

# **Threatened Pasts: Police Officers, Heritage Practitioners, and Victims of Heritage Crime**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Nottingham  
Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**July 2020**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my supervisors, Prof Jonathan Doak and Dr Loretta Trickett: thank-you for the invaluable guidance and support throughout my thesis.

To M and D: I won't write something long and soppy, but in short, the chips and the slow, hilarious decline into senility have really kept me going.

To T and G: thanks for popping back into my life at the right time.

To Bern in the Urn: Your congratulations would be much appreciated, but cremation hinders this somewhat.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge this wretched pandemic. Yes, I am writing about you Covid 19. You have caused me no end of trouble. I hope a very intelligent group of scientists comes up with a way to blast you into oblivion. I would like to leave the house and go to M & S. I have never wanted Percy Pigs more. They are but a memory now.

## ABSTRACT

Heritage crime is a marginalised, misunderstood, and under-researched area of crime. The existing body of literature has largely failed to examine the experiences, attitudes towards, and understandings of heritage crime from the perspective of victims, the police, and heritage practitioners in England and Wales. Employing a qualitatively led mixed methods methodology, this is the first empirical piece of research which examines the lived realities of the victims of heritage crime and those policing the phenomenon. It advances our understanding of how police respond to and navigate the challenges of policing heritage crime, and examines the victims of heritage crime, exploring who they are and how heritage crime impacts upon them.

These issues are confronted within the wider context of police responses to heritage crime and are situated amongst contemporary socio-economic and political issues. The findings reveal that heritage crime is rarely understood by police officers, is often perceived as a policing burden, and is not considered to be an important or serious enough crime to devote police time to. Officers are reluctant to engage in policing an area they do not fully understand, for numerous reasons, including a fear of engaging in an unknown area of crime and a lack of support and training. These issues contribute to a largely poor police response to victims of heritage crime, which contrasts with the acute impact this crime has upon victims.

The research found that there are numerous obstacles which hinder the confident and joined-up policing of heritage crime and the just treatment of its victims. Potential solutions are presented, centring around police officer education and practical methods of improving responses to victims.



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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*“They see it as a crime, and a bit of lead’s a bit of lead, whereas to me, a bit of lead has intrinsic history in it...its personal to the site”*

Heritage is a difficult concept to unpick. It is fluid, and open to continuous interpretation and reinterpretation across time (Graham, 2002). Paradoxically, crime is solidified into law, as that which is ‘sufficiently injurious to the public to warrant the application of criminal procedure to deal with them’ (Ormerod and Laird, 2018: 6). ‘Heritage crime’ is a term used to describe crimes against heritage sites and assets (Historic England, 2019a). There is thus something of an inherent tension between the underpinning concepts. Indeed, there is currently no overarching law specifically pertaining to heritage crime (although there are specific laws for specific types of heritage crime) and heritage crime is not currently required to be recorded by the Home Office (Shelbourn, 2014a, NPCC, 2017). Legally, ‘heritage crime’ is not a self-standing criminal offence. However, we know from the limited empirical research available, that despite not being classified as a crime, heritage crime has a tangible and profound impact upon its victims (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a, 2009b; Shelbourn, 2014b; Poyser and Poyser, 2017).

Contrastingly, heritage crime remains a marginalised area of crime within policing, which the majority of police officers have limited knowledge of (NPCC, 2017), whilst others are unaware that the crime exists (Oxford Archaeology, 2009b; Shelbourn 2014a). To compound these issues, the impacts of heritage crime are often intangible, such as the loss of historical value and the emotional impact upon victims of the crime (Poyser and Poyser, 2017). These impacts are, of course, recognised by the victims of heritage crime, but they are rarely recognised by police officers, who are looking for a tangible impact of a crime (Oxford Archaeology, 2009b). With a lack of knowledge and understanding of its impact therefore, officers may not feel confident in responding to heritage crime. However, victims may assume that officers will, nevertheless, recognise that crimes against heritage sites and assets should be recognised as crimes, and responded to as such by the State. Research has shown that in multiple and varying heritage crime cases, police officers respond to heritage crime very poorly, resulting in victims feeling frustrated and distressed (Shelbourn, 2014a, Poyser and Poyser, 2017). Victims have often been challenged by officers as to the validity of heritage crime (Shelbourn, 2014a; Oxford Archaeology, 2009b). Officers have denied and downplayed the importance and intangible impacts of heritage crime, even after being told what these are by the victim (Shelbourn, 2014b).

Victims have also reported officers failing to attend heritage crime cases after they had been reported, and officers stating that heritage crime is not a police matter (Poyser and Poyser, 2017). Research has established that certain crimes are neglected, downgraded, and marginalised by the police organisation (Loftus, 2009) despite their validity as crimes. Historically, police officers have neglected a plethora of crimes which they deem unworthy of police time, many of which have a direct human victim (Hoyle, 1996). It is perhaps unsurprising then that heritage crime, which lacks an immediate human victim in police terms, is not always thought of as particularly important nor taken seriously by police officers.

Overall, the existing research indicates that heritage crime is not perceived as 'real' police work and its associated impacts and victims are not taken seriously by police officers, leaving victims marooned by the criminal justice system (CJS) (Reiner, 2010). Indeed, questions may be raised as to why heritage crime should be policed at all, from both police officers and the public. In an era of inescapable austerity which continues to impact upon police forces (Grierson, 2017), alongside a changing landscape of criminality, such as a steep rise in particularly challenging crimes including online crime (Jewkes and Yar, 2011), hate crime (Chakraborti, 2009), and human trafficking (Gentleman, 2020); heritage crime will never be a political, nor policing, priority.

Indeed, heritage is already 'dead' and the possible extinction of heritage (Brodie, 2002) through acts of heritage crime, could be viewed as a loss which is unimportant in comparison to the loss associated with other crimes that involve human harm. From a policing perspective, there is no direct human victim of heritage crime, no individual whose life is in danger, no risk of harm or injury to a person. Whilst we can safely assume that heritage crime will never be a policing priority, its impacts, nevertheless, remain severe and wide-reaching. Heritage sites and assets possess a plethora of tangible and intangible values (Smith, 2006). Historical value, for example, is an intangible value which police officers may not recognise. Yet, if historical value is lost as a result of heritage crime, this loss impacts upon society's understanding of the heritage site or asset which has been damaged, and our overall understanding of history (Thomas and Grove, 2014). Therefore, heritage crime can be seen to be affecting communities and society as a whole (Baxter and Bullen, 2011). Indeed, heritage crime may not only unsettle but also devastate local communities, who are likely to have personally ascribed intangible values to the site or asset over time (Drake, 2008). More tangibly, heritage sites and assets are

often important sources of economic income (Walker, 2014), which can dramatically reduce in the wake of heritage crime.

The track record of the police in dealing with other marginalised crimes such as rural and wildlife crime and arts and antiques crime (the cousin of heritage crime) have not been particularly positive. Research has revealed that the reluctance to police these crimes has been a combination of facets of police culture, a lack of police interest in and motivation to police them, and limited resources (Fyfe and Reeves, 2011; Lennon, 2003; Oxford Archaeology, 2009a). Heritage crime however, unlike the similarly marginalised areas of rural and wildlife crime, and arts and antiques crime, is a relatively new area of crime for police forces in England and Wales. The name was only officially attached to the crime by Historic England and Cadw (the English and Welsh heritage bodies respectively) in 2011 (NPCC, 2013).

Ultimately, there is a permeance to heritage crime which does not occur with many other crimes of this nature. Criminal damage against a bus shelter may be an inconvenience but can be fixed or replaced. Criminal damage against a heritage site or asset is far more serious, as such damage destroys historical fabric, which cannot be replaced in kind. Indeed, some of the most severe heritage crime cases might lead to sites and assets being permanently destroyed; and once heritage is gone, it cannot come back. Whether heritage crime is perceived by police forces as a crime worthy of policing is crucial for the future of our heritage.

## **1.1: Background to the study**

The foundations for this project began when the researcher was conducting empirical research for a much smaller study on heritage crime. This research involved sending questionnaires to neighbourhood policing teams in Nottinghamshire and conducting semi-structured interviews with victims of heritage crime (Poyser and Poyser, 2017). With limited time to conduct empirical research during this period, the research pool was small (9 semi-structured interviews with victims and 50 questionnaires to police officers) and restricted to Nottinghamshire. However, it became apparent that there was both a clear problem in the policing of heritage crime, and that victims were eager to talk about a problem which they felt was being ignored. The findings prompted further interest from the researcher and motivated the researcher to conduct research on a broader scale. Whilst conducting the research and drawing upon the limited research on heritage crime, it was

noted that Wales had failed to be acknowledged or empirically examined in this existing body of research. Therefore, it was decided that a broader study should include Wales within its remit. This could also be accomplished as both England and Wales share the same legal system, though separate systems of heritage governance (Belford, 2018). Cadw is the Welsh heritage body which oversees the protection, conservation and preservation of heritage sites and assets in Wales, and Historic England is its English counterpart.

## **1.2: Original contribution to knowledge**

Existing academic research on heritage crime is limited. Much of the existing research has been literature based (*see* Grove and Thomas, 2014; Shelbourn, 2008; Shelbourn, 2014a), and the empirical gap in relation to heritage crime is extensive. Currently, only four empirical studies have explored heritage crime in England and Wales (two qualitative and two quantitative). Of the two qualitative studies, one of these is Oxford Archaeology's Nighthawking Report, which focussed upon illegal metal detecting (otherwise known as nighthawking) and produced a report and a second recommendation document (2009a, 2009b). The other is Poyser and Poyser's (2017) study, mentioned above.

Quantitative approaches can be located in Shelbourn's (2014a) study, which involved sending a survey to archaeologists, leading to a focus upon crimes such as archaeological theft, and Bradley et al's (2012) study, which examined the scale of anti-social behaviour and crime on heritage sites and assets in England. Therefore, with only four empirical studies, three of which are arguably outdated, we know very little about heritage crime in practice. The existing research indicates that heritage crime is widespread, and although current crime statistics do not include a heritage crime category, there has been an attempt to quantify the phenomenon, with Bradley et al (2012) estimating that over 70,000 heritage crime cases occurred in 2011. Research also indicates that police officers fail to understand heritage crime and have a very poor perception of it (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a; Poyser and Poyser, 2017), downgrading it and viewing it as 'rubbish' (Reiner, 2010). Research has revealed that the police treatment of heritage crime victims also appears to be poor (Shelbourn, 2014a).

None of the aforementioned studies have comprehensively examined victimisation and heritage crime, nor police officers' understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime. Wales has also been side-lined by the existing research. This thesis plugs a significant gap in our understanding of heritage crime and provides a springboard for

further study in the area. By researching the experiences of officers at the front-line of policing heritage crime, it provides empirically-informed and practical suggestions for improving police officers' understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime, as well as their treatment of victims.

On a practical level, these solutions account for the realities of front-line policing, and help inform both academic and policing understandings of the practical issues of policing heritage crime, from the perspectives of the officers themselves. Lastly, the thesis highlights the issues associated with the practical implementation of policing policy, into policing practice, and calls for police leaders to recognise the flaws of not liaising with front-line officers. On a conceptual level, this thesis draws on existing theory with a heritage specific focus, chiefly Wilson and Kelling's (1982) Broken Windows Theory, illustrating how many criminological assumptions regarding disorder and crime do not apply to heritage sites and assets. Furthermore, this research challenges current theoretical assumptions regarding heritage crime (chiefly the empirically unsupported literature that crime prevention will help prevent and tackle heritage crime (Grove and Pease, 2014)). Progressing theoretical knowledge in the area of heritage crime will not only help future researchers in the field, but theories with a practical element, such as Broken Windows theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) and crime prevention are anticipated to produce further research which helps inform and improve police responses to heritage crime.

### **1.3: Research questions**

The overarching aim of this thesis was to examine and compare police officers', heritage practitioners' and victims' understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime in England and Wales. A secondary aim was to identify and address some of the challenges associated with policing heritage crime more broadly in order to reflect the lived experiences of victims of heritage crime. In doing so, this research will broaden the existing empirical landscape of heritage crime, thereby providing a foundation for future research in the field:

In order to fulfil these aims, the following questions were developed:

1. How has the heritage sector in England and Wales influenced attitudes towards heritage and heritage crime in each country?

2. How do police officers understand, become aware of and perceive heritage crime, and how does this affect their response to victims?
3. What obstacles exist to impede the effective policing of heritage crime in England and Wales?
4. Who are the victims of heritage crime, and how do they understand, perceive and respond to it?
5. Can victim-focussed mechanisms be developed to overcome the obstacles to the effective policing of heritage crime?

## **1.4: Chapter outline**

Following this introduction, the thesis comprises six substantive chapters, and a concluding chapter. Chapter 2, the literature review, begins by examining the contested concept of heritage and introducing the concept of heritage crime. It illustrates how heritage is socially, economically and politically constructed, and explains how heritage crime came to be unofficially recognised as a crime in England and Wales. It establishes the current position of police understandings and awareness of heritage crime amongst officers in England and Wales, explores how police culture may influence understandings and awareness, and details various policing approaches towards it. The similarly marginalised areas of policing, specifically rural and wildlife crime, are also drawn upon in order to inform this chapter.

Chapter 3 discusses the different research methods employed for the purposes of this study, and how they were used to examine police, heritage practitioner, and victim perceptions, understandings and awareness of heritage crime in England and Wales. It also describes how the interview and FOI data were analysed and addresses ethical considerations.

The findings of this research are outlined in three subsequent chapters. Chapter 4 analyses the results of semi-structured interviews with police officers and heritage practitioners. This chapter reveals that there are multiple issues relating to understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime not just amongst police officers, but throughout the CJS. Firstly, the barriers to a positive perception and good level of understanding and



awareness of heritage crime are explored. The victims and impact of heritage crime are then discussed. Secondly, heritage crime is situated within the current policing environment. The issues with attaching heritage to rural crime are then extrapolated, and the problems with the reporting and recording of heritage crime are addressed. Finally, the chapter identifies the obstacles to improving police understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime, alongside police officer and heritage practitioner suggestions to remedy these obstacles.

Chapter 5 examines the findings of the FOI requests sent to 38 police forces. The collated responses were analysed and compared for similarities between them, and the emergent themes were then explored. A key theme concerned how individual forces had been given the freedom to decide what constitutes a heritage crime officer themselves, resulting in the heritage crime officer role being interpreted very differently between forces.

Chapter 6 explores the results of semi-structured interviews with the victims of heritage crime across England and Wales. The chapter addresses the multiple issues with police understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime from the perspective of the victims of heritage crime. The importance of the PCSO in relation to the policing of heritage crime is then considered. Thereafter, issues with reporting and reporting are revealed. It also examines the victims and impact of heritage crime.

Findings are synthesised in Chapter 7. This chapter highlights the issues which police officers, heritage practitioners and victims raised throughout this research. It provides potential solutions to some of the obstacles which were found to hinder the policing of heritage crime or result in poor police understandings and awareness of the crime. The following is proposed by the researcher: i) a victim typology specific to the victims of heritage crime, ii) a model for police forces to follow when implementing heritage crime officers, and iii) a strand of Wilson and Kelling's (1982) Broken Windows theory specific to heritage crime, coined 'Ruined Windows theory'.

In conclusion, Chapter 8 revisits the research findings and themes extrapolated over the course of the research. It also explores the ramifications of the researcher's findings, providing recommendations as to how these findings may impact upon both theory and praxis relating to the policing of heritage crime, and treatment of victims in the phenomenon in England and Wales.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 : Introduction: What is heritage?

Heritage has no official, unified definition (Smith, 2006). This is because heritage is socially constructed (Graham, 2002). It may be assumed that if heritage is socially constructed, due to the variety of individuals in society, there will be many different interpretations of what heritage is, and what it is not, and that these interpretations will change over time (Harvey, 2001). However, this is not the case. Power is central to the construction of heritage (Graham et al, 2005), and so it is the powerful who have the ability to construct heritage. As such, heritage reflects the powerful. In the UK, those with the power to construct heritage have, traditionally been the elite (Pendlebury et al, 2004). Constructions of heritage in the UK therefore, reflect the elite, meaning that elite heritage is the dominant form of heritage in the UK (Lowenthal, 2015). Other understandings of heritage are ignored and marginalised (Waterton, 2009), such as working-class heritage (Drake, 2017). Indeed, survey data demonstrates that it is the sites and assets of the elite, such as castles, cathedrals, country homes, and historic parks and gardens; which the general public most think of when asked what heritage is to them (Pendlebury et al, 2009: 180).

The Introduction to this thesis illustrated that there is an underlying tension surrounding the idea of heritage. This is because heritage is fluid and open to interpretation (despite the influence of the powerful and dominance of elite heritage), whereas crime is a more fixed concept. However heritage and crime, as separate concepts, do share one important similarity. Much in the same way that heritage is socially constructed by the powerful, crime is also socially constructed by the powerful (Quinney, 1970). The shared meanings of what social acts are considered normal, deviant, or criminal are socially constructed, constantly contested, and evolving (Surette and Otto, 2001: 147). Indeed, there is currently no heritage crime law (NPCC, 2017), although there is specific legislation for specific heritage crimes (explored further in 2.3). Legally, ‘heritage crime’ does not exist. Yet the powerful still see heritage sites and assets which reflect and represent them-elite heritage-receiving disproportionate attention and outrage when subject to criminal behaviour. A solid gold toilet, for example, was stolen from Blenheim Palace in 2019 (Gayle, 2019), and the police response and media interest was significant. On the other hand, when vast swathes of industrial heritage sites and assets are subject to heritage crime, they appear to

receive comparatively less attention, in not having uncontested importance automatically ascribed to them; as elite heritage does (Gould, 2015; Dicks, 2015).

Whilst heritage remains undefinable, the social construction of heritage has made elite heritage the dominant form of heritage across the UK. The ramifications of this in relation to heritage crime are unknown, although the social construction of heritage could impact upon the way the CJS responds to it. Indeed, despite the broad definition of heritage crime, the social construction of heritage may supersede how broad this definition is. In theory all types of heritage crime should receive equal attention from the CJS. Yet in practice, the social construction of heritage (and indeed crime) may prevent this.

## **2.2: Defining heritage crime**

Heritage crime is defined by the respective heritage bodies in England and Wales. Historic England is the chief heritage body in England, and Cadw is the chief heritage body in Wales. Historic England is responsible for protecting, conserving and preserving the historic environment (Historic England, 2019b), and is the English government's principal advisor on heritage in England (Trow, 2018: 83). In Wales, the authority responsible for protecting, conserving and preserving heritage, and defining heritage crime, is Cadw (Kalman, 2014). Quite differently from Historic England, Cadw has been integrated into the Welsh government's historic environment division from 2005 onwards (Mynors, 2006). Although both bodies are equally as concerned with the protection and maintenance of heritage sites and assets, their working practices towards and perceptions regarding heritage may differ, not least because of differing cultural attitudes towards heritage in England and Wales. For example, because Cadw is part of the Welsh Government, Lennox (2016: 164) argues that this limits its independence, its ability to ally with this heritage sector (through advocacy for the historic environment), and its opportunity to be innovative in terms of policy and ethos, as being closely aligned to the will of government hinders this.

Indeed, Howell (2016: 172) argues that the influence of the Welsh government is both being felt, and demonstrated, in the current Welsh heritage provision, as heritage sites and assets are 'rolled out,' as a means of promoting tourism and investment; a strategy which reflects the Welsh Government's influence of, and desire to, control the wider Welsh heritage sector. Moreover, resourcing is also likely to impact upon the way both bodies operate. Cadw is '...not a large organisation and its resources are relatively small in

comparison to other national bodies' (Humphries, 2013: 82). Both Historic England and Cadw have been subject to continued budget cuts in recent years, but Cadw has continuously received far fewer resources than Historic England (Belford, 2018).

It could be suggested that these differences might impact upon attitudes towards heritage crime in both bodies. However, despite such differences, Cadw is known for taking its lead from Historic England in relation to matters of heritage (Lennox, 2016: 322). This would suggest that basic working practices relating to heritage, and heritage related definitions may be similar, such as the definition of heritage crime.

The definition of heritage crime provided by Historic England is as follows:

*'Heritage crime is any offence which harms the value of heritage assets and their settings...However, **other crimes such as theft, criminal damage, arson and anti-social behaviour offences can also damage and harm heritage assets** [authors emphasis] and interfere with the public's enjoyment and knowledge of their heritage'* (Historic England, 2019b).

The heritage assets and sites Historic England refers to are:

*'Listed buildings, scheduled monuments, World Heritage Sites, protected marine wreck sites, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, protected military remains of aircraft and vessels of historic interest, undesignated but acknowledged heritage buildings and sites'* (Historic England, 2019b).

Much of the online literature and guidance concerning heritage crime produced by Historic England is endorsed by Cadw. Despite Cadw following Historic England's lead on heritage matters, as mentioned above, the definition of heritage crime adopted by Cadw differs slightly from Historic England. It is defined as:

*'Heritage crime is any unlawful activity which harms historic assets including buildings, monuments, parks, gardens and landscapes...Some of these assets are protected by specific criminal offences **but heritage crime often takes the form of 'general' offences such as theft, criminal damage, anti-social behaviour which are equally damaging to historic assets** [authors emphasis] and interfere with the public's understanding and enjoyment of them.'* (Cadw, 2019).

### 2.2.1 : Cross collaboration?

At first glance, the definitions provided by Historic England and Cadw are almost identical. This could indicate that there is an opportunity for English and Welsh police forces to collaborate on the policing of heritage crime, as both forces operate under the same policing related legislation and a similar definition of heritage crime. However, the different phraseology of the sentences highlighted in bold above suggests different emphases. Cadw conceptualises heritage crime as being as an individual type of crime, but a crime that can *also* take the shape of other low-level forms of criminal behaviours, such as theft or criminal damage. Meanwhile, Historic England conceptualises heritage crime as an individual type of crime, but views crimes such as theft, arson, and anti-social behaviour (amongst others), as separate forms of crime that exist alongside heritage crime.

Whilst this difference is minor, it has the potential to be exceptionally confusing to those outside of the heritage sector who may encounter heritage crime: the public, local authorities, CPS and police officers. Previous research conducted on heritage crime by the author (Poyser and Poyser, 2017) has identified that police officers in England struggle to accurately define heritage crime. In particular, police officers find difficulty in understanding whether a crime against a heritage site or asset was strictly classified as a heritage crime, or whether the crime was categorised as a criminal damage against a heritage site or asset (Ibid, 2017). The difficulties these respondents had in defining heritage crime on the frontline of policing also appear to be reflected in the slightly different definitions of heritage crime between England and Wales. Each body has produced two different definitions of heritage crime to describe the same phenomenon, both of which are equally valid as there is no universal definition of heritage crime.

This subtle definitional difference could have repercussions for the policing of heritage crime. If there is no universal definition of heritage crime between England and Wales, this could hinder collaboration between English and Welsh forces. In Wales, the definition from Cadw suggests that heritage crime is a type of crime itself, which encompasses other crimes (such as criminal damage). However, Historic England's definition suggests that crimes such as criminal damage exist alongside heritage crime. This indicates in Wales, criminal damage against a heritage site would just be referred to as a heritage crime, whilst in England the same scenario would be referred to as a criminal damage and a heritage

crime. This would naturally result in confusion in terms of categorising the crime between forces, and difficulty in applying a standardised response to the crime.

In order to combat potential confusion due to a lack of an identical definition of heritage crime between England and Wales, the NPCC Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Working Group (2017: 10) has also produced, what they term, a ‘working definition’ of heritage crime, which is as follows: ‘[Heritage crime is]...Any offence involving damage or loss to the historic environment, including all offences involving cultural property.’ Although this definition is broad, it is important for the NPCC to have produced it, as a police led definition of heritage crime is arguably best for police officers to specifically refer to as needed. Indeed, the NPCC have referred to this definition as a ‘working definition’, suggesting that this definition is best used by police officers in their working practice. The simplicity of this definition is also useful for officers, who may feel unfamiliar with the language used in the definitions supplied by Historic England and Cadw. Arguably, the more straightforward the definition, the easier heritage crime will be for officers across England and Wales to understand.

Irrespective of which definition is used by police officers and other actors within the CJS in practice, there is no legal definition of heritage crime, as there is no overarching heritage crime law. Instead there are various existing offences, which may be applied to specific heritage offences.

### **2.3: The legal framework governing heritage crime in England and Wales**

The existing legal framework for heritage crime provides the basis for police knowledge of and response to heritage crime. There is limited understanding and awareness of the existing legislation amongst police officers in England and Wales (NPCC, 2017), for initial training for officers tends not to cover such niche areas of criminal law. Indeed, it is therefore anticipated that the police officers in this study will have limited awareness and experience of using this legislation. Even if officers are aware of this legislation and understand the legislation enough to apply it, they may prefer to rely on other forms of criminal law that they are more accustomed to. For example, Shelbourn (2008:3) suggests that officers are more likely to use legislation that they are familiar with when investigating heritage crime cases, more general criminal offences such as criminal damage or theft, as heritage specific legislation can be complex and contains difficult elements for the prosecution to prove.

As mentioned previously, there is no specific law for heritage crime, as heritage crime lacks a legal definition. Instead there are multiple pieces of legislation which apply to different kinds of heritage sites and assets. These include:

- Protection of Wrecks Act (1973)
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)
- Protection of Military Remains Act (1986)
- Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)
- Treasure Act (1996)
- Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act (2003)

It is beyond the remit of this thesis to explore these statutes in detail, but examples include the Treasure Act (1996) which is utilised to prosecute illegal metal detecting, whilst the Planning (Listing Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) is used to prosecute crimes against Grade listed buildings, such as owners of Grade listed buildings who make unauthorised alterations to the historical fabric of them (BBC, 2015). Although certain powers in Wales are devolved to the Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru, the same legal framework applies.

### **2.3.1 : Legislative stagnation?**

The legislation above has undergone very few changes. This is likely to be because heritage crime is a rather unknown area of crime amongst the public (Grove, 2013). There is therefore, little public pressure to influence the reviewing, tightening, or introduction of new legislation (Kindred, 2011). However, there have been some small, but significant, changes to heritage legislation in England and Wales from 2016 onwards.

One of these pieces of legislation was passed in Wales in 2016 (and is specific to Wales), in order to help strengthen Wales' approach to tackling heritage crime. The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is particularly crucial as it limits the defence of ignorance in relation to scheduled ancient monuments (under the 1979 Act). This change means that prosecution in Wales is now possible if a person has committed a heritage crime against a scheduled ancient monument, and knew or ought reasonably to have known, that the monument was protected (Belford, 2018:113). Limiting the use of the defence of ignorance in this way enables the more effective prosecution of heritage crime, as, in the

past, the use of this defence meant that cases would be unable to be taken any further (Cadw, 2014).

More recently, a consultation regarding proposed changes to the Treasure Act (1996) was undertaken in 2019. The proposed changes are hoped to preserve more significant finds for public collections, make the Treasure process more efficient, and the Act itself easier to understand (Lewis, 2019: 18). Importantly, in the case of heritage crime, there is a specific proposal to extend the time limit for proceedings to be brought for an offence. It is proposed that the traditional six month time limit for summary offences be extended, allowing proceedings to be brought up to six months after the date on which a prosecutor is aware of sufficient evidence that a crime has been committed (DCMS, 2019). If the proposed changes go ahead, then this would help heritage crime officers significantly, as delays to reporting of metal detecting finds would have less impact upon the allocated six months investigative time for summary offences.

Additionally, it is also important to mention that heritage crime legislation is unlikely to develop further, because the perception may be that the law as it stands currently contains sufficient provision to address, for example, vandalism, arson and theft, through the general criminal law framework (e.g: Theft Act 1968, Criminal Damage Act 1971). This, alongside the limited and unfamiliar legislation for specific types of heritage crime, naturally has consequences for when heritage crime moves through the CJS. Such legislation may be easier to use by police officers and prosecutors, but being more general forms of criminal law, they may not result in proportionate punishment for heritage crime. Indeed, there appear to be various issues which heritage crime experiences as it moves through the CJS, which are explored in greater detail below.

### **2.3.2 : Prosecution, practice and substitution**

Whilst there is a dearth of literature on heritage crime more generally, there is even less legal literature on what happens when heritage crime reaches court. Frankly, this is because heritage crime rarely reaches a stage where the CPS becomes involved, let alone reaching court. There are two main reasons for this. As noted above, the legislation employed to target very specific heritage crimes, such as the Treasure Act 1996, may not be used in practice, since police officers and prosecutors prefer to rely on legislation they are accustomed to and which would produce similar sentencing outcomes (Holmes, 2013). Indeed, reports of cases where a heritage crime has occurred tend to show that the accused



has been prosecuted under a general criminal offence, such as theft, as opposed to a specific law pertaining to heritage crime (Bliss, 2013; Kent Police, 2016). For example, it has been found that cases which might utilise the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, have been prosecuted under the Theft Act 1968 instead (Shelbourn, 2008: 3). This, Shelbourn theorises, may not only be due to the familiarity the police and CPS have with general criminal offences, but also because there is difficulty in proving the substantive elements of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. However, without cases being prosecuted under heritage-specific legislation, the legal literature remains scant.

A second reason for heritage crime cases failing to reach court is that some heritage sites and assets are covered by insurance. For example, when theft of lead from a church roof occurs, these cases may involve only the reporting of the crime to the police for the purpose of receiving a crime number to submit an insurance claim (Dobinson and Dennison, 1995). Police involvement is often minimal, and the case will rarely go to court. Out of court disposals might also be used with heritage crime (Shelbourn, 2014a). Furthermore, as there is no specific heritage crime law, cases will not be brought before court as 'heritage crimes', rather, they would be brought before the court as 'normal' criminal offences such as criminal damage, theft or arson (amongst others). Overall case law on heritage crime is therefore, minimal (Shelbourn, 2014b).

As the legal literature on heritage crime is so limited, this discussion will also draw upon literature from the similarly marginalised areas of rural and wildlife crime, and the problems associated with taking rural and wildlife crime cases through court. These two areas of crime are operationally grouped together with heritage crime by the CPS (CPS, 2019) and the police (NPCC, 2018), suggesting that the issues facing rural and wildlife crime cases are likely to be reflected in heritage crime cases. Both rural and wildlife crime have also been embedded within policing for longer than heritage crime (Nurse, 2008), and so there is a greater quantity of literature to draw upon, to help inform our understanding of the similar problems which heritage crime may face in court.

### **2.3.2 A: Heritage crime in court: getting it to court, and legislative issues**

Heritage crime is not classified as a crime by the Home Office, meaning that there is no requirement for the police to record it and there are no official heritage crime statistics (Kerr, 2013). Therefore we cannot ascertain how many heritage crime cases reach the

prosecution stage. However, as a marginalised area of crime which few police officers have a good understanding and awareness of (Poyser and Poyser, 2017), we can safely assume that if few officers can identify the crime, then few cases reach CPS. Heritage crime is likely to be difficult to bring to court not least because of lack of police officer understanding and awareness, but for reasons directly relating to CPS procedures.

For any heritage crime case to successfully reach court, it must first pass both the evidential stage and the public interest stage, of the two-step test required for all prosecutions. The evidential stage considers if there is evidential sufficiency that would ensure a realistic prospect of conviction, whilst the public interest stage considers if the prosecution is in the public interest. With regards to the evidential stage, evidence in heritage crime cases can be hard to acquire. Literature shows that police officers do not perceive heritage crime as a crime and are unlikely to understand or recognise the crime when it occurs (Poyser and Poyser, 2017; Shelbourn 2014b). As such, officers have been dismissive and defeatist when faced with evidence of a heritage crime, such as telling victims that ‘digging holes’ could not be interpreted as criminal damage and that they ‘Didn’t see that they could find anything,’ in illicit metal detecting cases (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a: 98). Furthermore, if the police fail to treat heritage crime scenes as ‘real’ crime scenes, then this may mean that there is little evidence which could be used to identify and convict a suspect (Shelbourn, 2014a: 193). These attitudes towards and perceptions of heritage crime, explored in greater detail in section 2.5, are clearly an obstacle to heritage crime meeting the evidential stage.

Compounding these issues is the difficulty associated with gathering evidence from heritage sites and assets after heritage crime has occurred. Heritage crime may not be discovered until sometime after the offence has been committed, for example, when heritage crime occurs on remote sites or assets which are rarely visited, or when lead is taken from parts of a church roof which cannot easily be seen from the ground. Moreover, heritage crime which occurs on remote sites or assets are likely to lack witnesses. Lastly, many sites and assets lack CCTV, either because CCTV cannot be affixed to their historical fabric or because they are impossible to install, such as a public field containing historical artefacts (Grove and Pease, 2014).

For all these reasons, police officers may choose to use out of court disposals such as adult cautions instead of starting the prosecution process (Shelbourn, 2014a: 191). Indeed, a series of FOI requests submitted to five forces in England and Wales in 2018, concerning

illegal metal detecting and theft from heritage assets, revealed that between 2015-2017, the most common police responses to this crime included: NFA (no further action), investigation complete no suspect identified, suspect identified evidential difficulties, adult community resolution, and caution (Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary, 2018; Dyfed Powys Police, 2018; West Midlands Police, 2018; Devon and Cornwall Police, 2018). Not only do these responses illustrate how heritage crime can, very easily, fail to make it to court through a lack of evidence, but they also demonstrate at a front-line level, how police discretion results in a charge not being brought; by utilising out of court disposals. Out of all five forces, only two charges had been brought in this three-year period (Norfolk and Suffolk Constabulary, 2018).

The next stage concerns the public interest. The concept of ‘public interest’ is loosely defined and vague (Doak, 2008: 120), meaning that it is subject to different interpretations. The impact which heritage crime has upon the wider nation’s heritage may indicate that the public interest stage is reasonably easy to pass in heritage crime cases (Holmes, 2013). However, it is not quite this simple. The first prosecution under the Treasure Act 1996 in 2010, despite passing both stages, was met with a negative response by both magistrates and the public: CPS were privately told that the magistrates felt that the prosecution should not have been brought, and public support for the prosecution was greatly limited (Shelbourn, 2014a). In other cases, the public interest stage has failed to consider the wider impacts of heritage crime, namely the impact on the nation’s heritage (as mentioned above). In 2004 for example, the CPS decided not to proceed with an illegal metal detecting case, arguing that it was not in the public interest due to the low monetary value of the objects, which totalled £50 (Brodie, 2004: 3). In this instance the intangible historical value and significance of these objects was ignored despite the fact that, in being ‘everybody’s’ heritage, these types of cases should perhaps always fulfil the public interest test.

Lastly, it is worth noting that upon taking a closer look at the slight differences in the heritage sector between England and Wales; it could be suggested that prosecuting heritage crime might be more difficult in Wales than in England. In Wales, the Inspectors of Ancient Monuments (at all levels) are not PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) trained (Pers comms, 2018), whereas in England, all the Inspectors of Ancient Monuments (at all levels) *are* PACE trained (Historic England, 2013). This training means that Inspectors in England can issue a caution, which enables them to gather evidence via an interview (if there is a suspect); thereby beginning the process of investigating the crime

(Pers comm, 2018). Through these actions, Historic England's Inspectors are likely to be able to decide more easily if the case is worth putting to the police for further investigation, and possibly prosecution. This greater sense of autonomy is, arguably, an advantage over Cadw's Inspectors, who are entirely reliant upon police officers to conduct all processes relating to a heritage crime case (or a potential heritage crime case).

Whilst there are clearly numerous issues with taking heritage crime cases to the prosecution, and problems within the court setting itself (such as the reluctance to use legislation which perhaps the police and CPS are not accustomed to using), CPS have taken steps to try and alleviate these issues. Chiefly, this has been through the creation of the Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Co-ordinator role.

### **2.3.3: The Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Co-ordinators**

From 2013 onwards, at least one Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Co-ordinator has been placed in each CPS Area across England and Wales (Austin, 2013). These co-ordinators are specialist crown prosecutors, and their role specifically concerns rural, wildlife and heritage crime (CPS, 2019). The creation of this role is undoubtedly a great step forward in tackling heritage crime within the CPS, however, the position is not without its faults. For example, Flynn's (2017) research on Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Co-ordinators, found that whilst the co-ordinators all have experience and working knowledge of rural, wildlife and heritage crime (much of which they have learnt on the job), this experience and knowledge varied vastly between co-ordinators. Those with more 'on the job' experience had greater knowledge and confidence in prosecuting the three crimes than their less knowledgeable and less confident counterparts. Opportunities to increase existing knowledge and skills were also found to be limited as training conferences and courses were no longer running due to budget constraints (Flynn, 2017).

Arguably, the most crucial finding related to personal characteristics of the co-ordinators, namely that a personal interest and enthusiasm for all three types of crime, were crucial to undertaking the position, as it involved an additional workload on top of already full case-loads (Ibid, 2017). Lastly, there were two significant problems facing the co-ordinators. Firstly, the high case loads they had, and inconsistent communication of existing cases, sometimes resulted in inexperienced, non-specialist prosecutors taking wildlife, rural and heritage crime cases to court (potentially resulting in inadequate charges) (Ibid: 89). Secondly, CPS Direct often failed to direct cases to these specialist prosecutors, as the call

handlers did not have the knowledge of wildlife, rural and heritage crime to know to whom to send such cases (Ibid: 90).

The implementation of Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Coordinators has been a significant step in attempts to improve the overall CJS response to heritage crime. However, their role is impeded by a wider lack of knowledge, understanding and awareness within the CPS overall, as section 2.3 has illustrated. Indeed, one of the main barriers to the successful prosecution of heritage crime is, arguably, the focus by the CJS upon financial (monetary) value. Unfortunately, in heritage crime cases the financial value of the object or asset is often very low in comparison to the loss of historical value (Shelbourn, 2014b). Indeed, heritage practitioners have argued, from personal experience, that the court system seems more focussed upon the monetary value of heritage objects when heritage crime occurs (Oxford Archaeology, 2009b), as opposed to intangible values, such as intrinsic historical value.

Alongside the introduction of Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Co-ordinators, there are indications that the sentencing of all heritage crime cases will improve in years to come. In July 2019 new sentencing guidelines were introduced addressing many of the intangible impacts this section has discussed (Gould, 2019). Aside from highlighting the unique nature of damage to heritage sites and assets (in that they destroy history), considerations will be given by the courts to social impacts (such as the impact upon local communities), psychological impacts, and the impact upon emergency services, in terms of diverting resources (Historic England, 2019c). This is a positive development which will hopefully prompt further recognition of the impact and severity of heritage crime across the criminal justice system.

#### **2.3.4: Summary**

This section has shown that there is a lack of overall knowledge, clarity and awareness of heritage crime in the court systems in England and Wales, which is reflected in the sentences which heritage crime cases receive. The creation of the Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Co-ordinator Role and the recent sentencing changes are all significant developments, and may go some way to remedying the difficulties which have plagued heritage crime cases that enter the court system. Whilst these improvements are likely to impact upon future heritage crime cases in court, it is argued that it is crucial for more heritage crime cases to reach magistrates court. This is in order to prevent the vicious

circle which has been observed in attempts to bring marginalised crimes to court, wherein marginalised crimes are not prosecuted, resulting in magistrates and judges gaining little experience of prosecuting these cases, leading to lenient sentencing which discourages further prosecutions (Watson, 2005: 199). As heritage crime is a marginalised area of crime, the vicious circle scenario is certainly applicable to heritage crime cases. The only way for these cases to enter the court system however, is through police officers. Indeed, examining heritage crime through the lens of the CPS only accounts for a very small portion of the CJS, and is of course the last stage a heritage crime case reaches. Therefore, it is now important to examine the role of policing and police officers, in relation to heritage crime.

## **2.4 : Policing and heritage crime**

### **2.4.1 : Introduction**

Existing research indicates that police officers generally struggle to understand heritage crime and possess a lack knowledge and awareness of the area (Oxford Archaeology 2009a; Poyser and Poyser, 2017; Shelbourn, 2010). There are some forces which display a good level of understanding, knowledge and awareness of heritage crime (Oxford Archaeology 2009b), whilst others struggle with the concept and dedicate limited resources to the area (Ibid). This patchy coverage by forces is likely to impact upon the victims of heritage crime. With this in mind, this thesis will seek to expand upon the existing research and illustrate in greater detail the possible reasons for the limited police knowledge, understanding and awareness of heritage crime. It will also address the potential consequences and problems with the unequal attention paid to heritage crime, by forces across England and Wales, as well as plugging the gap in the empirical research concerning the policing of heritage crime in Wales.

### **2.4.2 : Police culture**

Police culture (the occupational culture of the police, otherwise known as ‘cop culture’) is the term used to describe the practice, attitudes, values and norms which all construct how to be a police officer and how to do policing (Paoline, 2003: 200). When an officer puts on the police uniform s/he enters this culture, which is governed by norms and values designed to mitigate the strains created by their unique role in the community (Van Maanen, 1973: 85). It is important for this thesis to explore police culture in order to help

answer RQ2 and RQ3. It is anticipated that certain facets of police culture may influence police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime, and how they treat victims of the phenomenon (RQ2). It is also predicted that certain characteristics of police culture (explored below) may be an obstacle to the effective policing of heritage crime (RQ3).

Police culture has been subject to continued academic examination since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Reiner, 1992a) but still remains difficult to define (Westmarland, 2008).

Although we cannot surely define what police culture is (Cockcroft, 2013), we can utilise existing frameworks in place to explore police culture in greater detail. Perhaps the most well-known is Robert Reiner's characteristics of police culture (2000). The characteristics are as follows: Mission, action, cynicism, pessimism (all four of which are interlinked), suspicion, isolation/solidarity, conservatism and machismo (Reiner, 2000: 89-101).

Firstly, the characteristic mission, or sense of mission, derives from an officer's desire to 'get the bad guys' and to do society's dirty work; work which nobody else is willing to do (Foster, 2003). This is a defining aspect of their role, the feeling that policing is a way of life, as opposed to just a job (Reiner, 1978: 247). Officers come to conceptualise themselves as the thin blue line between order and disorder and without them, chaos would ensue (Broden et al, 1988). The mission of police work is a source of great pride for police officers and is also cited as a reason for joining the job, particularly in terms of the ability within the role to make a difference to society (Loftus, 2009: 91). Intertwined with a sense of mission is the characteristic of action. Police work cannot be considered police work unless it is fun, challenging, and involves hedonistic action (Reiner, 2010: 12). As Holdaway (1983:131) illustrates, when officers describe car chases ending in the use of force against an offender, excitement, action and fun are fundamental to the story.

However, when officers realise that policing and police work is not the action packed ideal they believed it would be (explored further in this chapter), and instead consists primarily of peacekeeping and order maintenance activities, this realisation undermines the officer's sense of mission (Charman, 2017). This realisation, alongside the nature of the population officers usually encounter (challenging individuals) leads to officers feeling cynical and pessimistic (Cockcroft, 2013, Charman, 2017). Cynicism is directed towards the public, the CJS and higher-ranking members of the police organisation (Loftus, 2009). Whilst cynicism may impact upon morale (Niederhoffer, 1967), it is unlikely to impact upon professionalism (Chan, 1996).

Suspicion emerges within policing as officers are constantly managing unpredictability and anticipating danger. As part of their role, officers are required to make the distinction between the normal and abnormal (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993). In encountering the ambiguity and uncertainty which the public present daily however, officers respond to this by creating workable typifications of the people around them, to prevent the looming chaos and maintain order (Holdaway, 1983:65). However, the latter can lead to the manifestation of hostile stereotypes (Manning, 1974: 29). These stereotypes have led to officers stopping people who are not engaging in criminal activity, but whose location, behaviour or appearance suggests they might be (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993). This creates an 'us vs them' mentality and affects relationships between police officers and the public.

The nature of policing, which involves lengthy shift work, unsociable hours, and difficulty switching off from the job, isolates officers from civilian life (Reiner, 2010). Inevitably, this causes officers to withdraw from the civilian world, and invest more in relationships with colleagues (Cockcroft, 2013: 58). The isolation officers experience leads to solidarity with each other, as the police family replaces family and friends outside of policing: "I see more of the lads than I do of my own family...you all become like family don't you?" (Loftus, 2009: 119). Solidarity is therefore, used as a means of counteracting the pressures officers experience from those outside of policing looking in, such as public perceptions of policing, media criticism, and internally, unsupportive senior officers (Charman, 2017).

The penultimate characteristic, conservatism, refers to the fact that police officers are said to be conservative 'both politically and morally' (Reiner, 2010: 126). Police officers are morally conservative as they must enforce the law, and therefore become implicated in affirming these laws (Skolnick, 1966). In England and Wales specifically, police political conservatism has been bolstered historically through a symbiotic relationship between the Conservative Party and the police (Reiner and Cross, 1991). However, Cockcroft (2013) suggests that the political conservatism within policing may be lessening in England and Wales. Since the early 1990s, the symbiotic relationship between the police and Conservative Party has lessened, as the latter no longer perceive the police as the pet public service they once did in the 70s and 80s (Reiner, 1992b: 764).

Lastly, machismo emerges in police culture because the police are 'expected to be physically and emotionally tough, aggressive and engage in traditionally masculine activities' (Waddington, 1999: 99). Policing is an arena for exaggerated masculine exploits such as only pursuing adrenaline inducing crimes (Reiner, 1978), excessive



drinking, and exaggerated tales of violence and sexual conquest (Fielding, 1994: 50). These attitudes and norms have created a 'cult of masculinity' within policing (Smith and Gray, 1985), which impacts distribution of labour within the police force, where some crimes are perceived as masculine and others as feminine (Appier, 1998). Furthermore, the crimes which are perceived to be masculine are perceived as 'real' police work (exciting, high-octane jobs) whereas the crimes which male officers believe female officers should tackle, are considered as not 'real' police work, such as administrative tasks (Westmarland, 2017). 'Real' police work demands further discussion, as it can result in differing responses, attitudes and actions towards certain types of crime; indeed, officers have even been found to avoid police work that is not 'real' by framing particular jobs as jobs that only female officers can attend (Ibid).

#### **2.4.3: 'Real' and not 'real' police work**

'Real' police work involves crimes where officers 'feel their adrenaline surge in anticipation of chase, danger, confrontation' (Crank, 2015: 167). However, officers swiftly realise that the day-to-day reality of policing does not consist of the latter. In fact, policing is mostly dry, monotonous, and service orientated, where officers are more likely to find themselves becoming the proverbial clerk in a patrol car (Van Maanen, 1973: 404) than engaging in high speed car chases. Whilst officers recognise that crime fighting is an infinitesimal part of their work (Charman, 2015), work which does not ascribe to the crime fighting action packed ideal, such as '...low status, inconclusive order maintenance work...' (Waddington, 1999:57) is dismissed as not being 'real' police work by officers. Activities which fall under not 'real' police work include administrative tasks such as paperwork. Paperwork is the ultimate antithesis to 'real' police work, and in contrast appears monotonous, and is spoken about disparagingly (Chatterton, 1989).

Paradoxically, despite being rejected as irrelevant by frontline officers, paperwork is the defining characteristic of formal operations (Manning, 1980: 221), recording and legitimising police action, and well completed paperwork is essential for taking cases through the CJS (Chatterton, 1989). However, it is not just activities such as paperwork which are dismissed as not 'real' police work. There are in fact, certain *crimes* which are thought of as not 'real' police work, colloquially termed 'rubbish' (Holdaway, 1983) by officers. 'Rubbish' work includes non-criminal disputes and social work tasks (Chan, 1997), jobs where officers feel as if they are social workers or counsellors more than police officers (Charman, 2017). These types of crimes are given an inferior status within

an officer's sense of a crime hierarchy (Loftus, 2009: 92) and are thought of as 'bullshit calls' (Rubinstein, 1973: 110). Victims of 'rubbish' crimes, and crimes which are not perceived to be 'real' police work, are often seen as undeserving of a police response (Charman, 2019). The latter is explored in greater detail further in this chapter.

#### **2.4.4 : Police culture and heritage crime**

The above discussion raises the question as to how this occupational culture impacts upon the operational policing of heritage crime. Whilst we know little of what officers' understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime are in-depth, we can gather limited information from the following two studies, namely Oxford Archaeology's *Nighthawking Report* (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a) and Shelbourn's (2014b) survey to archaeologists on their experiences of engaging with the police regarding heritage crime. The *Nighthawking Report* (2009a), a qualitative piece which specifically focussed upon nighthawking (the informal term for illegal metal detecting), found that awareness and understanding of heritage crime and relevant laws were poor amongst officers. This resulted in Finds Liaison Officers (from heritage bodies) receiving an increased workload, as they were asked to handhold officers through the investigative process, informing officers of the relevant laws and action they should take (Ibid, 99). Policing attitudes towards the crime were negative, with victims detailing excuses for a lack of police action which included reasons such as: heritage crime was impossible to police, it was fairly low down on the list of police priorities, and that it lacked an immediate human victim, specifically 'They're not mugging old ladies' (Ibid: 98).

Shelbourn's (2014b) quantitative research which surveyed archaeologists reporting similar issues, mirrored these findings, with officers refusing to acknowledge that heritage crime was a crime, officers only recognising and showing interest in 'everyday' crimes as opposed to heritage crime 'Interest from the police was solely due to a vandalised portacabin, not damage to archaeology plus theft of cultural artefacts (Ibid: 192), and officers believing heritage crime was a victimless crime and therefore not worthy of police time: 'Police saw that the offence was more of a waste of time/victimless crime and they had no reason to follow-up' (Ibid: 192). Taken together, the existing research strongly suggests that police understanding of heritage crime is poor, officer's overall awareness of heritage crime is lacking, and their perceptions of heritage crime are not particularly positive.

Similarly, past attempts at policing arts and antiques crime, the cousin of heritage crime, have been unsuccessful, and suggest that culturally, heritage crime will suffer from the same shortfalls which ended the policing of arts and antiques crime across England and Wales in the early 2000s. Attempts were made by police forces to police arts and antiques crime in the early 2000s, through implementing due diligence officers, who specifically liaised with the art trade and policed art and antiques crime (Bennett, 2000). However, the role was short lived, as policing arts and antiques crime was not a Key Performance Indicator for police forces, leaving little motivation for forces to prioritise it, and few resources were dedicated to the role (18<sup>th</sup> April 2000, HC 371-II, 218).

Indeed, when the Metropolitan Police's Arts and Antiques Unit (AAU herein), the only specialist unit in the UK solely concerned with the policing of arts and antiques crime (Kerr, 2015), attempted to hold training sessions for due diligence officers, forces refused to spend the money on training and so the sessions dried up (Charney, 2016a). Culturally, forces perceived arts and antiques crime negatively, with retired officers from the AAU arguing that forces lacked interest and application in the policing of the two areas (Lennon, 2003). As heritage crime is not dissimilar from arts and antiques crime, it is safe to assume that the same cultural attitudes are likely to repeat themselves.

More broadly, examining general policing literature on police culture can also provide us with clues as to how officers understand, become aware of, and perceive heritage crime. In general, we can safely assume that police officers are highly likely to perceive heritage crime as 'rubbish' work (Holdaway, 1983). Heritage crime is very unlikely to involve the exciting, hedonistic aspects of policing, such as high-speed car chases, or apprehending an offender, as those committing heritage crimes are rarely caught in the act (Poyser and Poyser, 2017). Instead, heritage crime cases are likely to take up a lot of time if the officer is to pursue the case (explored in greater detail below), are likely to lead to no discernible result, and with no human victims, heritage crime cases will rank low in official and informal reward systems (Punch, 1979:47). Indeed, heritage crime cases may involve a lot of extra work on the part of the officer. Heritage crime is often not straightforward, and can be without witnesses, CCTV, an indication of what has been stolen (for example, nighthawking), or an accurate timeframe of when the crime occurred (Poyser and Poyser, 2017). Officers, therefore, are likely to be reluctant to pursue what they see as a futile case which will be difficult to investigate and prosecute.

Furthermore, heritage crime may be an unrewarding and unsatisfying crime to solve, particularly in cases which do not have an individual available to thank the officer for their work, such as heritage crime against isolated sites and assets which lack guardians. This is likely to dampen an officer's enthusiasm for policing the crime, as it does not adhere to the image of protecting the weak, nor does it provide the satisfaction of engaging face-to-face with a victim and providing positive service to a victim, which is considered good police work (Chan et al, 2003). Indeed, the policing of heritage crime may not fulfil many of the occupational characteristics of policing as described by Reiner (2010), which make policing worthwhile for police officers. For example, there is no room for machismo in the policing of heritage crime: responding to crime against an Ancient Monument with no direct victim is unlikely to allow for the '...hard men on the streets image...' (Heidensohn, 1992:77). As the core justification of policing is a victim centred perspective (Reiner, 2000:89) and there is no direct victim in heritage crime cases, the sense of mission also does not apply, and the image officers have of themselves as upholders of public safety (Holdaway, 1979: 110) is therefore, not upheld when they respond to heritage crime cases.

Moreover, attending reports of heritage crime is likely to be seen as tedious work, giving the officer no chance to show courage or to be an aggressive crime fighter; further undermining the officer's occupational image (Philips, 2015). Officers will also know that, whilst they may have all the skills in their existing policing toolbox to police heritage crime, heritage crime requires a level of knowledge and understanding of the area in order to police it efficiently and effectively. As an interviewee in Kerr's (2013: 133) research on arts and antiques crime stressed: 'The average bobby doesn't know a Canaletto from a can of beans.' Far from being a criticism, this simply highlights the reality that policing niche areas of crime are impossible without being equipped with essential knowledge, awareness and skills to police these crimes.

Lastly, we return briefly to the notion of heritage crime being 'rubbish' work. To compound the perception of heritage crime being 'rubbish' work further, the policing of heritage crime, much like art and antiques crime, does not just involve the skills of the police officer. Instead, it necessitates officers participating in extra work, engaging with those outside of policing, such as community partnership and outreach, alongside engaging with academics and professionals in the heritage world (Charney, 2016b). Police officers have, historically, been suspicious and mistrusting of academics (Charman, 2017;

Cockcroft, 2013) and are sceptical of partnership working, which they feel lacks action, outcomes, clear command and fear that partners will intrude upon police functions (O'Neill and McCarthy, 2014).

Therefore, to subvert cultural norms, to be confident in doing so, arguably requires an officer who is passionate and interested enough in heritage crime that they are able to resist cultural norms, and confidently perceive these marginalised and less exciting crimes as 'real' police work. Indeed, Detective Chief Superintendent Coles notes in the Select Committee for Culture, Media and Sport Report, that personal interest is crucial to policing art and antiques crime: 'Where you have a personal interest [in a certain type of crime] you are more dedicated' (23rd May 2000, HC 371-II, 477). These qualities are clearly important for all areas of crime, but are arguably *crucial* in crimes which are niche, and challenge the notion of 'real' police work. These qualities should, hopefully, be present in heritage crime officers, who are responsible for policing heritage crime across England and Wales (NPCC, 2017).

#### **2.4.4A: Police culture: implementing the policing of heritage crime**

The policing of heritage crime began with the launch of Historic England's Heritage Crime Programme in 2011 (Historic England, 2019d), which introduced heritage crime into the overall policing remit of England and Wales for the first time. The first ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers, now known as the NPCC) meeting regarding heritage crime produced the Heritage and Cultural Property National Policing Strategic Assessment (ACPO, 2013), which recommended that police forces develop 'a network of dedicated Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Liaison Officers, to promote Heritage and Cultural Property Crime at a local police level' (Ibid: 31). As such, the heritage crime officer role was introduced into forces across England and Wales to facilitate the policing of heritage crime.

However, it was inevitable that this was a role which would not fulfil the sole remit of a single stand-alone officer. Such a role would have been impossible to justify operationally, particularly as the policing of heritage crime was implemented shortly after austerity measures had been announced for policing (HMIC, 2012). It seems that, largely due to cost reasons, the role of heritage crime officer was to be attached onto an existing officer (much like the aforementioned due diligence officers).

It appears that the trend amongst forces has been to operationally affix heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime, meaning that the role of heritage crime officer has, subsequently, been attached to Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers (RWCO). This trend was officialised in the NPCC's Rural Affairs Strategy, which stated that heritage crime was an intrinsically linked theme in the policing of rural and wildlife crime (NPCC, 2018a). Responsibility for policing heritage crime therefore, will generally default to RWCOs, who will police heritage crime alongside rural and wildlife crime. They may consist of one officer with a team of RWCOs at their disposal (Hertfordshire Police, 2019), a team of RWCOs (Kent Police, 2016), or they may act entirely alone (Humberside Police, 2019; Essex Police, 2019), depending on the force. However, despite the claims of the NPCC Rural Affairs strategy (that heritage crime is intrinsically linked to rural and wildlife crime) there is no clear justification for this link. No evidence suggests that heritage crime is more likely to occur in rural areas (Bradley et al, 2012), but the focus upon policing heritage crime alongside rural and wildlife crime by Kent Police (one of the earliest forces to begin unofficially policing heritage crime), may have acted as a catalyst for further forces to adopt the approach of affixing heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime (Oxford Archaeology, 2009b).

Whilst it is important to allocate the policing of heritage crime to *some* area within policing, allocating it to rural and wildlife crime comes with a host of issues stemming from police culture. Rural and wildlife crime have historically, and continue to be, marginalised within police (Gilling, 2011; Wellsmith, 2011). Similarly to heritage crime, rural and wildlife crime both suffer from negative police cultural attitudes towards them (Yarwood and Cozens, 2004; Nurse, 2013a), creating numerous challenges for the officers responsible for policing rural and wildlife crime. Culturally, rural and wildlife crime, in not ascribing to the policing ideal of action packed and exciting ventures, are denounced as 'rubbish' crimes and perceived to be not 'real' police work (Nurse, 2013b). In the past, wildlife crime officers have been openly ridiculed and treated with contempt by their colleagues and superiors (Kirkwood, 1994: 75). More recently, Fyfe and Reeves's (2011) research found that wildlife crime officer's superiors perceived wildlife crime as 'bunny-hugging type stuff' (Ibid, 175) and made it very clear that wildlife crime was low priority and unworthy of police attention.

Moreover, previous research has revealed that there is a perception amongst NGOs that wildlife crime officers often struggle to access the proper equipment for their job, due to the low status of their work, alongside the fact that they do not have internal force backing

for the work they do (Nurse, 2008: 150). It is questionable therefore, as to how RWCOs will find the time, resources, and internal support to police heritage crime, if the areas of rural and wildlife crime already struggle to achieve the latter. Moreover, the attachment of heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime, two areas which have been and still are perceived as not 'real' police work (Smith, 2010; Wellsmith, 2012), means that the internal perception of heritage crime has already been decided by the police organisation: if heritage crime is attached to two areas which are already perceived as not 'real' police work, then by default, heritage crime also must not be 'real' police work.

Ultimately, the allocation of heritage crime to RWCOs appears to be ill-thought-out. It may have been assumed that the skills in policing rural and wildlife crime could be transferable, and applied to heritage crime, as all three crimes are marginalised within policing. However, heritage crime shares few similarities with rural and wildlife crime. It does not share the same legislation, nor the same types of victims, and is unlikely to require the same operational response. Furthermore, in policing two areas of niche crimes already, RWCOs are likely to lack the time to undertake the heritage crime side of their role.

Existing documentation also suggests that the policing of heritage crime was thrust upon RWCOs, and that they did not have a choice in policing heritage crime (NPCC, 2017; NPCC 2018a); unless of course another officer has an existing interest in heritage crime and volunteers to take on the role. The allocation of jobs to officers without consultation is not uncommon within policing, which has a hierarchal structure where front-line officers are told what to do by their superiors (Van Maanen, 1973: 14). Nevertheless, with heritage crime being imposed upon RWCOs, there is no guarantee that these officers will have the enthusiasm and interest required to police heritage crime (see 2.4.3). Indeed, Kirkwood's (1994) analysis of wildlife crime officers revealed that policing such niche areas requires genuinely interested officers who have a commitment to policing environmental issues (Ibid:69). However, wildlife crime officers were being forced into the role by their superiors, taking it on regardless of expertise or interest (Ibid: 65); and this method of allocation was considered the most unsatisfactory structure for effective wildlife policing (Ibid:71).

Lastly, the affixation of heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime is likely to have incurred significant issues for wider understanding, awareness, and perception of heritage crime amongst frontline officers. The move may have created misconceptions amongst officers

more generally that heritage crime is not a crime which can be investigated by a ‘normal’ officer; and requires specialist skills to investigate. In fact, all officers possess the skills to police heritage crime, they simply must be cognisant of the heritage aspect to the case. In assuming that they do not possess the necessary skills, an officer may be referred a heritage crime case and simply pass it onto an RWCO. Consequently, this would increase the RWCOs workload, affect their response time to the heritage crime case, and potentially impact upon treatment of victims of heritage crime.

## **2.5: Leadership and heritage crime**

The policing of heritage crime in England and Wales is led by the NPCC’s (previously ACPO) Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Working Group (ACPO, 2013). The Chief Constable responsible for leading this group is referred to as the NPCC Lead for Heritage and Cultural Property Crime. Since 2013, there have been four officers who have assumed this role for varying periods. This lack of continuous group leadership may have led to operational inconsistencies. Two of these officers have been said to share a passion for heritage, and therefore policing heritage crime, in being ‘keen archaeologists’ (Kerr, 2013: 232). It is arguable that possessing an interest, knowledge of, and enthusiasm for policing heritage crime are all crucial for this NPCC position. A leader with these qualities would be well placed to express why it is important for English and Welsh forces to dedicate already stretched resources to preventing and policing the phenomenon. Moreover, every force in England and Wales has force specific local priorities, despite receiving direction from the Home Office, and the NPCC, regarding national priorities (Loveday, 2005; Doig and Levi, 2013). The well documented disjuncture between frontline officers and senior leaders (Rowe, 2006) is likely to be heightened further if the senior leader is unable to successfully convey the latter.

Indeed, it is likely that there is already disjuncture between frontline officers and senior leaders regarding heritage crime, as neither consultation with nor involvement of front-line officers appears to be apparent within the Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Working Group documentation, from 2013 and 2017 respectively. This suggests that the perspective of frontline officers regarding the inclusion of heritage crime within RWCOs operational remit has not been considered. On paper, heritage crime is within the police remit of all forces in England and Wales (NPCC, 2017). On the ground however, it is likely to be far harder to police heritage crime than the NPCC documentation suggests.



### 2.5.1 : Policing approaches to heritage crime

As mentioned previously, heritage crime is currently an unrecordable crime. Data on heritage crime is not required to be collected by the Home Office, and many instances are instead recorded under other heads (Shelbourn, 2008). Without data, methods of policing heritage crime may be limited. Data is the foundation of many modern policing methods to tackling crime, and an absence of data renders two of these methods, Problem Oriented Policing (POP) and Intelligence Led Policing (ILP), unusable; as both rely upon data (Tilley, 2011). The third method, Neighbourhood Policing (NP), seems to be the most feasible means of policing and preventing heritage crime, as this method involves embedding officers in local communities, with officers carrying out regular foot patrol and using proactive engagement methods (Quinton and Morris, 2008). Regular patrol may make these officers more conscious of the heritage sites and assets around them, as was the case with local PCSOs in *The Nighthawking Report* findings (2009a); whilst liaising with and educating the local community about heritage crime may result in the community proactively looking out for and reporting heritage crime.

With a lack of data limiting the policing approaches police forces can use, it appears that forces have settled upon crime prevention (CP) as the best means of tackling heritage crime, suggesting that academic literature on heritage crime has filtered through to the police organisation. However, the limited academic literature on using CP to combat heritage crime is not empirically based, and also recognises that using CP on heritage sites and assets is greatly flawed (Grove, 2013; Grove and Pease, 2014). CCTV, for example, cannot be affixed to heritage sites and assets, as it would damage their historical fabric (Grove and Pease, 2014). CP can also clash with important cultural and historical facets of certain heritage sites and assets. Churches, for example, have historically and culturally remained open for the public (Baker, 1999). Some of the most basic CP techniques therefore, such as locking doors (Schneider, 2015), are likely to be rejected. Despite these issues, CP is heavily focussed upon as a key means of tackling heritage crime in both of the NPCC Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Strategic Assessments (ACPO, 2013; NPCC, 2017), whilst policing literature from Historic England suggests the same approach to preventing heritage crime (Historic England, 2018).

The focus upon CP by police forces, whilst flawed, is understandable. More active policing approaches towards heritage crime face huge obstacles, such as the difficulty in members of the public recognising heritage crime: fresh crimes against dilapidated sites or

assets, or those in a ruinous state for example, mean that crime may be hard to identify. Heritage crime can also easily go unnoticed and is rarely ‘caught in the act.’ Witnesses to heritage crime are often unaware that a heritage crime is occurring, with many assuming that the perpetrators are conducting official repair work (Weir, 2014), such as perpetrators wearing hi-vis jackets to appear as workmen when stealing lead or stone from churches (Burgess, 2018). Without this facet of the investigative process, which is one of the traditional starting points for investigations (Voillot, 2006), then officers may be confused by heritage crime, or give up without attempting to investigate further. Indeed, the latter is suspected to commonly occur with heritage crime, as, as mentioned previously, all police officers also recognise ‘...that to make something into a crime requires work’ (Sumner, 1994: 218). Heritage crime not only incurs work, but incurs work outside of the traditional remit which officers feel comfortable with, such as examining heritage specific law, or spending time finding heritage experts who can provide a heritage crime impact statement (HCIS). Therefore, officers may not want to actively pursue heritage crime cases, and instead may prefer to ‘learn complacency’ (Van Maanen, 1973) by avoiding these cases entirely, or perhaps closing the cases prematurely.

## **2.6: Victims and victimology**

### **2.6.1 : Introduction**

Having considered the factors which influence the policing of heritage crime, it is also important to explore victims and victimology, in order to contextualise who the victims of heritage crime actually are (RQ4). Victimology is clearly a broad, varied and youthful discipline (Fattah, 2010), arguably meaning that it is ripe for the development and introduction of new strands of victimology, such as a victimology of heritage crime. Indeed, victimologists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have recognised that great swathes of victims have been dismissed by the CJS, ignored in victim’s policy, and neglected by existing strands of victimology (Hall, 2013).

Unconventional and contested conceptions of victimisation are being explored by a growing number of victimologists. Green victimologists for example, are looking beyond the legalistic definitions of crime and victims and expanding the victimological field by examining non-human victims of crime (Lynch and Stretesky, 2014). Broader conceptions of what makes a victim and how far victimisation extends are being further through the

victimologies of white collar and corporate crime, which have been addressed by scholars (Croall, 2007). Despite these advancements and challenges to the victimological norm however, the number of victimologists exploring these greatly marginalised victims and areas of victimology remain small, and the academic attention paid to these areas is limited (Whyte, 2007; Pemberton, 2014). Victimologists continue to focus upon many of the restrictive approaches towards and perceptions of victims and victimisation which form the foundation of the discipline (Hall, 2017). Despite our knowledge of the complexities of victims and victimhood, the former continue to impact upon the societal construction of victims. With this in mind, it is important to explore what victimology considers a victim, as well as exploring the contesting conceptions of what a victim is, alongside this.

### **2.6.2 : Who is a victim?**

A starting point in addressing RQ4 is the notion of Christie's 'ideal victim', who is '...a person or category of individuals who, when hit by crime, most readily are given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim' (Christie, 1986:18). Christie's ideal victim (notably a woman) is conceptualised as:

*(1) The victim is weak. Sick, old or very young people are particularly well suited as ideal victims. (2) The victim was carrying out a respectable project-caring for her sister. (3) She was where she could not possibly be blamed for being-in the street during the daytime. (4) The offender was big and bag. (5) The offender was unknown and in no personal relationship to her (Christie, 1986:19)*

Clearly, the characteristics of the victim play a great role in their ability to achieve victim status. The probability of victims achieving victim status through their personal characteristics is referred to as the 'hierarchy of victimisation' (Carrabine et al, 2004). At the top of this hierarchy are victims who exhibit the characteristics of the ideal victim. The elderly female victim of violent crime for example, is readily assigned victim status. On the other hand, individuals at the bottom of the hierarchy include street prostitutes, homeless people, and drug addicts, who are often denied victim status as their lifestyles (which are seen as their choice) mean they are prone to experiencing victimisation (Walklate, 2011: 183). These individuals are referred to as non-ideal victims, for they are perceived as contributing to and therefore can be blamed for their victimisation (Winter, 2002). The non-ideal victim is explored in greater detail below.

Whilst an individual may be labelled as a victim by others, thereby gaining victim status, not all victims choose to accept this status. Victimisation is a ‘...personal subjective and relative experience’ (Fattah, 2000: 63). Even if a victim is recognised as such, it does not simply mean that victims will accept their victim status. In fact, the connotations associated with victim status may make victims reluctant to accept it, because victims are traditionally portrayed as helpless and vulnerable by society (Newburn and Stanko, 1994). However, it could be suggested that rejecting this status is futile, as the victim status is determined by a social process ‘...which may conform or conflict with self-identification’ (Zeigenhagen, 1978: 17). Victims are neither in total control of the victim label, nor their victim status. This is because the victim is a product of social construction (Strobl, 2004: 297). This construction determines ‘...what forms of victimisation and what kinds of people are helped’ (Spalek, 2006: 31). Victims are socially constructed in the same way that laws, which determine what is a crime and therefore what actions result in a victim, are also socially constructed; specifically by the powerful (Miers, 1990).

### **2.6.3 : Police officers and the ideal victim**

The ideal victim is socially constructed by the powerful, and the police have a significant role in this. Indeed, victims of heritage crime may not be perceived as ideal victims, or victims of crime at all, according to police conceptions of what constitutes a crime and what constitutes a victim. Police culture plays a significant role in officer’s conceptions of who a victim is, particularly that of ‘real’ and not ‘real’ police work (Reiner, 2010). Research has shown that there is a link between officers attending a ‘good job’ (‘real’ police work) and these good jobs resulting in what officers termed ‘genuine’ victims (ideal victims), as the following officer in Charman’s (2019: 89) study illustrates: ‘The good work is the people that are genuine.’ Another officer in the same study reported craving jobs with a genuine victim, as this was seen as proper policing (Ibid, 89). Clearly therefore, if the job is perceived as ‘real’ police work, this also means that the victim will fit the concept of the ideal victim and will be viewed as a genuine individual who merits a police response. Moreover, in being ‘real’ police work which serves a genuine victim, an officer’s sense of mission is fulfilled (Reiner, 2000).

Alternately, when an officer attends to ‘rubbish’ work, the victim is usually immediately perceived by officers as non-ideal (or ingenuine). This is because the victims of ‘rubbish’ work are often perceived as contributing to their victimisation, such as when officers attend crimes where there is an overlap between victim and offender (Lauritsen et al,

1991). The victim and offender overlap refers to the victimological finding that offenders and victims are often the same individuals (Farrall and Maltby, 2003). This overlap impacts upon how police officers assess whether a victim can acquire the victim label or not, as the overlap means that officers struggle to ascertain where the victim and offender starts and ends (Duggan, 2018), resulting in non-ideal victims of crime. Officers are often reluctant to engage with non-ideal victims (Charman, 2019), and may take minimal action or ignore them, as officers feel that non-ideal victims are culpable in their own harm (Brown, 1988:216). The latter is of course problematic, as an officer's assessment of who is worthy of victim status or not affects how they treat victims, with non-ideal victims being perceived as less deserving of an officer's efforts (Charman, 2019).

The victim-offender overlap is particularly relevant for discussions surrounding the victim/s of heritage crime as the identities of the ideal victim and the ideal offender are likely to be enmeshed more than other crimes. It has been argued that much heritage crime occurs out of ignorance (Vollgraaf, 2014). Thus, the offender is simultaneously and unknowingly also a victim of heritage crime, as the damage they cause to heritage sites and assets is part of their own history and heritage (Smith, 2006). This also means that there is no ideal victim, or ideal offender when heritage crime occurs as it may be impossible to separate victim from offender in certain scenarios. Examples of this include young people who may be unaware of the importance of heritage sites and assets, playing on them and subsequently damaging them (Moody, 2020), or farmers who may unknowingly damage ancient monuments or burial mounds on their land, which often look like innocuous mounds of earth (Bagnall, 2014).

This area is important to explore further, as recognition that heritage crime occurs out of ignorance may lead to victims of heritage crime being reluctant to call the police and inform officers of heritage crime, as they may perceive the reporting of crimes where victim and offender crossover, as a waste of police time. Indeed, petty crimes occurring on heritage sites and assets committed by teenagers may be perceived very differently from thieves consciously and maliciously stealing artefacts from an asset, by the custodian of the site or asset.

#### **2.6.4: Summary**

This section has outlined the development of victimology and explored who the victim is and how the victim is socially constructed. The concept of the ideal victim and non-ideal

victim were then examined, as well as how being labelled a victim gives the victim access to a sympathetic response from the CJS and its actors. Section 7.7 below will explore all of the concepts introduced in section 7.6, but through the lens of heritage crime and non-human victims of crime, referring back to previous discussions on green victimology and rural and wildlife crime.

## **2.7 : Finding the victim of heritage crime: problematizing non-human victims of crime**

Victimology ‘...continues to be centred on notions of victimisation espoused by official sources, often through the criminal law’ (Hall, 2013:9). There is no specific law on heritage crime, and therefore, there is, legally, no direct victim of heritage crime. Heritage crime therefore, falls into an legal gap. As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, heritage crime also falls into an academic gap. The existing literature on heritage crime has failed to address and examine the victims of the phenomenon. Therefore, it is important in this section to look to other areas of victimology and victimological scholars who challenge the existing norms within the field, particularly those which examine non-human victims of green crime, and rural and wildlife crime; in order to inform our discussion of the victims of heritage crime.

### **2.7.1 : A case for the direct victim of heritage crime**

It may be assumed that direct victims of heritage crime do not, and cannot, exist. The concept of the victim in victimological literature centres around the human. Even for green victimologists, whose concept of victims and victimhood extends to flora, fauna, animals and the environment more generally, the direct victim is at the very least a *living* organism, if not human (South et al, 2013). Examples of direct victimisation in green victimology that do not involve humans include: the illegal trafficking of animals (Maher and Sollund, 2016), direct damage to ecosystems (White, 2013) such as the illegal trade in endangered flora and fauna, or illegal deforestation (Skinnider, 2013), and man-made pollution directly affecting the natural functioning of a waterway (Lynch and Stretesky, 2014: 7).

However, at ‘face value’ it is difficult to argue that there are direct victims of heritage crime in the same way that there can be direct victims of green crime. A heritage site or asset is not human. It cannot feel emotions or pain. The damage or destruction of a

heritage site or asset is very unlikely to produce the same consequences to human, animal and environmental life that the damage and destruction of the environment does. After all, heritage is not *essential* to human life, despite holding much meaning and value to people (Smith, 2006). However, if the concept of victimhood can be fluid in the area of green victimology, then it could also be argued that the concept of victimhood can be equally as fluid in relation to heritage crime. Therefore, it is argued that the equivalent of the direct victim in heritage crime cases, (as it cannot be the heritage site or asset itself), is the individual who is responsible for taking care of the damaged site or asset.<sup>1</sup>

The direct victim of heritage crime shares many similarities with ‘conventional’ victims and appears to experience many of the ill-effects of direct victimisation that Hall and Shapland (2007: 178) list, including: shock, financial loss (direct and indirect), psychological effects (fear, anger, depression), guilt, and consequential effects (such as fear of further victimisation). Churchwardens have been reported as being ‘in tears’ (Davies, 2018) after heritage crime has occurred. Friends groups (individuals who volunteer to take care of heritage sites or assets in their locally community) have described feeling as though their ‘morale [is] being kicked in the teeth’ (Wood, 2017: n.p) and ‘devastated’ (Breen, 2019: n.p) following heritage crime; whilst vandalism at a church in Kent not only resulted in psychological effects (anger) but also financial loss, as the church was forced to close due to the repeated criminal behaviour (Williams, 2017). The direct victims of heritage crime also appear to experience secondary victimisation in the same way that victims of more ‘traditional’ crimes do.

Secondary victimisation is victimisation which occurs as result of involvement by victims in the CJS (Walklate, 2007: 130), and manifests itself when agencies of the CJS mistreat victims (Jou and Heberton, 2017). In particular, victims of heritage crime experience secondary victimisation through unsympathetic reactions from the police (Wemmers, 1996:20) and poor police communication (Condry, 2010). Indeed, the existing research discussed at the beginning of this chapter undertaken by Oxford Archaeology (2009a; 2009b), Shelbourn (2014b) and Poyser and Poyser (2017) all offer examples of secondary victimisation by agencies of the CJS, primarily by the police, in response to victims of heritage crime. A victim in Poyser and Poyser’s study (2017), for example, recalled how the police had attended a heritage crime which had been reported (by a local individual) but had failed to contact the victim and inform her that the crime had occurred; a clear

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of the direct victim of heritage crime is explored in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 8.

example of poor police communication which left the victim very confused. In the same study, victims also recalled calling the police, and the police not attending the crime as a result of a lack of police interest (Poyser and Poyser, 2017).

Oxford Archaeology's (2009b) research similarly showed that officers were unsympathetic, with victims explaining how officers had made it very clear that illegal metal detecting was less important than other crimes (Ibid: 98), and that officers were uninterested in investigating the crime '[the officers said that they] Don't see that they could have found anything' (Ibid). In Shelbourn's (2014b: 192) research meanwhile, police officers expressed dismissive attitudes towards victims, and rejected the idea that the victim might know more about relevant law than the police officer. Indeed, one archaeologist gave an example of him trying to get police officers to understand that illegal metal detecting on a scheduled ancient monument was indeed a crime, but the police officers simply would not believe the archaeologist in question: 'I was told the offences, if any, were of civil trespass and so the police would take no action.'

These are all examples of secondary victimisation against the direct victim in heritage crime cases. However, it could be suggested that certain heritage crimes may result in unintentional secondary victimisation. Oxford Archaeology's (2009a; 2009b) research centred upon illegal metal detecting, which is a type of heritage crime that many officers are likely to lack knowledge around and struggle to understand the severity of. This is because, for example, a hole in the ground caused by illegal metal detecting may simply appear as innocuous as a 'normal' hole in the ground to many officers. Additionally, there is usually limited evidence of who has committed the crime (it is difficult to catch nighthawks in action) and particularly what has been taken in these cases (Addyman and Brodie, 2002). Nobody knows what undiscovered artefacts lie beneath these protected areas (such as battlefields), as digging in these places is of course illegal. Both of these factors limit how the police can respond to the crime, as was the case with the following respondent from the Oxford Archaeology report (2009b: 99): '...as we could not tell them what had been stolen and its value they felt they could go no further with this.' The same victim also explained how the officers could not interpret 'digging holes' as criminal damage, because the officer reviewing the case would not have considered the crime worthy of further police time and resources (Ibid).

Secondary victimisation may not be a deliberate act of police unwillingness to be engaged, but, rather, may genuinely stem from ignorance regarding heritage crime (the 'digging



holes' comment above, highlights this), for heritage crime is relatively unknown area of crime amongst police officers (Poyser and Poyser, 2017; Shelbourn, 2014b). Furthermore, a lack of awareness and knowledge of what police officers can do with their existing skills in response to a crime, which few are aware of, may also influence their overall treatment of victims.

### **2.7.2 : The indirect victim**

Indirect victimisation refers to the 'impact that crime has upon those not directly involved in the particular event [crime] concerned' (Davies, 2011: 193). When individuals experience feelings of victimisation after a crime has occurred, but they are not the main or intended target of the crime, these individuals are referred to as indirect victims. The remit of the indirect victim can be quite broad, indeed, according to Furedi (1997: 97) anybody who has witnessed something unpleasant or has heard of such an unpleasant experience, is a suitable candidate for the status of indirect victim. Indirect victimisation is therefore, often collective in nature (Van Dijk, 2011: 122). In addition, indirect victimisation can extend beyond communities; wider society can be victimised by criminal events for example (Moffett, 2014). A key facet of indirect victimisation is that its consequences are no less real and can be no less damaging, than the consequences which result from a more direct encounter where someone intends criminal harm (Fattah, 1991: 18).

Like green crime, rural and wildlife crime, and arts and antiques crime, heritage crime also has a plethora of indirect victims. Green victimological scholars have recognised that there are multiple indirect victims of green crime, some of which are difficult to conceptualise and identify (Williams, 1996; White, 2013). In the field of arts and antiques crime, it has also been recognised that the victims of arts and antiques crime are vast and varied, and are in fact, not just limited to the small pool of individuals within the art and antiques sector (Charney, 2009; Kila and Belcells, 2014). Similarly, heritage crime may also have numerous and varied victims.

### **The local community**

Heritage sites and assets often form essential parts of local communities. Some heritage sites or assets, such as churches, may act as a community hub, and can help build social capital (Graham et al, 2009). Even if heritage sites or assets are not used by a community,

heritage has been recognised for its intangible and tangible benefits, such as providing a sense of place (Samuel, 1994: 247; Uzzell, 1995) and being an important cornerstone of identity (Graham and Howard, 2008). Aside from these benefits, the most important factor in relation to the local community experiencing indirect victimisation as a result of heritage crime, is that communities often feel a sense of ownership over their local heritage site/s or asset/s (Logan, 2008). The sense of owning a heritage site or asset can be best expressed through the concept of ‘cognitive ownership’ (Boyd et al, 1996), a concept which can also help us to address why communities experience indirect victimisation, in the aftermath of heritage crime.

Cognitive ownership refers to the link between people and place, a link which is defined by some form of intellectual, spiritual, or conceptual meaning which a person or group attaches to a site or asset (Ibid: 125). It does not include legal or economic ownership, rather, it centres upon personal identification and emotional association with a heritage site or asset (Boyd, 2012: 5). Cognitive ownership is also an inherent cognitive quality, as opposed to being an inherent quality of the heritage site and asset, and comes from ‘knowing’ the heritage site or asset by those who associate with and construct meaning about it (Boyd et al, 1996: 125). Communities are key to the model of cognitive ownership, because ‘community access to heritage is legitimized through the recognition of interest’ (Boyd, 2012: 180). If local communities feel a strong sense of cognitive ownership over their local heritage sites and assets, then it appears with some inevitability that the community will suffer from indirect victimisation after heritage crime has occurred.

Local communities are therefore indirect victims of heritage crime. Whether the site or asset is still utilised by or considered the centre of the community, or perhaps cannot be used by the community but evidently remains important to them; the feelings of distress are the same. Whilst the local community appear to be the most ‘direct’ of the indirect victims, there also seem to be a variety of other potential indirect victims of heritage crime. Heritage crime, like green crime, might also be considered as a form of crime which affects society at large (Lindgren, 2002). This suggests that wider society and everybody within it is also an indirect victim of heritage crime.

## **Wider society**

Heritage can be perceived as belonging to everybody (Breglia, 2006; Smith and Waterton, 2012). In this sense, we are all custodians of heritage now for the benefit of future generations. However, if heritage belongs to everybody, then heritage crime can result in a loss of heritage, which is a loss to everybody: that is, wider society. Many people may not recognise or consider themselves as victims of heritage crime, not least because the concept of ‘victim’ for many people is associated with a direct event which harms or impacts upon the individual personally, but also because heritage may not feel important to them. Indeed, wider public feelings of moral indignation that a heritage site or asset (whether local or national) has been damaged (or even destroyed) are unknown, but are most likely to be short-lived in day-to-day conversation, unless there is a direct connection to the site or asset (Robinson, 2018: 200).

Nevertheless, even if victims within wider society do not recognise themselves as victims, they can still be regarded as such. Society as a whole loses the benefit of gaining knowledge from, visiting, and enjoying heritage sites and assets when heritage crime occurs, particularly if heritage crime is severe enough to damage the site or asset beyond repair or to permanently close it. For example, an English Heritage owned castle in Leicestershire was forced to close due to repeated vandalism (Mack, 2018), whilst ruins which were opened daily in Maldon were similarly forced to close, due to continued vandalism on the site (Gueye, 2017).

At a basic level, closing these sites and assets mars wider society’s enjoyment of them, but their closure could also encourage further crime, without informal guardians regularly using these sites (Wilkinson, 2019). On a wider level, the loss of whole sites and assets due to criminal behaviour, such as churches being targets of arson across England and Wales which completely destroys them (Dalling, 2019); is a loss to every member of society. The assets and sites which are destroyed can obviously not be replaced in kind, and the potential to engage with them in any capacity is lost. Heritage enriches the lives of all members of society, and therefore a loss of heritage is arguably a collective loss.

## **Future generations**

We can turn to the similarly marginalised area of green victimology to gain an understanding of just how far-reaching the victims of heritage crime can be. Williams

(1996: 21), for example, argues that the victims of green crime can be as broad as future generations, defining victims of green crime as ‘...those of past, present, or future generations...’ The impacts of green crimes are often not isolated in the way that an ‘ordinary’ crime, such as criminal damage against a bus shelter might be (the bus shelter is simply replaced), and ripple outwards, affecting swathes of individuals after the initial crime has been committed (Lynch and Stretesky, 2014); including future generations. The same can be said of heritage crime. Indirect victims of heritage crime may constitute future generations, particularly in the terms of loss of knowledge and provenance, if a heritage site or asset is damaged or destroyed beyond repair or moved from its original setting illegally (Brodie, 2002; Gruber, 2014).

Heritage crime also destroys the opportunity for future generations to understand and appreciate heritage. The impacts of criminal behaviour may diffuse over time and over a wide group of individuals, but in the case of heritage crimes, they may not distil in the same fashion. Future generations may be equally as distressed as current generations that experience heritage crime, and may be more distressed by the fact that our current generation failed to conserve, preserve and protect heritage. A recent example of the latter is the deliberate destruction of heritage sites and assets and cultural property in Syria by ISIS. The nature of this destruction has led to it being considered a war crime, as it is now considered to be undertaken with the purpose of depriving Syrian people of their identity, knowledge and history (UNESCO, 2015). Indeed, Amr al-Azm, former head of Syria’s conservation laboratories, succinctly summarised the depth and breadth of loss which occurs due to heritage and cultural property crime: ‘I always say that people without their heritage and history are not a people’ (Shaheen, 2015: n.p).

## **2.8: Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the definitions and concept of heritage crime, as well as the legal framework governing heritage crime in England and Wales. Heritage cannot truly be defined, no matter what is put forth by national and international heritage bodies, and can mean a variety of different things to different people (Smith, 2006). However, as this chapter has illustrated, heritage is also utilised for a variety of political, social and economic purposes (Graham, 2002). In the context of the UK, this has meant that regardless of how interpretations of heritage may differ from person to person, the heritage of the elite has emerged as the dominant heritage across the UK (Schofield et al, 2011).

Although there is no overarching legal framework that governs heritage crime, there are a range of laws relating to specific crimes that are applied in practice. Moreover, it was found that heritage crime struggles to move through the CJS without experiencing significant barriers (Shelbourn, 2014b). A lack of knowledge and understanding of heritage crime within the court system in England and Wales were revealed as reasons behind the overall poor treatment of heritage crime by the CPS. In addition, the values by which the police and the CPS evaluate 'normal' crimes clash with heritage values. This means that heritage crime cases often fail to progress beyond the two-stage test for public prosecutions. It is hoped that the creation of the Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Coordinator role has gone some way to remedying these issues, although there is currently no evidence to support this. Tangentially, this thesis hopes to gain some level of insight on the treatment of heritage crime in the CPS, which it is hoped will be achieved by interviewing police officers on the issues relating to policing and prosecuting heritage crime more broadly.

This chapter also explored the concept of police culture and its characteristics, as well as exploring prominent themes which consistently emerge in the literature, such as the notion of 'real' police work and the clash between senior and front-line officers. Thereafter, police perceptions, understandings and awareness of heritage crime were discussed. Although there is little empirical research on police perceptions, understandings and awareness of heritage crime, the areas of rural and wildlife crime and arts and antiques crime (both of which share a number of similarities with heritage crime) were drawn upon to inform this discussion. Current police approaches to heritage crime were also addressed. Overall, this chapter illustrated how police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime amongst the average police officer, are likely to be poor.

Another key aim of this thesis is to fill a significant gap in the existing literature relating to victims of heritage crime. As such, this chapter reviewed the field of victimology, explored definitions of the victim, and examined the ways a victim may experience victimisation in relation to heritage crime. Wider victimological concepts such as the idea of the deserving victim, which often impacts upon police officer's responses to victims of crime (Charman, 2017), were also discussed through the lens of the victim of heritage crime. Indeed, whilst officers may refute the idea that they respond differently to different kinds of victims (Cretney and Davies, 1995), it was found from the limited existing research available, that many police officers perceive heritage crime as 'victimless.' Additionally, it was clear that this perception influences the way that officers respond to

the victims of this crime; a response which is epitomised in the limited literature wherein officers explicitly state that heritage crime is victimless and not worth police time (Shelbourn 2014b; Poyser and Poyser 2017).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1: Introduction

The chapter outlines the research methods and approach utilised by this thesis. This thesis set out to examine and compare police officers' and victims' understandings and experiences of heritage crime. The research methods and approach utilised by this thesis were orientated towards the following aims, identified as those being best placed to answer the research questions identified in 1.3:

Aim 1: to examine and compare police officers', heritage practitioners' and victims' understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime in England and Wales.

Aim 2: to identify and address some of the challenges associated with policing heritage crime more broadly in order to reflect the lived experiences of victims of heritage crime.

In order to address these questions, a qualitatively driven mixed methods research design was adopted (Mason, 2006). A qualitative focussed approach was thought to be best for the purposes of this research, for the following reasons. Firstly, the researcher was interested in exploring the lived experiences of the interviewees, and such realities and narratives can be difficult to interrogate through quantitative methods (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Secondly, because heritage crime is an area of crime which has not been subject to empirical research of this extent or depth prior to this study, in-depth research of this nature was deemed to be an essential foundation of this thesis. In order to complement the use of the *main* qualitative methods, *supplementary* qualitative methods were used, through sending FOI requests to all territorial police forces in England (FOIs were not sent to Wales, explained later in this chapter) enquiring if their force had a heritage crime officer/heritage crime liaison officer.

The qualitatively driven mixed methods research design involves the *core* of the mixed methods approach being qualitative in nature, and then a *supplementary* qualitative component being undertaken alongside the core qualitative component. As the FOI requests were sent out whilst the interviews were being conducted, this type of approach is known as a: QUAL+*qual* approach, where the study is qualitatively driven with a *simultaneous* qualitative supplement (Morse, 2017). The supplementary qualitative

method elicits data which the core qualitative method cannot, resulting in a study which is strengthened and deepened more than a single method study could achieve (Morse and Cheek, 2014). Further benefits of adopting a qualitatively driven mixed methods approach, specifically *QUAL+qual*, include: the ability to develop a more rounded understanding of the phenomenon being investigated by comparing the datasets, and the ability to gain an understanding of the phenomenon from differing perspectives (Hesse-Biber et, 2015). Lastly, a key benefit of the mixed methods approach more generally, for *this* research in particular, is that it is said to be very useful for exploring areas which have received little attention thus far (ibid, 2015), such as heritage crime.

### 3.1.1 : The research process

This thesis began with an examination of police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime, through the review of existing literature and other resources which focussed upon the phenomenon. A selection of the resources used, is provided in Table One below:

<b>Table 1: Sources used for the literature review</b>
Historic England online literature on heritage crime (including documents such as ‘Guidance for Sentencers and ‘Memorandum of Understanding Prevention, Investigation, Enforcement and Prosecution of Heritage Crime’)
Historic England and Cadw webpages on heritage crime
NPCC documentation concerning heritage crime (NPCC Heritage and Cultural Property Crime National Strategic Assessment 2013 and 2017)
Legislative documentation on the specific laws pertaining to heritage crime (such as the Treasure Act 1996)
Police practice documentation concerning rural crime and wildlife crime as heritage crime is operationally affixed onto both of these crimes (principally the rural crime strategies from forces, where these were available)
10 pieces of online police practice documentation specifically concerning heritage crime from individual forces in England and Wales (only available from 10 forces)
Academic resources on heritage crime (surveying the area of criminal justice, law, and criminology, alongside the limited academic literature on heritage crime)



50 newspaper reports concerning instances of heritage crime in England and Wales (25 per country)
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The researcher understood the importance of not taking documentary sources (particularly newspapers and webpages) at face value, as the credibility and validity of such sources is not guaranteed (Wincup, 2017). Therefore, the researcher utilised Scott's (1990) typology which is designed to assess the quality of documentary sources. This typology comprises four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning, as detailed below:

***Authenticity:*** Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?

***Credibility:*** Is the evidence free from error and distortion?

***Representativeness:*** Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypicality known?

***Meaning:*** Is the evidence clear and comprehensible? (Scott, 1990: 6).

By following this framework, the researcher was able to assess documentary sources more efficiently, sorting 'good' documentary resources from 'bad', leading to high confidence that the chosen documentary resources were both highly authentic and credible.

### **Research Process Phase 1 and 2: interviewing police officers, heritage practitioners, and victims of heritage crime**

Interviewing is an intricate process, a difficult technique which makes demands upon both the interviewer and interviewee (Frey & Oishi, 1995: 2). Interviews are time-consuming, with travel to participants being costly, meaning that sample size is generally small (Adler and Clark, 2014). Although interviewing victims of heritage crime was reasonably straightforward, interviewing police officers adds another layer of complexity to an already complex technique. Indeed, policing has long been wary of academic inquiry and police officers are often suspicious and distrustful of academics (Young, 1991).\*\*

However, despite the challenges associated with interviewing, the researcher felt that the aims of her research would be best met through interviews. This is because interviewing

‘...gives us access to the observations of others...we can learn about places we have not been and could not go’ (Weiss, 1994: 1). This makes interviewing an ideal research tool for understanding the personal experiences of victims, and groups such as police officers, which the researcher may struggle to access. Moreover, there was a limited pool of police participants to choose from, because the spread of officers who hold responsibility for the policing of heritage crime across England and Wales is inconsistent (see 3.4.2 for further information on this). Utilising interviews meant that in-depth inquiry into heritage crime which produced thorough and detailed data was still possible, even with a small number of participants available. Overall, qualitative interviewing was considered the best method of interrogating heritage crime, because any quantitative alternative would have merely scraped the surface of the views and experiences of the interviewees. Qualitative interviewing permits the data to speak for itself, whereas quantitative methods do not (Seidman, 2006). Specifically, semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research. The semi-structured interview is a method of interviewing which utilises pre-prepared questions, but the sequencing of questions is participant led, permitting for flexibility and probing based on interviewee’s answers (explored further below) (Roulston and Choi, 2018:233).

This method of interviewing is similar to an everyday conversation, but with a sense of purpose, involving a particular approach and techniques (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are advantageous over the rigidity of structured interviews (Berg, 2001). The rigidity of structured interviews offers little leeway for interviewer or interviewee to ad-lib (Tewksbury and Mustaine, 2015: 119), resulting in both interviewer and interviewee squeezing themselves into ‘...a number of predetermined boxes which may or may not be appropriate’ (Jupp, 1989: 63). The semi-structured interview meanwhile, is flexible and fluid (Mason, 2017), acting as a guide for the researcher. The researcher can alter the order and wording of questions as the interview progresses (Patton, 2002), instead of adhering to a strict pathway.

This flexibility allowed the researcher to probe interviewees for greater depth of response, asking further questions of and exploring potential points of interest discussed by the interviewee (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Berg, 1989). The latter was an important reason for employing semi-structured interviews, as heritage crime had not been investigated qualitatively prior to this research, and therefore it was crucial to be able to probe interviewees for depth if the opportunity arose. Pilot interviews were not run, but draft

interview guides were commented upon by the researcher's supervisors to check for error and omission, thus ensuring consistency and reliability.

To ensure that the officers felt comfortable during the interview, every face-to-face interview was conducted in the interviewee's place of work. Due to the shift-based work schedules of many of the interviewees, it was logistically necessary, at times, to conduct a telephone interview instead of a face-to-face interview. There are some negatives associated with telephone interviews, including a potential loss of contextual data and visual cues (Gillham, 2005), but Novick (2008) argues that the negative impacts associated with telephone interviewing are poorly evidenced and are in fact minimal. Before examining the phases of the research process in greater detail, it is important to discuss the different sampling methods used to gather participants for these phases. The section below will do this.

## **3.2: Sampling**

### **3.2.1 : Sampling method: heritage practitioners and victims**

This thesis employed two types of sampling: purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. Purposeful sampling involves the researcher selecting participants which fit the needs of the study (Morse, 2000: 129). The sampling approach for heritage practitioners and victims of heritage crime was purposeful, because it permitted the researcher to access information-rich cases, in which the researcher could "...learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research..." (Patton, 1990: 169). In an academically marginalised area like heritage crime, which has not been subject to any qualitative academic enquiry into the experiences of victims (and very little with regards to heritage practitioners), purposeful sampling was arguably integral to this study. Both victims and heritage practitioners were contacted through publicly available emails.

The sampling approach for obtaining police participants was snowball sampling. Snowball sampling involves the researcher identifying accessible participants who possess characteristics that are of interest to the research study (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). After the initial participants are contacted, these participants are used to identify others, and in turn, others; until data saturation has been reached (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 233). Both of these methods are discussed in greater detail below.

### **3.2.2 : Sampling method: police officers.**

Facilitating access to police officers has long been acknowledged as a significant barrier for academics engaging in police research (Holdaway, 1983). Having conducted research with the police previously, the researcher was aware of how to approach officers in order to invite them to take part in research (such as formality in emails and use of an officer's title), but access options remained limited. Therefore, this study utilised snowball sampling to obtain interviewees. Snowball sampling is an effective method of accessing difficult to reach participants (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997), such as the police. The snowball sampling method necessitates the researcher locating potential participants which they can access (in this case through police emails that were available in the public domain), and then asking these participants to provide the information needed, so that the researcher can locate further participants themselves (Watters and Biernacki, 1989; Babbie, 2007).

In Wales, snowball sampling worked very well, as Wales only has four territorial police forces. Upon conducting an interview with one officer from a police force in Wales, the officer in question then personally emailed the three officers who were in the same role as him, in the other three forces in Wales, explaining that the researcher was hoping to interview the recipients of his email.

Before moving onto section 3.3, it is important to briefly address some of the main shortcomings of both snowball sampling and purposeful sampling. These shortcomings include the limited generalisability (Engel and Schutt, 2014) of the results from studies which utilise these sampling methods, because of the small sample size generated (Patton, 2002), as well as a high probability of bias (Morse, 1991). However, the intention of this thesis was not to collate vast amounts of data which would be generalisable to larger populations; it was to collate rich detailed data which permitted a "mirror like" view into the phenomenon being investigated (Giacomini and Cook, 2000: 480). Moreover, despite the possibility of biased responses from participants recruited using these sampling methods, the researcher still achieved a range of views on heritage crime.

Lastly, data analysis in this study was conducted through Grounded Theory, specifically Strauss and Corbin's version of this popular method of data analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Grounded Theory is a method of data analysis which creates theory and theoretical concepts that are grounded in empirical data (Merriman, 2009), and, uniquely, allows for

research analysis and data collection to occur concurrently (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). Snowball and purposeful sampling are methods which are specifically utilised for studies with a Grounded Theory methodology (Grove et al, 2015). Moreover, with a Grounded Theory methodology, small sample size and limited generalisability are considered unproblematic because ‘...the size of the sample is not a concern, and the aim is not to provide a statistical result generally applicable across a population’ (Bryant, 2017: 251).

### **3.3: Research Phase 1A: interviewing police officers**

Phase 1A of the research aimed to investigate police officers’ understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime, alongside the potential obstacles officers encountered which may impede their practice. Twelve officers were interviewed, eight in England, four in Wales. It can sometimes be difficult to access police officers to conduct research with, as police management is known to be at times reluctant to grant access to outside researchers, fearing a hidden agenda (Rowe, 2015: 176). However, the marginalised nature of heritage crime was thought to be advantageous. Heritage crime is not generally considered to be a controversial or highly political area of policing, so it was unlikely that these officer’s superiors would reject their request for permission to be interviewed.

However, as highlighted above, there is a dysfunctional relationship between police officers and academics, conceptualised as a ‘dialogue of the deaf’ (in which neither academic nor police officer are listening to each other), ultimately resulting in ‘...mutual misunderstanding that negatively impacts upon the police-academic relationship’ (Bradley and Nixon, 2009: 423). To negate this issue, existing literature suggests that researchers mix ‘positionalities.’ Researchers’ mixing of positionalities and identities is instrumental to conducting successful police research (Fuller, 1999). In one moment, the researcher may present themselves as a researcher, and in other moments they may present themselves ‘...as advocates, sometimes as challengers, sometimes as change agents’ (Marks et al, 2010: 117).

To do so, the researcher employed a number of techniques. Firstly, the researcher worked hard to build rapport with the interviewees. Opie (2004) writes that humour is a key method of building rapport with interviewees, and this is something the researcher attempted to achieve with the officers. If the interview environment was relaxed enough to result in laughter, this was a signal that the barrier of formality associated with research and academics had been broken down, meaning that the police interviewee could be

probed further, and potentially more critical questions be asked of them. Healthy cynicism and dark humour were encouraged. The use of straightforward language is recommended as a facilitating factor of research with the police (Cockbain, 2015), so jargon was rejected in favour of informal language during the interviews, which the researcher would always introduce first.

Stanko and Dawson (2016) write that another stumbling block for policing researchers is the inability to recognise the realities of front-line policing, and so the researcher aimed to show that she was indeed aware of these realities, by, for example, making reference to the current (austerity-led) policing environment. In certain cases, the interview itself became an arena for officers to air their grievances with policing more generally, to which the researcher always listened with sympathy and empathised with the officers' worldviews - a crucial component of conducting police research (Marks et al, 2010). Informality also allowed the researcher to feel more comfortable interviewing the officers, thus producing an interview which flowed more naturally.

### **3.3.1 : Research Phase 1B: interviewing heritage practitioners**

Phase 1B of this research aimed to examine the understanding and perception of heritage crime amongst heritage practitioners. It also aimed to establish the potential obstacles that practitioners may face in protecting heritage, from a legislative and policing engagement perspective. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four practitioners: two from Wales and two from England. This interviewee number is, arguably, rather small. However, once the researcher had conducted the third interview, it became apparent that data saturation was already being reached, as participant answers were becoming repetitive and no additional data was being collected (Gratton and Jones, 2004). Interviews were conducted at the heritage practitioners' places of work, in a private room, so that they felt comfortable enough to answer the questions openly and thoroughly (Green and Thorogood, 2009).

### **3.3.2 : Research Phase 2: interviewing victims of heritage crime**

Phase 2 of this research aimed to examine the experiences and perceptions of heritage crime from the victims of the phenomenon themselves. It also aimed to examine the overall police understanding and response to heritage crime when victims reported it, and how this could be improved, if necessary. 16 victims were interviewed, eight in England,

eight in Wales. There were some challenges to sourcing the victims. From previous research experience on the same topic, the researcher was aware that ‘heritage crime’ is not used in mainstream public or media discourse, when the media reports an instance of heritage crime. Therefore, although a laborious process, the researcher searched for victims by compiling a ‘bank’ of search terms. This enabled her to search for victims of heritage crime, whilst avoiding the term ‘heritage crime.’

Four interviews were conducted via telephone, due to the work schedules of the victims. Telephone interviews may disadvantage the interviewer, as it can be harder to build rapport with participants (Gillham, 2005), but this type of interview can also be advantageous for interviewing vulnerable participants (like victims of crime). A ‘faceless researcher’ (Dinham, 1993: 25) may allow interviewees to be more open about sensitive topics (Kavanaugh and Ayers, 1998; Chapple, 1999). Ultimately, there is no noticeable difference in the data from telephone and face-to-face interviews when compared (Jendrek, 1994: 209), and thus telephone interviews were utilised where necessary. The other twelve interviews were conducted in the heritage asset, or on the heritage site, in which the crime had occurred. Conducting an interview at the place of a crime could have been upsetting for the victims, but all victims were asked in advance of the interview where they wanted to meet, and all were comfortable meeting at the site or asset where the crime had occurred.

The researcher employed various strategies in order to gain the victims’ trust and to make them feel safe and comfortable talking to her. For example, regardless of how comfortable the victims already seemed, the researcher ensured she was sensitive to the emotional impact of the crime upon the interviewee (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). If an interviewee appeared visibly angry about what had happened, the researcher would show concern. The researcher would also engage in self-revelation, exposing what she felt about the incident, in turn. Self-revelation on the part of the researcher is suggested by Rubin and Rubin (2005) as an incredibly useful tool when interviewing victims, as it helps the interviewee feel protected, less exposed, and builds researcher empathy. Notably, in the case of this research, in which the police often fail to recognise the severity of heritage crime and its impact upon victims (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a); it permitted *these* victims to be confident that their feelings *were* justified.

The researcher also ensured that enough time was spent talking to the victims, so that the interviewing process was not a, ‘smash and grab’, where the research interview comprises

of ‘...getting in, getting the data, and getting out’ (Wadsworth, 1984: 218). This would result in the victims feeling used and rushed. To mitigate the latter, the researcher expressed at the beginning of the interviews that she had plenty of time to speak with the victims, which often resulted in time spent with the victims greatly exceeding the one hour initially allocated for the interview. The victims were assured that the researcher did not simply want to rush through the interview, thus generating trust between them and the researcher.

### **3.3.3 : Research Phase 3: sending Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs) to police forces in England and Wales**

Phase 3 of this research sought to ascertain if each force in England and Wales had a heritage crime officer. According to Historic England’s Policing and Crime Advisor, every police force in England has a heritage crime officer (Kerr, 2018). Yet, in the interviews the researcher was conducting with the officers in England, she was anecdotally informed that the latter was not the case. Therefore, the researcher wanted to establish if each force in England did indeed have a heritage crime officer. Without the time to interview every heritage crime officer in England, submitting FOIs would help the researcher assess the overall ‘coverage’ of heritage crime officers. As a force’s heritage crime officer is generally not public information, it was decided that submitting an FOI request, enquiring if a force had a heritage crime officer, was the best method of accessing this data. FOIs were not sent to the four police forces in Wales because the researcher had strong connections with the heritage crime officers in those forces and maintained these connections post interview.

FOI requests have been underused by researchers concerned with criminology, legal studies, and criminal justice, but present many opportunities for researchers interested in these areas whose ‘...agencies of study are often rich in data but reluctant to publicise’ (Brown, 2009:88). Whilst FOIs can be an incredibly valuable research tool, as they permit the researcher to access data that would otherwise be unavailable to them (Savage and Hyde, 2012), there are potential difficulties associated with their use. The requesting process, for example, is somewhat fragile (Worthy et al, 2016). There are often an inadequate number of appropriately trained staff available to respond to FOIs (Roberts, 2012), and there is also the possibility of resistance to FOI requests from the agencies responding to them (Bauhr and Grimes, 2014). Indeed, in 2012, ACPO, described how FOIs were time consuming for police forces, were constantly increasing, were used



improperly, and were a drain on diminishing financial resources (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

Despite these potential difficulties, FOI requests were still considered the most effective method of establishing whether a force had a heritage crime officer. FOI requests were sent to 38 territorial police forces in England (the 39<sup>th</sup>, the Metropolitan Police, were exempt, because of the AAU). Once the requests were sent to the respective police forces, they had 20 days to respond. However, researchers may experience a delay in response, and so FOI's are not recommended for use when working to a tight deadline (Lee, 2005). To mitigate this, the researcher ensured that the research timeframe allowed for the possibility of responses taking longer than 20 days. The quickest response from sending the initial request to receiving an answer to the request, was 24 hours. The lengthiest was one year. A response rate of 36 was achieved.

### **3.4: Analysis**

#### **3.4.1 : Analysing the interview data**

Interviews are not only time-consuming to conduct; they are time-consuming to transcribe and analyse (Dantzker and Hunter, 2012). This is particularly the case when (as in this research study) open-ended responses are encouraged, thus producing a vast amount of information for the researcher to code and analyse (Maxwell, 2005). Therefore, sufficient time was allocated for the researcher to transcribe, and then analyse the interviews in depth. After transcription was completed, the researcher used grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to analyse the interviews. One of the purposes of this research was to generate theory directly from the data collected, and grounded theory is an analytical method designed for achieving the latter (Glaser and Strauss, 2017).

Interview analysis began with coding. Coding was a 3-step process, such is the grounded theory method of coding data. Firstly, interview data was subject to open-coding where data is broken down, compared, conceptualised, and then grouped together to form categories and subcategories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 12). The next step was for the interview data to be subject to axial coding. Axial coding deepens the analysis already conducted, relating categories to subcategories, specifying the properties and dimensions of a category and bringing the data back together which has been fractured during open-coding (Charmaz, 2006). The last step in grounded theory analysis, and for the collected

interview data, was selective coding. Selective coding connects the categories formed from the axial coding model, centring the categories around a core category, building a story from the analysed data (Creswell, 1998) and creating data-led theoretical propositions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Coding was a similarly time-consuming process, heightened by the large amount of data gathered from the interviews. These all had to be coded and themed systematically. The researcher coded all the data manually which, although a laborious process, has some tangible advantages. Manual coding permitted the researcher to engage more closely with the gathered data than coding electronically allows (Blair, 2015). Nevertheless, after manual coding had been completed (and the researcher felt confident that she knew her data comprehensively) a software package was used to code the collected data (NVivo). By doing so, the researcher adhered to the recommendations that both manual and electronic coding are utilised in order to scrutinise and interrogate data more thoroughly (Welsh, 2002). Lastly, the researcher did not experience any challenges in employing the Grounded Theory approach to data analysis, as she had used the method in previous qualitative research.

### **3.4.2: Analysing the Freedom of Information requests (FOI)**

Literature available on how to analyse FOI requests which produce qualitative data is scarce (Lee, 2005; Walby and Larsen, 2012; Spiller and Whiting, 2020) and a particular method of data analysis is not specified nor recommended (Walby and Luscombe, 2020). It was up to the researcher to decide which method of qualitative analysis to use, and thematic analysis was settled upon.

Thematic analysis offers a means of ‘...systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset’ (Braun and Clarke, 2012: 57). It is a flexible method of analysis (meaning it can be used for numerous forms of qualitative research), and inductive (themes induced from the data are not predetermined), meaning that the researcher may encounter emergent issues which they had not anticipated (Ezzy, 2002). The latter applied to the thematic analysis of the FOI requests, and was perceived as a positive by the researcher. Although an arguably rudimentary method of analysis, it was believed to be the best option for analysing the FOI data, because there is overlap between thematic analysis and grounded theory (Pidgeon, 1996); meaning that the researcher already had the necessary skills to utilise this

method of analysis.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase approach to conducting thematic analysis was employed as guidance for undertaking the analysis. After counting and sorting the responses from the 36 forces which had responded, the researcher repeatedly familiarised herself with the data, looking for initial similarities in the responses. In this instance, similarities in phrasing were important to identify. Many of the responses were phrased almost identically, but despite this, one force would respond 'Yes' to having a heritage crime officer, whilst the other would respond 'No'. Individual forces appeared to be making assumptions regarding the heritage crime officer role, such as assuming that all officers in rural and wildlife crime teams were also heritage crime officers. Although heritage crime has been affixed onto the rural and wildlife crime policing remit (NPCC, 2018a), this does not automatically make all rural and wildlife crime officers heritage crime officers, as mentioned in section 2.4.3. Therefore, it was decided that if a force's FOI response did not identify one designated heritage crime officer, or failed to state that all of the force's rural and wildlife crime officers were also heritage crime officers, then this force could not be counted as having a heritage crime officer. This was an important distinction to make, in order to determine if the NPCC's (2017) assertion that each force had a heritage crime officer was indeed accurate on the frontline.

The existing data was then manually coded and themed, in order to find patterns in the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 82), much like grounded theory. Due to the small amount of data, both processes were completed swiftly after every response had been received. The existing themes were then briefly reviewed, in order to ensure that they captured the overall tone and the most relevant parts of the data; and the themes were then defined and named (Braun and Clarke, 2012). The last stage in this six-phase approach was writing up, a process which blurs into the analysis, and involves '...compiling, developing, and editing existing analytic writing' (Braun et al, 2016: 204).

### **3.5: General ethical considerations**

Before a discussion of the ethical considerations in relation to this research study, it is important to note that this project was approved in accordance with Nottingham Trent University's Research Ethics Policy and complies with the University's Code of Practice for Research.

### **3.5.1 : Confidentiality**

Affording confidentiality to participants who engage in the research process is crucial (Davies et al, 2011). Permission was granted from all interviewees well in advance of the interview taking place. The interviews were recorded using a dictaphone. Recordings were then uploaded to a secure university computer and destroyed upon being transcribed by the researcher. Before the interviews took place, participants were ensured that their contributions would be confidential and anonymised, and their identities kept private. Identities of the participants were protected during data analysis through identifiers which only the researcher would recognise, such as *HP4 (heritage practitioner) or Victim 8*. Care was taken to ensure that any interview comments which might identify the interviewees, such as a mention of their force area, heritage asset/site, or specific heritage crime case which could be traced back to the interviewee (through a newspaper report for example); were removed. Additionally, as there are a small number of police officers responsible for the policing of heritage crime across England and Wales (see Chapter 5 for elaboration on this), the ranks of these officers have not been disclosed, because doing so may identify the interviewees. Instead, every police interviewee, regardless of rank, is referred to as *Officer 1*, for example.

### **3.5.2 : Informed consent**

Participants in any research study must know that their participation in the study is voluntary, and that they understand the study they are partaking in (Ruane, 2016). Participants should also be made aware that they can withdraw their consent to participate at any stage during the study (Hammersley, 2018). To meet these requirements, voluntary consent was obtained from all participants (before the interview began) in writing, via email or paper consent form. After this, all participants were informed, in clear terms, about the purpose of the research, why it was being undertaken, and how the findings would be disseminated (Israel, 2015). The participants were also told during the interview that they did not have to answer every question put to them, and that they could withdraw from the interview at any point during it.

### **3.5.3 : Pressure to participate**

When conducting research with police officers, there is a danger that officers will be pressured into partaking in the research by their superiors, owing to the hierarchal nature

of policing (Cockbain, 2015). However, it was predicted that there would be no issues with officers being pressurised to partake in this research. Officers were unlikely to be pressured to participate by their superiors, chiefly because very few officers have *heard* of heritage crime (Poyser and Poyser, 2017)! Moreover, as mentioned in section 2.3, heritage crime is a relatively uncontroversial area of policing. Brown (2015:39) writes that one of the key factors to success in conducting police research is ‘...the interest of the subject being researched by senior management.’ By all accounts, heritage crime is of very little interest to senior management; the area remains relatively unknown at all levels of policing due to its lack of proliferation throughout police forces (Kerr, 2013). As such, the *lack* of interest of senior management in heritage crime is likely to have worked in this research study’s favour: there would be no pressure for officers to participate from superiors because the area is unknown and also, a reasonably innocuous policing area. Indeed, frank discussion of heritage crime in an interview setting was unlikely to produce results which could cause reputational harm for the police.

### **3.7: Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the research aims and objectives of this thesis. It then described the various research processes undertaken for this study, including desk-based research, semi-structured interviews with police officers, heritage practitioners, and victims of heritage crime, and sending FOI requests to police forces across England. The methodological approaches utilised within this research have been detailed, and the advantages and disadvantages of each methodological approach, summarised. In particular, issues associated with interviewing police officers and victims of crime were discussed in-depth. The analytical techniques utilised in this study were then outlined, and lastly, three key ethical considerations were addressed.

This thesis will now explore the findings of the research which was conducted. These findings are presented in three chapters, Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 4 explores the police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime from the perspectives of police officers and heritage practitioners. Chapter 5 collates and analyses the FOI requests which were sent to all police forces in England. Lastly, Chapter 6 examines the understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime from the perspectives of the victims of heritage crime.

# CHAPTER 4: POLICE FINDINGS

## 4.1 : Introduction

This chapter explores police officers' and heritage practitioners' understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime in England and Wales. The first section examines the reasons for poor police understanding and perception of heritage crime. It analyses the barriers to police engagement with heritage crime and considers whether certain elements of police culture can contribute to these barriers, highlighting three factors which contribute to an overall poor understanding, awareness and perception of heritage crime amongst officers in England and Wales. The chapter then considers who the victims of heritage crime are, and what the impacts of heritage crime may be, comparing the perspectives of the officers and heritage practitioners. It also situates two impacts of heritage crime within a wider criminological framework. Thereafter, this chapter establishes heritage crime within some of the wider issues facing modern day policing. Then, the practical difficulties associated with the reporting and recording of heritage crime, guiding heritage crime through the CJS, and engaging in partnership working concerning heritage crime; are all addressed. Lastly, this chapter considers the obstacles which may inhibit police understanding and perception of heritage crime, for which the officers suggested solutions.

For these two phases of the research, twelve interviews were conducted with nine Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers (from herein referred to as RWCO/s) and three officers who were not RWCOs; but held the responsibility for heritage crime in their policing careers. The majority of RWCOs interviewed were also the heritage crime single point of contact (herein referred to as SPOC) within their force. A SPOC is not an additional job role, as when one becomes the point of contact for a specific area of policing, this is simply tacked onto their existing position. The other RWCOs who were not the heritage crime SPOC within their force had been made responsible for the policing of heritage crime by virtue of being an RWCO, as heritage crime has been operationally attached, within policing, to rural crime and wildlife crime (NPCC, 2017; NPCC, 2018b). The other four interviewees included practitioners from the heritage sector: two practitioners from Historic England and two from Cadw.

## **4.2: Alliance to Reduce Crime Against Heritage (ARCH)**

Chapter 2 discussed the Historic England group the Alliance to Reduce Crime Against Heritage (ARCH), a voluntary cross collaborative group which aimed to engage a variety of public and private stakeholders in order to address the issue of heritage crime (Historic England, 2019e). Officers were asked if they had ever heard of ARCH, and, if they were aware of the group, whether the group had been useful in the policing of heritage crime. It was found that, out of the 12 officers interviewed, only four had heard of ARCH. Indeed, one officer had heard of ARCH upon reading a copy of the researcher's MA dissertation: *"Only when I read it in your dissertation, and that's me being brutally honest. I searched ARCH, and then I ended up with some nice images of brickwork, stuff like that"* (Officer 4). Of these four officers, none felt that ARCH had been useful in tackling heritage crime or reducing heritage crime. Upon asking two of the RWCOs if ARCH had worked, both stressed that it had failed in their force areas: *"Not here"* (Officer 2), and that ultimately *"It worked for about a year and then...it just died a death"* (Officer 7).

### **4.2.1: Police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime**

Having established that many police officers within one police force struggled to understand heritage crime in previous research upon the topic (Poyser and Poyser, 2017), it was considered important to explore whether similar limited understandings and poor perceptions of heritage crime were replicated in forces across England and Wales. This, it was hoped, would provide a broader picture of police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime in England and Wales. The officers interviewed were asked if they thought that police officers more generally understood heritage crime and how these officers might perceive it. Officers were unanimous in their assertion that police officers outside of the RWCOs areas of policing were extremely unlikely to understand heritage crime: *"...outside of our bubble, no, I'm not convinced there's a good knowledge..."* (Officer 3), unless an officer had an existing interest in the area. Furthermore, every officer also agreed that heritage crime would be perceived apathetically or negatively by officers who were not RWCOs. This was because heritage crime was not something that officers dealt with regularly, an area of crime which was not an officer's:

*“...bread and butter, [describing officers more generally] we don’t go to heritage crime everyday. We can mop up theft from stores, and a fight on a Saturday night in town, but when someone says “Hmm, there’s a heritage crime” they’re immediately “Well what even is that, what?” [Laughs]” (Officer 5).*

Lastly, one officer reasoned that all police forces across England and Wales shared the same limited understanding and poor perception of heritage crime, because: *“...as a police service, I don’t think we know what it [heritage crime] is” (Officer 4).* Likewise, the heritage practitioners all agreed that outside of RWCOs (or the rare officer they encountered that was interested in the area) police officers across England and Wales unquestionably had a poor understanding of heritage crime *“...the average PC-not a clue” (HP2),* and, suspected one heritage practitioner, perceived heritage crime as an undesirable area of policing which they probably wanted to pass onto other colleagues: *“...and I suspect that it’s a bit of a hot potato and they’re busy trying to pass it on to one of their colleagues.” (HP1).*

Having acknowledged that overall police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime were poor, several reasons for this were identified by the interviewed officers. These are discussed thematically, under the following heads: i) Fear of the unknown; ii) Downgrading the severity of heritage crime; and iii) Lack of training and knowledge.

### **i) Fear of the unknown**

Fear of the unknown was recognised by all officers as a considerable barrier to positive police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime. Firstly, two RWCOs explained how encountering heritage crime was likely to worry police officers, as a general officer’s perception of heritage crime was that it was unlike other crimes that were encountered routinely, where they would: *“...be in their comfort zone...” (Officer 2).* With heritage crime, officers did not *“...have that familiarity...” (Officer 4)* that they did with crimes which they dealt with on a regular basis. Indeed, one officer said with some certainty that if heritage crime was allocated to an officer who was not an RWCO, or part of a rural crime team, it would undoubtedly cause panic:

*“If that [theft of a heritage object] got allocated to a general police officer, if you didn’t have a force with a rural crime team and there’s about thirty odd that don’t have them...so if you actually said to a police officer “We’ve got a heritage crime” they would absolutely panic” (Officer 10).*



Fear had the potential to overwhelm officers with no knowledge of heritage crime. Consequently, this could result in them perceiving heritage crime as far more complex than other crimes. In the following example for instance, it was only when Officer 12 had simplified a heritage crime that had occurred to his colleague, explaining how the heritage crime was simply a theft, that the colleague then understood the actions they had to take:

*“They get scared. I had one, someone had broken in and stolen a £750,000 Georgian table from a house. And they [the colleague] were in a state of “I don’t know what to do “ der der der [mimicking the officer panicking] What do I do bluhbluhbluh and I said “Well, if they’d broken into the house and stolen an Ikea table, what would you do?” “Well I’d do this” “Well do that” (Officer 12).*

It also transpired that the panic which many officers felt, could have significant implications upon taking heritage crime cases through the CJS. Simple heritage crime cases that could be taken through the CJS with relative ease, were impeded by this sense of panic. Such was the case with the following incident one RWCO described, in which an officer who was panicking over a heritage crime case almost allowed the standard time frame permitted to investigate any crime to expire:

*“And it did sit on this officer’s workload for a long long time, till virtually it were at the point where it were almost out of time-because you only have six months to do things. I think we did deal with that under the Treasure Act 1996, but of course it’s time restrained, so if we don’t get in there within six months we lose it, and I think we were within a couple of days. But that’s it...cops just panic” (Officer 7).*

A second complication which occurred from officers panicking was highlighted by another officer, who recalled how he had found himself re-opening heritage crime cases which had been closed unnecessarily, a problem he attributed to officers panicking:

*“But sometimes I do find myself re-opening cases that have been closed because people don’t think...they haven’t necessarily applied it...they’ve panicked, they don’t necessarily understand it, there’s a lack of knowledge.” (Officer 1).*

Ultimately, fear marred non-RWCOs perceptions of heritage crime, which would then have ramifications for their understanding of the area, namely, a clear reluctance from non-RWCOs to engage in a crime that seemed exceedingly complex in the immediacy. This led officers more generally, to, in some cases, downgrade the severity and validity of heritage crime as a crime.

## ii) Downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime

A keen awareness was shared amongst the officers that there was little immediate incentive or motivation to police heritage crime for most police officers. Consequentially, the majority of RWCOs felt that officers had a tendency to either dismiss heritage crime entirely, or to compare it to the other crimes they were dealing with, thus mentally downgrading heritage crimes when it did occur:

*“...they’re instantly comparing it, and they’re downgrading it mentally as well. [The officer is thinking] It doesn’t matter, its somewhere down here.” (Officer 1).*

Officer 7 stated how he had once had to demand that a ‘regular’ police officer attend and investigate a report of illegal metal detecting ,which had come through over the radio, because the officer in question had immediately dismissed illegal metal detecting as an insignificant and unimportant crime:

*“And you get people metal detecting, and you can hear people on radio saying “Oh well it’s just metal detecting, I’ll go later”. “No, you’ll go now, because that is a scheduled monument site, you need to go because damage to it is criminal. “Oh right, I’ll do it now.” Then of course you read the report later and it says area searched, negative.” (Officer 7).*

Lastly, some officers suggested that because heritage crime did not ascribe to the high-octane, rapid response form of policing associated with ‘real’ police work, this meant that officers were unlikely to enthusiastically engage in the area. Heritage crime did not have a place in their conceptions of policing:

*“...it’s got this perception within policing as, and I speak of wildlife and heritage crime here, as not being sexy-young cops don’t grow up thinking I wanna be a wildlife or a heritage crime officer-but here we are!” (Officer 9).*

## iii) Lack of training and knowledge on heritage crime

All officers interviewed agreed that knowledge of heritage crime within their forces was severely limited. The following two officers stressed how, of the thousands of police officers within their force, only a handful would know what heritage crime was:

*“And I bet, out of them 1600, I could count on both hands how many know what a heritage crime is, because it’s not taught to us” (Officer 7) when asked about the crime: “...oh, what’ve we got, about 4000 officers, you ask them what heritage crime is and [they’ll reply] “Oh, I dunno”. (Officer 8). Moreover, speaking to your ‘average copper’ would reveal an individual who had little to no awareness of the area: “...and I hate to say it, but if you ring up your average copper and start talking about cultural heritage crime...no” (Officer 12).*

Lack of training in the area was felt to be a sizeable contributor to the limited knowledge of heritage crime amongst police officers more generally, but the officers also recognised that delivering heritage crime training was virtually impossible. This was because heritage crime, much like the marginalised areas of rural and wildlife crime, was simply not high up enough on the policing agenda: *“What we’ve got here, is that with both wildlife and heritage crime, is that it’s not a top priority for the police.” (Officer 8). Basic training for officers would not cover niche areas of crime, such as heritage crime, as the following officer highlights, and is otherwise very linear in its approach to crime and criminality:*

*“...a bobby wouldn’t have clue about like that. They genuinely wouldn’t know...it’s just a lack of knowledge because when we do our initial police training its very much focused on the serious, acquisitive, black and white; that’s burglary, that’s theft, it’s an overview.” (Officer 5).*

Presenting crime in a ‘black and white’ manner is important when educating vast swathes of officers, but arguably inhibits their ability to recognise the nuances of niche crimes they may encounter, such as heritage crime. For example, the following interviewee described how it was only when a theft from a museum in his force area had occurred (a building which evidently holds heritage objects) that his colleagues perceived what had occurred as a heritage crime:

*“...[the crime] flagged up in people’s [officers] minds as a heritage type crime. But solely because of what it was and where it was taken from, stolen from a museum” (Officer 6).*

Theft from a museum may not always be a heritage crime (theft from a museum gift shop being one example), but *theft* is a crime which every police officer will understand. Contrastingly, his colleagues struggled to immediately understand that illegal metal detecting, which is always a crime, was not just, simply, individuals searching for metal in

the ground: “...[his colleagues would think] it’s just people with metal detectors looking for bits of metal in the field, so what’s actually that bad about that?” (Officer 6).

Most officers are likely to not have been exposed to illegal metal detecting as frequently as they have been to theft. Familiarity with the crime is therefore, clearly important. In one force, some officers and internal staff had received a good level of training from the following RCWO. The officer in question emphasised however, that retention rates within policing (both frontline and internal) were low, thus meaning that any training had limited effectiveness in the long term: “There’s been an element of training, but turn around within these departments, can be-I’m not gonna say high-you get obvious turnaround.” (Officer 1).

#### **4.2.2 : Summary**

Section 4.2 has explored the three key issues that emerged in this research which contribute significantly towards poor police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime. It has also highlighted how ARCH is not very well-known by police forces, and for the two forces which did know of ARCH, revealed that there was a clear lack of interest and motivation to engage in a voluntary scheme for a crime which is not a force priority. The next section, 4.3, will explore the victims and impact of heritage crime.

### **4.3: The victims and impact of heritage crime**

Interviewees were asked who they thought the victims of heritage crime were and what the impact of heritage crime was. These questions were asked in order to determine if the interviewees, particularly the officers, were aware of both the far-reaching impact of the crime as well the multitude of victims that heritage crime can encompass.

#### **4.3.1 : Victims**

All interviewees acknowledged that the victims of heritage crime were broad and not a fixed category of person/s. The officers also highlighted that although heritage crime was considered by the general public and their colleagues alike to be “...very much a victimless crime...” (Officer 4) the officers agreed that this was certainly not the case. For all interviewees, the victims of heritage crime rippled outwards, much like: “...throwing a stone into a pond...” (HP2).

The interviewees identified the following victims of heritage crime:

i. The individual

Heritage crime could harm individuals, such as the people who owned heritage assets and sites “*There’s the land owner, or the occupier*” (HP1) or those who looked after them “*...you’ve obviously got the person where the damage has been caused, such as your church warden...*” (Officer 4).

ii. Local community

The local community was cited by every interviewee as a victim of heritage crime. For example, four officers proffered examples of churches which had been subject to lead theft. These churches were an integral part of the local community, and thus, when heritage crime occurred, swathes of local people were affected: “*...it’s not just the church that’s damaged, it’s everybody that’s got their wedding there, it’s part of the community, it’s part of the rural life of people, it can be devastating...*” (Officer 3). It was the strong sense of ownership that the community felt that they had over the local church which meant that heritage crime felt like a *personal* attack, leaving the community outraged: “*...a church is considered a centre of community spirit...So, if somebody breaks into a church and trashes cultural items or takes valuable assets, there is far more outrage-far far more outrage*” (Officer 8), and violated: “*But also there’s the effect on people, you know, the violation they feel about a building that they love.*” (HP3).

iii. Wider society

The concept of victimhood was also expanded to wider society. Society was considered a victim of heritage crime by every interviewee: “*I think everyone’s the victim*” (Officer 11). Interviewees felt that society was a victim because of the permanent loss which could occur as a result of heritage crime: “*Things like that, once it’s gone it’s gone forever, isn’t it? So I think the impact is on society really* (Officer 10).” In particular, it was the loss of historical knowledge associated with heritage crime which meant that society was a victim, according to the following heritage practitioner:

*“So we do feel that it’s sort of society as one of the victims...they’ve [the criminal] damaged something, or removed something, or done*

*something [meaning] that we will now no longer know, be able to know through archaeology [heritage]....” (HP2)*

#### iv. Future generations

Lastly, future generations were also considered to be victims of heritage crime, for these generations would never be able to enjoy, experience and understand the heritage sites and assets that the current generation does: “...if something disappears...[people will miss out on] not being able, in the future, to interpret, understand, investigate. .” (Officer 1).

#### **4.3.2 : Impact**

All interviewees also acknowledged that the impact of heritage crime was broad, varied, and not always immediately apparent to regular officers. Heritage crime had a ‘...*shock and awe impact on the local community*’ (Officer 8). Unlike many other forms of crime, a significant impact of heritage crime was the permanent loss associated with it. Once heritage sites or assets were damaged beyond repair or destroyed, they were impossible to recover: “I mean one of the key issues we have to get across is that damage to a scheduled monument won’t grow back, you know?” (HP1). An officer who was an amateur archaeologist in his spare time reiterated the heritage practitioners’ comments, adding that:

*“So any crime which impacts a heritage site, that artefact, if lost through theft, or destroyed through damage, whether accidental or deliberate, is irreplaceable” (Officer 11).*

Interestingly, one officer argued that another impact of heritage crime was the arresting contrast between the heritage site itself, and the ‘modern crime’ that had happened to it:

*“...we need to understand that there is without doubt a greater impact on the community when such a crime [heritage] happens.. You want to see a bit of history and enjoy it for what it is, not see a modern crime.. ” (Officer 8).*

Indeed, two impacts of heritage crime identified by the interviewees can be applied to a wider criminological framework. These were Broken Windows Theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) and fear of crime, and are explored further in section 7.5.1.

## **I). Crime attracting crime**

Six interviewees also recognised that when a heritage site or asset was subject to crime, this would increase the probability of attracting more crime to it. This was because the condition of the heritage site or asset after the crime had taken place would indicate that it was uncared for (which was rarely the case), and thus further crime could be committed without fear of consequence:

*“...but there’s also this thing where people see other people doing it, and I always think that people treat places the way they find them. And, if they’re kind of looking tidy and presentable, people will treat it that way. But when they see other people misbehaving, it kind of encourages them to do it” (HP1).*

The impact of an initial heritage crime therefore, could snowball: *“...so that sort of lead theft on a church that’s in the middle of this community which leads to graffiti, which leads to that village green being an undesirable place” (HP4).*

Officer 1 also highlighted how the open nature of many heritage sites could attract crime to the site. However, the legislation used to ensure the protection and preservation of these sites was, naturally, so strictly adhered to, and so incredibly restrictive, that even the most basic of crime prevention measures could not be used on these sites; such as increasing footfall. Thus, protective mechanisms could inadvertently contribute towards attracting criminality to the site:

*“...if you’ve got a site, and I know that an increased footfall on that site would reduce the crime, but to do that, you might need to put something on the site to encourage people to visit, but then you can’t do that because it’s not allowed. So you can’t have an ice cream van rock up...whatever it might be...you can’t park that there, you can’t drive that there, you can’t stick that fence up...” (Officer 1).*

## **II). Fear of crime**

Fear of crime was also identified as an impact of heritage crime. Communities which very rarely attracted crime would suddenly suffer heritage crime, resulting in their overall fear of crime increasing as a direct result of what had happened, as this officer explained: *“And I’ve seen this before; if they see damage at a heritage asset, they become fearful of where they live...it cuts deeper.” (Officer 1).* Furthermore, due to the sense of ownership that many people felt over their local heritage sites, there could be a negative impact upon the

communities' perception of policing when officers failed to find out who was responsible for the crimes committed (because of lack of CCTV at heritage sites, for example): *"The knock on effect on confidence in policing when we probably don't find out who is responsible..."* (Officer 5).

Lastly, it is also important to mention that the impacts of heritage crime were not always fully grasped. Whilst the officers in *this* research thoroughly understood the impact of heritage crime quite clearly, heritage practitioners cited issues with getting police officers more generally to understand that heritage crime was actually a crime, let alone the impact of heritage crime: *"I mean, we do struggle to get the police to understand the direct [impact] as well. That digging on a scheduled monument is a criminal offence"* (HP4). This heritage practitioner's comments correlated with a comment from Officer 9, who explained that although *he* understood the impact that heritage crime would have upon a variety of parties, within policing, he was conscious of a wider *"...imbalance between the public perception of it and the police perception of it. For the police, it's another crime..."* (Officer 9). Consequently, it was suggested that a regular officer was likely to respond to heritage crime without realising the severity and impact of the crime.

#### **4.4: Framing heritage crime within wider policing issues**

The current austerity-led policing environment means that it is necessary to contextualise any critique of the present police response to heritage crime within the constraints of austerity. Of course, it is important to remember that regardless of austerity measures across police forces in England and Wales, fighting heritage crime would inevitably remain an infinitesimal part of police work. As mentioned in section 2.4.4, this is because fighting crime comprises a very small portion of a police officer's role (Charman, 2015), only accounting for a small percentage of police officer's daily work duties (Bent and Rossum, 1976; Holdaway, 1984).

Therefore, fighting heritage crime is a small area in an area of police that is already very small: crime fighting. As such, few officers are likely to be aware of the existence of heritage crime as a type of crime (unless they are allocated responsibility for it), regardless of the wider issues facing modern day policing. As such, it must be recognised that any impact policing in austerity may have upon police understandings, perceptions, awareness and overall responses to heritage crime, must be couched within the fact that tackling heritage crime is an infinitesimal part of an already small area within police work. The



following themes concerning wider issues in policing emerged from the interviews with the officers. These are explored below.

#### **4.4.1 : Policing in austerity**

Through wider discussion about resourcing issues in policing, all officers expressed concern regarding the funding situation across forces in England and Wales. Put simply, austerity was “...*definitely something you need to bear in mind*” (Officer 3), a factor which had become entwined with everyday policing. One officer described how his force could barely afford his patrol car and had to enlist outside parties to sponsor the vehicle. This officer went on to explain how he had been told upon starting his role that “... *I was told anything you want, whatever it is, vehicles, anything, let us know, and we'll get it. They've got nothing.*” (Officer 6). Another officer detailed how the plan, amongst a group of forces, was to attempt to tackle heritage crime “...*without any money or funding, and just people who've been given the titles, either by hook or by crook...*” (Officer 9). Clearly, the resourcing issues within policing were sufficiently acute that even a multi-force collaboration to combat heritage crime was still operating on a shoestring. The heritage practitioners were also acutely aware of the resourcing difficulties assailing police forces across England and Wales, as the practitioners were familiar with resourcing problems themselves:

*“I've been to meetings with members of the senior police forces in X and they've all been talking about budget pressures, and they're being asked to deliver more with less-which is very familiar.” (HP1).*

Whilst the heritage practitioners were very sympathetic, one practitioner did also recognise that despite the clear resourcing difficulties police forces were experiencing, this should not dissuade practitioners from stressing the importance of heritage crime to the police:

*“We have to be realistic and pragmatic about the world that we live in and the resources...at the same time, there's no harm in making the legitimate case that this is a really important issue” (HP4).*

Officers were asked if resourcing issues had impacted upon the policing of heritage crime. Out of the 12 officers interviewed, five said that resourcing issues had not impacted upon the policing of heritage crime. However, they couched this statement within the fact that

they had extremely limited resources already and were thus used to policing crime with an insufficient budget:

*“I don’t think it [resourcing] has [impacted upon policing heritage crime]. We don’t have the resources. We’ve had limited resources, limited commitments...so the reduction in resourcing and funding for front-line policing yeah, hasn’t overly caused us that many problems. Cause we’re already wallowing in that difficult mire of...lack of support, lack of resource, lack of knowledge and education, you know. We’re already there. So no...we’re still struggling” (Officer 8).*

Resourcing issues had become so commonplace within policing, that *not* having the resources to police crime was the norm for these officers, a facet of modern day policing these officers simply adapted to: *“I just think it’s one of those passive things. It’s made no difference anyway, cause we fit it in. If a heritage crime comes in, we will fit it in at some point. We can’t do anything else” (Officer 7).* To add to the aforementioned issues caused by austerity, one RWCO suggested that austerity would have a direct impact upon an officer’s capacity to care about heritage crime, because officers across the force were stuck in a mechanical process of going from one crime to the next, such were their enormous workloads:

*“Anybody-out of our 3000 police officers in X and X, and I’m speaking really openly here-nobody really gives a shit. You’ve got a lot of response officers who are going to these jobs and they’re putting a sticking plaster on stuff. And response cops, by virtue of what they do, they’ll go to a job, deal with a job, get rid, they’ll go to the next job, deal with the job, get rid” (Officer 5).*

Budgetary constraints also created a lack of continuity and consistency surrounding which officers held responsibility for heritage crime. Forces could not afford an officer solely dedicated to policing heritage crime, so responsibility for heritage crime bounced between officers, or appeared to be given to officers who were close to retirement as a ‘stop-gap’ to address the heritage crime problem; without dedicating extra funding to it. Three officers described how officers close to retirement had taken upon the policing of heritage crime, including Officer 7: *“We [as a force] said yeah we’ll sign up to it [policing heritage crime]. Then the Inspector that were dealing with it retired! (Officer 7).* The responsibility for heritage crime was then suddenly passed to Officer 7, and this to the officer that heritage crime was of little importance to his force.

However, the allocation of heritage crime to retiring officers, although being indicative of a lack of funds, could be positive, as was HP4's experience. HP4 recalled how an Inspector who was close to retiring had been delegated a heritage crime case because his force appeared to be struggling to find tasks for him until his imminent retirement.

Working with this Inspector resulted in extra resources:

*"...He was absolutely brilliant-because there was that sort of novelty value as well as being quite serious-very serious-about his work, but also he was somebody that was within nine months of retirement. And I think they were struggling to find decent sized stuff to give him that wasn't potentially going to go beyond his retirement. And again, him being an Inspector, made a difference in terms of the resources we were able to get to investigate the offence, and it was very interesting in terms of the amount of support we got on that as opposed to not 18 months earlier, [mimicking police] "Well that man who's waving a metal detector in the middle of that monument, you can't prove he's actually used it can you..." (HP4).*

The heritage practitioner regarded the Inspector positively, particularly because the Inspector's policing role resulted in greater resources being allocated to investigate the heritage crime in question. Whilst this experience was positive for HP4, it also suggests a laissez-faire attitude towards heritage crime at a wider level amongst police forces in England and Wales. The delegation of heritage crime to retiring officers indicates that heritage crime is of little interest to forces, and may be simply allocated to retiring officers as a means of temporarily appeasing the external pressure from the NPCC to address heritage crime (NPCC, 2017).

#### **4.4.2 : Policing in austerity: lack of support and training available to officers to learn about heritage crime**

Every officer informed the researcher that they had received little to no training on heritage crime. Only two officers confirmed that they had received minimal heritage crime training. The rest of the officers had taught themselves about heritage crime, and in some cases also had to train the part-time RWCOs they were supervising. The officers who were not policing heritage crime out of choice had to spend a significant portion of their own time learning about an area of crime, and the associated legislation, which they had not heard of before: *"It's all self-taught."* (Officer 5).

Whilst the officers both suggested and accepted that police forces lacked the resources to provide internal heritage crime training or support, it was nevertheless frustrating that they received such little aid. Of the two interviewees who had received training on heritage crime, for one of these officers, the training had occurred five years ago, and only consisted of a two-hour session which had been embedded into a lengthier wildlife crime course. The RWCO, likening heritage crime to the equally as broad and complex area of wildlife crime, explained that whilst the training had been delivered well, two hours was not enough to cover a crime as broad as heritage crime in depth. The RWCO had been given the contact details of the Policing and Crime Advisor for Historic England and was simply told to call the Advisor should he need any advice on heritage crime.

A lack of training also left one officer in a difficult position internally, being labelled as the force expert on heritage crime, despite having received no training and having only attended one heritage crime conference: *“Because I’ve had no training. All I’ve done is go to a conference last year in London...I’m supposedly the expert. And you just think [makes skeptical face]” (Officer 6)*. This situation was coupled with a feeling of exasperation, as with no training and thus very little knowledge of heritage crime, the officer’s colleagues and the general public soon began contacting him for advice about an area which he barely understood. The officer felt like responding to those emailing him for advice on heritage crime by saying that they should look for the advice themselves, because his lack of knowledge paralleled theirs: *“And you feel like emailing back and saying “I don’t know yet”, so why don’t you look, you look, [because] I’m gonna have to” (Officer 6)*.

In turn, Officer 7 also emphasised how he, and the part-time RWCOs within the force (of which there were over 15) had received no form of heritage crime training, and that attempts to reach out to Historic England on the matter had been met with no response:

*“...X offered to come here and do free training, and we had a wildlife crime officer training day, once a year. So once a year, all thirty of us got together, in a room, and we had guest speakers come in...and X said he’d come and do that, and I’ve not seen or heard from him since. So the last two training days we’ve had, we’ve used other agencies. Whereas really, he could fill a half or a full day on heritage crime.” (Officer 7)*

On the other hand, in Wales, Officer 8 described how he had organised a day’s training on heritage crime the part-time RWCOs he oversaw, which was conducted by Cadw, who were very eager to help: *“...officers out for a day of training, I’ve bought in Cadw to help with it. And it’s great!” (Officer 8)*.

Ultimately, the level of support the officers received mirrored the level of training that most of them had received, for support was largely: “*non existent*” (Officer 2). Indeed, the contradiction that resulted from this lack of support for the officers responsible for heritage crime was dryly described by Officer 9, as these officers would be subject to criticism for not policing the crime very well: “*...but in the same breath, there’s no backup or support available to stop the spotlight from being on you for not doing very well!*” (Officer 9).

#### **4.4.3 : Policing in austerity: NPCC document**

Despite having little to no support or training available, it was still necessary for the RWCOs to engage with the limited police specific literature on heritage crime which was available to help educate themselves. Consequently, the officers were often sent a report from NPCC National Working Group for Heritage and Cultural Property Crime, the *NPCC Heritage and Cultural Property Crime National Strategic Assessment* (2017). There was a strong belief amongst the officers that the report had failed to help them understand heritage crime, had not aided in the policing of heritage crime on the frontline, and was a very difficult and boring read; thus rendering the report completely redundant at an operational level: “*I think I stopped after four pages and had to put it down...*” (Officer 8). Likewise, Officer 1 appreciated the contents of the report, but questioned the accessibility of it for all officers, RWCOs and otherwise: “*And, I know all of this in here [holds up NPCC report]...I appreciate why this is all in here. But it’s very heavy. This stuff can be interesting*” (Officer 1).

Two other officers reiterated the comments from Officer 1, explaining how they had skim read the report, having found that the length had prevented them from delving any further into it. In fact, even one of the three officers who had volunteered to take on board the policing of heritage crime concluded that the NPCC report was drawn-out and offered little motivation for officers to read up on the subject, due to both its linguistic style and size: “*Yeah, this [holds up NPCC report]. Being frank, I read two pages and thought-fuck this. I’ve got better things to do on my day off.*” (Officer 12)

#### 4.4.4 : Heritage crime will never be a priority area

There was a recognition amongst all officers that heritage crime would never be a priority area in policing: *“It comes within an area of policing that’s already a priority if that makes sense...but it wouldn’t come as a single standalone priority”* (Officer 3). This is completely understandable. Firstly, heritage crime remains largely unknown to police forces. Secondly, the extent and scale of heritage crime is currently unknown, as heritage crime is not a recordable crime. It is naturally impossible to prioritise a crime in policing that is unquantified. Thirdly, and most importantly, heritage crime does not have an immediate human victim. When calling 999 or 101, call handlers are assessing vulnerability straightaway, and officers are attending incidents based on vulnerability: *“All forces are very stretched, and we have to go to those jobs that are the most vulnerable...”* (Officer 1).

As the officers all ascertained, the lack of an immediate, vulnerable, human victim with heritage crime, meant that police forces would always prioritise a crime *with* an immediate human victim: *“...you have to prioritise don’t you? So, do you deal with a burglary, or do you send someone to look at a church that’s been graffitied?”* (Officer 10).

Clearly, burglary’s primary impact is upon the person (Maguire, 1980), whereas to any police force, the primary impact of graffiti on a Grade listed church is damage to a building, not a person. For example, as the following officer illustrates, it would be impossible to argue that a human victim of crime was less important than the material, non-human aspect of heritage crime, and resources would always been prioritised towards a human victim:

*“...because they would come in and say “Well if we don’t have the surveillance team that day, ten people are gonna die” and I would have to say “If we don’t have the surveillance team that day, we might lose a painting” And you have to accept that.”* (Officer 12).

Aside from the necessity of a human victim for any type of crime to receive substantial resources, five officers argued that because of the ‘kneejerk’ reactionary behaviour of policing, it would require a heritage crime to occur on a colossal scale before a force would consider providing any resources for the area:

*“Unless it is somewhere that perhaps would create massive amounts of issues, Stonehenge for example, when there are either protests there, or when there’s been problems and it hits national media...” (Officer 4).*

Heritage crime was also often not a priority area for the officers who held responsibility for it. Officers who were already policing rural and wildlife crime recognised that these two crimes were their original priorities, and continued to be, particularly with the volume of rural and wildlife crimes that they were already wrestling with: *“It’s probably at the lower end of the three priorities, if you like.” (Officer 3).*

#### **4.4.5 : Summary**

Section 4.4 examined the role of austerity, and how continuous funding issues facing policing have impacted upon the ability of police forces to address heritage crime. A lack of resources contributed to the marginalisation of the crime, with findings highlighting how funding was so low and workload so high that officers were struggling to police heritage crime alongside their existing remit. Austerity measures were also found to have left officers without adequate support and resources to help them. Lastly, this section also explained why heritage crime will never be a policing priority area, meaning that adequate resources are unlikely to ever be dedicated to it

#### **4.5 : Consequences of embedding heritage crime in rural crime**

As established in the previous section, all the officers interviewed concluded that very few, if any, police officers outside of RWCOs would understand heritage crime, and that these officers would be likely to perceive the crime apathetically and be fearful of engaging in this unknown area. Indeed, many of the interviewees themselves had not heard of heritage crime prior to being allocated responsibility for it.

With the above findings regarding the policing of heritage crime in the context of rural and wildlife crime, it was important to establish if the officers themselves felt that the affixation of heritage crime to rural crime, and thus their role as RWCOs (the three officers who volunteered to police heritage crime are exempt from this section), had caused the officers any difficulties. The difficulties identified by the officers are outlined below.

#### **4.5.1 The policing of heritage crime as an attached role for RWCOs**

Two officers (one in England, one in Wales) felt that the attachment of heritage crime to rural crime was not an issue, as illustrated in the following exchange between the researcher and the officer from Wales:

*Researcher: "Has it not been an issue then, being bolted onto your role, at all?"*

*Officer 10: "Not at all. It's the significance of giving me illegal off roading. So if they said to me, Officer 10, I think you should deal with illegal off roading, whatever, yeah okay...can you have heritage crime? Yeah."*

However, every other officer interviewed did feel that the attachment of heritage crime to rural crime and thus their role as RWCOs, had been unceremoniously bolted onto their positions, adding to their existing stresses in juggling responsibility for the variety of crimes that fell under the categories of rural and wildlife crime. Officer 9 explained how he was: *"...now bolted onto that role as the rural tac [tactical] advisor really for rural crime. And embedded in rural crime is heritage crime..."* (Officer 9). Whilst Officer 7 illustrated that heritage crime had simply been 'tagged' on top of existing Wildlife Crime Officers (WCOs) functions: *"...all we've done is tag that onto the back of our job-we've got 26 part time wildlife crime officers, and all those 26 have had heritage crime tagged on top"* (Officer 7).

A lot of officers referred to their ever-growing number of responsibilities as wearing 'multiple hats': *"My role is that I wear three hats, wildlife crime, rural crime, and heritage crime"* (Officer 6) and that this was a stressful practice for them. However, this was not considered an unusual precedent in modern day policing: *"For our organisations, most of the time, you're looking at double hatting. For example, I've got, rural, wildlife and hate crime as well."* (Officer 8).

#### **4.5.2: Lack of choice in policing heritage crime**

Only three officers had volunteered to take upon the responsibility for policing heritage crime. The other nine officers made it clear that they had been given no choice in becoming responsible for heritage crime. For example, one officer explained how *"It was something that was thrust upon me rather than something I chased"* (Officer 8) whilst



another mused that for the RWCOs who had been told that they were going to be responsible for heritage crime on top of their existing role, it was likely that they had “...all been at the wrong place at the wrong time.” (Officer 5). The officer mentioned in section 4.2.1, who had received a brief two hour training session on heritage crime was told after this session that heritage crime was now within his policing remit:

*“ They said it was wildlife crime training week, there you are, off you go, oh and Wednesday afternoon, Chief Inspector so and so’s gonna come up and give you some training; there you go you’re a heritage crime officer.” (Officer 2).*

Although the officers expressed frustration at this lack of choice, it was ruefully accepted that being delegated unwanted tasks in policing was an inherent feature of policing, and the officers simply had to accept this: “*I’m not sad that I was given it...do you see what I mean? I quite like it now I’ve got it, but I wouldn’t have gone out of my way to get it.*” (Officer 8). However, this method of distributing heritage crime to the RWCOs did not account for the motivation needed to police niche areas of crime, such as rural and wildlife crime, which, as every officer discerned, often bares little similarity to the exciting, action packed policing ideal. All officers (excluding the three officers who were not RWCOs) became RWCOs because they had an interest in and a passion for the policing of rural and wildlife crime. The consequence of making officers police areas they are uninterested in were illustrated by the following RWCO:

*“Because just recently there’s another one of me [RWCO]...and he’s been just moved into it (heritage crime), he ain’t got a clue and hasn’t got an interest in it. So it’s pointless, absolutely pointless.” (Officer 6).*

Ultimately, despite heritage crime being thrust upon nine of the 12 officers, all of these nine officers expressed how they wanted to police heritage crime to the best of their ability, as they would with every other type of crime. Lastly, it is key to note that these nine officers had not let stress and pressure cloud their judgement, when expressing their belief that heritage crime had been thrust upon them with little choice, as HP3 found from personal experience that the officers did feel very much ‘put upon’:

*“But that thing...I mean, you’re right about the people [police] who wanted to do wildlife crime, who just feel that this whole thing has been...put upon. It is to actually say, look, this thing may help you, because, as I said, sometimes these are the same people [committing*

*heritage crime that are committing rural and wildlife crime]. You've met them in another field." (HP 3)*

#### **4.6: Reporting and recording of heritage crime**

All interviewees identified various issues associated with the reporting and recording of heritage crime. Issues related to the reporting of heritage crime included: a general underreporting of the phenomenon from the public and heritage bodies, a lack of understanding from internal staff, and inconsistent reporting methods. Issues related to the recording of heritage crime included: an inability to record heritage crime on internal police recording systems, and a potential reluctance to record heritage crime within police forces and for heritage crime to be a policing problem. Each of these issues will each be explored, in turn, below.

##### **4.6.1: Reporting: the underreporting of heritage crime**

Both officers and heritage practitioners alike felt that heritage crime was an underreported crime. One reason suggested for this underreporting was a lack of confidence in the police, due to poor practice stemming from their limited understanding: *"People don't have the confidence to report it because they don't get a good deal from the police because the police don't understand it"* (Officer 10). Another officer explained how landowners adjacent to a battlefield had previously reported illegal metal detecting to the police, but the poor police response had prevented them from doing so on future occasions:

*"...in the past they used to report, quite often, nighthawking and stuff like that...[but now] they've gotta challenge these people on our behalf, because they'll [the landowners] say "Oh you won't come out, if we report it to you, you won't bother coming out" (Officer 5).*

Other reasons for underreporting, suggested by the officers, included people neglecting to report heritage crime because they may feel as if they were wasting police time, an assumption that the crime was too low-level to be of importance to the police, or that people were simply unaware when a heritage crime had occurred:

*"...you've got a lot of old buildings, which would have historic listing, which may get anti-social behaviour, criminal damage...people may not realise that's heritage crime, because they just think that it's an old derelict building" (Officer 3).*

#### 4.6.2: Call handlers

There is no standardised method of reporting heritage crime in England and Wales. This is because heritage crime is not a “...*statistic that the Home Office collects*” (HP1), as discussed in further detail below. Therefore, it is common for the call handlers who receive a report of heritage crime via 101 or 999, to be completely unaware that heritage crime exists, nor to possess any understanding of what heritage crime is: “*Because quite often you know, the person you’re talking to, has absolutely no idea [about heritage crime]*” (HP3). However, there was also an assumption from the public that the police and police staff will be fully informed about every crime, which is unrealistic, particularly with marginalised areas such as heritage crime: “*people do expect when the police answer the phone that they’ll know exactly what they’re on about, when you can’t physically know everything.*” (Officer 6).

One significant consequence of having no standardised method of reporting meant that there was also a lack of consistency in *who* the victims of heritage crime reported heritage crime *to*. Officers cited examples where victims had reported crime to heritage bodies, such as the National Trust and Historic England, instead of the police:

*“...a lot of heritage crime reported to me, comes through Historic England. Because people will contact them before they contact the police...it does come through the backdoor sometimes.”* (Officer 3).

However, heritage bodies did not always pass crime which was reported to them, on to the police. Two officers reported issues with the National Trust reporting heritage crime, specifically nighthawking. One of the officers attributed the underreporting of nighthawking specifically to National Trust landowners, who, he believed, kept instances of nighthawking hidden, perhaps to maintain the illusion of National Trust sites as being crime free: “...[the landowners] *try and keep it to themselves...they never report it back to us*” (Officer 7). Meanwhile, the second officer recalled a similar instance, in which he spoke to the manager of a National Trust property who did not appear to see the benefit in reporting nighthawking:

*“I think there’d been fifty nighthawking attempts, not one of which had been reported. But when you actually spoke to the person in charge [they said] “Well, what’s the point in reporting it””* (Officer 12).

### **4.6.3 : Recording**

Every interviewee, except for one officer, believed that the recording of heritage crime could be improved. The officer who disagreed that the recording of heritage crime could be improved, stressed that this was because heritage crime was already being recorded, but was not being recorded under the title of ‘heritage crime’:

*“...it’s a recordable crime anyway...it has to be dealt with. So if something got stolen, or something got damaged, the police have to deal with it...And it has to be nationally recorded” (Officer 10).*

However, on police recording systems, heritage crime does not “...carry a specific crime number, or category” (Officer 3). Heritage crime would therefore be recorded as the offence that had occurred, such as criminal damage, but without any indicator that there was a heritage element to the crime.

Consequently, police forces all over England and Wales will be unconsciously collecting data on heritage crime: “...because we probably capture a lot of heritage crime on our databases. But we don’t know that it’s heritage crime” (Officer 9).

Thus, whilst police databases may be bursting with heritage crime, there is no cost or time efficient method-or incentive-to sieve through all recorded crime to ascertain what is a heritage crime and what is not:

*“I’ll put in bat, I’ll pull up baseball bat, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them. Same with heritage crime...you’ll put in monument, and I’ll have someone’s stolen my garden monument” (Officer 8).*

### **4.6.4 : A reluctance to record heritage crime**

Alongside the internal recording issues, heritage practitioners also reported a reluctance from police forces to record heritage crime as heritage crime, or to record heritage crime at all. One heritage practitioner relayed an instance where he had phoned his local police force, on 101, to be told that the heritage crime he was reporting would not be recorded as a crime; despite the heritage practitioner citing legislation which proved the crime was a

valid crime. The practitioner felt that the force in question appeared unwilling to record heritage crime as a crime, which was somewhat infuriating:

*“...whereas I think, we have had difficulties in the past with getting some forces to record things as crime. “I’ll give you an incident number, but no I can’t record that as a crime” [heritage practitioner responds] “But I’ve just told you exactly why it’s a crime under this [law]” Including one case where we had a photograph of the man standing in a clearly identifiable location with his metal detector like this, going [waves] at the camera... [Police reply] “You can’t prove he’s using that metal detector, that’s the trouble” Just feels like you’re tying yourself in a knot, and they’re trying not to record it. He was perfectly acquittable...I completely understand where the officer was coming from, but at the same time that felt pretty poor...” (HP4).*

Indeed, when crime is reported accurately, it creates another policing ‘problem,’ insofar as it adds to an officer’s existing workload. As the following officer summarises, if more resources are put into finding a crime, through accurate reporting and increased policing efforts, these actions do not necessarily work in a force’s favour:

*“The more resources you put into it, the more you find, the bigger your problem. If you don’t look for it, you don’t find it, you don’t have to deal with it, you can get on with what you want to. So it is the police’s way of closing their eyes to something. And their argument will be well it’s a chicken and an egg. “Well prove to me we’ve got a problem, and I’ll dedicate it an officer. But we’ve got no reported crime-why do I need an officer?” So, yeah, you have to always, I always think of that. Why would the police send someone? Do they need more work? No.” (Officer 12)”*

#### **4.6.5 : Proving heritage crime is a policing problem**

As heritage crime is not recordable, when a heritage crime is reported via 101 or 999, there is no heritage crime ‘tag’ for the call handler to select and subsequently record heritage crime as heritage crime. This, it transpired, had great consequences for proving that heritage crime was a policing problem. As the following officer explained, in heritage crime remaining an unquantifiable crime, it is currently impossible for the police to establish how much of a problem heritage crime is, *and* how much of dwindling police resource should be allocated to tackle the crime:

*“...however, if you can’t quantify a problem, you can’t determine how much resource needs to be allocated to it...If you’re not aware of the*

*size of the problem, you can't produce a proportionate response to the problem" (Officer 11).*

However, for the heritage practitioners who *knew* that heritage crime was a very pressing problem, the need for statistical proof that a phenomenon exists left them in an impossible situation. When the practitioners attempted to report heritage crime, it was inevitably never recorded as a heritage crime (if recorded at all), and so the resulting lack of data meant that police forces would never view the crime as a problem; leaving the practitioners in a 'log jam':

*"So one of the massive issues that we've got, is that we go to the police, and we have a meeting with them and say "We've got this real problem with heritage crime" and they go "Oh do tell us about it" And everything we say is anecdotal. And they say well you know we've evidence led, show us the evidence. And it's like well no we can't, because we can't collect it. So we're caught in this log jam." (HP1).*

#### **4.7: Legislation**

With no legislation stating that heritage crime is a specific form of crime by itself, legally, there is "...no such thing as a heritage crime" (Officer 4). Furthermore, heritage crime acts as a 'catch-all' term, encompassing a myriad of criminal offences: "You know, you're talking about theft, or trespass..." (HP1). Not only this, but whilst there are specific pieces of legislation pertaining to historic sites and assets which make it illegal to undertake certain activities on these sites and assets, much of this legislation remains largely unknown and unclear to police officers, who do not use it in daily policing: "I mean the 1979 Act is...well I was going to say it's quite clear, but it's only clear because I'm used to the language." (HP3).

Therefore, although specific legislation could be employed in certain instances, for the 'every-day' heritage crime offences such as criminal damage or theft, officers would gravitate towards the legislation they encountered regularly, such as the Criminal Damage Act 1971:

*"Whilst there is some legislation in relation to offences, fundamentally it tends to fall to theft, criminal damage...a lot of the time, for an officer who is legislation centric, he will think "Well, hang on, there's not another piece of legislation that says this is a more special theft" (Officer 8).*

Whilst legislation fails to differentiate a theft from a heritage site from other forms of ‘everyday’ theft (e.g shoplifting), heritage crime can be *added* onto a criminal damage sentence as an aggravating factor. However, this is of course dependent on an officer knowing that a heritage crime had occurred, understanding that heritage crime is an aggravating factor, and then adding heritage crime as a note on the crime report before sending the information to the CPS. If not, the heritage element of the crime that had occurred would remain unknown, the CPS would fail to take the heritage element into consideration, and the sentence (if received) may not be proportionate to the crime:

*“But if you’re damaging an ancient monument, its criminal damage as far as your police officer down there [parade room] is concerned. But unless somebody like one of us in here, actually writes on the notes page, please treat this as a heritage crime, if it ever comes to sentencing, because the CPS can then change the sentencing guidelines to heritage crime rather than just criminal damage. Criminal damage you just get a slap on the wrist...” (Officer 7).*

Likewise, a Heritage Crime Impact Statement (HCIS) could be sought by the police from a qualified heritage practitioner to prove how impactful the heritage element of the crime was in court. However, this too required the officer to be aware that they were prosecuting a heritage crime, in order to *then* understand that they could approach an expert for a HCIS. Even then, it could be complex and time-consuming to find an expert in the area, for which officers received little help:

*“The actual crime bit is not difficult. The difficult bit is putting it all together so you get the right sentence for the right person. It’s having a list of experts who can go that burial mound is Anglo-Saxon or whatever and that is important because of this. And that’s the bit that nobody helps you with.” (Officer 2).*

The limited knowledge which officers possessed and the lack of help they received when attempting to guide heritage crime through the CJS, was contradicted by the fact that heritage practitioners *needed* the officer's expertise in order to progress heritage crime cases through the CJS. For the heritage practitioners from a heritage body where practitioners were not PACE trained, police involvement was a necessity as the practitioners were ‘...two steps removed...’ (HPI) in not being a prosecuting authority. For

the heritage practitioners from a heritage body where they were PACE trained, police involvement remained crucial:

*“I think in reality almost every time if it’s going to be pushed through [the courts], it has to be put through by the police. We can take our prosecutions, it has happened. But it’s not our main area of expertise, and it is the police’s” (HP4).*

#### **4.7.1 : Existing legislation and aggravating factors: are they enough?**

Whilst there may be legislation and sentencing guidelines in place for heritage crime, encouraging regular officers to embed these considerations within policing practice appeared to be almost impossible. Officer 12 explained how police officers were only interested in law and legal definitions of a crime, of which heritage crime has neither: *“All the police are interested in is law. And the legal definition” (Officer 12)*. As such, the non-linear approach to interpreting heritage related legislation, and guiding a heritage crime towards prosecution, involving various parties and extra work in an area many officers have never encountered (the heritage sector), went firmly against the ‘grain of policing’:

*“And should they then put it to court [heritage crime], I should hope that they would take it into account and give a bigger punishment for it. But, it goes against the grain [of policing]” (Officer 9).*

In a pressurised environment with increasing workloads, officers would be inclined to settle for the easiest option, which they clearly understood:

*“You’re sinking under a workload, [the officer will think] yeah I can deal with this as a theft. I understand theft, I understand what I need to put in the file to get him convicted. Yeah, it’s a heritage crime, but what am I gonna do after I put it on file?” (Officer 2).*

One potential method of encouraging regular officers to consider whether a crime was a heritage crime or not, was to demonstrate to the officers the practical benefits of doing so:

*“I had a police officer ask me, “Well why would we specially record this if this had happened on a listed building?” And I said: “Well because if you then get them, this is an aggravating factor in their sentencing!” [the police officer responded] “Oooh. Oooh is it?” (HP4).*



Yet, opportunities to explain these benefits to officers would only arise in certain situations, as highlighted by the aforementioned heritage practitioner, and with heritage crime not being an operational priority, were highly unlikely to occur on a larger scale. It is worth noting that, at the time of interviewing, the Historic Environment Act (Wales) 2016 had been passed but not yet come into full effect for the Welsh heritage practitioners. This recent change had removed the defence of ignorance, through the launch of a public website called *Cof Cymru*, which details all the historic sites and assets across Wales: “...people can now check to see whether there’s a designated historic environment asset in their local area [and if] they need to get ancient monument consent or listed building consent.” (HP1).

In no longer having to prove to CPS that the defendant was *not* ignorant, this was anticipated to remove one of the main barriers which had resulted in prosecutions failing prior to the Act passing:

*“... [The CPS would say] we have very little chance of this reaching prosecution because effectively, you can’t prove that he knew it was scheduled, you’ve got no paperwork, etc. Whereas now, in theory, we don’t have to prove that.” (HP2).*

Whilst this legislative change was undoubtedly progression for the protection of heritage sites and assets, it could not combat one of the main problems incurred by practitioners and officers alike: ensuring CPS understood the gravity of heritage crime.

#### **4.7.2 : Lack of understanding from CPS**

Although in theory, there is meant to be a network of heritage crime prosecutors across England and Wales, with the CPS struggling under an increasing workload much like the police (Bowcott, 2018), it was not guaranteed that a heritage crime case would be put before a knowledgeable magistrate or judge:

*“...the frustrating things is trying to get that through to the people like CPS, who again, are dealing with incredible workloads. We’re not blaming anyone, we understand exactly why it’s difficult...” (HP4).*

The lack of understanding from CPS was also extremely frustrating for the RWCOs, who would put extra effort into compiling a heritage crime file, only to have their additional work ignored:

*“Cause no matter how much we do, we can do all the work, we can put that file together perfectly, but it makes no difference whatsoever when it goes to CPS if they don’t understand it, they’ll just say charge criminal damage. But what about the heritage? [magistrate thinks] “Ah well doesn’t matter about that.” (Officer 7)*

Furthermore, it appeared that the heritage crime Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which had been signed between ACPO (now the NPCC), English Heritage (now Historic England) the CPS, and participating local authorities (Historic England, 2012) was not always adhered to by the involved parties. One heritage practitioner described an instance in which the CPS had made a decision not to prosecute a crime with a heritage element to it, but had failed to inform Historic England of their decision; which they were always meant to do. The heritage practitioner received an apology, but, evidently, communication of the terms of this MOU had failed to filter down as effectively as one might have hoped:

*HP3: “Unfortunately, the CPS threw it out. I only heard last week that they haven’t proceeded with it, because they said there was still some uncertainty about a proper identification of these individuals...but, the thing is that when the CPS decide to pull a case that has a heritage component, they’re supposed to talk to us first. And they didn’t. So we’ve had a little bit of toing and froing to say look, we’ve got an MOU with you lot, let’s just...”*

*Researcher: “And so you didn’t get anything through from them in relation to that?”*

*HP3: “No, no. And they have apologised...”*

Furthermore, it is also important to note that for many of the parties involved in taking a heritage crime through the CJS, the central outcome is if a prosecution will be brought or not. For the heritage practitioners however, prosecution was not the only consideration. Unlike the police, the practitioners were responsible for the continued protection and preservation of a heritage site or asset which had been damaged: *“In our minds, the prosecution is only one outcome. But often our big focus is trying to solve a potentially very unstable situation which we can be dealing with” (HP2)*. Indeed, although the central objective for both officers and heritage practitioners are similar, they are not identical.

This point of divergence could have potential consequences for partnership working between parties.

#### **4.8: Partnership working**

Interviewees were unanimous that partnership working was integral to the prevention and reduction of heritage crime: *“Partnership work in specialist areas, one hundred percent [essential]. Without a doubt”* (Officer 8). Although working with partners did not always produce tangible results in the form of successful prosecutions, it was the connections which both parties made with each other, that were crucial for raising understanding and awareness of heritage crime within police forces: *“I’m not sure that it [the partnership] is producing any prosecutions, but the amount of conversation that’s going on between parties is really good”* (HP3). Indeed, the police officers naturally lacked expertise in heritage crime, and so collaborating with external partners in the heritage sector filled gaps in an officer’s knowledge. For example, Officer 3 had asked to be copied into emails from his local Inspector of Ancient Monuments, when the Inspector in question was dealing with heritage crime (that did not require police intervention), just so that he could increase his knowledge on the area: *“I ask to be copied into everything, just to see the type of thing they are looking at...”* (Officer 3). For the officers responsible for heritage crime across England and Wales, partnership working could also enable forces to share advice and best practice between each other, as the following officer anticipated:

*“You [can] share best practice...you can actually pick the phone up and say “Hi mate, have you had one of these?” “Oh no I haven’t but, so and so over in Bedfordshire has...””* (Officer 11).

However, a system to facilitate partnership working and information sharing around heritage crime between forces is currently not in place. This meant that, as five officers explained, police forces rarely spoke to each other about heritage crime, and opportunity to share best practice was therefore extremely limited or non-existent. Subsequently, this could leave officers feeling rather isolated when tackling heritage crime.

Ultimately, partnership working was believed to crucial by both parties, because neither heritage practitioners nor police officers could tackle heritage crime alone:

*“We totally believe we can’t tackle this on our own”* (HP2) *“You need the support of communities, partnerships and everyone else and their wife, the lot of them”* (Officer 1).

#### **4.8.1 : Negatives to partnership working**

Whilst all participants agreed that partnership working was key in preventing and tackling heritage crime, this of course, did not mean that it was always a positive venture.

Partnership working came with certain difficulties for police officers. When heritage crime occurred, involvement with heritage practitioners was expected, but heritage crime could also attract a variety of invested parties who were emotionally attached to the heritage site or asset. Dealing with so many stakeholders, who were usually all very upset, complicated crimes which were otherwise easy for the officer to deal with: *“It’s difficult, dealing with crimes that have got so many stakeholders” (Officer 9)*. It also became apparent that external agencies sometimes failed to understand that partnership working was meant to be an equal venture between the police and the external agency themselves. One officer described how he felt as if the burden was upon the police in partnerships *“Do we [the police] feel that things are solely loaded towards the police? My view is yes.” (Officer 4)*. Three officers also reported problems, sometimes bordering on resistance, in engaging with their local Diocese, whilst simultaneously dealing with complaints of lead theft from the Grade listed churches in said Diocese!

#### **4.9: Obstacles to officers’ understandings, perceptions, awareness of and responses to heritage crime**

All interviewees, heritage practitioners and officers alike (except Officer 11 and Officer 12) identified numerous obstacles which hindered the police response to heritage crime. The following obstacles emerged: lack of internal and external awareness of the heritage crime SPOC, utilising the existing policing toolkit to police heritage crime, terminology and evidence, and lastly, the importance of a genuine interest. These obstacles will be explored in further detail below.

##### **4.9.1 : Lack of internal and external awareness of the heritage crime SPOC**

Internal and external awareness of heritage crime SPOCs was very poor. Externally, for the heritage practitioners, finding out the identity of their local heritage crime SPOC (if available) was at times a near impossible task. When they did find out, it was very difficult to maintain contact with the SPOC, as the role bounced between officers: *“Because no sooner have you sort of got one who knows what they’re doing, they move on!” (HP 2)*.

Sometimes, the heritage practitioners concluded, it was a matter of luck that they had been able to find an officer within a police force who was sympathetic to heritage crime:

*“Sometimes, you just get lucky” (HP4).* Nevertheless, the overall consensus was that it was a rather gruelling process to find and maintain contact with the officers responsible for heritage crime in police forces across England and Wales.

Internally, the officers described how awareness of their responsibility for heritage crime was almost nonexistent. In juggling both the multifaceted areas of rural and wildlife crime, for most of the officers, heritage crime was their lowest priority, and workload pressures meant that they did not have time to raise internal awareness of their position. From personal experience, the RWCOs in this research knew that having a SPOC for rural and wildlife crime, resulted in officers who may have otherwise been reticent to engage in these two areas, phoning them for help and guidance. Similarly, officers could call the heritage crime SPOC for specific heritage crime advice. However, the majority of the ‘regular’ officers in their forces were unaware that heritage crime existed, let alone who held responsibility for the area within their force.

From the perspective of the officers interviewed therefore, the lack of internal awareness of the force SPOC for heritage crime was a significant barrier in officers’ understandings and responses to heritage crime. In fact, internal awareness of who held responsibility for heritage crime was so poor in one force, that the following officer described how, despite eagerly volunteering to take over responsibility for heritage crime from an officer who was: *“...really not that interested in heritage...” (Officer 11)*, finding this officer was an overly complicated task: *“It took me a few days to identify who the current incumbent was when I was saying “Oh yeah can I take this on”, people [internally] didn’t know who it was...” (Officer 11).*

#### **4.9.2: Utilising the existing police toolkit to police heritage crime**

Regular officers might be fearful of engaging in an unknown area of crime, but this does not mean that they are incapable of doing so. All interviewees felt that police officers had the existing skills in their possession, gained through the basic training all officers receive, to investigate heritage crime. Heritage crime could be: *“...dealt with by every policeman, it’s just property at the end of the day.” (Officer 12).* Officers were meant to be:

*“...omnicompetent...So any officer, PCSO or member of staff, should be able to investigate any heritage crime...”(Officer 1).* This omnicompetence, Officer 1 explained further,

meant that every officer should be able to use their ‘policing toolbox’ to investigate heritage crime as they would any other crime: “...then they should apply PNLD. They should apply their toolbox that they carry round with them every day, to the crime!” (Officer 1). However, as mentioned in section 4.2.1, the apprehension and fear of the unknown which regular officers felt when encountering heritage crime, could result in officers forgetting that they had all the basic, versatile skills of policing at their disposal, which could be applied to policing heritage crime.

Officer 8 explained how an existing problem-solving model within policing, the OSARA model, had been working, and was helping some of the RWCOs he supervised in tackling heritage crime: “...the OSARA model helps certain officers when it comes to heritage and cultural crime. Only because they know they’ve got to analyse, scan and analyse the problem. They’ve got to look at the response, they’ve got to report it” (Officer 8).

Indeed, despite potential reluctance from officers when encountering heritage crime, it was thought that the existing skills an officer has should be enough to conduct a successful investigation, for the process was the same for every crime: “It’s exactly the same investigative methods, it’s the same process, it’s the same court, it’s the same outcome” (Officer 10).

#### **4.9.2 A: Inability to utilise the existing policing toolkit: an absence of evidence**

Although officers could employ their existing policing ‘toolkit,’ this did not mean that this toolkit was always useful for investigating heritage crimes. Two officers recognised the ineffectiveness of utilising the routine investigative techniques ordinarily used at other crime scenes, such as forensics, for heritage crimes:

*“...whereas you look at something old, remote, made of stone, you’re losing a lot of your investigative things. I mean, they would send a CSI for us but, fingerprints on stone-useless...it’s finding those investigative alleys then when there’s not much there” (Officer 8).*

These issues were further compounded by the inability to use certain traditional crime prevention methods, such as CCTV, on heritage assets: “You don’t usually have CCTV overlooking it [the heritage asset or site], you don’t have witnesses, so it’s very difficult you know...(Officer 10).

For example, in a force which was struggling with high levels of lead theft from church rooves, one officer revealed how the local community would be quick to criticise the response of the police, questioning why no action appeared to have been taken. However, the community had failed to understand that the police were almost entirely powerless to prevent these thefts, due to both the lack of traditional crime prevention methods, and the nature of the crime circumventing the existing policing toolkit:

*“[the community asks] Why aren’t you doing anything about it?” Well, we can’t because these people strike in the middle of the night, 3 in the morning...we’ve got no CCTV, there’s no forensic evidence, there’s no witnesses, and no police officers are around...” (Officer 5).*

In addition to this, there was a cultural conflict exhibited between churches and the crime prevention advice which the officers would provide. Historically, a key facet of churches is that they are kept open on a daily basis for the public to access, meaning that the most basic crime prevention measures clashed with this important cultural aspect of a church, as explained by Officer 4:

*“I responded back to an email from, a very nice chap, and he said that we’ve got a church that’s a mile away from the village, and nobody does anything, but we open it up at 8 in the morning and we close it again at 6pm at night, and we’re getting a bit fearful about leaving any of the valuable stuff in it. What advice would you give me? [Officer responds]...Lock the doors. And it is sad.” (Officer 4)*

The absence of evidence when investigating heritage crime also had consequences for officers’ understandings of why heritage crime was a serious crime. In the case of illegal metal detecting described below, regular officers were met with an illegal metal detecting case where nobody, not even the RWCO (the heritage crime SPOC in this instance), could prove what had been taken; nor were there any potential leads. The regular officers subsequently found it very difficult to comprehend why illegal metal detecting was actually a serious crime, when there was no evidence of what had been taken or by whom:

*“Yeah, we’ve had difficulties with this...we go there, and we [RWCO] say there has been metal detecting here, they’re looking for valuable items within the listed area. And then they go [the regular officers] “Well, what’s the effects? What’s been taken?” [RWCO responds] Well, we don’t know! And all we’ve got is tuft of grass and raised clobs of earth! And they go [the regular officers] “Well what’ve we got?!” (Officer 8).*

### 4.9.3: Terminology and definition

Both officers and heritage practitioners recognised that the term ‘heritage crime’ could be a key obstacle contributing to poor understanding and negative perception of the phenomenon within policing more widely. As mentioned in Chapter 2, heritage crime is a ‘catch-all’ term for various types of crime which regular officers deal with on a daily basis: *“At the end of the day, it’s just a theft or a damage...it’s just putting that label onto a crime” (Officer 5)*. However, the term heritage crime confused officers, and became a stumbling block for them: *“But if you said, “Can you go and deal with the theft of a mantle from an old building” He’d say “Yeah okay, on my way” You say about heritage crime, people go “Oh my god” So it’s the way you term it” (Officer 10)*.

It appeared that the term ‘heritage crime’ added a layer of complexity to crimes which officers would ordinarily face no obstacles when investigating:

*“...he [another police officer] phoned me and I said “You do realise that’s a piece of triple SI land, and it’s an ancient wall of some description” [Officer responds] “Well what does that mean!” “It means that you’ve got a heritage crime” “Well what does that mean!” ...and he said “Well what do I do?” And I said “Well you haven’t got to do anything, but mark it up as a heritage crime” (Officer 7)*.

In short, Officer 8 summarised how it was simply the ‘alien title’ of heritage crime which made officers reluctant to engage in the area.

### 4.10: The importance of a genuine interest

Heritage crime has never been, and is very unlikely to be, of great interest to the police as an organization: *“Heritage crime, by both national and international, was of no interest to the police at all. And it still isn’t to the vast majority of forces, I have to say.” (Officer 12)*. The other officers echoed these sentiments, explaining how heritage crime appeared to have been reluctantly added to the policing portfolio, cemented by the ill-thought-out affixation of heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime. The current scenario, wherein responsibility for heritage crime is commonly defaulted to RWCOs, bypasses other police staff who possess a genuine interest, passion, knowledge and eagerness to police heritage crime; such as the following PCSO:



*“Cause we’ve got PCSOs, we’ve got one in X, he’s brilliant, metal detecting type stuff and heritage, he knows loads...And he can reel loads off. He knows far more than me. If there was an incident, I’d ring him. I’d ring him up first, and say just have a look at that, and see what you think and then he’d go “Oh yeah” and get really excited...and those are the people that you need in the role.” (Officer 6).*

All officers stressed that responsibility for heritage crime must be delegated to those who are genuinely interested, passionate and motivated, an individual: *“...whose got a passion for it and can understand it could and can explain it...” (Officer 3)*. Indeed, these key characteristics that the officers suggested were essential to policing heritage crime, were revealed to already be key in practice. According to the heritage practitioners, when they encountered officers with the passion and motivation necessary to police heritage crime, these characteristics were key to providing a good service, and often resulted in circumventing existing challenges in policing, such as resourcing:

*“There’s individual officers who are interested and have got engaged with a particular issue, and that undoubtedly does help when you get somebody that’s having something to do with the X site at X [heritage practitioner says] “I know this is difficult for you to put a lot of resources into...” [police officer responds] “Ooh no, this is really iconic to my area!” Oh right, that’s really interesting, we’re gonna get on all right, kind of thing” (HP4).*

Put simply, without passionate and interested officers policing heritage crime, the problem would continue to fester, and policing would never be able to ‘win’ against heritage crime: *“You won’t win. You need someone that cares” (Officer 1).*

#### **4.11 : Conclusion**

This chapter examined police understandings, perceptions and awareness of heritage crime across England and Wales. It began by exploring why police understanding and perception of heritage crime is generally poor and revealed that the following three factors were key contributors to this poor understanding and perception: fear of the unknown, downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime, and a lack of training and knowledge of the phenomenon. The victims and impact of heritage crime were then explored, and it transpired that both the officers and heritage practitioners were unanimous in their assertions of who the victims were and what the impact of heritage crime was; despite

only three of the officers having a strong interest in heritage. Next, this chapter explored the impact of austerity measures upon the policing of heritage crime, revealing that austerity measures have had little impact upon officer's abilities to *police* heritage crime, because these officers were well accustomed to policing with limited resources. It was found, however, that austerity measures had prevented officers from received adequate training and support relating to heritage crime.

Penultimately, this chapter revealed that there were significant flaws in the reporting and recording of heritage crime, leading officers to believe that the phenomenon went underreported. It also became clear that the scale of heritage crime cannot currently be assessed accurately. Notably, heritage practitioners often felt that there was some resistance from police officers to heritage crime being recorded as a crime, despite these heritage practitioners citing laws which suggested otherwise, which was a clear barrier to proving that heritage crime was a policing problem. This chapter highlighted problems facing officers and heritage practitioners in relation to employing specific heritage crime legislation, and moving heritage crime through the CJS, demonstrating that agencies across the CJS possess a lack of understanding and awareness of it. Lastly, this chapter explored how partnership working both helps and hinders the policing and prevention of heritage crime. The next chapter examines policing and heritage crime from the perspectives of victims of the phenomenon themselves.

# CHAPTER 5: ESTABLISHING HERITAGE CRIME OFFICERS ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS (FOI)

## 5.1: Introduction

In order to supplement the core qualitative component of this research, FOI requests were sent to police forces across England. FOI requests were not sent to the four forces in Wales, the reasons for which are explained in greater detail below. The FOI requests asked forces whether they had a heritage crime officer, and what policing position the heritage crime officer had alongside the heritage crime officer role; as the heritage crime officer role is secondary to the primary position of being a police officer. Firstly, sending the FOI requests helped ascertain if each police force in England did indeed have a heritage crime officer, as NPCC documentation states that all forces in England and Wales do have a heritage crime officer (NPCC, 2017). Secondly, it also establishes what kinds of police officers are policing heritage crime, including their rank and role. A total of 38 requests were sent to 38 of the 39 police forces in England (the Metropolitan Police were not sent an FOI request, in having the AAU). Of these 38 requests, a response rate of 36 was achieved; with 2 forces failing to reply.

From the data collated, in total, 20 (16 in England, all 4 in Wales) police forces in England and Wales have specified that they have a heritage crime officer. 20 forces in England also stated that they do not have a heritage crime officer. Of these 20, 12 stated that they either have an RWCO or team of RWCOs who presumably deal with heritage crime on a case by case basis, or a team of officers that include heritage crime in their policing remit. However, although the policing of heritage crime may be covered within these RWCO's remits, these officers were found to not all be, *specifically*, heritage crime officers. As such, responses from forces which stated that they had RWCOs that policed heritage crime, but did not specify that one or more of these officers were heritage crime officers, are not included within the final number of heritage crime officers (the latter is explained further below). The reasoning behind this is that although the policing of heritage crime is included within the operational remit of rural and wildlife crime, therefore meaning that RWCOs and officers in Rural Crime Teams (RCT herein) often police heritage crime by default, the inclusion of heritage crime in an officer's remit *does not* automatically make this officer a heritage crime officer (see 2.4.3A). Therefore, if the FOI response has failed

to identify one officer who has been designated as the force heritage crime officer (SPOC), or has failed to state that the officers in the force's RCT are all heritage crime officers, such as Kent Police who state that all "*Officers of the Kent Police Rural Task Force also adopt the role of Heritage Liaison Officers*" (Kent Police) and Hampshire Constabulary who also explicitly state that their RCT polices heritage crime; then this force cannot be included in the final number of heritage crime officers.

### **5.1.1 : Result summary**

In Wales, all four Welsh forces each have a heritage crime officer. Of the 16 forces in England and the 4 forces in Wales which do have heritage crime officers, the responsibility for heritage crime is bolted onto an existing policing role. For example, in South Wales the heritage crime officer is a PC, more specifically a Wildlife and Environmental Crime Officer. This 'bolting on' is replicated across all forces in both countries.

However, a specific pattern shared between the heritage crime officers in England and Wales is the delegation of heritage crime to specific areas of policing; namely that of rural and wildlife crime. In total, across both countries, 24 forces have delegated responsibility for heritage crime to police officers or internal police staff (such as rural and wildlife crime co-ordinators), who are primarily concerned with rural and wildlife crime. For example, the officer responsible for heritage crime in Lincolnshire Police is described as '*Chief Inspector: Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Lead*' (Lincolnshire Police) and in Hertfordshire, the 3 officers who police heritage crime are '*...Rural Crime Officers, part of the Rural Operational Support Team (ROST)*' (Hertfordshire Police). 9 of the 12 officers interviewed for this research were also RWCOs (those who were not, had had heritage crime bolted onto their existing role). The allocation of heritage crime to RWCOs, RCTs, or staff officers who are concerned with rural and wildlife crime, appears to be a nationwide trend in both countries. This trend reflects the recommendations of policing literature, such as the NPCC's Rural Affairs Strategy (2018a) and Wildlife Policing Strategy (NPCC, 2018b), and both of the NPCC's Heritage and Cultural Property Crime National Strategic Assessments (ACPO, 2013; NPCC, 2017). These recommendations state that heritage crime is the responsibility of RCTs and RWCOs, and that heritage crime can be confidently linked into rural and wildlife crime. The FOI responses demonstrate that most forces have followed these recommendations from NPCC literature, but in allocating heritage crime to RWCOs or RCTs, this could indicate to

officers that heritage crime occurs chiefly in rural areas, as regular officers assumed in previous research (Poyser and Poyser, 2017).

Furthermore, the affixation of heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime, both of which are marginalised specialist areas of policing that officers generally receive training to police (NWCU,2019a), could potentially complicate the perception of heritage crime amongst regular police officers. Regular officers may assume that they need the help of a specialist officer to investigate heritage crime, when, as established in 4.9.2, every officer possesses the existing skills necessary to investigate heritage crime themselves. Officers more generally might also assume that investigating a heritage crime case which they encounter is not their responsibility, as it has been allocated to a specific type (or group) of officers.

Whilst there are similarities in the area of policing (rural and wildlife crime) and the type of police officer (RWCOs/WCOs) that heritage crime has been allocated to in England and Wales, a significant difference between both countries is the limited consistency between the rank and role of heritage crime officers in England. In comparison, there is a far greater sense of structure and consistency in the rank and role of heritage crime officers in Wales. Three of the heritage crime officers in Wales, specifically South Wales, Gwent, and North Wales, are all PCs; and in Dyfed-Powys, the heritage crime officer is an Inspector. With the most senior heritage crime officer being an Inspector, there is a clear hierarchy in Wales, arguably simplifying the Welsh response to heritage crime. For example, the three Welsh PCs have a clear national lead who can give them advice, direction, facilitate cross-collaboration, and co-ordinate the response between the four forces. Contrastingly, in England, the heritage crime officers consist of nine PCs, five Sergeants, five Inspectors, one Detective Sergeant and two Chief Inspectors; as well as nine non-operational staff. To organise a lead for heritage crime in England (outside of the NPCC) would be far more complex, both culturally and logistically. Culturally, the Inspector in Wales is somewhat closer in perspective to front-line officers, and literally closer in proximity to front-line officers than a Chief Inspector would be, if they were to take the lead on heritage crime in England. Logistical issues would also be likely to be occur when attempting to co-ordinate operational staff and civilian staff in England.

Indeed, this variation of officers responsible for policing heritage crime in England is another difference between the policing of heritage crime in England and Wales. This variation could result in great discrepancies in the attitudes, perceptions, and responses to heritage crime in each force across England. For example, heritage crime officers who are

also senior police officers in a more managerial position, such as the Chief Inspectors in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire Police, will have greater access to resources and more power available to them than the lowest ranking heritage crime officers. The hierarchal nature of policing means that more senior heritage crime officers could (although unlikely), order lower ranked officers in their forces to focus more upon the policing of heritage crime, and may be able to carve out time for officers to attend training. Such actions are unrealistic for PCs, who hold little influence over decisions concerning policy and resources.

Comparatively however, officers who are situated at a lower level within policing are at an advantageous position, in that they may be able to influence their colleagues on the ground level, introducing heritage crime to them more naturally, without their colleagues feeling as if the policing of the crime is being imposed upon them from above. This may encourage these colleagues to take heritage crime more seriously and perceive it as less burdensome. It is also questionable as to how senior officers who are simultaneously heritage crime officers, can spare the time in an already demanding role, to spread knowledge of heritage crime throughout their respective forces. Their opportunities to attend events to raise awareness of, and host collaborative meetings with partners concerning heritage crime, are also likely to be limited.

## **5.2: No heritage crime officer**

Twenty forces responded to their respective FOI requests with either 'No information held' or 'No.' Contrary to the information provided by the NPCC documentation on heritage crime (NPCC, 2017) therefore, these results show that every force in England and Wales does *not* have a heritage crime officer. This is a significant finding, as it helps explain why the officers in this research struggled to build networks of heritage crime officers and share best practice. The spread of heritage crime officers is clearly patchy, and the rank and role of the officer varies hugely between forces, meaning that forging links between, and accessing such a wide variety of officers, is likely to be difficult and time consuming. Moreover, the information supplied alongside some of the 'No' responses matched the issues which the interviewed officers raised in Chapter 4. In particular, the FOI request from Cheshire Constabulary revealed that their Rural Crime officers would occasionally respond to heritage crime, but that there was nothing on force systems to highlight that these officers could deal with heritage crime if it occurred: '*We do not have anything on Force systems to highlight this...*' (Cheshire Constabulary). Due

to the 'No' response, these officers cannot be classified as heritage crime officers within this research, but the fact that these officers do police heritage crime means that they could, of course, be considered as heritage crime officers. However, even if the latter was the case, their role would be rather redundant without anything on internal systems to highlight that these officers can deal with heritage crime; echoing the difficulties of the officers in this research in relation to overall internal awareness of their position. The participating officers in this research lacked the time to inform anybody internally of their role as heritage crime officers, and therefore were often not recorded on their force's systems as being the heritage crime SPOC (at the time of interviewing). With nothing on force systems to identify them as heritage crime officers, this meant that their colleagues could not approach these officers for clarification or advice about heritage crime cases. Furthermore, it seems that these actions let future victims of heritage crime down, who may not be put in touch with an officer who is accustomed to dealing with heritage crime, if this officer is not highlighted as such internally.

### **5.2.1 : Team or individual officer?**

Nine forces have RCTs which according to the FOI responses, deal with heritage crime, despite some of these teams not having a named heritage crime officer. The heritage crime officers who form part of an RCT or RCTs which police heritage crime, due to its inclusion under the rural and wildlife crime schematics, arguably have some advantage over the heritage crime officers who operate alone. In a team, there is an opportunity to share best practice amongst each other, to compare cases and seek advice from colleagues. As such, teams may grasp heritage crime much faster than individual heritage crime officers, possibly leading to RCTs developing a greater understanding and broader knowledge of heritage crime than individual heritage crime officers.

The overall level of knowledge of the phenomenon is likely to vary greatly between individual officers and RCTs, therefore. The latter could be mitigated by utilising the existing internal systems used by all police forces, such as the Police OnLine Knowledge Area (POLKA), which has a page that allows officers to communicate with each other and share best practice about heritage crime. However, the officers described how the page was uninformative and underused, as Officer 11's experience illustrated: *"Yeah, there's a whole section for heritage crime, nothing's gone onto it...I posted on there saying I'm the new heritage crime officer, contact me...nobody did"*. Furthermore, it is inevitable that caseload distribution will be far greater for individual officers than RCTs, as cases can be

distributed more evenly across an RCT. This is disadvantageous for individual heritage crime officers, and may result in them taking a longer time to respond to and investigate heritage crime, in comparison to officers within an RCT. Ultimately, whilst the rank, role, and number of heritage crime officers differs across each force in England and Wales, officers are generally allocated heritage crime on the basis that they are involved in the policing of rural and wildlife crime in some capacity.

Not all forces, however, have followed the trend of linking heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime. Six forces have allocated the policing of heritage crime to ‘every’ police officer in their force.

### **5.2.3: No heritage officer as every officer can police heritage crime**

Three forces (Devon and Cornwall, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire) all responded to their FOI requests stating that they did not have a heritage crime officer, because every officer was capable of policing heritage crime. For example, South Yorkshire responded that: *‘Incidents or Crimes of this type would be part of the daily duties of all Officers, within all districts as required’ (South Yorkshire Police)*. The responses from these three forces are valid, as every officer possesses the skills in their metaphorical policing toolbox, to police the crimes which come under the overarching title of heritage crime. Indeed, the latter was stressed by the officers in this study. However, the experiences of the officers in this research also indicated that when heritage crime was allocated to officers as part of their daily policing duties, the vast majority of these officers struggled to comprehend the area and were reluctant to police it; due to a lack of understanding and interest in heritage crime.

It is welcome that these forces have not simply bolted heritage crime onto rural and wildlife crime, as it embeds heritage crime within these respective forces as a ‘normal’ crime that any officer would naturally encounter. However, it is questionable as to how effective the allocation of heritage crime to every officer is, in the policing of the phenomenon. Indeed, this thesis has raised numerous issues concerning the allocation of heritage crime to officers who have no interest in or motivation to police the area. Such issues have included officers mistreating victims, not taking heritage crime seriously, and closing heritage crime down prematurely and without due consideration. Thus, responses from these three forces indicate a wider lack of understanding of heritage crime within policing. The suggestion that ‘heritage crime is included in an officer’s role’, is correct at



a policy level, but does not account for the additional knowledge, motivation and interest required to police heritage crime in practice.

Similarly, three other forces also revealed that they did not have heritage crime officers, as responsibility for policing heritage crime was allocated to all officers, specifically however, officers within Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs). These forces include Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, and Leicestershire:

*'No, we do not have specified roles of this nature. This activity is normally aligned to Neighbourhood and Local Investigation Police Officer roles...this covers all Police Officer Ranks' (Devon and Cornwall Police)*

*'However, the thematic of heritage crime does sit under the Territorial Policing Command as does rural crime' (Dorset Police)*

*'The role involves liaising with a team of our officers who will also have wildlife and rural crime within their portfolio's (as well as their normal neighbourhood responsibilities)' (Leicestershire Police)*

This approach may prove advantageous for these three police forces. For example, the allocation of heritage crime to NPTs is likely to help dismantle internal policing myths surrounding heritage crime, such as the notion that heritage crime requires specialist officers to police it. The actions of the above three police forces, in not allocating heritage crime to RWCOs and RCTs specifically, and instead allocating heritage crime to officers more generally, is arguably an instrumental step in normalising heritage crime within policing (much like the aforementioned six forces incorporating heritage crime into every officer's role). In addition, another potential merit of allocating heritage crime to NPTs is that officers within these NPTs may have a greater understanding of the impact of heritage crime upon the local community, as their presence within local communities means that they are likely to know the importance of local heritage to the communities they serve. As such, they are likely to be more sensitive to the impact and victims of heritage crime.

Of course, there are also some negatives to this method of allocating heritage crime. Whilst NPTs are more likely to have the drive and interest to police heritage crime, from the perspective that it impacts upon their local community (as opposed to being personally interested in heritage crime), these officers may struggle without any form of accessible guidance or training. Heritage crime may also be downgraded by these officers, if nobody has informed them as to why heritage crime is important to police, and is likely to be

relegated to the bottom of these officer's workloads, as it lacks a direct human victim (and therefore ranks low in terms of policing importance). These NPTs also do not appear to have an identifiable SPOC available to support them if they need advice. Whilst allocating heritage crime to non-specialised areas of policing and officers is a step towards the normalisation of heritage crime internally, the wider, largely negative, policing attitudes towards heritage crime cannot be remedied without additional support and training for officers in these NPTs.

### **5.3: Volunteers**

Three forces mentioned utilising volunteers to help police heritage crime. In Cheshire, there is one '*Heritage watch volunteer*' (*Cheshire Constabulary*), whilst Leicestershire Police has '*a team of heritage watch volunteers who are people who have academic knowledge of heritage and a passion to deliver crime prevention advice and guidance for some of our locations*' (*Leicestershire Police*), which their heritage crime officer supervises. Lastly, the response from Essex Police mentions that it has '*...a Heritage Watch portfolio*' (*Essex Police*) within the force, and of course, police 'Watch' schemes consist of volunteers. Indeed, according to the Essex Police website, the members of this group include various agencies which are duty bound to protect heritage alongside interested members of the general public (Essex Police, 2019).

For Leicestershire and Essex Police, a network of heritage crime volunteers to supplement the work of their heritage crime officers is likely to be far more useful than allocating heritage crime to officers who lack interest in the area. Heritage crime volunteers not only have the necessary motivation and interest in heritage crime to help police it, but they also arguably have more time available to them than police officers do to engage in the enhancement of practice.

### **5.4: The heritage crime officer role**

Many of the FOI responses illustrated that there was confusion surrounding what the role of a heritage crime officer actually constituted. This meant that it was often dependent on the researcher to ascertain from the gathered data if a force had a heritage crime officer or not. For example, both Cambridgeshire Police and Northamptonshire Police described how they did not have a heritage crime officer. However, in Cambridgeshire, their RCT polices heritage crime as '*part of their overall remit...*' (*Cambridgeshire Police*), whilst in

Northamptonshire their Rural Crime officers '*oversee the investigation of Heritage Crimes*' (Northamptonshire Police). These comments mean that any of the officers in Cambridgeshire or Northamptonshire could, potentially be classified as heritage crime officers by their respective forces. However, both their FOI responses have not clearly stated that these officers are heritage crime officers, and therefore they cannot be counted amongst the final number of heritage crime officers in England and Wales.

By contrast, Hampshire Constabulary responded that their force has '*a team of Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers who all deal with heritage crime*' (Hampshire Constabulary). Whilst there is little discrepancy between the responses of these three forces, it is because Hampshire Constabulary has overtly stated that the officers in their RCT are heritage crime officers, that means that Hampshire has been included amongst the overall number of heritage crime officers in England and Wales. Indeed, despite the similarities between the responses from these three forces, it seemed that whether a force provided a 'Yes' or 'No' response was largely dependent upon individual force interpretation of the heritage crime officer role. This theme emerged throughout the FOI responses, with each individual force taking a slightly different approach to what they classified as a heritage crime officer. For example, the responses provided by Cambridgeshire and Hampshire are identical, both forces have a team of RWCOs policing heritage crime, but Cambridgeshire responded with 'No' whilst Hampshire responded with 'Yes'.

Clearly, there is no regulation or standardisation in the implementation of heritage crime officers, which has led to internal misconceptions about what a heritage crime officer constitutes. Therefore, with no clear instruction from senior levels of policing, forces have decided for themselves whether they have a heritage crime officer or not, as opposed to following a strict set of criteria to establish if an officer is considered a heritage crime officer. In addition, those forces which cite that numerous officers are responsible for policing heritage crime, do not specify which of these officers is the heritage crime SPOC within their force, indicating that a SPOC does not exist.

The general confusion surrounding the breadth of the heritage crime role, and its links to rural, wildlife and heritage crime observed in the FOI responses, is exemplified in two responses, from Bedfordshire Police and Greater Manchester Police (GMP). Both forces answered 'No' to the FOI request, but then supplied additional information regarding wildlife crime: '*We have an RCT which incorporates wildlife crime within their role*' (Bedfordshire Police) and '*GMP does have some wildlife liaison officers as a bolt-on to*

*their normal role*' (Greater Manchester Police). These responses are particularly confusing as wildlife crime is even more tenuously linked to heritage crime than rural crime, a point which the officers in this study made very clear (see 4.5.1).

A further, similar, theme emerged from the FOI responses, concerning the assumptions forces make regarding the links between heritage crime, rural crime, and wildlife crime. These assumptions are likely to stem from the embedding of heritage crime within rural and wildlife crime (as mentioned in 5.1.1) at NPCC level (without any clear reason as to why heritage crime fits into these aforementioned areas). In turn, assumptions are being made internally by forces regarding the links between rural and wildlife crime and heritage crime, which vary per force, in the same way that forces are interpreting the heritage crime officer role individually. Evidently, heritage crime is assumed to be linked closely enough to these two crimes, that the additional information provided by these forces is perceived to be relevant.

This suggests a deep-seated internal inference that wildlife crime officers, specifically, will be policing heritage crime as part of their wildlife crime officer role, due to the 'bolting on' of heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime more generally. Such assumptions are not only observed in the responses from GMP and Bedfordshire Police, but are also reflected in the following responses from Norfolk and Thames Valley Police *'In Norfolk, the dedicated rural officer is a Wildlife Crime Officer'* (Norfolk Police), and Thames Valley *'Thames Valley Police have a designated officer who will deal with wildlife and rural crime'* (Thames Valley Police). In each of these responses, no explanation is provided as to why this additional information is supplied, or indeed, why it is relevant to heritage crime. These prevailing assumptions could be viewed as a success if heritage crime only occurred in rural areas and had a strong, tangible link to wildlife crime, but as this thesis has examined, the latter is not the case (see 4.5.1). This additional information and the assumptions being made internally indicate a greater misunderstanding of heritage crime which appears to extend through multiple police forces.

There were two anomalous responses which emerged from the FOIs. These relate to West Midlands Police's subject matter expert, *'West Midlands Police have a subject matter expert for Wildlife Crime, Rural Affairs and Heritage Crime'* (West Midlands Police) and Essex Police's crime prevention tactical adviser *'Essex Police also has a crime prevention tactical adviser who also has a heritage crime portfolio'* (Essex Police). The FOI response

from West Midlands Police failed to elaborate upon what exactly a subject matter expert was, and this therefore raises numerous questions. Firstly, the nature and remit of the role is unclear. West Midlands Police does not provide a definition of what a subject matter expert is, but there are many other policing areas within the force which also have subject matter experts, who are simultaneously operational officers (West Midlands Police, 2019). Presumably, the role of a subject matter expert is similar to that of a SPOC, within which this officer provides essential information and guidance to frontline officers policing heritage crime, but the efficacy and accessibility of the Detective Chief Inspector who fulfills this position is debatable. As mentioned previously, the ability for high-ranking officers to disseminate knowledge of their role internally, and for officers to approach them for advice regarding heritage crime cases, may be difficult due to the demands and breadth of their workload as a more senior officer.

Secondly, if this officer is an expert in heritage crime, it is also questionable as to why they have not been allocated the role of force heritage crime SPOC. Thirdly, and most importantly, what qualifies this officer to be a subject matter expert is unclear. The officer may be required to have sufficient qualifications (such as a heritage related degree), a personal interest in the subject, expertise gained throughout their policing position, or a mixture of all three. There is of course, no existing measurement for what qualifies an officer to be a heritage crime officer, nor a subject matter expert on heritage crime.

The appointment of the heritage crime subject matter expert therefore, not only exemplifies the lack of clarity surrounding heritage crime in police forces in England and Wales, but also emphasises the ill-thought-out implementation of the policing of heritage crime across England and Wales more generally. The second anomalous response concerns Essex Police's crime prevention tactical adviser, who has a heritage crime portfolio to aid in the policing of heritage crime. The latter shows how heritage crime can be successfully embedded within normal policing practice, similarly to the allocation of heritage crime to police officers more generally, and NPTs. This crime prevention tactical adviser compliments Essex Police's heritage crime SPOC, the officers supporting this SPOC, and the Heritage Watch volunteers. Essex Police have covered multiple areas of policing, from proactive preventative policing, to utilising frontline officers for a more reactive response. This multi-faceted approach to tackling heritage crime is likely to prove effective in the long-term.

Amidst the confusion which emerged from these FOI responses, it is important to briefly recognise the forces which other forces might learn from, in terms of best practice. The most comprehensive approach to heritage crime emerged from Essex, Leicestershire, and Kent Police. All three forces have multiple officers who engage in the policing of heritage crime and a clear heritage crime SPOC. Notably, all three forces have also created an external presence in relation to heritage crime, either through voluntary schemes or engaging in outside initiatives. For example, both Essex and Leicestershire Police have a voluntary Heritage Watch scheme, whilst Kent Police sits *'on the heritage watch steering group, where the key iconic sites of Kent are represented, alongside Historic England and other partners'* (Kent Police).

These three forces are existing examples of how forces can effectively and efficiently police heritage crime, through transparently policing the crime internally, and externally engaging with the public and partners through Watch schemes and meetings. Ultimately, these FOI responses have demonstrated that whether a force has a heritage crime officer or not is a matter of individual force interpretation. This reflects the lack of guidance that forces have received in relation to heritage crime and has in turn, led to greatly differing responses from forces which have supplied very similar answers.

## **5.5: Conclusion**

This chapter explored the nature of the role of the heritage crime officer in police forces across England and Wales and provided an in-depth analysis of forces which possessed a heritage crime officer, and those which did not. It was found that there were a greater number of heritage crime officers across England and Wales than was predicted, however, they were extremely varied in their rank and role which is likely to inhibit cross-collaboration and information sharing between forces. This chapter also revealed that the 20 forces which did not have heritage crime officers occasionally fulfilled the role in other ways, through the use of heritage crime volunteers, or by generalising heritage crime within policing and allocating the crime to NPTs.

Analysis also revealed that the FOI responses were indicative of broader misunderstandings and confusion surrounding the heritage crime officer role. For example, the forces which responded with identical information regarding heritage crime officers, where one force reached the conclusion that they had a heritage crime officer, whilst the other force responded that they did not. Lastly, the 'patchwork' spread of

heritage crime officers is important to investigate further, and indeed, strongly links to the next chapter concerning the victims of heritage crime, as with an unequal spread of heritage crime officers across England and Wales; the experiences of the victims of heritage crime are likely to vary greatly.

# CHAPTER 6: VICTIM FINDINGS

## 6.1: Introduction

This chapter concerns the issues associated with the policing of heritage crime from the perspective of the victims of heritage crime in England and Wales, and goes some way to answering, RQ2, RQ4, and RQ5. Exploring how police officers understand, become aware of, perceive and respond to victims of heritage crime (RQ2), is a key component of this thesis, and understanding victims' personal experiences are vital in providing a comprehensive answer to this question. This chapter will address who the victims of heritage crime are and how they understand, perceive and respond to heritage crime (RQ4). Collating the perspectives of victims will also help to address RQ5, by informing the development of victim focussed mechanisms relating to heritage crime.

Specifically, this chapter explores the responses the 16 victims of heritage crime interviewed for this research, received, when engaging with the police about heritage crime. It also examines how far these victims feel that police officers in England and Wales understand and are aware of heritage crime, and what the police perception of heritage crime appears to be from the perspective of the victim.

Firstly, the victims' experiences of police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime, and how these impact upon their response to victims, are explored. Next, the role of the PCSO in the policing of and engagement with victims is outlined. Following this, heritage crime is situated within some of the wider issues facing modern day policing, examining factors such as austerity measures which have inhibited the policing of heritage crime, and affected the treatment of victims of the phenomenon. The second section of this chapter establishes the issues associated with the reporting and recording of heritage crime and goes onto explore who the victims are, and the nature of their experiences. The third section interrogates some broader themes, including crime prevention and heritage crime occurring out of ignorance. Finally, the chapter concludes with a selection of victim focussed recommendations of how to improve police practice in relation to the area. For this phase of the research, 16 interviews were conducted with victims of heritage crime across England and Wales, eight from England and eight from Wales.



## **6.2: Alliance to Reduce Crime Against Heritage (ARCH)**

As mentioned in section 4.2.1, ARCH is a voluntary, cross-collaborative network which draws partners together in order to prevent and tackle heritage crime. Similar to the police officers, victims were also asked if they had ever heard of ARCH, and whether it had proved useful in achieving its aims. Of the 16 victims interviewed, 14 were unaware of ARCH's existence. For the two victims who were aware of ARCH, it appeared that little had been achieved through signing up to ARCH and that the direction of the initiative was unclear: *"There's a lot of intentions. I think what we were all hoping, those that agreed to sign it, was...the actual signing of something was very simple"* (Victim 4). Indeed, it was evident that although police forces and victims had signed up to join ARCH, the initiative lacked strong leadership and defined aims and objectives, leading to its eventual stagnation. Moreover, it transpired that the pressure to join ARCH upon parties was not well received, and had a negative impact upon parties joining up:

*"...I dunno if it was English Heritage or somebody, but they tried to impose it [ARCH]. Because there wasn't that sense of custodianship amongst the people they were trying to get on board. It was seen as a bureaucratic imposition from outside rather than something organic, from within"* (Victim 16)

Clearly therefore, there had to be a strong motivation from potential parties to get involved in ARCH, a motivation which could not be manufactured, and stemmed from a deep sense of ownership over and desire to protect and preserve the heritage site/s or asset/s they cared for.

## **6.3: Police understanding, perception and awareness of heritage crime:**

Victims were asked if they thought that police officers and their local police force understood heritage crime, and how these officers had responded to heritage crime when it had occurred. It transpired from the interviews that the overall understanding, awareness and perception of heritage crime amongst police officers and staff was poor. Four reasons were identified: lack of understanding and awareness of heritage crime, lack of follow-up, downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime, and the role of call handlers as gatekeepers. However, some examples of good practice did emerge, in which officers were knowledgeable on heritage crime, passionate about the area, and considerate of victims.

### 6.3.1 : Lack of understanding and awareness of heritage crime

Victims in both England and Wales revealed how the police officers they had encountered showed a clear lack of understanding and awareness of heritage crime. For the 10 victims who had had police officers respond *in person* to the crime they reported<sup>2</sup>, the attending officers demonstrated a clear lack of knowledge and awareness surrounding heritage crime: “...it [heritage crime] was a very small part of their job. They were not very well informed” (Victim 13). The response the victims received from the police was usually substandard, as officers struggled to comprehend exactly why heritage crime was important “...the response of the police was very poor...they just really couldn't be bothered to look into it seriously” (Victim 9) and stumbled over of the less ‘normal’ aspects of heritage crime (such as an absence of evidence).

Officers displayed a distinct lack of knowledge. This meant that four victims had to introduce attending officers to the concept of heritage crime after the incident had occurred, reiterating to these officers that what had happened to the site or asset was indeed a crime. Victim 1 recalled how, after a particularly devastating incident in which the asset had clearly been almost completely destroyed, he was forced to explain to the investigating officers the impact of the offence and that it was, in fact, a heritage crime:

*“The two officers that came out to start the initial investigation, both had never really heard anything about heritage crime at all...And I was going “Oh-this is a heritage crime actually” And that was [met with] “Oh...we don't really know what that is.” Errr...it didn't get that sort of, they didn't really [say] “Oh, well it isn't criminal damage, it's that” there was this “We don't really know what heritage crime is so we're just gonna consider it as a criminal damage” ...But then when you actually start talking about it [the officers realise] you know what, this is heritage crime...they just didn't have the knowledge to go “Ah okay, yes okay fine we can note that down” (Victim 1).*

It is unreasonable to expect every officer to understand or possess an equal level of knowledge of heritage crime. Nevertheless, this lack of knowledge meant that the officers in question were not adequately equipped with the skills, and crucially, the confidence, to pursue a heritage crime focussed investigation. Victim 9 described a similar experience,

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that six interviewees engaged solely with PCSOs and did not encounter police officers, which is explored later in this chapter

and also felt that the police did not know how to proceed when encountering a heritage crime:

*“I don’t think they know what to do with it. When I went to make a statement about the nighthawks, she said “Well what crime has been committed here?” and I said “Well its heritage, its vandalism...” and said “How do you mean?” and I said “Well, when they’re digging into the ground, they’re actually disturbing the archaeological context”...[officer replies] “Oh yes, that’s a good one” [mimes writing down notes rapidly]” (Victim 9).*

Moreover, one victim described how the lack understanding and awareness of heritage crime which many police officers had, manifested itself in an inability to comprehend why heritage crime was such a serious offence. This lack of understanding was further compounded by a refusal to listen to the following victim, who understood the crime better than the officer did, and cited relevant legislation which clearly illustrated that what had occurred was a criminal act:

*“I’ve had a bike, come down the X, channelled a massive groove down the [heritage site] the police officers have come here and said: “Well they’re not doing any harm are they?” “They’ve just archaeologically dug a Scheduled Ancient Monument, it’s a criminal act.” [officer responds] “Yeah, but they’re not doing any harm are they?” (Victim 3).*

However, a key issue which police officers face when understanding and perceiving heritage crime as a ‘real’ crime, is that many of the offences which occur on heritage sites and assets would not otherwise be regarded as crime, or at least would not carry the gravity they do on heritage sites and assets, as Victim 3 explained:

*“...but, the problem is, is that the crimes that are happening here as well, if they happened elsewhere they wouldn’t be a crime. If you pulled your back brake on a BMX track and turfed that up, it’s what it’s there for. If you did it down the ditches around the car park, although it’s a bit of a hindrance to the council because they might have to come and grass seed it or whatever, it’s not a crime. It’s a crime here” (Victim 3).*

This contrast, where in one place a particular action is criminal and in one place it is not, is arguably a contributing factor to the lack of understanding among officers. As the officers in this research stressed, they are looking for clear-cut crimes, reflecting the black and

white approach to crime which is taught in initial training (see 4.2.1). Where a crime is sometimes a crime in certain places but not in others, this will inevitably confuse some officers.

Although heritage crime is a marginalised area of policing, it is concerning that the victims found themselves responsible for informing police officers that the incident they were investigating was criminal in nature (particularly as heritage crime is an umbrella term for a myriad of recognisable crimes with which officers are already familiar). It is arguable that the poor treatment of victim stems from a reluctance amongst police officers to engage in an unknown area, and the fact that officers cannot possibly know or understand every area of crime, as the officers in this research suggested. However, victims in this section also described an unwillingness of police officers to listen, sometimes bordering on outright resistance, and refusal to recognise, that heritage crime was indeed a crime.

### **6.3.2 : Follow-up**

When the police responded to reports of heritage crime, a recurring problem the victims encountered was a lack of official follow-up: *“Because there’s never a follow-up. I haven’t had a follow-up” (Victim 9)*. The lack of follow-up was especially frustrating when police officers would attend the crime, respond well, and then disappear: *“...when there are issues, the police tend to respond. But when it comes to the follow-up with it, that’s where we certainly have problems. And trying to get them to engage with it is the real issue...” (Victim 4)*.

Five victims were aware that without any of the key elements of a police investigation such as witnesses, suspects, or sufficient evidence; the options for the police would be limited. Therefore, they anticipated and accepted that the probability of the police following up the cases they had reported would be minimal. Yet, even when the police were quite literally handed evidence of a heritage crime occurring, this was no guarantee that they would provide any form of follow-up:

*“...with respect to the police, I further informed the police when more information came to my notice, and received no response at all. They never got in touch. I specifically went to the local police station with typed up information, photographs...” (Victim 2)*.

While the victims understood the difficulties officers may experience in investigating, the lack of any form of follow-up/inconsistent follow-up was strongly felt to be a product of the limited awareness of heritage crime amongst officers.

### **6.3.3 : Downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime**

The participating officers in this research explained how the lack of an immediate human victim associated with heritage crime, and the unlikelihood of the crime conforming to the notion of ‘real’ police work, would result in regular officers mentally downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime (see 4.2.1). Victims, too, reported instances where police officers would overtly downgrade the severity and validity of heritage crime. However, the reasons the *victims* cited for police officers downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime, were slightly different than those which the participating officers suggested.

Two victims explained how they felt that the police organisation (including PCSOs) assumed that heritage bodies and church bodies were in receipt of enough funding, to mean that heritage crime was not a devastating issue for these parties, and could be remedied without police involvement. Victim 1 explained how a PCSO appeared to think that heritage crime was the responsibility of the heritage body, due to the perceived greater resources available to heritage bodies to tackle heritage crime incidents. To this PCSO, heritage crime was not a police problem:

*Victim 1: “We’ve always had a relatively good strong relationship with the local PCSOs...and I’ve had a few meetings with them, but I almost got the impression that was on the basis of we are not looking good on the crime statistics so therefore what are we doing about it. And I think there was a bit of emphasis of it being pushed back onto us to deal with the problem, which...I think in hindsight we should have pushed back a little bit more to say actually this is a wider policing problem and not just a what we can physically do to stop it because you know, if you look at the metal theft, we are a bit limited on what we can do, like we said, where do we put alarms and so on...”*

*Researcher: “So do you think this is symptomatic of austerity policing, or more of an attitude thing?”*

*Victim 1: “Ummm, no, no, I think the initial thing was a bit of an attitude problem actually...they see X as a commercial organisation, and a business, and therefore actually, what are you doing about these issues in your area...”*

Victim 14 detailed an almost identical scenario. In this victim's experience, there appeared to be an assumption from the attending police officers that churches and church bodies were well funded. Subsequently, this led the officers to believe that heritage crime was not particularly impactful upon churches. As Victim 14 described:

*“...because they think “Oh well, it’s the CofE, they have loads of money” and it’s like “Well it’s a redundant church, its actually not owned by the CofE anymore, and the CofE might have lots of money, but we don’t get any of it, and it’s not for putting lead back on the roof”*

These findings are indicative of a perception that the heritage sector, and church bodies, are inherently wealthy, to those outside of these sectors (such as police officers), perhaps because they largely reflect and display (primarily) elite heritage. As these victims explained however, austerity measures have affected the heritage sector, just as they have the policing sector, but the perception that heritage bodies have huge resource appears to have prevailed. Consequentially, it appears that attitudes deriving from this perception have impacted directly upon police response and treatment of these victims.

On occasion, officers informed victims that what had occurred on their site or asset was *not* a crime. Three victims described how they had been told by attending officers that the incidents which they had reported were in fact, not crimes at all. In one case, police officers had even argued with one of the interviewees:

*“If I’m telling that police officer that it’s a crime to dick on this site, regardless of if they know it, they should be taking that as gospel so that’s protracted to the people that’re doing the damage...otherwise, I’ve had police officers arguing with me, in front of the people that are doing the crime, so those people that have done the crime just see it that they can keep on doing it. Because they’ve belittled me” (Victim 3).*

Undeniably, such reactions delegitimise a victim's lived experiences. This behaviour was particularly distressing and frustrating for victims, as heritage crime covers a range of perfectly valid crimes which require police attention. As officers inwardly downgraded the importance of heritage crime, they appeared to disengage, deciding that heritage crime

was not worth police time; simultaneously delegitimising the victim and treating them inadequately.

#### **6.3.4: Call handlers as gatekeepers**

Call handlers could also delegitimise and invalidate victim status. Call handlers were usually the first contact that victims had with the police, and five victims explained how call handlers would often dismiss the crimes they attempted to report, closing crimes down and removing the possibility of access to the police, as Victim 1 illustrated:

*“For all of the other incidents that we’ve had, whether it be lead thefts, or ASB, we had very little, in fact we had no police response to it, other than a crime number. Because the immediate question always comes up “Have you got CCTV?” and of course our answer is usually “No” because where we have got CCTV is not necessarily covering those areas...So ultimately, it almost rules you out, you’re given a crime number and they then close it down” (Victim 1).*

Assessing whether a victim requires a police response by determining if they have crime prevention methods which, as discussed in section 2.5.2, can rarely be applied to heritage sites and assets due to the damage associated with installing them; immediately rules out any form of police response. This suggests that the call handler was using a strict call-script, which could not account for the anomalies that heritage crime callers would present, such as an inability to use crime prevention on many sites and assets. Whilst the use of a call script is not the call handlers’ fault, call handlers still acted as gatekeepers to the police response, thereby abrogating legitimate victims of crime.

#### **6.3.5: Good police practice relating to heritage crime**

Good practice relating to heritage crime generally stemmed from police officers having a genuine interest in the area (as officers predicted in Chapter 4). The victims revealed that engaging with officers who were interested in heritage or heritage crime, resulted in them receiving a far better response than officers who displayed little interest in the area. Officers who expressed an interest in heritage crime, or an affinity for their local heritage sites and assets, possessed a greater motivation to engage with heritage crime than their colleagues did:

*“...it can be when an officer who is particularly interested in heritage crime is what drives something...For a good while, probably several years ago now, we had some potential metal detectorists around X...And this one policeman was interested in the site, he knew the site, he managed to track down the individuals and, well, not formally cautioned [them] as he didn't actually catch them in the crime, but they were warned, they were known and warned from the areas and so far we haven't had a repeat” (Victim 4).*

Evidently, an officer invested in the area would put more effort into pursuing a heritage crime case than an uninterested officer, as they were personally incentivised to do so. However, a positive response from the police was not always dependent upon an officer's interest or motivation to police heritage crime. Victim 15 described how he had received a prompt and compassionate police response from officers who had responded to his report of a heritage crime, for the following two reasons. Firstly, the officers were local, their station being a five-minute drive from the heritage asset in question. Secondly, these officers also possessed a good level of awareness of the heritage asset (not heritage crime itself). The asset was not only visually prominent within the town and therefore almost impossible to be ignorant of, but more importantly, the asset was based on the local officer's patrol route [on foot and by car]. While the officers might not have understood the historical significance of the asset, they were very much aware of it and recognised its importance to both the victim and local community:

*“One is our local PCSO, and the others [police officers] are based around, obviously [police station] is not very far away. So they obviously do know the church, and it's part of their routine circling around when they do their patrols. So they're well aware of us. And, no, I can only say that they looked after us as best they could, and they did it well” (Victim 15).*

This example proves that a personal interest and understanding of heritage crime are not necessary prerequisites of positive police responses to the crime. Good responses from police officers can be driven by a combination of factors unrelated to heritage crime, such as the proximity of heritage sites and assets to an officer's patrol routes. Recognition too, that heritage sites and assets are important to communities, or the inability to ignore said sites or assets if they are financially integral to the local area, also impact upon how officers treat heritage crimes: *“...I mean, they certainly recognise that places like X and X are [important]. They're the only thing that keeps the bread on the table. So I think they appreciate that” (Victim 10).*



Overall, the level of understanding and awareness of heritage crime across England and Wales was very limited. There were exceptions to this, however. One victim who had been subject to heritage crime in both England and Wales, was well positioned to compare the police response in each country. This victim argued that they had received a better response in Wales than in England for numerous reasons, including Welsh officers expressing more sympathy, and responding more efficiently, than their English counterparts. Perhaps the most important reason cited by the victim was the fact that the police officers in Wales did not display such a defeatist and nonchalant attitude towards heritage crime incidents:

*“I would say that my experience in Wales is different...the police were there [attended the reported heritage crime], and they took photographs, and, they didn't find anybody, they couldn't do anything, but they did seem more responsive, I would have said. And maybe more sympathetic as well. And it got picked up by lots of local newspapers as well, which is helpful I suppose. And that is something that's different, I think, here [England]. You know, a lot of the time in England, with lead theft and roof covering theft, it's almost like the accepted fate of these things...it does seem that way, that you know, that “Well, what do you expect” kind of” (Victim 14).*

Whilst a personal interest and motivation in heritage or heritage crime were generally where good police responses to heritage crime stemmed from, this section has shown that these are not always essential. Victims did not strictly need an officer who held either of the aforementioned attributes, they simply wanted officers to afford heritage crime the same level of care they offered to the other crimes they attended: *“But all we want somebody to do is take an interest” (Victim 9)*, instead of being left feeling isolated and unsupported.

#### **6.4: Policing: the role of the PCSO**

The importance of PCSOs to the victims of heritage crime was not to be underestimated. PCSOs filled the policing gap in relation to heritage crime, where police officers could not: *“X and X [PCSOs] have done so much for us...they're extremely helpful” (Victim 6)*. Benefits of liaising with PCSOs as opposed to police officers reported by the interviewees included: the easier facilitation of regular contact with PCSOs (which resulted in meaningful relationships being built between parties), swifter responses from PCSOs that

impacted directly upon the heritage sites or assets (such as increasing patrols or altering their patrolling habits) and lastly, the fact that PCSOs demonstrated a far better understanding of the impact heritage crime could have, particularly upon the local community.

Nine victims reported a very productive relationship with their local PCSO/s: *“I get on very well with the PCSO that we’ve got now” (Victim 12)*. Almost universally, these victims attributed their good experiences to their PCSOs, who provided a positive and understanding response to heritage crime. PCSOs were often more accessible than police officers, and would happily attempt to reduce low-level crime (such as ASB and minor vandalism) by making their presence more known on heritage sites, usually in the form of increasing patrols: *“In the past when we were having a lot of this [low level crime] we did liaise with the community police team. Who then put up extra patrols” (Victim 7)*. Victims also # reported being able to engage more directly with PCSOs through local surgeries the PCSOs held. Indeed, such direct engagement led one victim to acquiring the direct number of his local PCSO, who the victim would occasionally ask to monitor the heritage site he was looking after whilst it was being excavated, which the PCSOs readily did:

*“I mean, I used to have the direct numbers of the PCSOs, and that was useful. Particularly, when we were doing the excavations, we were worried that we would get people up there at night-time and things like that. And we had a really good relationship with the PCSOs at the time, so I would say “You know, do you mind just going up there and having a look and see if you spot anything?” and they would say “Yeah, just give us a call”” (Victim 11).*

In this way, PCSOs also proved instrumental in alleviating the fears of victims of heritage crime and provided a clear and reassuring presence through their accessibility and visibility. Another important role PCSOs played was their ability to improve victim satisfaction, negating the negative treatment victims had received prior to the PCSOs involvement. For example, Victim 3 had experienced poor treatment from police officers, but this treatment had improved dramatically when a PCSO had volunteered to become a heritage crime officer in his local force and began building a relationship with Victim 3:

*“It changed immensely. The reason for this is because we had the backup. We had that essential support. We had someone that we could go to. We had someone that could advise us. We had someone that was coming down here on a regular basis, showing the X Police badge,*

*proving that actually the problems we were having down here are a problem...And that's where X was different. He spoke to us, and he heard us, and listened. Whereas other people just spoke at us, told us what we can and can't do, what they can't do for us cause funding was running out, and then we never saw them again" (Victim 3).*

PCSOs proved instrumental in repairing the fraught relationship between this victim and the police force in question, as well as the negative opinion of the police more generally which had been generated from the latter. Furthermore, in being firmly embedded within the community, PCSOs appeared to be willing to engage with the victims of heritage crime more than police officers. This is possibly due to PCSOs having more dedicated time within their job role for direct engagement with the community than police officers do (Sutherland, 2014).

From the victim's point of view, the only downside of PCSOs filling the policing gap was that they could change quite regularly. This meant that victims had to rebuild the relationship they had spent time creating, with the replacement PCSO, as well as hopefully ensuring that the new PCSO understood the site as well as the previous individual:

*"...the PCSOs, for example, change quite regularly. So you get to know someone, and they get to know the site, and then they leave, and you get someone else in who doesn't know the site as well...And I mean, good for them, because they're moving up the police force, but in another respect it's like you know, when they do leave, it's like, ah, okay, we've gotta kind of cultivate another relationship" (Victim 11).*

Nevertheless, this disadvantage was considered minimal in comparison to the merits of liaising with PCSOs, as opposed to police officers.

## **6.5: Framing heritage crime within wider policing issues: austerity policing**

Victims were not asked directly about austerity measures within policing, but the topic arose in each interview, either through discussions surrounding police responses to heritage crime or because the victims were grappling with austerity measures themselves. Although the topic of austerity arose unintentionally, it was considered important to extract this theme (and subthemes) from the interviews. Situating the responses victims received from police officers within the current austerity-led environment in policing, is

contextually important (Dodd, 2019a), and may provide greater insight into how funding cuts have impacted upon treatment of victims more generally.

Every interviewee was highly conscious of the monetary difficulties currently facing modern policing: *“I do know the police are stretched. I know all these types of things”* (Victim 14). In particular, the victims who were employed by heritage bodies empathised with the funding struggles facing police forces in England and Wales, having had personal experience of the consequences of budgetary constraints; which in some cases increased the vulnerability of the sites and assets they cared for:

*“And I hinted with my HQ to have CCTV put on site, but obviously the cost implications are tremendous for them. Because nothing bad has happened yet...it’s a Catch 22. Resources are low, so wait for something bad to happen and we’ll do it, but you need to do something once something bad has happened anyway”* (Victim 8).

Good responses from the police were also couched in the knowledge that the police had limited resources, and therefore such responses were not always guaranteed and could be circumstantial: *“We were fortunate...we know how police resources are stretched...but if they’d been somewhere else on another call, it might not have been so blunt”* (Victim 15).

### **6.5.1 : Heritage crime and policing priorities**

All 16 victims expressed an understanding that crimes which did not have an immediate victim would rarely be a police priority, unless in extreme cases. This view echoed the comments made by the heritage practitioners and police officers. Ten victims argued that this was primarily due to the absence of an immediate human victim in cases of heritage crime: *“...I know the police have got no money. There is no danger to people. For the police a monument is not people. So it is not a priority”* (Victim 8). In Victim 9’s experience, individual officers were concerned about heritage crime, but resourcing meant that heritage crime was simply not a priority for his local force to respond to: *“It’s just resource. It’s basically a case of we’ll send somebody when we can. Individually, yes, they are concerned. But it doesn’t seem to be a priority”* (Victim 9).

The victims also contextualised the fact that heritage crime was unlikely to be a police priority in comparison to the other issues that their local areas were facing. The seemingly innocuous nature of heritage crime meant that it was unlikely to be urgently responded to:

*“But again, there’s so many issues in the area...the fact that someone’s digging a couple of holes into an enormous site isn’t, I don’t think, particularly high on their agenda” (Victim 11).*

As discussed in section 4.4.1, police forces and officers are under huge pressure, which has only increased with continued budget cuts. Forces must make hard decisions about which crimes demand an immediate response. Explaining this to victims helped them to understand why heritage crime was so low down in terms of police priorities. In Wales, one victim had been able to meet with the local Inspector, who explained how crimes that demand a more immediate response in terms of harm and vulnerability, but may not always be visible to the public, will be prioritised over crimes without a human victim or ‘minor’ low level local issues:

*“...we’ve spoken to the local Inspector about these issues, and he’s made it quite clear that the police have got priorities on organised criminal gangs, modern day slavery, domestic violence.... People tend to raise issues about parking and speeding and things like that, and although that’s important to local people, it’s not what the main business of the police is about...” (Victim 12).*

This victim further explained how the Inspector had shown him a diagram of an iceberg in order to demonstrate where priorities were focussed, and that the police’s lack of response to heritage crime was not due to wilful neglect. This was a particularly helpful exchange, as it offered Victim 12 clarity as to why heritage crime was not being prioritised: *“Yeah-if there’s been a fire in a bread oven [on the site]...it did fracture one of the stones, but it’s never to feature as a priority as far as the police are concerned” (Victim 12).*

Finally, a key point raised by one victim concerned how police perception of heritage sites and assets could contribute to particular heritage crimes being prioritised whilst others were neglected:

*“They probably would have [attended] if it was art in a museum, or jewels in a big glass showcase...I think they would’ve gone to that. But because you can’t put a value on it, you can’t say “That cost this much” it’s very difficult for them to prioritise it for their...in what they have to deliver, and their targets...” (Victim 5).*

Victim 5's assumption is particularly interesting in light of Officer 6's comments concerning the theft of an object from a museum, which his colleagues automatically perceived as a heritage crime, and yet did not perceive illegal metal detecting as a heritage crime (thinking the latter was just a hole). Additionally, this quote illustrates that the victim was keenly aware of how modern policing functions within a target driven environment, where measurement and quantification are now a quintessential part of any officer's role. The inability to place any sort of monetary value on the site in question and to quantify the damage that had occurred, led Victim 5 to believe that the police have little incentive to prioritise heritage crime; where the value of heritage can be impossible to quantify and the unrecordable nature of heritage crime cannot contribute to target driven goals.

### **6.5.2: Victims de-victimising themselves**

Whilst all of the victims considered themselves victims, one concerning trend which emerged from was how victims tended to 'de-victimise' themselves. Indeed, 11 victims accepted the subpar police treatment and response to heritage crime, citing their awareness of the struggles police officers were facing without sufficient resources as their reason for doing so: "*And I think, with so much other crime and stuff going on, it's difficult to give it the attention it needs. It is difficult for them, I can sympathise. Nobody was in immediate danger*" (Victim 5). After heritage crime had occurred, four of these 11 almost immediately resigned themselves to the fact that the police would be unlikely to achieve anything: "*I suppose I was sad, but I had low expectations. I had low expectations the police could do anything*" (Victim 2). Repeatedly, victims couched their expectations of the police in certain parameters, such as their knowledge of the budget cuts which were affecting police forces in England and Wales, for example: "*...if they had more resources, yeah, they could do a lot more, and we could ask a lot more of them*" (Victim 10). In doing so, these victims did not assert their victim status and were instead rescinding their status as a victim, despite being legitimate victims of legitimate crimes.

Austerity measures and their impact upon policing appear to have firmly permeated public discourse regarding policing and impacted upon victims' perceptions of policing and what they expect of police officers. The police officers interviewed for this research described the impact that austerity measures were having on their practice (see 4.4.1); heritage crime was being squeezed in where it could. Nevertheless, austerity measures should *not* be synonymous with the inconsistent and often inconsiderate treatment victims received from

officers. Indeed, Victim 3, who had repeatedly experienced bad police treatment in the past, argued that:

*“...if they say it’s down to funds and all this, and officers are being retracted, whatever...but it shouldn’t make the police officer care any less. If there’s a police officer that’s turned up here, then they need to do the job to the best of their abilities.” (Victim 3).*

## **6.6: Reporting of heritage crime**

All interviewees identified various issues associated with the reporting of heritage crime. Issues related to the reporting of heritage crime included: underreporting, difficulties explaining heritage crime to call handlers, and reporting heritage crime internally.

### **6.6.1 : Reporting: the underreporting of heritage crime by victims**

Although heritage crime may appear to be being underreported in the opinions of officers, most victims in this study assiduously reported offences, regardless of the police response they received. The exception was Victim 3, who had refrained from reporting heritage crime in the past due to a lack of confidence in the police, which had been caused by the *continuous* poor treatment this victim had received when attempting to report heritage crime. Whilst the police response to and treatment of Victim 3 had since improved (he now reported all crime which occurred) the previous response was so poor that Victim 3 simply never reported the crime:

*“Oh bloody hell it’s not you again.” That was the attitude about two years ago. We just didn’t report it because there was no point...the uniform has let me down. Why should I bother reporting every bit of crime if nothing’s done?” (Victim 3).*

This quote clearly demonstrates how impactful negative police attitudes towards heritage crime can be (see 6.3). Presumably, limited understanding, awareness, and poor perception of heritage crime resulted in a victim who was not only let down, but who also completely ceased reporting heritage crime. Overall, the victims described how they would always try to report heritage crime, regardless of the police response, out of a ‘moral obligation’ they took from their position as caretakers of the heritage asset or site:

*“I think we would report it irrespective of their attitude or their response in any particular situation. We are wardens, stewards of the building, and the surrounds, for the community and whatever we may feel about police response time, say, we would still feel that we had to report it and would do so” (Victim 15).*

This kind of commitment was echoed across every interview. The strong sense of responsibility victims felt towards what they viewed as ‘their’ heritage sites and assets eclipsed any potential doubts, or scepticism, about whether the reporting of heritage crime was actually effective, or indeed if regular reporting had any bearing on the police response to heritage crime. Indeed, this approach was observed in practice from Victim 14, who, despite lacking confidence in the police, was not dissuaded from reporting heritage crime. Instead, the substandard police response made this victim more determined for reported heritage crime to be responded to properly. This led Victim 14 to create a script for colleagues, to ensure that they would receive a consistent police response:

*Victim 14: “...when there was a heritage crime reported, or we discovered something, there was a script that they had, that you had to use to speak to the police, so you would say “It’s a designated asset” “It’s this that and the other”...you had to say that it was a designated heritage asset and that you were reporting a heritage crime...and then there was a form that we had made that you had to fill in, you know what type of damage was it, and obviously trying to get the crime reference number and the police officers, you know...”*

*Researcher: Their collar number?*

*Victim 14: Yes*

*Researcher: That’s a clever idea. Because then you have somebody that is held accountable...*

*Victim 14: Exactly, and that’s exactly what we’d do, and this was really developed out of [the police] having said “Yeah we’ll send someone out” and nothing ever happening. And never being able to follow through.”*

Whilst a script seemed effective insofar as the response of the police improved, the onus fell on the *victim* to devise a mechanism which would receive a consistent and maintained response from the police. Such experiences also corroborate with the views of the interviewed police officers, who believed that police forces did not take heritage crime seriously. It became apparent that were two complex factors which contributed to heritage crime being underreported: the reporting of heritage crime internally, and difficulties with explaining heritage crime to call handlers.



### 6.6.2: Reporting heritage crime internally

The internal reporting procedures within many heritage bodies meant that heritage crime was underreported simply because it failed to reach the police. Three victims, who were employed by such bodies, explained that instances of heritage crime they had encountered were seldom reported. For example, Victim 8 explained that if a heritage crime had occurred, he would file a report internally, which were collated over time and then sent to a senior staff member who would meet to discuss the crimes with the police: *“So every time we see a heritage crime, we file a report, and the report is sent to HQ. And I believe, every month, one of our managers meet with the police and discuss them”* (Victim 8).

These three victims did agree that an *exception* to reporting straight to their heritage body as opposed to the police, would be in cases where a very severe heritage crime might be occurring in front of them. However, it was clear that although there were standardised reporting methods to follow within the heritage bodies, these reporting processes could be subject to personal interpretation by the victims themselves. These victims worked very independently and thus had a great deal of autonomy. Therefore, *they* were the individuals who decided if a heritage crime was serious enough to report to the police: *“But we do have a policy on sort of near misses, so you say, er, somebody tried to do something, but we were able to stop them before they did it, or we were able to clean it off, then that’s considered a near miss”* (Victim 10).

Of course, this autonomy could also result in discrepancies in reporting practices with regards to heritage crime: *“It’s quite difficult. Because we’re all different...Some people in my job are quite strict and follow all of the rules to the point, and they file a lot of reports, and call the police a lot of times”* (Victim 8).

Assets and sites owned by local councils could also have specific internal reporting systems. Victim 7, who chaired a charity which looked after an asset owned by the local council, described how they had been told to follow a specific reporting procedure. All crimes were initially reported to the council, who would then decide if the crime, once reported, was passed onto the police: *“That’s the format that we’ve been given. We will report to the council, and then the council will report to the police, if it’s perceived to be criminal activity”* (Victim 7).

Victim 7 went on to explain that the council would provide him with a reason as to why the crime had or had not been passed onto the police. Although it is understandable that sites owned by councils and heritage bodies must have their own reporting systems in place (to collect their own data on crime), this indirect form of reporting could inhibit police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime. Dealing with heritage crime internally and not reporting all incidents to the police, prevents the police from building up a problem-orientated picture, as Victim 11 summarised: *“You’ve still got to phone them, you’ve still got to phone 101 or whatever, and report the crimes as they happen. Because it’s that kind of volume over time, that’ll make...that’ll raise the profile of heritage crime and the site”* (Victim 11).

Thus, when heritage crime is reported, this could lead officers to believe that the incident is rare, downgrading the severity of heritage crime not just because of the absent human victim, but also because internal data does not reflect the volume of crime actually occurring on the site or asset. As explained in section 4.6, although the incident would not be recorded as a heritage crime, it would be instead recorded as a specific type of offence, leaving an internal record of reoccurring crime on the heritage site or asset.

### **6.6.3: Call handlers: explaining the unknown**

The interviews revealed that a key, recurring, reason behind underreporting stemmed from a lack of understanding on the part of call handlers when the victims reported heritage crime via 101 or 999. Victims would attempt to report heritage crime, but the call handlers receiving the call failed to understand what heritage crime was, sometimes outright challenging the victims or even telling them that heritage crime could not be considered as a crime: *“The call centre would be like “I’m really sorry X, but we’re not gonna send an officer because this isn’t a crime...””* (Victim 3). Therefore, whilst heritage crime may appear to be going unreported, it appears that recording, rather than reporting, is the crux of this issue, for two reasons. Firstly, call handlers were unable to record heritage crime on internal police recording systems, as there is no heritage crime category. Secondly, call handlers were refusing to recognise heritage crime as a crime, and therefore not recording heritage crime under another crime category (such as criminal damage, theft); thereby giving the illusion that heritage crime was being underreported. For example, Victim 5 described how an individual had phoned the police as a heritage crime was occurring on the site which Victim 5 was responsible for, but had been unable to express the severity of the heritage crime rapidly and succinctly to the call handler:

*“And so she saw it and called it in the police. But she was trying to explain to the person at the other end of the phone at 101 what was happening and she said that she felt really silly because it’s a really important thing, but how do you put that across in a phone call? And you can kind of understand to us it [heritage asset] means a hell of a lot, but when you try to put it into words, what it means, it was a bit like “Hmmm?” [sceptical tone from call handlers]. So yeah, that was one of the interesting things where somebody was like “What do you mean they’re pushing [heritage asset]?” “Like off the top of a wall?” And she [caller] was like “No, it’s bigger, its bigger than that!” If someone’s not seeing exactly what’s in front of you, it’s a bit difficult to communicate...I think in the end she just hung the phone up and left them to it...” (Victim 5).*

In this instance, the impacts of a call handler not understanding nor recognising heritage crime were significant. Firstly, the crime was left unreported, as the individual reporting the crime was so frustrated that she hung up before anything could be taken down on police recording systems. Secondly, by debating with the individual about the crime, this wasted valuable time when the call handlers could have escalated the incident: a crime was happening during the call, in front of the victim. Lastly, this example illustrates the repercussions of the marginalisation of heritage crime within the police. The asset to which Victim 5 refers was a prominent and well-known heritage asset within the county. Had brief training been provided to the call handler, the asset could have been identified over the phone and an appropriate response provided. Instead, in this case, the asset was destroyed beyond repair.

#### **6.6.4: Reporting: discovering heritage crime**

Fifteen of the 16 victims were unable to monitor the sites they looked after 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This led to members of the public often finding heritage crime before the victim themselves: *“I’m not usually the first person to find it, because I don’t go through the park every day. It’s usually somebody like one of my neighbours, or one of the dog walkers, who rings me up and says “Oh, you’ll be sad to know...” and then I report it” (Victim 6).*

An implication of this inability to constantly monitor the heritage sites and assets they looked after, was that heritage crime was usually reported after it had happened: *“...it’s usually reporting it after the deed is done, you know, you come up and see a bloody huge*

hole” (Victim 9). Again, although this did not prevent all interviewees from reporting heritage crime, when they did report the crime, victims were at an immediate disadvantage. They were highly conscious of the likelihood that the police were unlikely to respond with urgency, or at all, as the crime had already happened and had neither human victim nor witnesses: *“In the East [side of the church] there was a blind spot where the theft happened. The entire left of the chapel went, and a quarter of the church’s roof; all done where it couldn’t be seen from the footpath...”* (Victim 2).

It was also found that the inability to pinpoint when heritage crime had happened, after it eventually *was* discovered, did prevent two victims from reporting the crime to the police. Both victims explained how they felt that the police would be unwilling to investigate a crime without any idea of when the crime had been committed:

*“...a lot of it goes unreported because we are only here once a fortnight on a Sunday regularly...the timeframe to pinpoint any action that’s been happening is gone, so before X came along, we didn’t report anything. Because I couldn’t give them [the police] a window that’s narrow enough to give them an idea [of when the crime had occurred]...”* (Victim 3).

Ultimately, whilst the fifteen victims who did not have constant surveillance (in the form of CCTV) attempted to report as much heritage crime as was practical, they agreed that it was impossible for every incident of heritage crime to reach them due to factors outside of their control. These factors included not only the inability to maintain a constant presence at the site(s) or asset(s) of which they took care, but also because there was no guarantee that members of the public would be able to recognise that an offence had taken place at the site or asset.

## **6.7: The victims and impact of heritage crime**

The victims were asked who they thought the victims of heritage crime were and what the impact of heritage crime was. These questions were asked in order to ascertain who the victims of heritage crime thought the victims of heritage crime were, and if they considered the impact of heritage crime to be as extensive as literature on the topic suggests (Grove and Thomas, 2014). In congruence with the heritage practitioners and

police officers, the interviewees argued that the victims of the crime were broad and encompassed a multitude of persons.

### **6.7.1 : The victims**

#### **i) The individual**

As mentioned in section 6.5.2, the victims interviewed in this research all considered themselves to be victims of heritage crime. Therefore, every interviewee strongly believed that victims could encompass individual people. Interestingly, one victim argued that the victims of heritage crime may also constitute the offenders themselves:

*“I want to say that victims are the ones coming as the offenders...the future belongs to the kids even though the kids don't care that we will lose our monuments” (Victim 8).*

From this victim's point of view, the offender was also a victim, because the majority of the offenders, he felt, were unaware that they were committing heritage crime. Therefore, by damaging or destroying what was to be their heritage in the future through their current actions; the offender simultaneously became the victim.

#### **ii) Local community**

Members of the local community were also believed to be victims of heritage crime: *“It's very diffusive, because it affects the whole community” (Victim 2)*. Heritage assets represented: *“...something within the community. Life goes on around it, and it's important to a lot of people” (Victim 15)*, and so when an asset was subject to heritage crime, the whole community could be left feeling aggrieved. Indeed, Victim 5 discussed how the nature of certain heritage sites and assets could draw every member of the local community together regardless of class, in outrage, when heritage crime occurred:

*“Yeah, all of our visitors, and people from further afield as well. Very wide ranging. I don't even think...because with some heritage crimes, there might be like a divide with the class systems or whatever, with some classes caring more about it than others, but here, everybody, no matter who you are, is gonna be bothered about this” (Victim 5).*

Heritage assets were key facets of numerous local communities, and whether or not the community recognised the historical value of the heritage assets, they ascribed their own personal values to them, meaning that heritage crime had a profound personal impact upon most members of the local community.

### iii) Wider society

In common with the responses from the police officers and heritage practitioners, the concept of victimhood was extended to wider society: *"I think all of us [are victims]. I think society"* (Victim 16). Universally, the interviewees believed that each member of society was a victim of heritage crime *"We're all victims of heritage crime"* (Victim 13). More specifically, heritage sites and assets were firmly embedded within the lives of a wide variety of individuals, including visitors from afar to these sites and assets, holding an importance and sense of ownership for these individuals that extended beyond the immediate community: *"...people get very emotive about X and how it's being looked after...people have historically come here as children and then grown up and brought their own children"* (Victim 1). Overall, the victims of heritage crime were: *"...a little bit of everybody"* (Victim 8).

### iv) Future generations

Mirroring the responses of the police officers and heritage practitioners, the interviewees also felt that future generations were victims of heritage crime. Heritage crime jeopardised the ability of future generations to learn about the past: *"Future generations is one. Future generations who are being denied the opportunity to appreciate and learn about what existed in the past"* (Victim 12). Furthermore, if heritage crime was so severe that heritage was completely destroyed, from the interviewees' perspectives, this permanent loss was to the detriment of future generations, who would lose both tangible and intangible connections to the past: *"...with the piece of heritage, it's the memories associated with that, and the connections that are broken down and lost to future generations..."* (Victim 4).

### 6.7.2: The impact of heritage crime

All 16 interviewees discussed how the impacts of heritage crime were broad and complex, many of which had a ‘ripple effect’, wherein the overall impacts of heritage crime were usually far more extensive than the initial crime which had occurred. For example, the victims explained how heritage crime could cause a loss of historical context (provenance), which is essential for understanding how and why historical assets are found where they are: *“As soon as you dig something up, you’ve lost the context...”* (Victim 16). Moreover, victims also suggested that if heritage was lost to crime before it could be recorded, there was no way of accurately knowing what had been lost: *“We don’t know what we’re losing, and that is the real crime if you like”* (Victim 13). Such impacts are significant, and can be incurred from very minor acts, such as illegal metal detecting, which involves the arguably simple act of digging a hole in the ground without permission and removing an artefact from the hole.

Another significant impact which resulted from heritage crime cited by the victims, included a recognition that heritage crime could be so severe that it would result in the permanent loss of heritage sites and assets which: *“...leaves us all poorer”* (Victim 12). Churches were highlighted as specific heritage assets which were part of a larger national collection, and their loss through heritage crime was not only cultural, but would also erase an architectural legacy: *“I find that it’s a cultural loss. They’re part of a national collection. I really do think with churches they are the greatest architectural legacy. You’re kind of eroding that architectural legacy every time something like this happens”* (Victim 14).

On a smaller scale, heritage crime caused outrage amongst the local community when it occurred, owing to the strong sense of ownership the community felt over ‘their’ local heritage site or asset:

*“People have a pride in their local heritage. I’m quite surprised actually, with how much pride that people take in it, how much ownership they feel that they have of it, even if they don’t verbalise that a lot of the time. And so, if there is damage to it...then that is usually followed by outrage.”* (Victim 7).

Victims also reported feeling powerless to stop heritage crime, through a frustrating combination of the inability to utilise crime prevention methods and a poor police response:

*“...and there’s also been a huge impact on the staff and volunteers who are involved within X...And it’s been kind of, a real morally demoting sort of time for everybody, cause everybody just kept seeing incident after incident after incident happening, and we were almost left a bit powerless to stop it” (Victim 1).*

Indeed, whole communities could be left feeling helpless after a heritage crime had occurred, as they were sometimes powerless to respond in the wake of a heritage crime, where the site or asset had been destroyed entirely:

*“So I think it’s that thing where a lot of people feel deep ownership over this place, and someone has interfered with it and damaged it, and it’s kind of that helplessness, I think, cause people are just like “It’s gone, and there’s nothing I can do”” (Victim 5).*

As the impacts of heritage crime were not always immediately apparent to police officers, it became clear that conveying these impacts could be extremely difficult. This was further complicated by the fact that regular officers may have never considered impacts as significant as those associated with heritage crime, prior to encountering a heritage crime. Crimes which might appear to be reasonably innocuous and easily resolvable to an officer, such as the theft of lead from a church roof (the lead can be replaced with a non-lead alternative) could actually lead to the closure-‘death’-of the building itself: *“And I would say there are cases with churches that don’t have much congregation, something like a lead theft, for them to fundraise for that, that can actually be the death of that building. It really can, you know?” (Victim 14).*

Indeed, many impacts of heritage crime manifested themselves in ways which would not be (and possibly never would be) apparent to police officers. For example, heritage crime could result in an overall devaluing of history more widely. Assets which were removed from where they originated and then sold online (a product of illegal metal detecting in the case of the following interviewee) without recourse, could significantly damage the public’s perception of the importance of heritage:



*“I also think it’s a devaluing of history...if we get to the point where all we’re interested in is bits of bling and we’re not troubled by how they came to be there and what the significance of them is, then it becomes a snowball. Because you’re less and less likely to think these things are important because they become, well, they’re just items on Ebay that look nice. Rather than being something that reflects where someone who was hacked to death or where a great political decision was decided” (Victim 16).*

This is an intangible impact which very few officers might consider unless they had an interest or educational background in history and heritage

### **6.7.3: Emotional impact**

Officers may also struggle to understand the emotional dimension of heritage crime upon victims. Whilst heritage crime is devoid of an immediate human victim, the victims interviewed for this research all felt the emotional impact of offences acutely. The strong sense of ownership and close connection the victims felt for the sites and assets they cared for, alongside a keen awareness of the wider ramifications which could develop from a singular instance of heritage crime, was a recurrent theme for victims: *“I think X is something that a lot of us feel quite strongly about” (Victim 2).*

More broadly, the local community, who also considered themselves victims in the experience of the interviewees, felt a spectrum of emotions after a heritage crime had occurred. These feelings ranged from unease and sadness *“I think it’s unease. And unhappiness” (Victim 15)* to despair *“So a lot of people’s reactions were “How do we fix this?!” and then when you tell them that we can’t, it is gone, they were a bit like “Oh”. Quite bereft I think” (Victim 5)* and outrage: *“...[there was] a whole groundswell of outrage on behalf of the church” (Victim 2).* Indeed, Victim 11 illustrated how heritage crime could have a secondary emotional impact for these local individuals, long after the initial heritage crime had occurred:

*“...although it is no longer the parish church and hasn’t been for 40, 50 years, there is a significant group of people who still live in the area who remember it being the parish church, and it is a very emotive building for people...some people I’ve spoken to have got married there, or baptised there, or christened there. So they’ve got this very close connection with it, and they also remember it when it was still in use, when it had a roof, when it looked beautiful...And so a lot of people, when they come up and see the state of it now, where it’s been graffitied, or where it’s been damaged by people just picking bits off it,*

*or deliberate destruction in some cases where people are, presumably, taking sledgehammers up to it...it's very very emotional for those individuals" (Victim 11).*

Furthermore, any criminal activity on these sites and assets undermined the hard work, time and effort that had been put into taking care of them, heightening the general emotional impact upon the victim: "...your heart breaks really. You think; why are we doing this? We've worked so hard, we've raised all this money, and it looked lovely" (Victim 6).

#### **6.7.4: Financial impact**

Inevitably, heritage crime incurs a financial impact. Every victim believed that the financial impact of heritage was secondary to the intangible impacts outlined above: "*They can say oh yes, this has been smashed...but the actual cost is incalculable really*" (Victim 6). Nonetheless, this did not mean that the financial impact upon the site or asset was not a pressing issue. The urgency to repair heritage sites and assets before they were damaged further (incurring internal water damage from loss of a church roof, for example) and the cost of repairing damaged heritage sites and assets weighed heavily on victims' minds, to the extent that the financial impact directly impacted upon the physical health of Victim 2, in the form of sleeping troubles:

*"Sleepless nights...certainly in the period before the insurance said they were going to repair it, I was you know, really really worried that somehow, because we're in an extremely poor area, we haven't got, you know, wealthy benefactors who are gonna say "Oh here take ten grand towards the cost" It's really an uphill struggle" (Victim 2).*

Seemingly mindless damage, undertaken rapidly, resulted in financial ramifications and a lengthy repair process which dwarfed the initial crime: "*This was just smashed out with a wrecking bar, smashed all the way through. That was repaired last year. That cost a grand*" (Victim 9). Overall, it was evident that the financial impact of heritage crime was, more often than not, far more significant than the initial crime that had occurred, "...there was thousands of pounds worth of damage for nothing, for a fiver..." (Victim 12); and could incur a slew of mental, physical and emotional issues. Clearly, the impacts of heritage crime were rarely isolated and instead, coalesced, with each impact likely to prompt another.

### 6.7.5 : Appearance of the heritage site

Two victims discussed how the appearance of the heritage sites or assets they looked after was a contributor to the likelihood of crime occurring on that site or asset. These scenarios bear similarity to Broken Windows Theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) (see 7.6.1 for further discussion on this) but, in these cases, an initial crime against the heritage site or asset does not act as a catalyst for the site or asset to be subject to further crime. Firstly, the age of the sites and assets made them appear to the untrained eye as if they were being uncared for, whereas in fact they were simply in a ruinous or aged state: *“It’s in too much of a ruinous state to actually look like its anything important. That’s the biggest problem. And I think, if you go back to when we first started here, and the site was even more of a wreck, it did happen a lot more [crime]” (Victim 3).*

Secondly, if the land the site or asset was situated on, or the area around it, was even slightly unkempt, this implied to the general public that it was being uncared for, and thus would attract crime to the site or asset. For both victims, it was the simple act of cutting the grass on and around their sites which would directly increase or decrease incidents of crime:

*“The minute we cut the grass out there, and it looks cared for, the crime reduces. Because it does look like someone’s been here, they’re looking after it, whatever. If we leave all of the grass to just grow for one season, you’d be surprised at how much crap happens again on this site” (Victim 3).*

*“This is one of the dilemmas...when you’ve just had the grass cut look over here, it’s not Royal Park standard, but it is being looked after, somebody’s up here doing something to it. And hopefully that’s enough...that might alter their behaviour” (Victim 9).*

The fundamental difference between these examples and Broken Windows Theory is that the actions which incur criminality for Wilson and Kelling are *deliberate* (a result of disorder), whereas the inability to maintain the appearance of a well looked after heritage site or asset because victims cannot afford to regularly cut the grass constantly, is not. Furthermore, the fact that the site or asset may already be ruinous (thus appearing uncared for) skips a step in Wilson and Kelling’s theory: there is no gradual process of decline

which acts as a catalyst for criminality on the site or asset as said site or asset is in a permanent state of disrepair.

#### **6.7.6: Fear of crime**

Interviewees revealed that one impact of heritage crime which could be situated within a wider criminological framework was the potential increase in fear of crime resulting from heritage crime. For example, Victim 11 discussed how the local community were reluctant to visit the heritage site he cared for, due to rumours surrounding the behaviour and actions of individuals who frequented the site:

*“You know, we’ve spoken to a number of people who say they’re scared to go up there, they hear stories about what happens up there, there’s youths up there, they don’t want to go up there, they’re scared for their own safety kind of thing. And so, you know, that’s problematic because it discourages the kind of footfall that you want to encourage, because, in our opinion, the way that you reduce ASB, the way that you reduce it sustainably and in the long term, is by encouraging good behaviour to go on up there” (Victim 11).*

Unfortunately, in a cyclic fashion, fear of crime *then* had an impact on the levels of crime which occurred on the site. The community, fearful of engaging with the heritage site, chose not to visit it or incorporate it into their daily activities. Yet, frustratingly, as Victim 11 was aware, if the community had increased their engagement with the site, the increased footfall and routine presence of people at the site would have made them capable guardians (Cohen and Felson, 1979); and their presence would have removed the incentive to commit crime without fear of recourse.

#### **6.8: Crime prevention**

Chapter 2 explored how utilising crime prevention measures on heritage sites and assets can be very difficult. Indeed, of the 16 interviewees, 15 were unable to use traditional crime prevention measures on the heritage site or asset they looked after. The one victim who could utilise crime prevention measures, specifically CCTV, was able to utilise this because the asset was in the centre of a small town, meaning that cameras could be affixed to external structures which overlooked the site without damaging the historical fabric of the asset. For the other interviewees however, preventing crime was very difficult. In

Victim 1's case, some of the most basic crime prevention techniques could not be used, as the site was open access: "*[There are] a lot of places where you can come in and out. And in fact, the [road] that runs through the middle of X is a public highway, so that's open 24 hours a day*" (Victim 1) and could not simply be closed off.

The cost of crime prevention measures was also a considerable barrier to their implementation. Many of the victims relied upon their local councils, which decided if a heritage site or asset was to be in receipt of crime prevention measures. These councils often had a paradoxical attitude towards crime prevention, where crime had to occur before crime prevention measures could be considered being used. This was particularly exasperating, as heritage sites and assets were therefore, being subject to further damage as they waited for crime prevention measures: "...*but at the moment, the council aren't agreeing...they're saying that there has to be another attack before we get CCTV*" (Victim 6).

Universally, the victims recognised that an effective method of reducing heritage crime was to place a permanent guardian on the site, as it removed the incentive to commit crime unseen: "*If people know that somebody is up here, then they will stay away*" (Victim 9). Permanent guardians could rarely be installed however, due to budgetary constraints. Some sites had had a guardian in previous years, but they had eventually been rescinded due to dwindling resources: "*They also built a visitor centre that was very popular, and used, but money ran out, so the visitor centre closed, and there was nobody seeing if anything was going on*" (Victim 7).

Although not cost effective, a permanent guardian on the site appeared to be the most effective method of reducing heritage crime. Two victims described how there was a direct correlation between the presence of a permanent guardian on their site and the levels of crime on their sites. Upon receiving funding in 2015 to make his voluntary role a full time paid position, Victim 3 explained how crime against the site was virtually non-existent (apart from crime occurring out of ignorance), a result which he attributed to his permanent presence on the site:

*"And in 2015, I don't think, apart from uneducated crime [ignorance], like kids throwing stones through rifle loops and seeing it as a game, we didn't have any crime that year because we were on site...The crime rate went down, because we were here at regular times"* (Victim 3).

Victim 10 reported a similar instance. When there was a heritage officer based at one of the heritage sites Victim 10 was responsible for overseeing, crime decreased, but when this officer was removed from his position, crime increased: “...a few years ago, there was a presence up there, a heritage officer based in the building up there. So it all kind of went away when he left, and wasn't replaced...then it all sort of came flooding back again” (Victim 10).

Lastly, it is important to note that historical and cultural factors meant that some of the most basic crime prevention measures could not be utilised. For example, target hardening, in the form of closing and locking a Grade listed church, directly clashes against the cultural belief that churches should be left open for the public: “It should be an open building” (Victim 15).

Clearly, when the crime prevention measures were able to be used on heritage sites and assets, they worked well. However, the inability to use crime prevention measures was, largely, due to factors beyond the victims' control. These reasons included inadequate financial resources, long-standing cultural reasons, and understandably strict rules surrounding the preservation of heritage sites and assets; meaning many crime prevention measures cannot be utilised, for fear of damaging the historical fabric.

#### **6.8.1 : Police forces unable to understand when crime prevention fails to work**

To compound these issues further, a focus upon crime prevention has become widespread within police forces. This led to complicated exchanges with victims when crime prevention measures appeared to be the obvious solution to heritage crime, for police officers and staff (internal crime prevention officers/advisors), but could not be utilised, either due to cultural and historic aspects, or because of third party advice which conflicted with police crime prevention practice. Indeed, the advice four victims received from their insurance companies was to keep the church or churches they cared for *open*. In turn, this could lead to confusing exchanges between the victims and the police, where the latter could not fathom why the victim had voluntarily left their asset in a vulnerable position. Indeed, Victim 14 explained how a crime prevention adviser was baffled when she enquired as to how locking the doors of the asset would help, when the perpetrators were targeting the windows:

*“But then the chap came along and he said “Well, what do you expect, you’ve had your church open” I was like “Yeah but they’re breaking down the door going into the tower” you know? And he said “Yeah, well, the first thing you need to do is lock the church” And I said “But they’re breaking in the windows, so you know, we don’t want to lose[cultural aspect of keeping church open]...what can we do here?” And he just said “Well you know, you’re putting yourself into this position by leaving the church open” And...I can understand that, but...if our insurers are giving us advice to the contrary then...anyway... He couldn’t understand, he said “Well you wouldn’t leave a shop open or something like that” and we were like “Yeah but it’s not a shop!” And, just the windows were being smashed out constantly...And again, we had this chap come out, and there wasn’t.. there wasn’t really any kind of constructive advice really, or any.. it was “Well just report it”” (Victim 14).*

As the above example demonstrates, the rigidity of crime prevention measures did not account for their unsuitability on some heritage sites and assets, and their failure to work in certain scenarios resulted in a defeatist attitude amongst both police staff (a crime prevention advisor in this scenario) and police officers.

Officers/police staff appeared to be unable to suggest any means of tackling heritage crime which did not rely upon crime prevention measures. Neither officers nor police staff thought critically about what else they might do, or how else the crime prevention measures which *could* be utilised upon heritage sites and assets (such as ‘extending guardianship’ by involving the community or neighbourhood watch) might be achieved. Of course, crime prevention measures are not taught to officers/police staff with the caveat that they may not work on heritage sites and assets, as this is far too specific for broad training on crime prevention. Nevertheless, the inability for officers/police staff to reconcile that many of these measures would not work and could not be applied to heritage sites and assets, and their insistence upon applying them despite this, was indicative of a myopic attitude where crime prevention was the only option; and there was little else police officers/staff could do for heritage sites and assets if it did not work.

However, in the instances when officers/police staff did think critically regarding the delivery of crime prevention methods, this could reduce the need for a police presence on the site or asset. In the following example, a PCSO delivered educational sessions on heritage crime to the local community, which had led the members to develop a sense of ownership over their local heritage site, resulting in community members acting as collective guardians:

*“It is the fact that, with the education that X gives... You’ve got a whole community that are taking ownership, they are looking out for these sites, and the police, actually, although it’s being reported to them, you’ve got eyes and ears everywhere that should be preventing the problem. And if they gave it a long enough time, there wouldn’t be a problem. Because the community would be looking after all of these areas under the advice of X” (Victim 3).*

### **6.8.1: Different crimes creeping in**

Without overt crime prevention measures to deflect crime, six victims reported how heritage sites and assets were perceived as a convenient place to commit crime without fear of being caught. Consequently, victims explained how this would attract low-level criminal behaviour onto heritage sites and assets, such as drug taking “...we started to have some drugs and some other problems...the paraphernalia of drugs addiction” (Victim 8), trespassing, verbal abuse of volunteers on the site, littering, and arson: “...we were getting these really intense small fires. I think it was barbeque coals, disposable barbeques...” (Victim 9).

A major problem incurred from the different forms of crime which crept onto heritage sites was that these crimes dissuaded local people, who would regularly incorporate the site into their daily routine (such as running or walking their dog) from maintaining their routine, because these individuals felt intimidated by those who were openly committing these crimes. In turn, this led the individuals who would regularly use the site, to change their routine, meaning that the site lost its capable guardians (Felson, 1998), who both reported and discouraged criminal behaviour on the site:

*“Yeah, there is definitely drugs. And it’s got to the stage now where we do have residents that will look after this site, they’ll walk their dogs here or whatever, phone it into us if there’s a problem, but they’ve got to the stage now where they say they don’t feel safe coming here to walk their dogs, so we’ve lost our prevention team, really...” (Victim 3).*

Indeed, it was not just intimidation which could lead to the loss of informal social control and the increase in low-level criminal behaviour. When sites were subject to building work for restoration purposes, for example, this would prevent members of public from engaging with the site as they usually did: “...because of that [building work] there isn’t



*the deterrent effect of the members of the public who are legitimately going up there and walking around. So people can go up there and have a drink...and then they leave graffiti...” (Victim 7).*

The loss of this type of informal social control system could be disastrous for a site or asset, as these victims illustrated. Indeed, in no longer attracting those who were willingly exercising social control, these sites were left increasingly vulnerable to criminal activity.

## **6.9: Heritage crime occurring out of ignorance**

Victims were unanimous in their belief that heritage crime was rarely committed intentionally. Instead, they argued that heritage crime largely occurred out of ignorance, and every victim had experienced heritage crimes which they attributed to ignorance. A primary reason cited by the victims for crime committing out of ignorance, amongst children and teenagers specifically, was boredom: *“...a lot of the crime is...what I would describe as low-level stuff, which is...a result of boredom” (Victim 11).* The victims also made a distinction between the crimes which occurred out of ignorance, and those that did not: *“The kids-I don’t mind cleaning up after the kids. It’s the adults, they genuinely just don’t care” (Victim 9).*

Furthermore, the circumstances and environment of heritage sites and assets could also contribute to crimes occurring on them which were a result of ignorance. As mentioned previously, many heritage sites and assets do not have permanent guardians, are not overlooked, and therefore, may be seen as inviting places for individuals to commit low-level offences without being caught:

*“I don’t think a lot of people that come and commit these crimes actually know that it’s a heritage site. I think a lot of the crime that’s happening on heritage sites are, where they’ve stumbled across an area, and seen an advantage, or a place where they can just muck around. They don’t realise-it’s just a place where they’ve stumbled upon. And it’s like, “Gosh guys, look at this. There’s no-one around, there’s lots of bricks we can throw, there’s massive graffiti on all these walls, no-one cares about it, we can smoke cannabis, we can do our drugs without anyone seeing us” So I don’t think they’re actually here purposefully to create heritage crime, it’s just they’ve found that place they can do it without disturbance (Victim 3).*

From the victims' responses, it was found that those who were most likely to commit heritage crime out of ignorance were young people and teenagers. The actions of these two groups must be contextualised, however, within the current austerity led environment affecting local councils and young people's services (Weale, 2020). These groups were more likely to be found unintentionally causing damage on heritage sites as the local amenities for young people, such as skateparks and youth clubs, had been shut down: *"We now have cyclists that are using this as a BMX track, because the council shut down the BMX track a mile and a half down the road"* (Victim 3). Young people did not have anywhere to gather that was catered towards them, and heritage sites and assets became a place to seek shelter and a refuge from authority.

One victim disclosed how heritage crimes which had been committed out of ignorance could, perhaps ironically, be moved through the CJS far more effectively (e.g. through diversionary action) than those which were committed consciously or deliberately. More serious and, arguably, malicious infractions such as illegal metal detecting, which in the victim's opinions was far more likely to be deliberate, left little to no evidence. This created a frustrating dichotomy:

*"And then you have to have the evidence. And the police'll say "Where's the evidence?" to bring a prosecution. It makes simple things, which are actually very minor, like a case of graffiti, which was really somebody who probably didn't know they were doing anything wrong...it's reported by locals, who are outraged about it, the local police officer says "Well, look, you know, we can do something about this, this is a crime"...Historic England wrote a crime impact statement, and they were obviously cautioned. But most cases, you're looking at, you know, metal detecting, where you can't find...there's very little to do if you don't have the evidence"* (Victim 4).

Indeed, Victim 10, too, argued that illegal metal detecting was a heritage crime which was likely to be committed deliberately, with the perpetrator possessing full knowledge of what they were doing, but when undertaken on open sites (akin to that described by Victim 4) were very difficult to catch: *"I think it's just people seeing somewhere that they think they can play with their new toy, and oh I've found something so I'll dig it up, finders keepers. I mean there's nobody around so why not, that sort of thing"* (Victim 10).

Therefore, crimes that were the product of ignorance, but left tangible evidence proving that they had occurred, and which police officers understood, moved more successfully through the CJS, despite the relative 'innocence' of the individual who had committed

them. Contrastingly, deliberate heritage crimes such as illegal metal detecting, rarely leave any tangible evidence (except a hole in the ground), making it more difficult to justify a police investigation.

## **6.10 : Conclusion**

This chapter explored police understandings and perceptions of heritage crime from the perspective of the victims of heritage crime. Interviews with victims revealed that there were four reasons for the substandard police understanding and negative perception of heritage crime, alongside one reason for the good understanding and positive perception of heritage crime from police officers. The role of PCSOs in the policing of heritage crime was then analysed. This chapter then examined what the consequences of austerity measures had been for victims of heritage crime, finding that austerity measures had had a tangible influence upon victims' expectations of police response. This examination of austerity measures further revealed an instrumental finding of this thesis; the notion of victims of heritage crime 'de-victimising' themselves.

It was also found that, contrary to the finding in the last chapter, victims did not underreport heritage crime due to a lack of confidence in the police. Instead, the victims endeavoured to report all the heritage crime they could but were often prevented from completing their reports by call handlers. In relation to the recording of heritage crime, this chapter highlighted how victims could be inadvertently contributing to the downgrading of heritage crime within police forces, by only requesting for the recording of heritage crime for the purposes of receiving a crime number; as opposed to asking for a police response.

The victims and impact of heritage crime were then discussed. The responses from the victims mirrored those of the heritage practitioners and police officers, with all interviewees agreeing that the impacts of heritage crime were felt by individuals, the community, wider society, and future generations. Moreover, such impacts were far broader than they might initially appear to a police officer. The difficulties of employing crime prevention measures on heritage sites were then addressed, alongside the problems which incurred from these difficulties. Lastly, this chapter also revealed that victims unanimously believed that heritage crime was rarely undertaken maliciously.

# CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

## 7.1: Introduction

This chapter synthesises the findings of Chapters 4, 5, and 6, and specifically returns to address the five research questions which underpin this thesis:

1. How has the heritage sector in England and Wales influenced attitudes towards heritage and heritage crime in each country?
2. How do police officers understand, become aware of and perceive heritage crime, and how does this affect their response to victims?
3. What obstacles exist to impede the effective policing of heritage crime in England and Wales?
4. Who are the victims of heritage crime, and how do they understand, perceive and respond to it?
5. Can victim-focussed mechanisms be developed to overcome the obstacles to the effective policing of heritage crime?

Section 7.2 begins by examining the factors behind the generally poor police understanding, perception and awareness of heritage crime in England and Wales. It also addresses the problems which participants in this study encountered when engaging with call handlers, illustrates the consequences of affixing heritage crime to the existing remit of RWCOs; and considers the role of the PCSO in relation to the policing and prevention of heritage crime. Section 7.3 illustrates how partnerships have struggled to be successful in tackling heritage crime, and why the CPS struggles to take offences through the CJS. Potential solutions are proposed. Finally, section 7.4 centres upon the victims of heritage crime. It proposes a new typology for victims of heritage crime and unpicks why victims tend to de-victimise themselves (first noted in 6.5.2). Section 7.5 focusses upon methods of improving understanding and awareness of heritage crime across the police, and considers why heritage crime policy has not transferred into practice. This section also illustrates the issues with reporting and recording heritage crime in greater detail. Lastly

section 7.6 discusses how existing criminological theory has been advanced in the context of these findings.

## **7.2: Policing factors**

### **7.2.1 : Police understandings, perceptions, and awareness of heritage crime**

A key aim of this research was to establish the understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime amongst police forces in England and Wales. The results of this research have established that police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime are, on the whole, poor (excluding of course, officers in this research, and officers who are personally interested in heritage crime). The findings from this research are consistent with existing qualitative empirical research findings, namely those from the *Nighthawking Report* (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a; 2009b) and Shelbourn's (2014a; 2014b) research. As explored in section 2.4.3, both the *Nighthawking Report* (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a) and Shelbourn's (2014) survey to archaeologists, revealed that police officers lacked knowledge and interest in heritage crime, did not give sufficient recognition to the victims of heritage crime, and often perceived it as victimless. Findings from this research, meanwhile, revealed how police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime have altered little in the years since these earlier studies. Aside from this, this thesis also builds upon the existing body of literature by establishing the *reasons* for the lack of understanding, poor awareness and poor perception of heritage crime amongst police officers.

In this chapter, 7.2.1 explores the following three internal policing factors which contribute to a poor police understanding, perception and awareness of heritage crime: downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime, fear of the unknown, and a lack of training and knowledge. These factors are all significantly influenced by police culture and are therefore grouped together. They also focus upon front-line officers. Two more internal policing factors also contribute to poor police understanding, perception and awareness of heritage crime. These are: call handlers as gatekeepers, and the rural and wildlife conundrum. These factors cover more areas of policing (not just front-line officers) and therefore necessitate more detail. As such, they are considered in their own respective sections (see 7.2.2 and 7.3.3)

### **7.2.1A: Downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime**

Prevailing police culture underpins the following three internal policing factors. Firstly, downgrading the severity and validity of heritage crime. Police officers believe that only police officers understand policing (Sparrow et al, 1990) and therefore they have the greatest understanding of crime and criminal law (Reiner, 1992b). This was observed in their poor responses to victims of heritage crime and heritage practitioners, where 'regular' police officers downgraded the severity and validity of heritage crime, by telling victims and heritage practitioners that: i) heritage crime was not a crime, ii) the crime would not be responded to as it was not a valid crime, and iii) arguing with victims about whether heritage crime was a crime. The attitude was one of 'We, the police, know best' (Adlam, 2002: 25). However, when this mantra is challenged by victims citing legislation for example, this may undermine the officer's authority and his/her identity.

Victims of heritage crime and heritage practitioners fall into what Holdaway (1983:77) refers to as 'challengers'; individuals who stem from various disciplines which allow them to quite literally challenge police practice and threaten the control police officers have over their territory. These individuals crack the protective shell of police culture (Holdaway, 1986: 150) by, for example, revealing that they know more about heritage crime than police officers, through citing legislation that the officer does not understand. As such, the officer's authority and position as the most knowledgeable individual in the policing-victim exchange is challenged, as occurred in many of the cases explored in this thesis. In the experiences of victims and heritage practitioners, this challenge was met with strong resistance, with officers refusing to acknowledge that heritage crime was indeed a valid crime.

### **7.2.1B: Fear of the unknown**

The second factor is 'fear of the unknown'. Through this factor, a central facet of police culture is manifested, namely the fact that officers do not like being given tasks which take them out of their comfort zone (Skogan, 2012). A general fear of the unknown in relation to heritage crime therefore, arguably stems from a reluctance on the part of officers, to engage in policing areas they do not understand, as Goodman (1997:480) writes '...police officers, like other human beings, do not like doing things they are not good at or do not understand...' This echoes the sentiments of the police officers in this research, who argued that regular officers would not want to engage in heritage crime as they were

worried about encountering an area, which they had limited knowledge of, to the point at which this reluctance threatened potentially successful heritage crime cases progressing through the CJS. Indeed, the fear and reticence regular officers felt when engaging with heritage crime cases also illustrates why having a heritage crime SPOC was so crucial, to the interviewed officers. The officers in this research stressed that a heritage crime SPOC was an important solution to alleviating these fears:

*“You’d have people that are more willing to deal with it if you could have that fallback, and sort of say “Right, I have spoken to an expert (SPOC), he’s given me X Y Z advice, and then I’m gonna go to interview my suspect and I feel more confident in dealing with it” that’s what I’d say” (Officer 5).*

A heritage crime SPOC would remove this fear of the unknown, to a great extent, as well as the fear of recourse for making mistakes in an area that officer is unfamiliar with.

### **7.2.1 C: Lack of training and knowledge**

The last factor concerns the lack of training and knowledge on heritage crime amongst police officers. Officers in this research felt that they lacked training in heritage crime, which impacted upon their knowledge of the area. Lack of training was symptomatic of the lack of internal support they had also experienced, and whilst it is widely accepted within policing that officers will learn on the job (Charman, 2017); gaining on the job experience was difficult when heritage crime was so marginalised within their workloads. If police officers had the relevant training, their knowledge of heritage crime would, naturally, be better than that which officers have currently. Training would also mean that these officers are in a better position to educate regular officers about heritage crime and help the same officers tackle heritage crime cases with confidence.

A possible explanation for the lack of training could be a product of the police cultural attitudes towards new areas of crime. When faced with a new ‘problem,’ forces often form specialised squads or units in response to the problem (Maguire, 2003). This was internally recognised by the Metropolitan Police in the saying “When in doubt, form a squad and rush about’ (Sparrow et al, 1990). However, the creation of these squads indicates to officers outside of the squad that they are absolved of responsibility for policing anything within the squad’s remit (Moore, 1992: 115). ‘Squad creation’ can hinder innovation; police forces are unlikely to actively seek for ways to improve upon

their existing practices, as the squad is seen as already dealing with the ‘new’ crime (Ibid). These issues are replicated in many ways for heritage crime officers. Regular officers expressed no awareness of, nor interest in heritage crime, removing the need for large scale training. As the heritage crime problem was already being dealt with through the creation of the heritage crime officer (paralleling the squad in this case) there was no need for training for heritage crime officers, and no need to improve upon the policing of heritage crime; as the heritage crime problem has been tackled from a policing perspective. It is suggested that this is a very short-sighted approach, but, nonetheless, would go some way to explaining why heritage crime officers interviewed within this study had received little to no training.

Lastly, although the understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime were largely poor amongst regular officers, Chapter 6 did reveal pockets of good practice across England and Wales. This good practice stemmed from officers who already had an existing interest and passion for heritage and heritage crime. This interest and passion led these officers to have a positive perception and understanding of the crime, resulting in victims receiving a good response from these officers. Their awareness of heritage crime also gave them an ability to recognise both the crime, and the severity and impact of it, far better than their colleagues. Yet, despite these pockets of good practice, it appears that the overall understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime amongst police officers across England and Wales, are poor.

The two further factors which contributed to poor overall understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime are explored further below in sections 7.2.2, and 7.2.3.

### **7.2.2 : Call handlers: the crucial link**

A key theme which emerged from this research were the difficulties victims and heritage practitioners had in conveying the importance of heritage crime to police call handlers, who did not have the resources to ‘triage’ heritage crime accurately, record it, and then send it onto the heritage crime SPOC (if necessary). Call handlers ‘...set the agenda and act as gate-keepers to police assistance’ (Garner and Johnson, 2013: 35). In this study, the gate-keeping position meant that call handlers were at times responsible for preventing heritage crimes which *did* merit a police response, from progressing through the CJS. In being the first point of contact for victims of heritage crime seeking a criminal justice



response, call handlers should ideally be equipped with the skills to recognise and log heritage crime as ‘heritage crime.’

The call handler role is fast paced and demanding. Their primary goal is to rapidly determine the nature of calls they receive, assign a level of urgency to the call, and determine the most appropriate response to it (Milne and Bull, 2016:178). As part of this role, they are constantly having to engage in what Lumsden and Black (2018: 614) term ‘boundary work’, wherein call handlers assess whether the call that they receive falls into the boundaries of police work. Boundary work is an unfixed concept (ibid), so call handlers must individually determine if a call necessitates a police response. When receiving a phone call, call handlers ask a series of questions (usually working from a list of question prompts, referred to as a call-script), in order to establish if there are any specific lines of enquiry for a police investigation (Leeney and Johnson, 2012). Examples include if there were any witnesses, or if CCTV was in use and may have captured anything regarding the incident (Stafford, 2018).

Call handlers clearly lack understanding and awareness of heritage crime. This, combined with the issue of boundary work amongst police call handlers, and a call script which does not account for heritage crime, means that the repeated issues the victims and heritage practitioners experienced, when calling the police in this study, were somewhat inevitable. Both boundary work and the call script heightened the existent issues regarding a lack of understanding and awareness of heritage crime on the part of call handlers and incurred various consequences. Call handlers are not taught to recognise the nuances of heritage crime, such as the inability to utilise crime prevention methods on heritage sites and assets. They would follow their normal call script, assessing heritage crime calls on the basis that they were the same as other crimes. This included asking the prescriptive questions on call scripts, which could not account for the unique aspects of heritage crime and heritage sites and assets, such as asking if the site or asset had CCTV. Indeed, after asking these standardised questions, victims explained how call handlers would close down what was in fact a valid crime, leaving victims disappointed and frustrated.

Although the purpose of the call handler is to filter out incidents which do not require police involvement (Manning, 1982), all of the above issues meant that call handlers were simply unable to differentiate heritage crime from ‘normal’ crimes, and thus filtered heritage crime out of police systems incorrectly. These issues came to the fore when call handlers told victims and heritage practitioners that there was no possibility of them

recognising and recording certain heritage crimes on police recording systems, despite victims and heritage practitioners citing legislation to explain that what had occurred was a crime. In the face of a crime which call handlers did not understand, victims and heritage practitioners also reported call handlers being sceptical and discouraging. Indeed, there appeared to be a disjuncture between the caller and call handlers. This disjuncture is known as frame mismatch, where ‘interactional trouble’ between the caller and call handler occurs as ‘...organizational resources are already pressed and the caller's difficulty is not a high priority one, or [the call] involves asking callers for certain types of information’ (Tracy, 1997: 338). Heritage crime is rarely a high priority call (as there is no human victim) and a heritage crime call necessitates the call handler knowing what heritage crime is, to ask for the specific information which would identify a heritage crime. Call handlers are unable to do so without relevant guidance or training.

The officers and heritage practitioners interviewed for this research felt that educating call handlers about heritage crime would both streamline the reporting process and gradually improve general police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime. With a better understanding of what heritage crime was, callers would not have to persuade call handlers that heritage crime was both serious and merited a police response. From a policing perspective, knowledgeable call handlers could improve the overall police response to heritage crime by being able to accurately assess incoming calls, and then distribute and inform officers accordingly, as the following officer explained: *“And then with contact and call handling, I think that should be a yearly input [of training]. Because they are likely to come across it far more...I need them to know. If they know, then they should resource it correctly”* (Officer 1). In turn, officers would approach the crime with a reasonable level of informed awareness of what they were attending; allowing them to respond accordingly. Call handlers might benefit from face-to-face training, but this is only likely to be possible in certain forces where the heritage crime SPOC is provided with enough time to engage in internal outreach: time which the SPOCs in this research all struggled to achieve. The call handling role also has problems with high staff turnover (Stafford, 2016), meaning training would have to be repeated, and would therefore likely be unsustainable.

Whilst training may not be feasible, there *is* a pressing case for call handlers to be provided with short guidance on heritage crime, developed by a heritage body. Such guidance might assist call handlers in identifying heritage crime. For example, guidance might include a short explanation of what heritage crime is, and key terminology such as

‘Ancient Monument’ or ‘Grade listed.’ A call handler’s guide has been produced for the similarly marginalised area of wildlife crime by the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) (NWCU, 2018), which suggests that such an option would be feasible. Although the NWCU is firmly embedded within policing (more-so than heritage crime, meaning that suggested guidance is more likely to be accepted), having been a police intelligence unit since 2006 (NWCU, 2019b), there is arguably, scope for Historic England and Cadw to develop similar guidance utilising the resources and connections through Historic England’s Heritage Crime Programme. Indeed, developing guidance in conjunction with police officers is likely to produce guidance which translates effectively into practice. Technologically, guidance could be complemented by a flag on internal systems, which, when the call handler had identified the location of the caller, highlighted if the location was a heritage site or asset. However, this could pose resource challenges for many forces.

Of course, guidance would not completely resolve all of the issues associated with logging and recording heritage crime accurately. Good guidance does not negate human error. Nevertheless, any actions towards ensuring that heritage crime is logged and recorded accurately, as far as possible, are important to undertake. Implementing guidance for call handlers is the first step in improving the recording and responses to heritage crime, and the treatment of victims, and heritage practitioners, by call handlers. Further issues with reporting and recording, which are not linked to police culture, are explored in section 7.6.

### **7.2.3: The Rural and Wildlife conundrum**

As illustrated in Chapters 2 and 4, heritage crime is inextricably linked to rural and wildlife crime and is (wrongly) considered to be a subset of both these crimes. Indeed, the FOI responses supported the latter, revealing that responsibility for policing heritage crime was mostly delegated to Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers, (RWCOs) or civilian officers specifically concerned with the co-ordination of RWCOs. This section will specifically focus upon the nine RWCOs identified within this research.

This research found that the attachment of heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime, and subsequent allocation of heritage crime to the policing remit of RWCOs, was both perplexing and frustrating for the RWCOs interviewed. The ill-thought-out grouping of these crimes, without an overt link, had simply resulted in an increased workload for these officers, a workload consisting of another marginalised area of crime for which they had received no training, guidance or support. Indeed, current policing literature offers no

clear explanation as to why heritage crime has been subsumed under rural and wildlife crime. The NPCC's Rural Affairs Strategy states that there will be a continuous link to heritage crime when policing the rural, as heritage crime is said to be an intrinsically linked theme within rural policing (NPCC, 2018a: 6). Its sister document, the NPCC's Wildlife Crime Policing Strategy, also cites heritage crime as an: '...intrinsically linked theme[s]...' (NPCC, 2018b: 3). Neither document explains why and how heritage crime is intrinsically linked to both rural and wildlife crime. Compounding these issues further, the aforementioned Rural Affairs Strategy document states that heritage crime (alongside off-road biking and fisheries related crime) is placed amongst *Organisational Priorities*, as opposed to the key *Operational Priorities*. This means that the policing of heritage crime will be managed by each individual police force regionally and locally (Ibid, 2018b), resulting in forces having significant autonomy (explored further below) over how they police heritage crime. This possibly explains why the FOI responses in this research are so varied.

This autonomy, and lack of priority afforded to heritage crime within the NPCC documents, contradicts the prioritisation of heritage crime in police forces which is suggested by Historic England. For example, in 2013 it was announced that every police force within England would have a dedicated 'Heritage Crime Liaison Officer', and since this time, it has been reported that every force in England does have one of these officers (Kerr, 2018). This research has revealed that this is, unfortunately, not the case. Indeed, these contradictions between policy and practice may provide an explanation for the inconsistencies in the implementation of heritage crime officers across England (all four Welsh forces had a heritage crime officer), described in the FOI responses, and the seemingly rash allocation of heritage crime to RWCOs. Despite *subsuming* heritage crime into the policing of rural and wildlife crime, the policing of heritage crime is not being *imposed* upon police forces by the NPCC, and in not being policed at a national level, all accountability is also removed from the NPCC. Arguably, the fact that police forces are not being explicitly *told* to police heritage crime and are being left to manage heritage crime at regional and local levels themselves, leaves little incentive for police forces to police heritage crime rigorously, if at all. Indeed, Officer 12 firmly believed that the only method of policing heritage crime effectively, considering that many forces would not be enthusiastic about creating another policing problem for themselves, was to make the policing of it obligatory:

*“So the only way to deal with that is to, at an NPCC level, to dictate that all forces will do this. Make it obligatory. And if its obligatory, they’ll all preserve it, they’ll have to tick a box to say they’ve got one [heritage crime officer], and when he leaves, or she leaves, they have to bring someone else in, and then they will complete this national training course before they do this and whatever” (Officer 12).*

With no internal authority monitoring police performance of the area, forces do not strictly *have* to police heritage crime; resulting in the patchwork approach documented by this research. However, some interviewees did experience external pressure to police heritage crime (likely from Historic England’s Policing and Crime Advisor). This, the officers felt, had led to the generally haphazard allocation of the crime (bar the three officers who volunteered for the role), where heritage crime was hastily thrust upon them as their forces responded to this external pressure. Nevertheless, overall, it appears that there is almost no internal pressure to police heritage crime, which feeds into a continuous cycle of a lack of guidance, direction, and resources to police the crime. Indeed, police officers can tell if senior officers are serious about policing certain crimes through the amount of resource allocated to a particular area (Chan, 1997); of which heritage crime has little.

The reasons for affixing heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime may never become entirely clear, but this affixation has resulted in a plethora of issues for the officers responsible for the policing of heritage crime. This research revealed that it was difficult for many of the officers to undertake the core parts of the heritage crime officer role, such as raising awareness of their position internally, as they were juggling multiple areas of crime already. The officers who were RWCOs were forced to prioritise their limited time towards rural and wildlife crime; those crimes were their chief focus, and remained so, before being allocated heritage crime. Such findings mirror the existing literature on wildlife crime, where Wildlife Crime Officers (WCOs) reported that their effectiveness as WCOs, and ability to have any sort of impact in their role was limited; for they were juggling responsibility for wildlife crime alongside their current policing position (Fyfe and Reeves, 2011). Organisational perceptions of wildlife crime also forced these officers to prioritise every other crime over wildlife crime (Ibid, 2011). Although all interviewees were juggling additional responsibilities alongside their core policing role, the pressure associated with juggling crimes is arguably amplified for RWCOs, who are already contending with two areas of crime which usually involve extensive partnership working, outreach work, and having to provide guidance as the ‘expert’ in their force to colleagues who may encounter the crime (Enticott, 2011; Mawby, 2016).

Compounding these issues further, nine of the 12 officers in this research had received no choice in the allocation of heritage crime to their existing role. Superiors delegating responsibility for certain areas of crime to officers without these officers having a choice, is normal cultural practice in the hierarchal policing structure, where officers are simply ‘...expected to follow orders within an organised bureaucracy with militaristic leanings’ (Jefferson, 1990: 20). However, as noted in 4.5.2, if the heritage crime role continues to be allocated without taking into account the personal enthusiasm and motivation of individual officers, such actions are likely to result in the ineffective policing of the area.

It would perhaps, have been advisable to consult the scant literature on heritage crime, and the wealth of literature on policing the similarly marginalised areas of rural and wildlife crime, when developing the heritage crime officer role. However, the implementation of heritage crime officers has instead been poorly organised and ill-thought-out. Prior to implementation, there should have been a much greater level of engagement with what existing research already tells us, such the Oxford Archaeology reports, (2009a, 2009b), Kirkwood’s (1994) research on the best models for allocating wildlife crime within policing, and findings regarding the errors in policing arts and antiques crime (Committee for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000; Steel, 2007). Using this existing knowledge base could have helped to circumvent potential challenges and difficulties. Policing is a largely practical task, but research findings can be an important resource in streamlining approaches to marginalised areas of crime.

#### **7.2.4 : Differences between the policing of heritage crime in England and Wales**

Research Question 4 (RQ4) concerns how police officers understand, perceive and become aware of heritage crime in England and Wales. It was anticipated that there may be differences in the understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime between England and Wales, and that this may manifest itself in a difference in the policing of the crime between both countries.

Analysis of the interviews revealed that there were minimal differences in the policing of heritage crime between England and Wales. One important difference to mention, however, is that in contrast to England, all four police forces in Wales have formed an All Wales Heritage Crime Group, with the aim of sharing best practice and pooling resources together to police heritage crime more efficiently (Pers comms, 2018). It remains to be

seen what kind of impacts the creation of this group will have upon the policing of heritage crime in Wales, but as these forces are already accustomed to working together (Gwent PCC, 2019), they are likely to be positive. Indeed, cross-force collaboration comes with a host of benefits, including the ability to spread limited resources more widely, saving money, and increasing policing capabilities (Rogers, 2017). Furthermore, because this cross-force work is specifically within Wales, many of the issues which may inhibit cross-force collaboration, such as clashing of regional identities and imbalance between big and small forces (Ibid), are likely to be mitigated. In addition, the small number and close proximity of the forces in Wales (all are within the same country) means that the efficiency and effectiveness of this group is likely to be far higher than the very disjointed, and arguably isolating, nature of policing heritage crime in England.

### **7.2.5 : The importance of the PCSO**

It transpired from the victim interviews that there was a distinct correlation between victims who reported a universally positive response to heritage crime, and a PCSO attending the incident, whilst victims who had police officers attend heritage crimes were far less satisfied with their response. This is an important area to explore further, as it suggests that police forces are potentially allocating responsibility for heritage crime to the incorrect areas within the organisation. Indeed, the FOI responses show that heritage crime officers are largely ranked at PC and above.

The victims in this study discussed the importance of the surrounding community in the prevention and reporting of heritage crime locally, as the local community often felt a strong sense of ownership over ‘their’ heritage sites and assets. They also expressed that the positive and accessible relationship they had with PCSOs was a product of their local PCSOs broader engagement and embedment within the community. Victims were impressed with the PCSOs willingness to listen and act upon the issues the victims raised. Raising awareness of heritage crime amongst the local community and community engagement can be achieved far more readily by PCSOs than police officers (Cosgrave and Ramshaw, 2015). PCSOs generally have more time to spend building up community relations and developing a detailed knowledge of their local beat, whereas police officers are often too preoccupied with other tasks (such as case building) to be able to achieve the aforementioned (O’Neill, 2014). As Victim 7 described, the accessibility of his local PCSO meant that he had been able to forge a good relationship with this PCSO, at a regular ‘surgery’ which the PCSO held within the local area. This strong relationship

alleviated some of Victim 7's fears of further heritage crime occurring. Indeed, findings from the *Nighthawking Report* (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a: 98) also reflected positively upon PCSOs, finding that their ability to walk the local beat regularly permitted them to informally monitor heritage sites or assets, thus helping to prevent heritage crime. Walking the beat may also help PCSOs recognise heritage sites and assets more easily, which they may then develop a sense of ownership over themselves.

PCSOs are also equipped with the powers to gather witness statements for certain crimes, to view CCTV footage (helpful for some heritage sites and assets) and to address low-level crimes and ASB (O'Neill, 2019). The latter is particularly important, as it was found that numerous low-level crimes which occurred on heritage sites and assets, were often a by-product of their open and unattended nature. These types of low-level crimes are unlikely to be perceived as warranting an urgent response by police officers, particularly as there is no direct human victim. However, in knowing their 'patch' comprehensively, PCSOs are arguably better positioned to assess risk, vulnerability and the contextual aspects of low-level crimes than a police officer can (Sutherland, 2014). This is advantageous when low-level crimes occur on heritage sites and assets, as a PCSO may be better placed to understand the significant impacts of these crimes upon the site or asset itself and the local community, more readily than police officers. Therefore, accounting for the existing literature, victim's comments in this study, and the capabilities of the PCSO; it could be suggested that PCSOs are better placed to tackle heritage crime than police officers.

The disadvantage of this approach is that an interested and motivated police officer would still have to take upon the role of force heritage crime SPOC; for PCSOs are unable to investigate and prosecute crime (Paskell, 2007). This individual would take upon an advisory role to PCSOs, acting as an interim between the police and heritage bodies, and picking up cases which require further investigation (beyond PCSO powers), for example. Despite the drawback of still having to have a force SPOC, one of the aims of the NPCC Cultural Heritage and Property Crime National Strategic Assessment (2017:17) is to develop a training programme for Heritage Crime Officers and PCSOs, alongside volunteers within the police. Therefore, this suggestion already has a basis for a potential new approach in tackling heritage crime.

There may also be financial benefits to this approach, as in-depth heritage crime training is unlikely to be necessary. This thesis therefore proposes that a combination of regular



patrol by PCSOs of their local area, alongside regular engagement with the local community (victims in this study often made PCSOs aware of heritage in their patrol area), would result in PCSOs knowing heritage sites and assets, and the potential victims and impacts of heritage crime comprehensively; without requiring in-depth training. This was the case for one victim from a small-scale study of heritage crime in Nottinghamshire (Poyser and Poyser, 2017), who felt like the response from police officers to heritage crime was far less sympathetic and empathetic than the local PCSO, who knew the asset which was subject to heritage crime very well. Indeed, because PCSOs are already likely to know and understand the value and importance of heritage sites and assets to their local community, the default response is likely to be sympathetic and positive.

The importance of the PCSO in tackling heritage crime is further heightened when examining the policing of heritage crime through the lens of policing models. As explored in 2.5.2, few policing models are effective in the policing of heritage crime. Of neighbourhood policing (NP), problem-orientated policing (POP) and intelligence-led policing (ILP), NP appears to be the only effective method of policing heritage crime; and findings relating to PCSOs reinforced this assertion. Findings also reinforced that neither POP nor ILP are currently effective methods of policing heritage crime, primarily because they require police recorded data to work (Tilley, 2009); of which there is currently none on heritage crime. This means that neither model is particularly suitable. By process of elimination, this leaves neighbourhood policing. Heritage crime aligns well with NP, which is orientated around preventative approaches, engaging the public, and longer-term outcomes (O'Neill, 2019), which all apply to heritage crime. As the interviewees in this research outlined, the current approach to heritage crime centres around crime prevention, longer term outcomes (the response to heritage crime is rarely reactive) and the impact is primarily centred around the local community (unless heritage crime occurs against a nationally recognised site or asset). Ultimately, PCSOs are integral to neighbourhood policing (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015) and so, it appears that PCSOs are indeed one of the best placed members of the police organisation to tackle heritage crime.

In short, the existing literature and findings of this thesis place PCSOs squarely within the remit of policing heritage crime, and the neighbourhood policing model as the best approach for delivering a PCSO-centric approach to the latter. Of course, delegating responsibility for heritage crime to PCSOs is an approach which would only work well in certain forces, and would clearly be redundant in those which have already abolished their PCSOs (Dodd, 2019b). A neighbourhood policing led approach to heritage crime would

also arguably be far easier to conduct in communities which are more cohesive and possess high levels of social capital. However, the feeling of shared, cognitive ownership of heritage sites and assets (Boyd et al, 2005), and the abilities of PCSOs to build social capital (Rogers, 2017), could mitigate any potential issues a PCSO led approach to the policing of heritage crime might incur.

### **7.3: Partnership factors**

This section addresses Research Questions 3, 4 and 5. RQ3 concerns the obstacles which exist in the effective policing of heritage crime in England and Wales. RQ4 addresses who the victims of heritage crime are, and how they understand and respond to heritage crime. Lastly, RQ5 examines whether victim-focussed mechanisms can be developed to overcome the obstacles outlined above.

Chapter 4 established that partnership working between the police and the heritage sector is already difficult to facilitate, due to differences in organisational languages and priorities. Despite these issues, heritage crime clearly requires the involvement of multiple parties to facilitate the efficient prevention, policing and prosecution of heritage crime. Neither police officers nor heritage practitioners can tackle heritage crime alone. Any discussion surrounding partnership working must therefore take into consideration the working cultures of the parties involved; alongside extraneous factors such as limited funding. All of these issues are taken into consideration below, where the existing problems and solutions to these problems are explored.

#### **7.3.1 : CPS related issues**

Both the officers and heritage practitioners interviewed for this research explained how there were numerous issues to contend with when attempting to guide heritage crime through the CJS. These issues centred around the CPS' lack of knowledge on heritage crime, miscommunication between parties, and subsequent misunderstandings between the CPS and heritage practitioners. Issues such as miscommunication should have been prevented through the Heritage Crime Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Historic England, 2019f), an agreement signed between the CPS, Historic England, and various other parties (e.g, local authorities). At a policy level, as mentioned in 4.7.2, the signing of this MOU appeared to ensure that heritage crime would be adequately addressed by the CPS. However, the findings of this research found that in practice, the keys facets of this

MOU have not been implemented thoroughly enough in every CPS Area. In HP3's experience, this had led to a case with a heritage crime element being 'thrown out' of court before the relevant heritage body could be contacted; as they should have been. In fact, the MOU appeared to have largely been forgotten by its signatories, as Victim 4 highlighted: *'There's a lot of intentions...the signing of something was very simple.'* In this victim's opinion, consistent action and recognition of this MOU had failed to accompany the signing of it.

CPS has appointed fourteen Crown Prosecutors across England and Wales to act as Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Coordinators, introduced in 2.3.3. These provide the specialist knowledge necessary to prosecute the aforementioned crimes (CPS, 2019). A chief issue however, which the officers in this study experienced, was that there was no guarantee that these specialist prosecutors would always be available to provide the degree of knowledge necessary for prosecuting heritage crime. Research recognises that even with a specialist prosecutor in place, prosecutor continuity is not always guaranteed (Bowcott, 2016), and this can be especially challenging when attempting to ensure that marginalised areas of crime are understood by, and receive appropriate attention from, a judge or magistrate (Flynn, 2017). For example, Officer 7 described how the specialist prosecutor for Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime in his force area was close to retirement, and gradually phasing out of his role. A replacement had not yet been found, meaning that when a wildlife crime case had been sent to court, instead of the specialist, an unknowledgeable lawyer had attended, who failed entirely to understand the case at hand: *"The lawyer that turned up on Monday in magistrates court for this job hadn't got a clue"* (Officer 7).

As such, the lawyer had to be guided through the process of prosecuting a wildlife crime, being told what to say and do by an outside expert who had luckily attended on the day of the case. Such findings reflect Nurse's (2008) interviews with representatives from NGOs, where it was found that regardless of the resources NGOs put into educating a specific prosecutor about the importance of wildlife crime, their work could easily be undermined if the case was suddenly passed to another prosecutor. This prosecutor was unlikely to have had to read the case file, and often failed to grasp the importance of the case (Ibid). Without knowledgeable prosecutors who are confident in prosecuting heritage crime, the severity and the gravity of heritage crime will not be understood by a magistrate or judge. Indeed, magistrates and judges already struggle to understand and reflect the severity and gravity of heritage crime in their sentencing; through lacking experience in prosecuting the

area and being accustomed to judging the severity of a crime based (in part) on its financial value. This practice cannot account for the symbolic and emotional value of heritage sites and assets affected by heritage crime (Shelbourn, 2008).

Therefore, whilst the implementation of fourteen Crown Prosecutors across England and Wales who specialise in rural, wildlife and heritage crime is, undoubtedly, a positive start in tackling these areas; there is clearly still much to be done. Improvements must be made in terms of adherence to the Heritage Crime MOU. It is argued therefore that one of the following options occurs: i) the MOU is signed on a yearly basis by its current signatories, and the relevant information regarding the MOU is disseminated to these signatories after they have signed the MOU, or ii) an online workspace is created specifically for these fourteen Crown Prosecutors, containing all of the relevant information needed to help them take Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime through the CJS, including clear reference to the MOU. It might also be beneficial for these prosecutors to receive some form of training session, workshop, or conference, led by Historic England or Cadw. Such an event would be specifically for the purposes of examining the impacts of heritage crime, providing contextual advice about Heritage Crime Impact Statements, and highlighting individuals to contact for advice.

Magistrates and judges should also arguably receive some form of guidance concerning heritage crime, due to the irregularity of heritage crime cases reaching court, the unfamiliarity of the crime, and the fact that specific niche legislation may need to be employed (Shelbourn, 2014b). Indeed, providing training for prosecutors and guidance for magistrates and judges is particularly timely, considering the recent changes to sentencing guidelines for heritage crime which apply to both Magistrate and Crown Courts (Historic England, 2019c). These changes have resulted in the ‘full impact’ of arson, criminal damage, and vandalism being considered in heritage crime cases; specifically highlighting that damage to heritage sites and assets can destroy unique parts of English and Welsh history, and should be taken into account during the sentencing process (Ibid: np).

Despite continued austerity measures which are affecting all areas of the CJS (Bowcott, 2018), it is vital that these fourteen Prosecutors (and possibly magistrates and judges) receive some form of training and sustained guidance from Historic England and Cadw; which enables the associated parties to exchange best practice. One theme which stood out from the findings of this research was the glaring lack of support officers and heritage practitioners alike received in their attempts to tackle heritage crimes. Heritage crime will

continue to be extremely vulnerable within the CJS if essential guidance is not provided, for the small number of practitioners who are currently responsible for the criminal justice response.

### **7.3.2 : Raiders of the Lost ARCH**

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 6, ARCH is a voluntary, cross-collaborative network, created in 2011, with the intention of reducing the amount of heritage crime in England (Wales is not included in ARCH's remit) (Historic England, 2019e). Despite the continued presence of the ARCH group on Historic England's webpages, according to all interviewees in this study, it appears that the project has stagnated. No tangible results appeared to be forthcoming from the group, and officers explained how ARCH was often only adhered to in name by the many police forces which had initially signed up in 2011. Fourteen of the 16 victims had no knowledge of ARCH, appearing to suggest that ARCH had limited outreach; corroborating the officer's assertions that the scheme had stagnated. The two victims who were aware of ARCH felt that many of those who had signed up to the initiative had felt pressured to do so, despite the ARCH webpage stating that the group consists of entirely voluntary participation. In Victim 16's words, the initiative was somewhat imposed upon the signatories. To these victims, the goals and long-term modus operandi of the group, were unclear.

ARCH appears to be another example of the difficulties of translating policy into practice which plagues heritage crime initiatives. ARCH's webpage states that conferences and training will be held, to network and share best practice (Historic England, 2019e). Chapters 4 and 6 revealed that in practice, these events have either not occurred, or that members were not aware of them. Indeed, none of the two victims who had heard of ARCH, nor the heritage practitioners or the police officers, had been involved in conferences, training events, or information sharing about heritage crime from the group. Shelbourn (2014b: 197) writes that one of the contributing factors to poor enforcement of heritage crime has been the failure of teamwork between the police and external parties; which is exacerbated by the lack of clarity and confusion about the roles of the various agencies involved in its enforcement. Whilst ARCH may have had the potential to diminish these stumbling blocks, it seems to have been unsuccessful in doing so.

ARCH is a multi-agency group, and the problems of multi-agency approaches are well documented. These include issues such as problems with information sharing, uncertain

aims and objectives, and differing expectations between parties (Edwards and Benyon, 2000). On the part of the police specifically, partnership working incurs a scepticism that tangible results will manifest (Pearson et al, 1992). However, literature has demonstrated that partnership working can be extremely effective in the policing of other niche areas of crime (Wellsmith, 2011). The infrastructure for such a multi-agency network to aid in the policing of heritage crime, is already in existence through ARCH, even if ARCH has stagnated. Therefore, this thesis recommends that, firstly, the current ARCH network and its members should be reviewed, in order to establish if the current members of ARCH still wish to participate in the initiative. Secondly, the members of ARCH should be consulted as to how they wish the initiative to progress, possibly through a questionnaire or conference to draw up a series of goals and clear objectives, which are mutually beneficial for all parties. Lastly and most importantly, a core component of partnership-based initiatives such as ARCH is strong leadership (Edwards et al, 2000). If initiatives like ARCH are to stand any chance of success, such robust leadership is essential.

## **7.4 The victims of heritage crime**

This section addresses RQ2 (how far do police officers understand, become aware of, and perceive heritage crime and how this affects their response to victims), RQ4 (who are the victims of heritage crime, and how do they understand, perceive and respond to heritage crime), and RQ5 (whether victim-focussed mechanisms can be developed to overcome the obstacles in the policing of heritage crime). Perhaps surprisingly, this research revealed how every interviewee recognised that the victims of heritage crime were vast and remarkably varied. These findings inform the development of a new victim typology, which helps to significantly develop and clarify our understanding of the nature and extent of heritage crime. It also considers the phenomenon of victims ‘de-victimising’ themselves, which illustrates how victims situate the poor police response they received against the backdrop of continued austerity measures.

### **7.4.1 : Typology of heritage crime victims**

One of the purposes of this research was to generate theoretical concepts which are specific to heritage crime, as there is a dearth of theory within current literature. A clear strand of similar responses emerged from all the interviewees pertaining to the victims of heritage crime. Every participant in this research unanimously agreed that the victims of heritage crime were wide reaching, varied, and included what can be distilled into the

following categories: the individual, the local community, wider society, and future generations. The study of heritage crime as an academic discipline lacks adequate examination of the victims of the phenomenon and has failed to categorise the various victims which emerge from heritage crime itself. Typologies are recognised as a useful method of breaking down otherwise complex concepts within law and criminology, into more easily understandable segments, allowing for a deepening of analysis (Siegel, 2016; Walklate, 2005). Although a typology concerning *types* of heritage crime does exist (Grove, 2013), a typology of heritage crime *victims* has yet to be created. The findings of this research have been used to inform the development of such a typology. This approach was thought to be the best method of examining the types of victims, which emerged from the findings in greater detail, whilst remaining reasonably simple.

Although the development of this victim typology has primarily been informed by the semi-structured interviews conducted for this thesis, other areas of academic literature have been drawn upon to help inform its development. These include green victimological literature, namely Skinnider's (2011) typology on the victims of green crime, and Shichor's (1989) model of white-collar crime victims. As mentioned in Chapter 2, victims of both green and white collar crime share many similarities with the victims of heritage crime, primarily due to the broad nature of victimisation which emerges from all three crimes (Skinnider, 2013; Becker, Jipson and Bruce, 2000). Drawing on Shichor's victim model and Skinnider's (2011) typology, it is proposed that the victims of heritage crime can be separated into the following categories:

- 1) Immediate personal victim
- 2) Professional or practising victim
- 3) Community/ communal victim
- 4) Remote victim
- 5) Future victim

Firstly, the immediate personal victim concerns the individual/s who directly look after the heritage site or asset in question, in a paid or unpaid role. The immediate personal victim can concern small groups of individuals, for example 'Friends' groups, who voluntarily involve themselves in the management and conservation of a heritage site or asset (Rugg and Parsons, 2018). These victims are emotionally and actively (in terms of caring for it) closest to the site or asset, and because the site or asset cannot be a victim itself in the way the police might understand (it is not a non-human animal or alive); such persons are the

first or immediate victim/s of the offence. Moreover, as the victims from this study reported, the individuals who look after heritage sites and assets almost always possess a strong personal connection to said site or asset, meaning that heritage crime often felt like a *personal* attack upon these individuals; hence the category ‘immediate personal victim.’ The immediate personal victim is similar to the direct victim of crime, but heritage crime victims cannot be considered direct victims in the traditional victimological sense, as addressed in 2.7.1. The term ‘immediate personal’ encompasses the personal connection to heritage, and the immediate impact heritage crime has upon what would be traditionally viewed as indirect victims.

The second victim of heritage crime is referred to as the ‘practicing victim’. These victims include heritage practitioners, such as Inspectors of Ancient Monuments working for Historic England and Cadw. These victims not only possess a strong understanding of the value of heritage sites and assets more widely, but they are also immersed in the conservation and preservation of heritage, and the discovery and analysis of heritage finds. For example, for an archaeologist, ‘...heritage is data’ (Smith and Waterton, 2012: 53). Heritage crime jeopardises or completely negates the ability for these practitioners to interpret and learn from heritage sites and assets. The practicing victim is differentiated from the other types of victim in this typology, because whilst the feeling of loss associated with heritage crime may not be as personal, these individuals arguably possess the greatest understanding of the wider impact of heritage crime. The loss of knowledge and potential to learn from these sites and assets may also be felt most acutely by these individuals.

Thirdly, the communal victim consists of every member of the local community. As this research has found, the impact of heritage crime upon the local community is often profound, as members of the community generally feel a strong sense of ownership over their local heritage assets and sites. Some of these sites and assets formed centres of the local community or were incorporated into the community’s everyday routine. Members of the local community might walk through an open site daily, for example. These victims are likely to not only just be affected emotionally by heritage crime, but they may also alter their behaviour in response to the crime. For example, victims may no longer feel safe enough to incorporate walking through a heritage site into their daily lives. Communal victims are on the tertiary level of victimisation, as the harm caused by the heritage crime diffuses outwards and impacts numerous individuals.



The remote victim is an individual who is familiar with the heritage site or asset, but they are distinguished from the communal victim as the site or asset is not part of their daily lives, nor is it local to them. These victims may only visit the site or asset occasionally, or even only once before, but it remains an important feature in these victim's lives. This victim may not be aware that heritage crime has occurred until, for example, they observe within the media that the site or asset has been subject to heritage crime (as recalled by Victim 5), or visit the site or asset after heritage crime has occurred. The distance the victim is from the site or asset does not appear to lessen their emotional response to heritage crime.

Finally, future victims are a victim who will have no knowledge of their victimisation. All interviewees agreed that future generations would be victims of heritage crime that had occurred in the present day. Future victims will lose the opportunity to understand, appreciate and visit certain heritage sites and assets if these sites and assets are permanently damaged or destroyed through heritage crime. Moreover, future victims will not be able to understand the contextual nature (provenance) of these sites and assets if they continue to be subject to issues such as illegal metal detecting, theft and trafficking. The victims in this research also illustrated how the loss of heritage disadvantages future generations, as it removes both tangible and intangible connections to the past.

#### **7.4.1A: 'Heritage' as a potential victim**

There is not space in this thesis to explore the concept of 'heritage' as a victim in depth, but in light of the creation of the above typology, it is important to mention the idea that 'heritage' may be a victim itself.

Victims of heritage crime are rarely immediate, particularly to police officers. Indeed, according to the typology of heritage crime victims mentioned above, the victims of heritage crime are largely broad, reflecting the breadth of victimisation which occurs as a result of heritage crime. Perhaps one of the greatest losses with regards to heritage crime is that future generations will not know what they have lost. This draws parallels to green criminologists' recognition that environmental losses have a similarly significant impact upon future generations, in terms of their quality of life and the ability to learn from the environment (Nurse, 2017). It could be argued that future generations are the greatest victims of heritage crime. Current victims of heritage crime may be able to reconcile their victimisation, but future generations are deprived of the latter, and more so, the ability to even conceptualise the breadth of their victimisation. They are arguably most

vulnerable to victimisation, because of the abstract nature of their victimisation to current generations.

It is important to consider the idea that heritage may also be a victim in and of itself. This radical conception has been broached by green criminologists who consider the environment itself as a victim (Skinnider, 2013). Parts of the environment which are considered victims include flora, fauna, ecosystems and landscape features (such as hills and rivers) and are grouped under the name non-human environmental entities (White, 2020: 81). If non-human environmental entities can be considered victims, then there is room for heritage sites and assets to also be considered victims. Heritage sites and assets, much like non-human environmental entities, have no voice, and therefore require protection from those with a voice, such as researchers and the government (Lynch, 2020: 51). The loss of heritage has similarly adverse impacts to the loss of the environment, many of which are intangible (such as the loss of knowledge, the loss to future generations) and irreplaceable. For these reasons, heritage sites and assets might also be considered victims of heritage crime.

#### **7.4.2: Victims ‘de-victimising’ themselves**

An interesting theme which emerged from this study is that of ‘de-victimisation.’ This was a process whereby the victims all readily accepted that they were victims, but they downplayed their validity as a victim. In turn, this led to victims accepting sub-standard treatment from the police, contextualising this treatment within their awareness of the austerity measures affecting policing. This awareness meant that many of the victim’s expectations for a positive police response and understanding of heritage crime were already incredibly low. This led them to excuse poor police responses which may have otherwise not been accepted by victims of similar crimes.

It should be noted that the concept of de-victimisation in this thesis shares similarities with Taylor et al’s (1983) study on how victims use selective evaluation as a response to victimisation; subsequently de-victimising themselves. However, Taylor et al (1983) focuses upon five key reasons which victims use to minimise victimisation, in response to serious events specifically relating to health (Taylor et al, 1983: 35). The application of

de-victimisation within this study focusses upon crime specifically, centring upon the concept of Just World Theory (Lerner, 1980) as the primary reason for victims de-victimising themselves.

The process of de-victimisation is differentiated from that of acquiring victim status and rejecting victim status, as every victim still accepted their status as victims of heritage crime (as was the case in Taylor et al's study). To gain greater clarity on the reasoning behind these victim's actions, we can look to psychological theories, namely Lerner's (1980) 'Just World Theory' (JWT from herein). Indeed, JWT has helped inform the development of victimology (Pemberton, 2012) and therefore is a fitting theory to use in the context of this research. JWT posits that people get what they deserve, and that what a person deserves is based on the outcome that they are entitled to receive, an outcome which is decided by this person's behaviour and attributes (Lerner, 1980: 11-12). In very simple terms, people like to believe that good people deserve good things, and bad people deserve bad things: they believe in a just world. People strive to maintain their belief in a just world, and therefore, as Hagedoorn et al (2002:128) write '...people will get upset and will try to protect their belief when they are confronted with information which disconfirms their notion that the world is a just place.'

It could be suggested therefore that some victims of heritage crime attempt to convince themselves that the reasons for a poor police response are due to factors outside of police control, such as austerity measures, as opposed to the police not caring about heritage crime. Indeed, if victims can find one aspect of a situation that is fair, in the case of this research, austerity measures which inhibited police function, JWT argues that they will use this fair aspect to subsequently justify the situation (Hafer and Begue, 2005).

Comments from the victims relating to police officer's poor responses being out of police control, included, for example, Victim 2's comments regarding their own existing low expectations of the police response to heritage crime, as they recognised that the police were lacking resources. Similarly, Victim 12 was also conscious that police forces were coping with a variety of 'unseen' crimes, which drew resources away from what police forces perceived as less important crimes, such as heritage crime.

Studies have demonstrated that people will attempt to assimilate an injustice to their belief in a just world, through downplaying the unfairness of the incident (Lipkus and Siegler, 1993), and by being forgiving (Strelan, 2007); both of which the victims in this study did. For example, the fact that victims were also aware (often from past engagement with the

police over heritage crime) that due to the inability to utilise crime prevention measures such as CCTV, and the sometimes isolated nature of the heritage sites and assets they cared for (resulting in no witnesses), there was very rarely a ‘starting-point’ from which the police could begin the investigative process. There was often no catalyst for the police to start investigating, and police officers were, effectively, stuck. Therefore, the victims justified the police response. Although the current literature on JWT has not closely examined the relationship between poor police response to crime, and victims wanting to maintain a just view of the police, Hagedoorn et al’s (2002) study focussed upon JWT in the context of authoritative decisions, finding that people are likely to perceive an authoritative decision as just, even when they receive an unfavourable outcome. As the police are an authoritative figure to most individuals, the existing literature indicates that victims of heritage crime would indeed use JWT in order to rationalise and accept substandard police responses to the crime. Furthermore, the assertion of 15 of 16 victims that heritage crime occurred out of ignorance instead of deliberate malice, arguably reinforces the victim’s desire to believe in a just world. Indeed, one might suggest that the just world response from victims is pre-determined due to their belief that few people would actively want to damage or destroy heritage.

As Chapter 2 discussed, the victim label is crucial for positive outcomes to emerge from the criminal incident (Cross, 2018). In heritage crime cases, it is arguably crucial that victims do not diminish their validity as victims, despite acknowledging the context within which they were receiving a largely negative response. As this thesis has discovered, many police officers do not view heritage crime as ‘real’ police work. If heritage crime victims continue to ‘de-victimise’ themselves, this may engender a level of scepticism amongst officers, that heritage crime, like other forms of marginalised crime, does not require a robust police response.

## **7.5: Practical factors**

Research has found that the views of frontline officers are routinely ignored in the construction of policing, despite the fact that street level policing practice has the most impact on the day-to-day operations of the police and therefore, the outcome of any programme or policy (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 2005: 298). In order to answer RQ3 (which concerns the obstacles that exist in the prevention and policing of heritage crime in England and Wales and how to remedy them) and RQ5 (which examines whether victim focussed mechanisms can be developed to overcome obstacles in the policing of heritage

crime); it was crucial for this thesis to place the lived experiences of frontline officers at the centre of the methods. Section 7.5 explores how training might be developed and delivered, and how recording and reporting processes could also be developed, and improved. Lastly, steps to ensure that dedicated and motivated officers become heritage crime officers are considered.

### **7.5.1 : Training and support for heritage crime officers**

A clear need for training and sustained support for heritage crime officers emerged from the findings of this thesis. The officers described how support was non-existent and training was outdated or minimal: one officer had attended a conference and was then considered a qualified heritage crime officer. Existing documentation designed to help officers learn about heritage crime was thought to be dull and ultimately unhelpful, and was therefore not utilised. In turn, officers felt ill-equipped to deal with certain aspects of their role. This research has demonstrated how these officers are restricted in what they can achieve by limited resources, guidance, and internal support for their role. A lack of training both stemmed from and exacerbated these issues.

Officers believed that heritage crime training was a good idea but couched their responses regarding its implementation within their knowledge of austerity measures, alongside the fact that not enough regular officers have the personal interest and motivation required for policing heritage crime, to warrant large scale training. In addition, unlike other marginalised areas of crime, such as rural and wildlife crime, it is arguable that heritage crime has not been embedded in the policing psyche for long enough to support the development and implementation of effective training. Poor police cultural attitudes towards rural and wildlife crime have been reasonably assuaged through the continued external efforts of NGOs and outside bodies, who have been imploring the importance of policing these areas from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Nurse, 2008). These efforts have led to permanent events which were developed to both help the policing of rural and wildlife crime and ensure that it maintains a permanent position on the policing agenda, such as the Wildlife Crime Enforcers Conference (RSPB, 2018) and wildlife crime training courses (NWCUC, 2019a). Therefore, it seems that heritage crime training cannot be delivered on the same scale as its marginalised counterparts, because of budgetary constraints, and the fact that heritage crime has not received enough external or internal attention to justify police forces dedicating the necessary time and resources required.

There *is*, this thesis argues, scope for training to be delivered to heritage crime officers. However, without heritage crime being embedded in the policing psyche as a problem, and limited external pressure leading to limited internal action, convincing police leadership to provide the resources required to implement training may be difficult. Nevertheless, these difficulties are not insurmountable. All interviewees bar one felt that heritage crime training would be useful, meaning that there is currently an existing (albeit small) audience for heritage crime training. Furthermore, the interviews with heritage practitioners revealed that there were means of circumventing the internal and external obstacles to delivering heritage crime training (such as limited budgets). Clearly, good quality, succinct heritage crime training can be delivered to small numbers of officers, despite the variety of internal and external issues currently facing policing. How this could be actioned is explored below.

### **7.5.2 : Delivering the training**

All interviewees (except one) agreed that it was important for police forces to receive some form of heritage crime training. The delivery of training to the small existing cohort of heritage crime officers would maximise efficiency and value for money, but would require forces to allocate their heritage crime officers the time to complete this training, and to disseminate the learned information internally. Traditionally, police officers are trained in-house, with training commonly being delivered by formerly operational officers (Howlett-Bolton et al, 2005). However, in being a relatively new area of crime, police forces are ill-equipped to provide heritage crime training themselves.

There appear to be two methods of delivering heritage crime training to police officers. Firstly, the heritage practitioners in this study were happy to deliver heritage crime training sessions, at no cost, to their local police forces (this may of course, not be the case in all areas). Although getting to the point of delivery could be laborious due to police bureaucracy, it was apparent that training sessions were mutually beneficial for police officers and heritage practitioners. Sessions held by heritage practitioners in this research greatly increased a small number of officer's awareness and understanding of heritage crime (sessions were usually delivered to small teams of RWCOs) and provided officers with a direct local contact for when heritage crime occurred in their force area. For heritage practitioners, the training session strengthened links between the heritage body and the police. Indeed, Officer 8 recalled how he had asked his local Inspector of Ancient Monuments from Cadw to deliver a day's training to the RWCOs he oversaw, which the

Inspector did voluntarily. Taking this into consideration, it may be possible therefore to facilitate a more widespread informal arrangement between Inspectors of Ancient Monuments, for example, and local police forces, where Inspectors of Ancient Monuments deliver training sessions to small cohorts of officers concerned with the policing of heritage crime; such as teams of RWCOs.

Of course, one disadvantage of this arrangement is that training would be on an informal and non-standardised basis, unless a formal agreement could be reached between participating police forces in England and Wales and Historic England and Cadw. This training could, however, be categorised under Continuous Professional Development (CPD), which consists of any police training which is not mandatory (Simmill-Binning and Towers, 2017). This type of training is rarely formally recorded or accredited (Ibid), but a lack of ‘quality control’ does not necessarily decrease the efficacy or usefulness of training delivered by bodies outside of policing, particularly when it is almost impossible to ascertain the current quality of in-house police training (Stanko and Hohl, 2018).

Another potential option is external training courses, which would be designed and delivered by bodies external to policing. Wildlife crime training, for example, is generally delivered by a wildlife training consultancy to police forces, in the form of a week-long residential training course (NWCUC, 2019a). The training itself is delivered by two retired police officers, which is particularly advantageous in terms of navigating police culture. These officers are also likely to be equipped with the skills to translate niche areas of legislation (i.e: very specific wildlife crime laws) into terms that attending officers would understand. It is possible that Historic England or Cadw could replicate such an approach by designing and delivering an external training course. However, the cultural clash between police forces and heritage bodies, which manifests itself through communicative issues, rooted in terminological differences and linguistic approaches, may hinder this. Nevertheless, heritage practitioners are conscious of these barriers, and are perfectly willing to streamline information on heritage crime for police officers, as evidenced by the actions of HP2:

*“I mean, one of the things we’re going to do as part of this year’s plan is, we’ve produced some factsheets, a really short one. And we’re going to produce one that basically just explains, on the one side for the police, so that when we’ve reported a crime we can just send them, along with our report of what the damage is, it’s just like a one page note that we’re producing, that’ll basically say this is the Act, this is why it’s a crime, this is what you do...”(HP2)*

As argued by the officers in this research, the act of committing a heritage crime is not as complex as rural and wildlife crimes: heritage crime is simply a crime which officers are already accustomed to, with a heritage element added onto it. Indeed, officers suggested bringing all of the parties relevant to the policing of heritage crime together for a just one day's worth of training:

*“You could bring everybody together for a day, and that would be a mixture of updates from, say, CPS, if the law had changed they could give you an input on the update, perhaps everybody brings a best practice story to the party and shares that, and then the networking.” (Officer 11).*

Indeed, with Officer 11's experience in mind, it is argued that training should be reasonably short. One or two days may be sufficient to cover the important aspects of heritage crime, including: i) different types of heritage site and asset and methods of identifying them, ii) dealing with individuals to contact when more in-depth advice is required (from heritage bodies and CPS), iii) analysing existing legislation and application of this legislation (particularly in a court setting) and finally, iv) exploring the impact of heritage crime upon victims, including use of the Heritage Crime Impact Statement.

In fact, very similar approaches were already being undertaken by some heritage practitioners, who were, as mentioned above, happily delivering training for free:

*“...we've run training events for X Police, which is just like a day, or half a day, of giving them presentations and making sure we know who each other is so we know who to ring...the last one...I gave them some local examples, and talked about how we need to know who the local contacts are in particular areas, getting them to know me...kind of talking through case studies and to find out how the best way to pursue things” (HP3).*

Heritage crime training can, therefore, clearly be facilitated (with certain caveats), and is currently being facilitated in certain areas in England and Wales, as this practitioner describes. Indeed, the experiences of this practitioner can be used as blueprint for implementing more widespread training across England and Wales.

Another possible option would be the delivery of online training. NCALT, the system currently used to deliver such training, was viewed negatively amongst officers. It was felt to be dull, difficult to learn from, and ultimately unengaging (Honest, 2016). Every officer



in this research agreed that heritage crime training should *not* be delivered online. Indeed, because online training was thought to be dull, the ability to rapidly ‘click through’ online training resulted in the interviewed officers anticipating that other officers would not fully engage with the materials. E-learning has been criticised by officers for possessing limited interactive capabilities (unlike attending a training course) and providing no opportunity for officers to clarify any areas they do not understand (Betts and Farmer, 2019:140-141). Indeed, officers in this research highlighted how their workload pressures meant that they struggled to get mandatory online training completed, let alone any extraneous training, such as online heritage crime training: “*We’ve got a lot of those mandatory trainings that don’t get done*” (Officer 9). As such, online training may be the least effective method of improving standards.

### **7.5.3: From policy to practice**

This research has identified a clash between what is available in policing literature, what is stated by police leaders on heritage crime, and the reality of policing heritage crime at the front-line. The NPCC Cultural Property and Heritage Crime National Strategic Assessment (NPCC, 2017) for example, states that all forces in England and Wales have a heritage crime officer, which both the officers and FOIs refuted. The same document also states that there is a POLKA (Police Online Knowledge Area) webpage on heritage crime, which the officers in this research said was blank and therefore useless. Indeed, such statements within this NPCC document do not correlate with the officer’s experiences on the ground.

Waddington (1999: 119) argues that police officers are capable of recognising ‘bullshit’ when they see it and can therefore recognise if reform within policing is soundly based or otherwise. The police officers in this study argued that the policing of heritage crime had been ushered in suddenly, with little explanation. The latter, combined with the lack of overall support they received, resulted in the officers concluding that the introduction of heritage crime to policing had been ill-thought-out. This is unsurprising, considering that the police documentation and discussion surrounding heritage crime largely fails to reflect the front-line reality. For example, Historic England’s Policing and Crime Advisor has stated that over the course of four years, heritage crime outreach programmes have been conducted for as many as 10,000 practitioners, including many police officers, and that all of these trainees should now have a basic awareness and understanding of heritage crime (Kerr, 2018: 9). None of these comments corroborated with those of the heritage crime

officers in this research. Indeed, these types of comments only serve to exacerbate the gulf between police officers and police management (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983). For heritage crime training to be effective the goals of police leadership must align with front-line realities.

### **7.5.3A: Circumventing cop culture?**

As this thesis has established, police cultural attitudes towards heritage crime are largely negative. Heritage crime is classified through police culture as being not ‘real’ police work. Overcoming cop culture as a whole is a difficult task, as although it is not a monolith (Reiner, 2000), and the attitudes towards non-traditional crimes such as heritage crime are arguably universal, unless the officer has a particular interest in heritage. Nevertheless, there are ways to *circumvent* cop culture. The officers in this thesis emphasised that heritage crime should be delegated to officers who have expressed a particular interest in the area. This may not overcome the broader underlying issues police culture presents in classifying any crime which is remotely unusual or exciting as not ‘real’ police work, but it would circumvent these issues (issues pertaining to disinterest in, marginalisation of and lack of enthusiasm for policing these crimes). The label of ‘heritage crime’ may also overcomplicate what is often a straightforward crime for which officers can apply legislation with which they are accustomed and with which they are comfortable. However, whilst the label of ‘heritage crime’ may heighten negative police cultural attitudes towards the crime-the label itself ‘others’ heritage crime and highlights that it is not ‘normal’-if this label was to be removed, it would arguably be counterproductive. The heritage crime label helps to differentiate heritage crime from other crimes and most importantly, highlight the significance of it. Without the label, this significance would be diminished.

Focussing upon the criminal law in relation to heritage crime may also be another way of circumventing the negative police cultural attitudes towards heritage crime. As Officer 12 stated in Chapter 4, officers are interested in law, and solid definitions of crime which they can easily work with and apply in real life scenarios. According to the officers in this research, when regular officers could grasp onto an area they already understand legally, they approached heritage crime with greater vigour. This is an important finding, and further research would help to ascertain the best ways of proliferating this message amongst officers. Indeed, current literature designed for police officers, such as Historic

England's *Guide for Law Enforcement Officers* (Historic England, 2016) and previously mentioned NPCC documentation (NPCC, 2018) puts emphasis upon viewing heritage crime through the lens of existing legislation and simplifying the crime.

#### **7.5.4: Reporting and recording**

Currently, there are no police reporting or recording processes in place for heritage crime. Without any form of standardised recording or reporting system in place, our statistical knowledge of the crime is limited. We cannot establish the scale of the heritage crime problem, nor can we identify potential heritage crime hotspots. In short, without any official, standardised methods of reporting and recording, this research found that the reporting and recording of heritage crime was fraught with issues.

The issues raised in this section concerning reporting and recording are reasonably straightforward, but rather difficult to resolve. For example, call handlers, who are at the frontline of the reporting and recording process, have no official guidance on how to record a reported heritage crime as accurately as possible. Even with guidance, as suggested in 7.2.2, call handler's options are limited unless internal police crime recording systems have a heritage crime category, which they currently do not. Therefore, heritage crime is likely to not be recorded when reported, to be recorded under a different crime category, or for victims to be given a crime number for insurance purposes and the crime to be recorded upon review (meaning it may never be recorded) (Home Office, 2020). Recording heritage crime accurately would have necessitated heritage crime being included within police recording systems, and there is limited chance of this happening. Police internal databases are provided by third parties, specifically external companies which make and host the software for police databases, such as NicheRMS or Athena (Roycroft, 2016). Officers in this study explained that because this recording software is designed, developed and hosted by third party companies, adding another category for heritage crime would not be a simple task. Indeed, to do so would be prohibitively expensive, and was therefore unlikely to occur.

The NPCC Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Assessment 2017 (NPCC, 2017) has suggested exploring the creation of 'National Stolen Cultural Property' database (Ibid), specifically for recording heritage crime across the UK. The details as to how such a

database would be developed and financed is not explained in the document, and chances of financing such a resource intensive project are slim; particularly when the Home Office does not recognise heritage crime as a crime. It is concerning however, that the NPCC has failed to recognise that past efforts at creating a database to record art, antiques and cultural property crimes were unsuccessful. This database was deemed financially inviable and a poor use of public money (Morris and Flint, 2004: 1). Without any recorded data on arts, antiques and cultural property crime, it was also difficult to prove that a database would be impactful in reducing these crimes (Thomas and Pentland, 2004). If this database could not be facilitated in the early 2000s, prior to significantly reduced police budgets across England and Wales, it is likely that attempts to create another database would be impossible today. Indeed, external factors beyond the police organisation's control (such as outsourced police reporting and recording infrastructure) have contributed to inconsistent and inefficient reporting and recording processes for heritage crime. However, as this chapter has stressed, internal factors which the police organisation *can* control, such as allocating heritage crime to officers who are motivated, passionate, and dedicated to policing the area, cannot be forgone in the face of those external and uncontrollable factors, which hinder positive change.

For example, whilst police forces cannot add a heritage crime category onto existing third-party recording systems, they can develop guidance for call handlers. The existing problems with recording and reporting heritage crime will continue unheeded if guidance is not readily available for call handlers (as discussed in 7.2.2), or if standardised methods of reporting and recording are not introduced. This thesis has shown that victims will not be dissuaded from reporting heritage crime, regardless of police force responses. Despite there being very little in place to guarantee heritage crime is recorded accurately and that victims will receive a police response as a result of this; victims did not cease reporting heritage crime. In fact, the opposite occurred. Victims continued to report heritage crime regardless of the call handler and police response, or lack thereof. In some cases, the lack of recording and reporting mechanisms only made victims more determined for heritage crime to be recorded and reported. One victim, as mentioned previously, even created a system to ensure that heritage crime was reported and recorded as accurately as it could be, and that they received a follow-up.

Indeed, the problems with recording and reporting heritage crime will continue to exacerbate if police leaders do not put measures in place to improve the current situation. Already, the numbers of heritage crime cases are distorted, not just due to the lack of

standardised police recording and reporting. Heritage practitioners explained how internal reporting systems within heritage bodies resulted in heritage crime never reaching the police (thus never becoming a police problem). Compounded these issues, findings also revealed that members of the public often report heritage crime to heritage organisations, as opposed to the police. Ideally, data on heritage crime would be shared between both public and private parties, in order to facilitate the effective and efficient tackling of heritage crime. Currently, the chances of this occurring are very low, although some form of arrangement would go very far towards challenging the narrative that heritage crime is a marginalised area of crime.

#### **7.5.5 : Seen but not heard: heritage crime as the ‘grey figure’ of crime**

A true picture of heritage crime is impossible to create, and it is anticipated that much of the reported heritage crime falls into the phenomenon known as the ‘grey figure’ of crime. Criminologists describe the phenomenon of crime that occurs, but goes unreported, as the ‘dark figure of crime’ (Coleman and Moynihan, 1996). A cousin of the dark figure of crime, the ‘grey figure’ of crime refers to the disjuncture between crime that is reported by the public, and crime which the police actually record (Bottomley and Pease, 1986). In this scenario, crime is most definitely reported to the police, but when reported, the crime is not recorded by the police, or is recorded inaccurately (Payne and Hutton, 2017). Heritage crime is likely to fall into the ‘grey figure’ of crime, for the results of this study have demonstrated that heritage crime is very rarely recorded accurately on police databases. This is due to a combination of no available call handler training and guidance, an inability to record heritage crime accurately on police systems, and in certain cases, individual practice (see 4.2.2, 4.6.1, and 4.6.2).

It is not just inaccurate recording that leads heritage crime to fall into the ‘grey figure.’ Heritage crime is an un-notifiable crime (recording is not mandatory). Police forces are not obliged to tell the Home Office of the level of un-notifiable crimes in their force area (Aplin, 2019). To complicate recording practices further, offences against *certain* heritage sites and assets under current heritage legislation *are* considered notifiable offences (Historic England, 2018). However, it is proposed that the latter heavily contributes to the grey figure of heritage crime, in two ways. Firstly, although damage to an Ancient Monument is considered a notifiable offence which can be collected in crime statistics under Home Office guidance (Historic England, 2012), the lack of tangible evidence (such

as no CCTV) usually associated with heritage crime, means that this notifiable offence is likely to be ‘no-crimed’ (Joyce, 2017).

No-criming is a process whereby an officer decides that the crime is not worth pursuing, citing reasons such as insufficient evidence or an inability to identify the suspect (Gregory and Lees, 1999). When a crime is ‘no-crimed’ it disappears from police records, meaning that a crime has been reported but has been, for example, deemed impossible to investigate successfully, and is therefore not added to the crime statistics despite being a legitimate crime (Edwards, 1991); thus falling into the grey figure of crime. Secondly, the official guidance provided by Historic England for police forces to follow in relation to heritage crime, states that any offence which is not notifiable, is instead recorded as an ‘incident’ (otherwise known as a crime related incident) (Historic England, 2018). This exact scenario happened to HP4, who had a call handler say to them: *“I’ll give you an incident number, but no I can’t record that as a crime”* ...[HP4 replies] *“But I’ve just told you exactly why it’s a crime under this [law].”* Indeed, if expert guidance by Historic England is suggesting recording heritage crime as incidents, then this provides forces with a pre-made excuse for either ‘no-criming’ heritage crimes or criming them as an incident only. Expert guidance is telling forces that classifying heritage crime as an incident is both acceptable and expected. From a policing perspective, it is arguable that there is little incentive to record heritage crime accurately, or to record the phenomenon at all.

It is also important to mention how third-party pressures can influence the recording practices of the police (Hope, 2014) and also contribute to the grey figure of heritage crime. Victims in this research who had suffered from lead theft, from various types of historic sites and assets, reported how they often had to report the crime (despite knowing that the police response would be poor) in order to receive a crime reference number to make a claim to their insurance company. As victims need a crime reference number, this means that police forces *must* record lead theft when it occurs. Furthermore, lead, as a metal, can be recorded under a variety of crime categories (Home Office, 2013; Home Office, 2016), thus increasing the overall number of crimes in the category which the officer chooses to place lead theft within. In short, this recording of lead theft means that forces are increasing the numbers of crimes within other recordable crime categories, for a crime which they would ordinarily no crime, due to the lack of evidence many lead thefts present (Price et al, 2014). As such, police forces hands are, effectively, tied when recording lead theft from historic sites and assets.

Without police recorded statistics on heritage crime, heritage crime cannot currently be

proved to be a policing problem. This is despite the fact that the victims in this study suffered from repeat victimisation, and the heritage practitioners encountered heritage crime regularly enough to prove that there was a clear problem on the ground. The paradoxical reliance upon statistical police data to prove that there is a crime problem means that crimes where data cannot and is not required to be collected, such as heritage crime, do not exist as problems; and mean that the lived experiences of heritage practitioners and victims are currently redundant.

#### **7.5.6: Due Diligence Officers: avoid the same mistakes**

Chapter 4 revealed that the heritage crime officers had little to no heritage crime training, limited internal support, and almost no resources with which to undertake the heritage crime role. The experiences of the police officers interviewed for this research, mirror the issues associated with the implementation of due diligence officers, officers appointed in the early 2000s across England and Wales to liaise with the arts and antiques trade and tackle arts and antiques crime (Bennett, 2000). However, the due diligence officer role was beset by numerous challenges. This thesis has explored these challenges in Chapter 2, however in short, they included: budgetary constraints and the role being seen as a low policing priority (Antiques Gazette, 2000: n.p), inadequate time being given to the officers to conduct their role, and forces not possessing the funds to send their officers to relevant training sessions (Oxford Archaeology, 2009a). Indeed, without adequate resources, training, and internal police understanding of the importance of the crime; it appears that these officers were largely redundant. These are the same issues heritage crime officers are currently facing, and the risk of the heritage crime officer role becoming redundant is, arguably, a real possibility. However, the mistakes made in the implementation of due diligence officers can be learnt from by the police, and lessons can be applied in practice to the current heritage crime officers.

Ideally, each police force today would have a heritage crime officer, similar to the network of due diligence officers. However, due diligence officers were imposed upon every force in the early 2000s, as examined in Chapter 2, and an officer per force failed to work. One heritage crime officer per force is also failing to work, with Chapter 5 revealing that each force in England does not have a heritage crime officer, despite NPCC documentation stating otherwise (NPCC, 2017).

ACPO was equally as enthusiastic and involved in introducing the policing of arts and

antiques crime (Steele, 2000) as the NPCC appears to have been in the policing of heritage crime (NPCC, 2017); but after the initial enthusiasm and commitment to policing heritage crime there appears to have been little thought dedicated to the practicalities of policing the area. This research found that the current method of distributing responsibility for heritage crime, where heritage crime is largely imposed upon officers without choice who are not necessarily interested in the area, exacerbates the existing problems with resources and cultural disinterest. A key point which emerged from this research was that crimes which are culturally perceived within policing as ‘rubbish’ (Reiner, 2010), should not be imposed upon police forces or police officers, as this does little for the policing of the crime in question. By making officers who show no interest, passion or motivation for policing heritage crime responsible for the area, the policing of heritage crime will continue to be perceived poorly, understanding will be limited, and awareness will be low.

On this basis, this thesis has extrapolated these issues into the seven step model below. This model has been developed using the direct experiences of the victims, police officers and heritage practitioners in this research, in order to produce an empirically informed model which should (similarly to Kirkwood’s (1994) models of wildlife crime officers) produce the most suitable method of allocating the policing of heritage crime for forces across England and Wales. This model aims to prevent the current method of allocating heritage crime to officers who are uninterested and unenthusiastic about policing the area from continuing. It allows police forces to consider the suitability of officers by referring to the list of questions and considerations below. Ultimately, this model aims to prevent police forces from allocating heritage crime to officers who are ill-suited for the heritage crime role. It also adds accountability to the process of allocating heritage crime, which is currently lacking (section 7.2.3).

### **The Heritage Crime Officer: A Proposed 7 Step Model:**

*Step 1:* Is there an officer in the force interested in heritage crime?

*Step 2:* Is the role open to officers at all levels?

*Step 3:* Do they have any qualifications pertaining to heritage/ are they active in the heritage sector in some way? (e.g; amateur archaeologist)



*Step 4:* Have they expressed an explicit willingness to learn about heritage crime/willingness to engage in the inevitable partnership working necessary to police heritage crime?

*Step 5:* Is there support in place to help the officer: has the force reached out to Historic England/Cadw, local heritage groups, PAS?

*Step 6:* Who would be responsible for the policing of heritage crime if this officer was to fall ill/retire/no longer be able to adopt responsibility? (to maintain seamless transition of the role, and ensure that the role is not forced upon an disinterested officer)

*Step 7:* Can the addition of a heritage crime officer be justified operationally? (This question must be answered honestly: will the force allow the officer time to integrate with the community in regards to heritage and spread awareness of his/her role, will the heritage aspect of the officer's job be marginalised, is there enthusiasm for management with regards to taking this role on?)

The policing of heritage crime must *not* be forced upon police forces. If the policing of heritage crime is indeed imposed upon forces, as described by the interviewees in this research, it will simply be pushed to the very bottom of the policing agenda by both the force itself and the overworked officer who did not express interest in the area, and ultimately continue to be perceived as a burden.

## **7.6: Implications for theory**

There are two areas of criminological theory which emerged over the course of the interviews for this thesis, namely Broken Windows Theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) and more generally, the theme of fear of crime. Below, these are developed upon, in the context of heritage crime. These developments are anticipated to help improve our understanding of the policing of heritage crime from a theoretical viewpoint.

### **7.6.1 : Criminological theories: problematizing Broken Windows and fear of crime**

Following analysis of the interview data, it became clear that there were two particular threads of criminological thought interwoven into the interviewees' responses, without the interviewees realising they were describing criminological phenomena. The first

criminological theory explored was Wilson and Kelling's (1982) Broken Windows Theory. As mentioned in Chapters 4 and 6, this theory posits that low-level crimes and physical dilapidation which go unpunished, and are unremedied, will subsequently attract an incremental number of crimes, increasing in severity (Skogan, 1990). A central component of Broken Windows Theory is that these low-level crimes are *deliberate* and the resulting environmental degradation is a product of said *deliberate* criminality (Pollard, 1998). The findings of this thesis however, suggest that Wilson and Kelling's work can be viewed through a heritage specific lens. On heritage sites and assets specifically, this thesis found that there was no precursor to site or asset deterioration through acts of criminal behaviour. As two victims described, the heritage sites and assets they looked after came to be perceived as places to commit crime *not* because an initial crime had occurred. Instead, the existing appearance of the asset or site, many of which were in a permanently ruinous state and deteriorating beyond repair, or lacked the funds to keep tidy and look cared for (such as regular grass cutting), inversely, resulted in the site or asset becoming the cause of criminal behaviour *itself*.

Disorder is believed to be a necessary component for decay to occur (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004), but in the case of heritage crime, the existing decay or dilapidated appearance due to the age of heritage sites and assets, or the inability to pay for their upkeep, indicates to the public that they are being uncared for; thus inviting crime and acting as a catalyst for disorder. Therefore, this thesis has termed this phenomenon 'Ruined Windows theory', as the site or asset is *already* in a state of decay through the natural deterioration process of heritage, rather than a result of deliberate human action. In addition, the financial limitations facing interviewees, which meant that they were unable to maintain the appearance of the site or asset in question, was neither criminal nor deliberate, once again suggesting that Ruined Windows is a step removed from Broken Windows. However, many of the basic premises of Wilson and Kelling's theory remain applicable to heritage crime. Much like Broken Windows Theory, all interviewees were conscious that after an offence had occurred, it often went unnoticed or was not discovered for some time after the crime had initially happened. This meant that those who committed heritage crime generally went unpunished, and, as mentioned above, indicated to other individuals that further criminal behaviour would be tolerated and could snowball thereafter.

Whilst there are clearly some similarities between Broken Windows and Ruined Windows, the latter does present a challenge to the traditional solutions utilised to prevent

the downward spiral of crime and deterioration that incurs from Broken Windows Theory (Kelling and Coles, 1997), such as ‘...cleaning up graffiti and other signs of vandalism, cleaning the streets and avoiding property falling into decay’ (Hopkins-Burke, 2017: 289). With heritage crime, rapidly remedying damage resulting from vandalism, for example, is often impossible. The historical nature of heritage sites and assets means that any attempts to restore or repair them requires particular care and time, involving multiple parties and specially trained individuals (Norton, 2017). Indeed, Victim 7 described how specialist masons were required to undertake some intricate repairs to the heritage asset he cared for, but this process had been delayed by unpredictable weather, as specific conditions were necessary to carry out the work. Sections of the asset in question therefore, had been partially boarded up for some time. To the untrained eye, it appeared that the asset had been damaged and that nobody cared enough to have it repaired or restored. However, the opposite was true. Clearly, there are a variety of complex factors which inhibit the swift remedying of damage caused by heritage crime, and distance it from Broken Windows Theory.

The second criminological concept explored was fear of crime, in this case, the link between heritage crime and fear of crime. Despite one officer in Chapter 4 explaining how, in his experience, he had found that fear of crime increased as a result of heritage crime amongst the local community, the findings in Chapter 6 refuted this officer’s experience. From the perspective of the victims, fear of crime was only isolated to the immediate area surrounding the heritage site or asset itself (such as the grounds of an open access heritage site). Fear of crime appeared to be *localised* to the site or asset in question. In response to heritage crime, victims described how members of the public altered their routine, no longer incorporating sites or assets into their daily lives, avoiding them in the fear that they may be at an increased risk of crime and victimisation; on those sites or assets *specifically*. Indeed, Victim 11 described how the local community were reluctant to visit a heritage site which had been repeatedly subject to crime because they feared crime *on* the site in question; but not in any other aspect of their daily lives. There was no suggestion from the victims in this study, or the public the victims engaged with and referred to, that crime which occurred on the heritage sites or assets made them or the public fear crime and increased victimisation in their daily lives more widely. Fear of crime was restricted to the heritage site or asset itself.

There were a combination of reasons for this localised fear of crime. The crimes described by victims were generally low-level and restricted to heritage sites and assets, and as

mentioned previously, heritage sites and assets were thought to be attractive places to commit crime without recourse. For example, they were open access, did not have a permanent guardian, were not overlooked, or were isolated. Research has recognised that these factors can contribute to an increased risk of crime on heritage sites and assets (Bradley et al, 2012), but because these factors could not be changed, crime was often met with a sense of accepted inevitability (to an extent) from the victims. Indeed, whilst fear of crime literature posits that signs of disorder symbolise a loss of informal social control, which causes individuals to fear that they have an increased risk in becoming a victim of crime (LaGrange et al, 1992), there was conversely no indication from the victims that the disorder they experienced in the form of heritage crime, was a sign of crime occurring elsewhere. This could be attributable to the aforementioned factors, alongside the victim's general consensus that heritage crime primarily occurred out of ignorance.

Importantly, victims were aware of the general levels of disorder and crime in their local areas and were conscious that the disorder which occurred on the heritage site or asset was not representative of crime in their local area as a whole. Whilst victims did not ascribe to many of the norms within existing fear of crime literature, interviews tended to corroborate with existing research which suggests that the lived environment can either increase or decrease fears of victimisation (Box et al, 1988). Lastly, there was also no indication from the victims, and the community which they liaised with on a regular basis, that the local community felt at an increased risk of victimisation as a result of heritage crime, refuting the link, in this instance, between indirect victimisation and a fear of crime (Hale, 1996). Clearly, the type of crimes committed (low-level), and the nature of heritage sites and assets, in almost being cradles for crime which did not disperse into the local area, meant that the victims, and local community more broadly, only felt a fear of crime and a risk of increased victimisation *on* heritage sites and assets specifically. This fear of crime was not illustrative of a fear of crime and victimisation more broadly. This is an important area to explore in further research in the field as it calls into question some of the findings of the broader fear of crime literature.

## 7.6.1A: Criminological theories and: the Risk society and Labelling theory

### The Risk Society

Two theoretical constructs may also provide useful frameworks for improving the praxis response to heritage crime: Beck's (1992) 'risk society' and labelling theory. The risk society is a product of late modernity, the period in which we currently live. Late modernity (otherwise known as high/liquid/reflexive modernity) is a fraught period of change, characterised by rapid technological advancement, detraditionalisation, disembedding of social life, and reflexivity (Giddens, 1991). Constant reflexivity leads to ontological insecurity, and the risk society is a response to the pervasiveness of ontological insecurity. The significant changes of the world around us, the shift from modernity to late modernity, has increased our awareness of risk, as Beck (1992: 21) illustrates, risk is '...a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities of induced and introduced by modernisation.' The police response to the risk society is through a constant process of risk management and risk assessment, which is reliant upon knowledge, in the form of data (Maguire, 2000).

In the risk society, with the police as the thin blue line between chaos and order, crime and victims are rationalised through the measurement and management of risk. Hierarchies of victims are created; with victims deemed most 'at risk' receiving the most immediate police attention. Although the police are the knowledge brokers of the risk society, organisations and communities are also expected to participate in measuring risk, as the police '...help them to look after their own risk management' (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997: 67). This is usually in the form of crime prevention, which, as this thesis has shown, rarely works in the case of heritage crime, for cultural and historical reasons, alongside the nature of aged heritage sites and assets. Moreover, knowledge in the risk society manifests itself through the use of collated data held on police databases (ibid), and there is currently no clear police data on heritage crime.

It could be argued that there is an *absence* of risk with heritage crime. Therefore, officers may be seen as being tolerant of risk when policing the crime. Officers in this study made frequent reference to risk. Risk was constantly considered in their work, and the officers were conscious that the measurement of risk ensured that heritage crime would be at the bottom of the 'risk agenda' of policing; with no immediate victim, no immediate harm, no risk of a high risk situation. From the policing perspective, heritage crime is 'low risk', with no data to merit the policing of it. From a heritage practitioner and victim

perspective, heritage crime is high risk. Once again, a clear clash between the police, and heritage practitioners and victims, emerges, who both view risk in relation to heritage on the opposite ends of the risk spectrum. Risk, in a policing context, simply does not apply to heritage crime and, in fact, acts as a detriment to the protection of heritage.

### **Labelling Theory**

As Chapter 2 explored, heritage is socially constructed. This may lead to an uneven approach in labelling: some heritage is considered more worthy of preservation and conservation than other types of heritage, some forms of heritage are labelled elite, others, industrial, each with socially constructed connotations (Smith, 2006).

To contextualise the impact of not labelling heritage crime as a crime, we can turn to labelling theory. Labelling theory has been developed and advanced by a variety of sociological and criminological theorists across the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Becker (1963) and Lemert (1972). These theorists interpret labelling theory in differing ways, but their interpretations are all underpinned by the idea that crime and deviance are socially constructed, and that nothing is deviant or criminal until it has been labelled as such. Collating and considering the experiences of all the interviewees across this thesis, through the lens of labelling theory, it appears that those who commit heritage crime out of ignorance are arguably more likely to be labelled deviant or criminal, for a crime they do not understand the severity of nor perhaps realise they are committing; than those who consciously commit heritage crime, understand its severity, and know the harm and damage they are causing. The latter individual is more likely to evade the criminal label.

It is suggested that those who commit more minor heritage crimes, stemming from ignorance (or not), cross-over with 'regular crimes' and have facets which allow officers to label these crimes, and the perpetrators of these crimes, with relative ease. For example, graffiti, vandalism, or ASB on a heritage site or asset are more likely to leave evidence, to be recognisable by officers, to allow officers to apply legislation they are accustomed to (such as criminal damage). On the other hand, heritage crimes which are more serious and deliberate such as nighthawking, lead theft from churches, and heritage marine crimes rarely leave evidence (Bradley et al, 2012) and therefore, evade police involvement, thus avoiding the labelling process. Indeed, as labelling theorists stress, and in the case of heritage crime in particular, '...deviance is not the quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others...' (Becker, 1963: 8). Smaller, less significant crimes are dealt with by the powerful (the police), but the crimes committed by

those who have knowledge and awareness of the heritage crime they are committing (power) are difficult to police, and therefore, largely ignored.

### **7.6.2: A Zemiological Approach?**

Chapter 2 of this thesis explored how both heritage and crime share the fundamental similarity of being socially constructed by those with power. In addition to both heritage, and crime, *victims* are also socially constructed by the powerful (Miers, 1990). As heritage crime is not legally defined as a crime, there are no legally defined victims of heritage crime. Of course, this thesis has proved that there are indeed victims of heritage crime. Working within the official definitions of crime has been said to be a disservice to victims (Elias, 1985: 6). To address these shortcomings, it is worth considering a zemiological approach to the study of heritage crime. Adopting this approach would allow heritage crime scholars to examine the plethora of unrecognised harms and variety of victims which emerge from the crime. Considering that there is no heritage crime law, and the harms resulting from heritage crime are not captured legally (for example, loss of heritage to future generations), then the argument for a zemiological approach to the study of heritage crime is particularly pertinent.

Zemiologists argue that the criminal law is said to be unable to capture the more damaging and pervasive forms of harm which exist (Hillyard and Tombs, 2003: 12). Thus, zemiology looks beyond legally defined harms to consider harms which are not outlined in criminal law, or harms which are, but are either ignored or handled without resort to it (Hillyard and Tombs, 2004: 13). Zemiologists consider the following social harms: economic/financial, physical, and psychological harm, and harms relating to cultural safety (ibid). Every victim in this study experienced such harms, bar physical harm. Adopting a zemiological approach to the study of heritage crime and victims of heritage crime would mirror the zemiological considerations in similarly marginalised areas of crime.

For example, green victimologists examine green victimisation through a zemiological lens (McKie et al, 2016), allowing these scholars to address the more ‘legally ambiguous activities which foster victimisation’ Hall (2013: 14). Moreover, adopting a zemiological approach allows scholars to consider crimes where the victim may not be immediately apparent, is widespread, or perceived as victimless, such as climate change (Brisman and

South, 2013) and wildlife crime (Nurse, 2017). All of these benefits to using a zemiological approach can equally be applied to heritage crime.

Therefore, it is argued that discussions around heritage crime should adopt, in part, a zemiological approach. Physical harms are unlikely to be a result of heritage crime, but financial, social, and psychological harm, are all harms which can occur as a result of heritage crime. The psychological harms which emerge from heritage crime are substantial. Chapter 6 demonstrated the extensive psychological impacts of heritage crime upon victims, ranging from anger, to feelings of despair over the destruction of heritage, and extreme stress and worry over how to afford specialist repairs to the heritage sites and assets they looked after. Indeed, these specialist repairs form part of the financial harm associated with heritage crime, repairs which, if severe enough, can threaten the survival of heritage sites and assets. This also relates to the notion of cultural safety, which concerns notions of autonomy, development and growth, but also and crucially in the context of heritage crime, access to cultural, intellectual and informational resources which are generally available in any given society (Hillyard and Tombs, 2004: 20). The destruction of whole heritage sites and assets, the illegal trafficking of heritage assets, the removal of heritage assets from where their original resting place and the defacing of heritage sites and assets, all clearly contribute towards a loss of cultural, intellectual and informational resources.

From a policy and practice perspective, situating heritage crime within a zemiological framework could also be beneficial for improving understanding of its impact among police officers. Expressing the various harms which heritage crime causes may help officers to understand the severity and impact of the crime, as well as the broad range of victims emerging from it. Indeed, the small number of heritage crime officers across England and Wales who are aware and knowledgeable of the impacts of heritage crime may already be considering heritage crime from a harms perspective, albeit without framing it within such terminology.



## **7.7: Conclusion**

This chapter examined the factors which contributed to the generally limited police understandings and perceptions and, poor awareness of heritage crime. Firstly, it examined how factors relating specifically to police culture contributed to poor police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime. Issues with partnership working were then explored. The problems of general underfunding across the CJS, and how this was likely to impact upon the efficacy of Wildlife, Rural and Heritage Crime Prosecutors was discussed. The chapter further highlighted the importance of focussing efforts upon improving the overall understanding and awareness of heritage crime across the CPS. Whilst acknowledging the budgetary constraints currently assailing policing, this chapter demonstrated how heritage crime training might be accomplished, which meets the needs of officers, heritage practitioners and victims, but remains cognisant of the financial restrictions facing police forces across England and Wales.

This chapter also made suggestions relating to theory and practice. A key aspect of this thesis, pertaining to victims, was the development of the victim typology in Section 7.4. Defining and distilling the breadth and depth of the victims of heritage crime was key to not only this thesis, but central to furthering academic understandings of how the victims of heritage crime perceive themselves, and others, as victims of the phenomenon. In practice, this is anticipated to help officers understand, and be more aware of, who the victims of heritage crime are, and why heritage crime can be devastating to such a broad range of individuals. The discovery of victims 'de-victimising' themselves revealed how the awareness of austerity measures amongst victims has a significant impact upon how they view their right to a police response to heritage crime. In presenting an original model to avoid heritage crime being allocated to officers who are uninterested in the area, this chapter demonstrated how the policing of heritage crime has been ill-thought-out, and that this has negatively impacted upon the officers responsible for policing it. Lastly, the creation of Ruined Windows Theory was a key development in the field of heritage crime, which has, until now, been a theoretical desert.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

*'Victimhood is a contested space'* (Cross, 2018: 243)

This quote is particularly relevant to heritage crime, for it summarises the crux of the heritage crime 'problem' which emerged from this thesis. This was that there will always be differing perspectives between police officers, victims of heritage crime and heritage practitioners regarding the severity and importance of the phenomenon. Whilst victims and concepts of victimisation naturally change over time, and are subject to social, political, cultural and economic influences (Green and Pemberton, 2018), these influences are even more nuanced in the case of heritage crime. However, no research thus far had addressed the large gap in the existing heritage crime literature, namely the qualitative investigation of heritage crime from victims, police officers, and heritage practitioners' perspectives (RQs 2, 3 and 4). This research aimed to fill this gap. In order to answer this overarching aim, this study sought to answer the following five research questions:

1. How has the heritage sector in England and Wales influenced attitudes towards heritage and heritage crime in each country?
2. How do police officers understand, become aware of and perceive heritage crime, and how does this affect their response to victims?
3. What obstacles exist to impede the effective policing of heritage crime in England and Wales?
4. Who are the victims of heritage crime, and how do they understand, perceive and respond to it?
5. Can victim-focussed mechanisms be developed to overcome the obstacles to the effective policing of heritage crime?

Many of the findings which emerged from this research rarely affected one group of participants singularly. For example, the role of police culture in heritage crime not only impacted upon police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime, but it also affected the victims of heritage crime. Indeed, the vast majority of the issues raised in Chapters 4 and 5, and the participants affected by them, were closely intertwined.

Therefore, this chapter will illustrate how this thesis answered the first four research questions through a series of suggested changes below, each pertaining to a particular theme which emerged throughout this thesis. The fifth research question is answered in the 'Recommendations' section towards the end of this chapter.

## **8.1: Heritage and crime**

Heritage crime itself ties into a wider debate about what heritage is, how it is defined, who is responsible for its preservation and conservation, and 'whose' heritage is most important to maintain. An examination of these aforementioned factors (RQ1) revealed that conceptions of heritage in England and Wales have been and continue to be narrow in perspective. A review of the limited existing literature found a lack of experience in dealing with heritage crime across the CJS, from the police to the CPS, and revealed that attitudes towards heritage crime and its' victims appeared to be poor. In particular, an examination of the victims of heritage crime suggested that police officers were unlikely to understand the severity and impact of this form of crime. Chapters 5 and 6 confirmed these assumptions (RQ2, RQ4), and are discussed further below. The protection, preservation, and conservation of heritage is undoubtedly important to many people. Heritage crime is, as this thesis has discovered, a definite policing issue. However, in examining police culture alongside the current policing approach to heritage crime, it was confirmed that there were multiple barriers to police understanding, awareness and perceptions of the phenomenon.

### **8.1.1 : Police culture**

As a relatively new area of crime within policing (Historic England, 2019d) it was important to establish police understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime, and how these might impact upon police responses to victims of heritage crime (RQ2). This research revealed that the overall understandings, awareness, and perceptions of heritage crime were mostly poor amongst officers in both England and Wales. Three themes directly relating to police culture, emerged in Chapter 4 (RQ4), including fear of engaging with an unknown area of crime, the lack of an immediate human victim (which led to officers downgrading the importance of the crime), and little to no training (resulting in a lack of overall knowledge of heritage crime). Combined, these all contributed to a poor response to heritage crime from police officers in general.

Individually, these factors illustrated how police culture is interwoven into police officers' understandings, awareness and perceptions of heritage crime.

Chapter 4 also revealed that the poor responses by regular police officers were also clearly influenced by police culture (RQ2). Firstly, it became apparent from the interviewed officer's responses that the 'lay low' and 'cover your ass' mantra amongst regular officers, appeared to prevent them from engaging in the policing of heritage crime. Officers were reluctant to risk making mistakes in an area of crime which was unfamiliar to them (Van Maanen, 1974). This reluctance to engage in unfamiliar crimes is arguably heightened in heritage crime cases, where the crime can affect swathes of people, and the consequences of an inadequate police responses may incur the outrage of whole communities (RQ4). Heritage crime is also very rarely action packed or exciting, therefore failing to provide officers with a sense of mission when responding to it (Reiner, 2010). Without this sense of mission, officers (heritage crime officers excluded) were found to perceive heritage crime as 'rubbish' (Waddington, 2014) and unworthy of police attention. Regular officers were found to be disinterested in investigating heritage crime cases, and downgraded the importance of the crime (RQ2, RQ3). In addition, crimes which lack an immediate human victim, such as heritage crime, were (understandably) not considered important, in comparison to other crimes with an immediate human victim. Subsequently, the policing of heritage crime was (and continues to be) insufficiently resourced, resulting in heritage crime SPOCs receiving limited to no training, poor guidance, and no support. They were also not provided with the time to advertise their role internally, making it in some ways, redundant (RQ3).

Lastly, two facets of police culture which emerged strongly in this research are the unquestioning deference to one's superiors, and the lack of recognition of the lived realities of frontline officers from superiors themselves (Reiner, 1992a; Rowe, 2006). The superiors in this case, the NPCC, have unfortunately contributed to the marginalisation and continued misperceptions of heritage crime within policing. For example, the idea that heritage crime is closely linked to rural and wildlife crime, has been supported by NPCC documentation (NPCC, 2017; NPCC, 2018b). This internal discourse has marginalised heritage crime further within policing. Moreover, the consequences of affixing heritage crime to rural and wildlife crime were felt acutely by the RWCOs, who held responsibility for heritage crime, as they failed to understand how their existing skillset would aid them in their policing of the crime (RQ4). Overall, and as the officers themselves alluded to in this study, any police officer recognises '...that to make something into a crime requires

work' (Sumner, 1994: 218). This research revealed that heritage crime is highly likely to incur time consuming work with unfamiliar partners outside of policing, such as engaging with heritage practitioners. Officers also might have to employ heritage specific laws which they have little knowledge of and experience using. It is unsurprising therefore, that the SPOCs described regular officers as having little incentive to engage in heritage crime cases, despite being told of their importance by the heritage crime SPOC in question (RQ2, RQ4). Heritage crime was simply another pressure that these officers, and the policing organisation itself, did not need.

### **8.1.2: Austerity measures**

Although the overall police response to heritage crime was poor, there were pockets of good practice, and a steadily improving response in all four forces in Wales. It transpired that the key driver behind a positive, consistent police response to heritage crime (RQ2) and its victims (RQ5) was a dedicated and enthusiastic officer who is passionate about policing the area; mirroring findings in the similarly marginalised areas of rural and wildlife crime (Kirkwood, 1994; Nurse, 2008). However, regardless of whether a heritage crime officer was enthusiastic and motivated to police heritage crime, an officer's ability to undertake the successful policing of the crime was often greatly inhibited by factors beyond their control. In exploring the obstacles that exist in relation to the prevention and policing of heritage crime (RQ3), it was found that austerity measures were a sizeable contributor to numerous issues associated with policing the area. With inadequate resources available at their disposal, and very limited justification to prioritise heritage crime, even the most passionate officer was forced to relegate this crime to the very bottom of their workload. In addition, the passing on of the heritage crime officer role between officers, and the total absence of the role in numerous English forces, left existing heritage crime officers without a strong support network. For all intents and purposes, the heritage crime officers in this research were largely operating alone in their pursuit of heritage crime.

### **8.2: Structural obstacles**

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 highlighted numerous structural obstacles which hindered the policing of heritage crime and impeded the positive treatment of victims of the crime across England and Wales unanimously (RQ2, RQ3). A key structural obstacle which affected all participants related to issues with reporting and recording heritage crime. Heritage crime

is not required to be recorded by the Home Office (and if heritage crime *is* recorded on police systems, there is no means of delineating it as a ‘heritage crime’). Without any police recorded data on heritage crime, it was exceptionally hard for victims and heritage practitioners to prove that heritage crime was a policing problem (RQ3, RQ4). Indeed, the assertions of both victims and heritage practitioners that heritage crime was a growing issue, could not be supported without statistical evidence from the police (RQ3). From a policing perspective, whilst a lack of police recorded data meant that heritage crime was not a policing problem, it also meant that police officers could not efficiently and effectively police it (RQ3).

Reporting heritage crime presented victims with numerous difficulties (RQ4). Call handlers were revealed to be gatekeepers to a police response (Garner and Johnson, 2006), arguably more so with heritage crimes than other forms of crime, as call handlers were unfamiliar with the area. Victims would diligently report heritage crime, but would rarely see results from their actions, as they found it difficult to convey the importance and impact (RQ4) of a crime which, to call handlers, did not exist. Further issues were incurred when call handlers judged the severity and urgency of a heritage crime call against narrow existing criteria for ‘normal’ crimes, which could not account for the specifics of heritage crime cases. Chapter 6 also revealed how call handlers closed down valid heritage crime cases, arguing that it was not a crime, despite victims and heritage practitioners stressing that heritage crime *was* a crime, and *did* require a police response (RQ3). This left both parties feeling exasperated (RQ3).

Although existing research indicated that negative experiences with call handlers may prevent victims from reporting further crime (Rossetti et al, 2017; Stafford, 2018) victims continued to report heritage crime (RQ4). Chapter 6 revealed that whilst victims may have been left feeling exasperated by the poor treatment of them from call handlers (RQ3), they felt that they had a responsibility, a moral obligation, to report heritage crime for the benefit of current and future generations (RQ4). Bad experiences with the police will clearly not dissuade victims of heritage crime from reporting the crime, and heritage crime is clearly a policing problem which cannot be ignored.

### **8.2.1 : Beyond the Police: heritage crime and CPS**

More broadly, this thesis revealed that other parts of the CJS, outside of policing, were the source of various obstacles which impeded both police officers and heritage practitioners

(RQ3). Findings from Chapter 4 emphasised how police officers focus upon the legal definition of crimes, of which there is none for heritage crime. Prosecution of heritage crime cases were, therefore, not seen as straightforward, amongst regular officers (RQ3). Indeed, this research revealed that the average officer was unlikely to be aware of legislation pertaining to heritage crime, nor the fact that heritage crime is an aggravating factor in court, meaning that officers would prosecute heritage crime under legislation with which they were familiar (RQ2, RQ3). This serves to negate sentencing guidelines which have endeavoured to ensure that heritage crime cases receive a proportionate sentence in court (Historic England, 2018; 2019c). Chapter 4 also revealed how the extra work necessary to prosecute a heritage crime case (such as finding and contacting heritage experts) could be a burden, even for the heritage crime officers (RQ2).

In turn, a general lack of understanding and knowledge from the CPS concerning heritage crime emerged as a considerable obstacle facing both heritage practitioners and the police (RQ3). Heritage practitioners experienced difficulties in getting the CPS to understand the importance of heritage crime. Officers meanwhile, explained how the efforts spent building a case file, including contacting specialists and drawing together a HCIS, could all be thwarted by unknowledgeable magistrates or judges, who failed to understand the impact and importance of heritage crime (RQ3, RQ4). Specialist CPS prosecutors for rural, wildlife and heritage crime are in place across England and Wales (CPS, 2019), but with one per CPS Area, the officers recalled from personal experience how their involvement in cases was not always guaranteed (RQ4). Recognition of these pitfalls is crucial, as is raising awareness and increasing knowledge of heritage crime across the CPS. Introducing changes to the policing of heritage crime will all be redundant if the CPS cannot be relied upon, to appreciate the devastating impact and importance of heritage crime.

### **8.2.3: Victims and heritage crime**

This research found that the victims and impacts of heritage crime are vast and varied, which the officers in this study all understood (RQ2, RQ4). The experience of the victims however suggested that this knowledge was not widespread across police forces, considering the generally negative police responses the victims received (RQ2, RQ4). When police officers responded to heritage crime, issues raised in Chapter 6 by victims included: having to inform attending officers that heritage crime was a crime, a lack of follow-up, and officers failing to take heritage crime seriously or consider it a police

problem (RQ2, RQ4). Whilst police officers provided a generally poor response, this research found that PCSOs provided a response that was unanimously considered to be positive, understanding, and compassionate (RQ2). Unlike police officers, PCSOs also did not appear to need an existing personal interest in heritage or heritage crime to provide good practice, as their immersion in local communities gave them an understanding of the severity and impact of the crime.

The victims themselves highlighted a key obstacle in the policing of heritage crime (RQ3) which is important to address but difficult to navigate. Specifically, this obstacle concerned the fact that many crimes which *are* a crime on a heritage site or asset are *not* a crime in other places. Unknowledgeable attending officers, therefore, could not understand why victims were so distraught over events, and impacts, which appeared innocuous to them, such as a hole in the ground from illegal metal detecting. Upon being told that what had occurred was indeed a crime by victims, officers were reported as being dismissive, and at times, openly resistant to recognising what was a legitimate crime (RQ2). Despite this, the general consensus amongst the victims was that most police officers were not intentionally careless, but that their often blasé attitudes towards heritage crime were influenced by a lack of understanding, training, and familiarity with the crime; alongside the pressures of austerity measures upon officers (RQ2, RQ4).

The next section of this chapter will focus upon the recommendations that this thesis has suggested in order to improve the policing of heritage crime across England and Wales.

### **8.3: Recommendations**

There are a variety of recommendations which are suggested to improve the policing of heritage crime and the treatment of victims (RQ5). However, these recommendations must be contextualised in the current policing environment and the prevailing organisational attitudes towards ‘victimless’ crimes. These suggestions are separated into different categories, including cultural and policy changes, practical changes, theoretical changes, and structural changes. Each change is highlighted alongside a respective recommendation below.



### **8.3.1 : Policy changes**

The influence of police culture upon the police organisation's approach to the policing of heritage crime has led to internal marginalisation, ill-thought-out affixation of the crime to officers, and general inconsistencies in policing the area across forces in England and Wales. These inconsistencies were highlighted in the FOI results, which revealed that not all forces in England have a heritage crime officer, contradicting official NPCC documentation concerning heritage crime (NPCC, 2017). The FOI results highlighted the disjuncture between the realities and complications of policing heritage crime from the frontline, and the messages from police leaders. Cultural change is extremely difficult within policing (Chan, 1996), but efforts can certainly be made to soften certain aspects of police culture. Police leaders must seek the input of frontline officers in relation to heritage crime, as frontline officers currently have the greatest experience in the area. Therefore, this experience must be drawn upon.

Narratives from police leaders must align more closely with the operational realities of policing heritage crime. Continued oversight from police leaders has left heritage crime officers without training, adequate support networks, and guidance. Indeed, frontline officers have been acknowledged for their ability to translate, adapt and resist policy which does not reflect the realities of frontline policing (Davis, 2019:79). To ignore frontline officers in the policing of heritage crime not only does a huge disservice to these officers, many of whom did not pursue the policing of heritage crime, but also, arguably, jeopardises heritage sites and assets. More broadly, officers have recently reported in the Home Office Front Line Review as feeling that the NPCC could be stronger at supporting the rank and file (Betts and Farmer, 2019: 177). Moving forwards, the current realities of rank and file policing must be acknowledged by the current NPCC Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Lead.

#### **8.3.1A: Policy changes: the possibility of training**

The difficulties associated with introducing heritage crime training and providing police officers with some level of general knowledge surrounding heritage crime are significant, as this thesis has explored, for heritage crime is neither a policing priority nor considered an important enough area to dedicate limited resources to. Officers in this thesis highlighted the fact that implementing police training for heritage crime would be almost impossible. However, recent changes to police education, in the form of the Police

Education Qualification Framework (PEQF herein), may provide opportunities to integrate a foundational level of heritage crime training, or at least knowledge acquisition in relation to the area. Consisting of three entry routes, (Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, undergraduate degree in professional policing, or a 2 year conversion course for those with a degree that is not professional policing) the PEQF is a standardised national framework which sets out the minimum educational requirements by rank or level of practice for all police officers and staff (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018: 244).

The PEQF was created in response to the changing nature of crime and role of the police in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and seeks to introduce new forms of knowledge into police forces (Williams et al, 2019). In particular, the PEQF aims to address ‘new’ crimes which undermine traditional police learning and training (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). Age old mantras of ‘common-sense’ and ‘learning on the job’ clash against a spectrum of ‘new’ crimes, which require entirely different policing approaches to which officers are accustomed. Indeed, the College of Policing acknowledges that there ‘...is increasing demand on the police to do more than just solve crime and ‘catch the bad guy.’’ (College of Policing, 2021: n.d). It is suggested that the PEQF is an ideal platform for the inclusion of marginalised crimes, such as heritage crime. Of course, to justify the inclusion of heritage crime within the PEQF’s remit, heritage crime would have to be grouped with similarly marginalised crimes: the trio of heritage, rural and wildlife crime would be the most feasible.

Of the 3 PEQF entry routes, introducing rural, wildlife and heritage crime into the undergraduate curriculum would arguably be the most effective and receptive method of teaching potential officers about heritage crime. Undergraduates on professional policing courses appear to have the least contact with the police out of these 3 entry methods and are therefore less likely to have police culture influence their opinions of marginalised crimes. If marginalised areas of crime can be introduced to potential police officers before they enter the police force, they may be able to circumvent (or be less receptive to) the cultural influence in formulating their opinions of, and policing, these crimes; all 3 of which are traditionally perceived as ‘rubbish work’ (Reiner, 2000). Introducing marginalised areas of crime into the undergraduate curriculum would be markedly easier than introducing them into the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship or the 2 year conversion course.

Indeed, Brown (2018: 15) notes that the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, although not completely dominated by police forces, is likely to be too ‘...police controlled, and may be particularly susceptible to the potential adverse socialising effects of the police occupational culture.’ The PEQF is certainly not the solution to comprehensive police understanding of heritage crime, but introducing marginalised crimes through the PEQF may have a small, but significant, impact upon overall knowledge and police perception of heritage crime.

### **8.3.2 : Structural changes:**

An important structural factor which currently impedes the policing of heritage crime is a lack of accurate recording and reporting in the area. As raised in Chapters 4 and 7, there are currently no reporting and recording standards for heritage crime in England and Wales. Introducing reporting and recording standards for heritage crime would be greatly beneficial, not only for improving the treatment of victims and heritage practitioners who report offences, but also for our overall knowledge regarding the nature and extent of heritage crime. These reporting and recording standards would, understandably, not be flawless, but would go some way to plugging a huge data knowledge gap in relation to heritage crime. Implementing standards might help inform policy makers and police leaders where heritage crime is most concentrated, thereby enabling a more targeted police response. Heritage crime training could then be focussed upon forces where recorded levels of heritage crime are the highest. Moreover, recorded data may allow policing approaches such as POP and ILP to be used, as both approaches require data. Whilst changing internal police recording systems seems highly unlikely in the short term, relatively simple actions such as providing call handlers with guidance on heritage crime would help to provide a clearer picture. Call handlers may not be able to record certain heritage crimes even if they do recognise them, but the sheer acknowledgement of these crimes could help to validate victims, as well as enable a more effective police response.

A further structural factor to consider concerns alternative models of enforcement in relation to heritage crime. These might include a National Heritage Crime Unit, similarly to the National Wildlife Crime Unit, and/or a multi-agency approach to policing heritage crime specifically situated within Historic England. These are explored in greater detail, below.

As this thesis has illustrated, austerity measures continue to assail both the heritage sector and police forces across the UK (Dodd, 2019a). Nevertheless, it is suggested that a Heritage Crime Unit would be a useful structural addition to the existing methods of policing heritage crime in England and Wales; akin to the NWCU (as mentioned in Chapter 7). With a limited budget, a Heritage Crime Unit would most likely remain small. Nevertheless, there would be scope for such a unit to grow, as the NWCU did with continued lobbying, changes in crime trends, and increasing attention being paid to wildlife crime (NWCU, 2019). As the importance of wildlife crime has risen in policing agendas, despite still being marginalised, funding for the NWCU has been relatively sustained. The Unit remains small, but its' size has not reduced its' impact or efficacy, and it is recognised and well regarded by RWCOs across the UK. However, when such specialised units are formalised, there are a variety of consequences.

As discussed in Chapter 7, police officers often perceive specialised units as containing the only individuals capable of policing crimes within the Unit's remit and may be tempted to simply 'pass on' crimes under the Unit's remit which they do not want to police. These units are also commonly a target for policing budget cuts. The NWCU itself was threatened with budget cuts in 2016 (Carrington, 2016) which could have led to its total closure, whilst the current unit which polices cultural and heritage crime in London, the Arts and Antiques Unit, was temporarily disbanded, (a disbandment which the arts and antiques community was convinced might have been permanent) and its officers deployed to help with the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017 (Reyburn, 2017).

However, the attention a crime receives once it is formalised into an official national unit, alongside the benefit of centralised information and guidance in one place; largely outweighs these concerns. Moreover, the success of the AAU and the NWCU despite their size, suggests that niche areas of policing do not necessarily require the training of multiple officers to be effective; rather officers who are passionate, interested, and motivated, necessary traits echoed by the interviewed officers in this thesis.

A National Heritage Crime Unit may work alongside a multi-agency approach. This thesis has identified the problems of the multi-agency approach in policing, and the reticence of police forces to engage in multi-agency working more generally. Nevertheless, in marginalised areas of crime like heritage crime, where a myriad of skill-sets are required (knowledge and practical experience of applying obscure legislation, an understanding of specific forms of heritage, regular engagement with other actors in the CJS, amongst

others), then a multi-agency policing approach to the problem appears to be the most useful way of combining the various skill-sets required to prevent, police and prosecute heritage crime. Indeed, a multi-agency approach to the policing of heritage crime is, arguably, unavoidable. Considering the willingness of heritage professionals to aid police officers in the policing of heritage crime, it is suggested that a multi-agency policing approach to heritage crime might be situated within one of the 6 regional offices in Historic England. Historic England's headquarters are in London, but to place a multi-agency policing group in London would be redundant, with the AAU also in London. It may also be perceived as centric to the South of England. Centring this unit outside of London would offer opportunities for multi-agency working with smaller heritage agencies which may not have easy access to London, heritage agencies which focus upon less elite forms of heritage and voluntary groups; alongside more established partners.

In addition, the collection of heritage crime data ought to be considered. One of the most important issues which has assailed the policing of heritage crime is the inability for police forces to quantify the crime. Quantification of a crime is not only important for ascertaining where, when, and how frequently a crime is occurring, but is also crucial for obtaining support to tackle the crime and can clearly identify that the crime in question *is* a policing problem. Of course the paradox with quantifying heritage crime, by recording it on police systems, means that it becomes a policing problem. As explored in Chapter 4, police forces will not eagerly shoulder another area of crime. Yet, the fact that heritage crime is currently not recorded, is one of the contributory factors to the lack of police understanding, awareness, and knowledge of the phenomenon amongst police officers. Moreover, as the heritage practitioners all acknowledged, without statistics, they could not make a case for policing the swathes of heritage crime they knew was occurring, but which was absent from force databases. Quantifying heritage crime is unlikely, but the case must be made for quantifying the crime. Without quantifying heritage crime, the problem will continue to plague policing. Victims of heritage crime will not stop reporting the phenomenon: as Chapter 6 explored, victims see reporting heritage crime as a 'moral duty' to the protection of heritage. The last barrier, arguably, to the comprehensive policing of heritage crime (but not necessarily the improved treatment of victims) is the recording of heritage crime as a crime on police databases.

### **8.3.2A: Structural changes: a less punitive approach?**

It is arguable that considering a less punitive approach to tackling heritage crime would be a step forward in recognising the unique nature and impact of the crime. The current punitive punishments for heritage crime do not sufficiently reflect the damage and harm caused to victims and communities (Shelbourne, 2014b), nor is there any evidence of a deterrent effect. Indeed, the CPS' focus upon monetary value in relation to sentencing detracts from the wealth of other, arguably more important, issues which emerge from a heritage crime. From the wealth of issues associated with taking heritage crime through the CJS, made by the officers and the heritage practitioners in Chapter 4, it seems that the prevailing punitive approach is inadequate. Therefore, it is contended that restorative approaches may hold potential in raising awareness of the impact of such offences among offenders.

Conventional justice places little concern on the relationship between victim and offender (Calhoun and Pelech, 2010: 293). In heritage crime, the relationship between the victim and the offender is complex, with heritage crime often occurring out of ignorance, and the offender simultaneously being the victim (by damaging shared heritage). This complicated relationship indicates that a restorative approach may prove beneficial in heritage crime cases. Restorative approaches, although without a universal definition, are underpinned by 'values' which are particular to it and in contrast to conventional justice such as respect, truth-telling, trust, fairness, empathy, participation, and voice (Pranis, 2007: 60-64; O'Mahony and Doak, 2017: 14). Such values may instil a sense of agency and empowerment, which are strikingly absent in the conventional criminal justice system (O'Mahony and Doak, 2017). Empowering the victim in heritage crime cases has a host of benefits, not least due to the complicated relationship between victim/offender but, as explored in further detail below, it would offer the victim a chance to educate, inform and even perhaps empower the offender themselves (through a new knowledge and understanding of heritage).

Current restorative approaches in police forces centre upon a restorative community resolution (a community resolution can be non-restorative), which is 'instant' restorative justice, or community/restorative conferencing (Shewan, 2010). A community resolution

is typically used for low level offences, where the offender admits responsibility, has no relevant offending history, and the victim does not want to undertake more formal action (Glen, 2017). Community/restorative conferencing are used for more persistent, serious crimes, or post-offence (Shewan, 2010), conditions which rarely apply for heritage crimes. Therefore, community resolutions appear to be the best non-punitive approach to dealing with heritage crime.

Community resolutions help promote the perspective of the victim. They would be particularly useful for recognising the harms created by heritage crime which may not be recognised by the CJS, or which are not immediately apparent; such as the loss of provenance, loss of heritage to future generations, and psychological impacts. Indeed, a community resolution is the ideal arena within which to communicate the abstract sense of loss associated with heritage crime, to an offender. Chapter 2 illustrated that community resolutions were already being used by four police forces in relation to illegal metal detecting, suggesting that this restorative approach is feasible in cases of heritage crime.

Community resolutions would offer the chance for the individual in charge of the site or asset to communicate to the offender the severity of heritage crime, no matter how seemingly insignificant the crime itself is. They could be used as an educational tool in heritage crime cases, in particular, benefitting offenders who commit heritage crime out of ignorance, and victims of heritage crime who do not want formal action taken because of the latter. An offender might be able to observe some portion of a heritage site or asset being repaired, to understand the protracted, costly, and difficult nature of fixing even the most minimal damage. This would act as a learning experience for the offender: even if the crime against the heritage site or asset seems insignificant, the harm caused has complex and lengthy consequences.

### **8.3.3: Theoretical developments:**

These potential developments in praxis should also be reflected in the further development of theory. Theoretical developments emerged from the use of Grounded Theory, for one of the products of utilising Grounded Theory as a method of analysis, is the generation of theory (Glaser, 1992).

This thesis set out to contribute theoretically to the field of heritage crime, an academic area which has remained a theoretical desert for numerous years. Theoretically, two empirical advancements were made pertaining to heritage crime. Heritage crime was found to empirically link into broader criminological concepts, including fear of crime and Broken Windows Theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). In particular, Broken Windows Theory was expanded upon from a heritage crime centric perspective, termed 'Ruined Windows Theory.' Crucially, in 'Ruined Windows Theory', initial instances of criminal behaviour did not have to occur for there to be subsequent crime attracted to the site or asset. This was because the appearance of the heritage site or asset, which is either decayed or dilapidated due to its age, attracted crime, as its appearance indicated that it was uncared for. Furthermore, it was also found that because much heritage crime occurs out of ignorance, unlike the deliberate acts which form the foundations of Broken Windows Theory, this meant that 'Ruined Windows Theory' was one step removed from (but has its roots in) Broken Windows Theory.

The results of this thesis also demonstrated that fear of crime emerging from heritage crime was largely restricted to the heritage site or asset itself. Victims, and the local community who utilised the heritage sites and assets, did not experience a more general fear of crime because they were aware of the contextual aspects of heritage crime. Specifically, these contextual aspects were that heritage sites and assets were often perceived as a place to commit crime without recourse, and that much of the crime which occurred on them occurred out of ignorance. Therefore, the victims and local community the victims liaised with, felt that heritage crime was not an indication of wider disorder outside of heritage sites and assets.

Existing perspectives on heritage crime cites crime prevention as a method of tackling heritage crime (Grove and Thomas, 2014; Grove and Pease, 2014), but no empirical basis supports this. This thesis revealed that whilst crime prevention measures could work well on heritage sites and assets in theory, in practice, these measures were largely ineffective. Reasons for their ineffectiveness included, for example, the permanently open nature of many sites and assets, and the cost implications of some crime prevention measures, such as paying for the presence of a permanent guardian on the site or asset. The victims explained how the latter was the most effective crime prevention measure, but, in these particular cases, the individuals concerned had had their posts rescinded due to budgetary constraints. Another flaw which emerged in crime prevention usage was the inability for police officers to understand that certain straightforward crime prevention measures could



not be applied on heritage sites and assets. The clearest example of this was officers who suggested that churches lock their doors to prevent crime, most likely unaware of the fact that heritage assets such as churches are traditionally kept open for long standing cultural reasons (Baker, 1999). Similarly, many heritage sites and assets are open access by design, and are therefore impossible to close (Humphries, 2006).

Moreover, the victims were emphatic that heritage assets should be kept open for the enjoyment of others, despite the risk of crime. When police officers attempted to shoehorn traditional crime prevention practices onto heritage sites and assets, despite the victims repeatedly telling the officers they would not work, the police mantra was perceived as defeatist: “If crime prevention fails, there’s nothing else we can do.” This inflexibility on the part of officers and the wider police response to heritage crime reflects the focus upon crime prevention measures in police documentation (NPCC, 2016; NPCC, 2017), and is indicative of the limited thought that has been put into the policing of heritage crime. The NPCC and its partners must think more creatively about their approaches to tackling heritage crime as a whole, but crime prevention measures formulate a large part of their current approach. Whilst crime prevention has its merits, as Chapter 6 demonstrated, in the case of heritage crime it is fundamentally flawed, and will not take precedence over cultural traditions, nor prevent crime that occurs out of ignorance.

Lastly, it is also worth considering the application of zemiology to the study of heritage crime. Heritage crime easily fits within the conceptual framework of zemiology. In particular, zemiology permits heritage crime scholars to capture the harms caused by heritage crime and allows these same scholars to consider broader forms of victimisation; meaning it is useful for exploring abstract victims of heritage crime such as future generations. Viewing heritage crime through a zemiological lens, and framing heritage crime in terms of the harms it causes, might also help police officers to comprehend the less immediate consequences of heritage crime and consider it in the light of its immediate impact upon victims and communities.

#### **8.4: Concluding thoughts**

Clearly, there are numerous changes which can be made to the policing of heritage crime and the treatment of victims of the phenomenon. Heritage crime is gaining traction in policing and police forces across England and Wales are gradually becoming more aware

of the problem. Despite the challenges the officers in this research faced, they were all determined to police heritage crime to the best of their ability. However, amongst officers more generally, the perception of heritage crime is poor, and the treatment of victims, substandard. Police perceptions of victims remain unyieldingly based in the tangible, immediate human victim, whilst officers still struggle to recognise crimes without an immediate human victim as being important (Flynn and Hall, 2017); juxtaposing directly against the varied victims and broad impact of heritage crime. Indeed, although the impacts of heritage crime may not always be immediately obvious to officers, they are acutely felt by the victims of heritage crime. Problematically however, heritage crime demands a police response which contrasts against traditional police methods, including responding to crimes which are not immediately obvious or leave no evidence (such as illegal metal detecting appearing to only leave holes in the ground), engaging heavily with partners, and utilising proactive instead of reactive policing.

Indeed, the effective policing of heritage crime does not appear to be achievable without collaboration. More academic research is greatly needed to help forces police heritage crime more effectively. Linguistic and cultural barriers must be overcome between heritage practitioners and police officers, and police leaders must engage more with heritage crime officers. As this research only centred upon England and Wales, further research, with a greater budget and more time, could include Scotland and Northern Ireland, in order to gain a more rounded view of heritage crime policing across the UK. Studies on a smaller scale, which would improve our understandings of the realities of policing heritage crime from a cultural perspective, might involve ethnographic work with the police. Building on the findings of this research, it would be beneficial to explore the victims of heritage crime further, conducting qualitative research with communities and individuals who feel victimised by heritage crime, but are not geographically close to the heritage site or asset in question. Overall, whilst the policing of heritage crime does incur extra work on the part of police, the seriousness of the crime merits police attention despite the latter. Indeed, as all the participants in this thesis stressed, once heritage crime has damaged or destroyed a site or asset:

*‘...it’s gone, that’s it, it’s not coming back, you’ve lost it forever’ (Victim 4).*

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Interview schedules

## Appendix 2: Freedom of Information Request email

## Appendix 3: Freedom of Information Request responses

### Appendix 1: Police officers and heritage practitioners interview schedule

As part of my PhD, I am investigating the understandings and responses to 'heritage crime' across England and Wales. Your views are considered to be very important to this research, and therefore I wondered whether you may be prepared to answer the following questions. This interview is anticipated to take no more than one hour and all interview responses are anonymised.

1. In your opinion, what are the impacts of heritage crime?
2. Who are the victims of heritage crime?
3. What are the impacts of heritage crime on its victims?
4. In your experience, when they report such instances, are victims aware that it is a **heritage** crime specifically?
5. What are your opinions on the legislation concerning heritage crime?
6. Do you believe that there are strong enough penalties in place to prevent heritage crime?
7. In your opinion, what obstacles exist in responding to heritage crime?
8. Do you think that there is sufficient training available for police officers relating to heritage crime?
9. Based on your personal experiences, how far do you feel that police officers understand heritage crime?

10. How far do you feel that collaborative partnership working (such as ARCH, the MOU) is the best method with which to tackle heritage crime?
11. Do you think that the focus on metal theft has had an impact upon heritage crime awareness and understanding?
12. How would you improve awareness and understanding of heritage crime within your police force? (/the police force across England and Wales more broadly-to use when interviewing heritage professionals)
13. Could the recording of heritage crime be improved and if so how?
14. Have resourcing issues impacted upon provisions for heritage crime?

Thank you for participating in this interview. If you would like a copy of this interview once it has been transcribed, please contact me on: [bethan.poyser@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:bethan.poyser@ntu.ac.uk) and I will gladly supply one.

#### **Appendix 1A: Victims interview schedule**

As part of my PhD, I am investigating the understandings and responses to 'heritage crime' across England and Wales. I am particularly interested in the discrepancies between victims and police practitioners' understandings and experiences of heritage crime, with a view as to recommending improvements for policing policy. Your views are considered to be very important to this research, and therefore I wondered whether or not you may be prepared to answer the following questions. This interview is anticipated to take no more than one hour and all interview responses are anonymised.

1. In your own words, please define heritage crime.
2. What is your role in relation to this heritage site?
3. Have you experienced any instances of heritage crime on this heritage site?

4. When reporting an incident of heritage crime to your local police force, can you describe the police response? (time, how they acted, if they used a Heritage Crime Impact Statement)
5. To what extent do you feel that your local police force understands heritage crime?
6. Have you ever been consulted by your local police force about preventing instances of criminal behaviour on this site?
7. In your opinion, does your local police force do enough to tackle heritage crime?
8. Has your role as a place manager required you to respond to heritage crime yourself?
9. In your opinion, what are the impacts of heritage crime?
10. Who are the victims of heritage crime in your opinion?
11. Are you aware of the resources provided by Historic England concerning heritage crime?
12. What, if any, recommendations would you give to improve your local police force's understanding of heritage crime?

Thank you for participating in this interview. If you would like a copy of this interview once it has been transcribed, please contact me on: [bethan.poyser@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:bethan.poyser@ntu.ac.uk) and I will gladly supply one.

## **Appendix 2: Freedom of Information request email**

To whom it may concern,

I am requesting this information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

Currently, I am conducting a PhD on heritage crime. As part of this research, I am hoping to find out if every police force in England is in possession of a heritage crime liaison officer.



The role of heritage crime liaison officer is often (almost exclusively) 'bolted on' to a serving police officer's existing role. For example, in some forces Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers have had the role of heritage crime liaison officer bolted onto their existing position, becoming Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Officers. In other forces, the role of heritage crime liaison officer is taken on alongside the officer's existing position; with the officer in question being referred to as, for example, 'Inspector **and** Heritage Crime Liaison Officer.'

With this mind, my 2 questions are as follows:

- 1). Does your force have a heritage crime liaison officer/heritage crime officer?
  
- 2). If your force does have a heritage crime liaison officer, could you please tell me what rank the officer in question is and if that officer is one of the following: a Rural and Wildlife Crime Officer; Rural, Wildlife and Environmental Crime Officer; Rural Crime Officer; Wildlife Crime Officer; or Wildlife and Environmental Crime Officer, or an officer whose title is not listed above.

Best wishes,

Bethan Poyser

### Appendix 3: Freedom of Information Request results from police forces in England

Force	Does this force have a heritage crime officer?	Rank and Role of Officer
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	No: 'Avon and Somerset Police does not currently have a heritage crime officer or heritage crime liaison officer.'	N/A
Bedfordshire Police	No: 'Bedfordshire Police does not have a dedicated heritage crime officer. We have a Rural Crime Team which incorporates wildlife crime within their role. The Rural Crime Team consists of 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant and 4 Constable'	N/A
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	No: 'We do not have a specific heritage crime officer as a named individual. We have a team of Rural Crime officers for whom heritage crime is part of their overall remit.'	N/A
Cheshire Constabulary	No: 'Cheshire Constabulary does have a Heritage watch volunteer, in addition the responsibility is <b>sometimes</b> bolted onto the role of Rural Crime Officers responsibilities depending on the location in Cheshire. We do not have anything on Force systems to highlight this, however you may find the following link useful with your research: <a href="https://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/watch-schemes/rural-watch/">https://www.cheshire.police.uk/advice-and-support/watch-schemes/rural-watch/</a> '	N/A
City of London Police	No	N/A

Cleveland Police	No: ‘Having made enquiries within the Force we do not have a heritage crime liaison officer.’	N/A
Cumbria Constabulary	No: ‘I can confirm that Cumbria Constabulary do not have a Crime Liaison/Heritage Crime Officer.’	N/A
Derbyshire Constabulary	Yes	PC: Wildlife, CITES & Heritage Crime Officer
Devon & Cornwall Police	No: ‘No, we do not have specified roles of this nature. This activity is normally aligned to Neighbourhood and Local Investigation Police Officer roles...this covers all Police Officer Ranks’	N/A
Dorset Police	Yes: ‘A thematic held by a Patrol Inspector who does not have responsibility for rural crime. However, the thematic of heritage crime does sit under the Territorial Policing Command as does rural crime.’	Inspector
Durham Constabulary	Yes	Detective Sergeant
Essex Police	Yes	Rural and Wildlife Crime Officer  Essex Police has an officer who specializes in wildlife and heritage matters supported by other officers covering all three local policing areas.  Essex Police also has a crime prevention tactical adviser who also has a heritage crime portfolio.

		Essex Police also has a Heritage watch portfolio. All three work closely together in regard to heritage crime matters .
Gloucestershire Constabulary		N/A
Greater Manchester Police	No: 'There is no post title within the force of heritage crime liaison officer/heritage crime officer. GMP does have some officers who are wildlife liaison officers as a bolt-on to their normal role.'	N/A
Hampshire Constabulary	Yes: 'Our force has a team of Rural and Wildlife Crime Officers who all deal with heritage crime'	1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant, 6 police staff, 3 police staff investigators .
Hertfordshire Constabulary	Yes: 'Hertfordshire Constabulary has 3 X full time Heritage Crime Officers. (1 x Sgt & 2 x PC) they, in turn, link in with Safer Neighbourhood teams throughout the Constabulary to ensure crimes reported against wildlife are fully investigated. They form the Rural Operational Support Team and also lead on Rural, Wildlife, Environmental and Equine Crime.'	1 Sergeant, 2 PCs All 3 are Rural Crime Officers, part of the Rural Operational Support Team (ROST).

Humberside Police	Yes	PC: Rural and Wildlife Crime Officer (not responded yet but available online)
Kent Police	Yes	Sergeant: Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime (this isn't an FOI response-can find out online)
Lancashire Constabulary	Yes	Police staff: Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Co-ordinator.
Leicestershire Police	Yes: 'Sgt Redacted is the tactical lead for heritage crime in Leicestershire Police.' 'He has this as part of his portfolio of heritage, wildlife and rural crime. The role involves liaising with a team of our officers who will also have wildlife and rural crime within their portfolio's (as well as their normal neighbourhood responsibilities). [Sgt's own words] 'I also liaise / supervise a team of heritage watch volunteers who are people who have academic knowledge of heritage and a passion to deliver crime prevention advice and guidance for some of our locations.'	Sergeant: Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Lead.
Lincolnshire Police	Yes: 'Lincolnshire Police has a force lead on Rural Crime, which includes responsibility for Heritage Crime...[the officer] has responsibility for Rural Crime and the force Wildlife Officers.'	Chief Inspector: Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Lead.
Merseyside Police	No	N/A

Metropolitan Police Service	Arts and Antiques Unit (contains 3 officers which are dedicated to the policing of art and antiques crime. Heritage crime would be delegated to these officers)	N/A
Norfolk Constabulary	No: 'Neither Norfolk nor Suffolk Constabulary has a dedicated heritage crime liaison officer/heritage crime officer. The Rural Crime Teams also cover reports of heritage crime. In Norfolk, the dedicated rural officer is a Wildlife Crime Officer. There are a further 36 Wildlife Crime Officers across the organisation in a variety of roles.'	N/A
North Yorkshire Police	Yes	Inspector (not actual response-can find out online)
Northamptonshire Police	No: Northamptonshire Police has 2 Rural Crime Officers who oversee the investigation of Heritage Crimes.'	N/A
Northumbria Police	No: 'Northumbria Police do not have heritage crime liaison officers/heritage crime officers.'	N/A
Nottinghamshire Police	Yes	Chief Inspector: Rural and Wildlife Crime Lead for the Force.
South Yorkshire Police	No: 'I approached a number of departments and our districts for assistance with this request. Firstly Workforce Planning firstly advised that there is no listing of Heritage Crime Liaison Officer but they checked with each of our four districts (Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster) Each returned with a Nil response. Our Operational Support Unit & Specialist Crime Services also gave a Nil response. Therefore our response is one of "No Information Held" Incidents or Crimes of this type would be part of the daily duties of all Officers, within all districts as required.'	N/A

Staffordshire Police	Yes: 'They do act as part of the Rural and Wildlife Crime Unit; however, this is ancillary to their regular duties.'	Inspector: Part of the Rural and Wildlife Crime Unit.
Suffolk Constabulary	No: 'Neither Norfolk nor Suffolk Constabulary has a dedicated heritage crime liaison officer/heritage crime officer. The Rural Crime Teams also cover reports of heritage crime. In Suffolk, Nick Stonehouse is the Head of a Rural Policing Team.'	N/A
Surrey Police	Yes	PC: Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Co-ordinator
Sussex Police	Yes	Sergeant: Rural Wildlife & Heritage Lead PCSO-Voluntary Heritage Crime Officer
Thames Valley Police	No: 'Whilst Thames Valley Police have a designated officer who will deal with wildlife and rural crime, there is not a specific job role of 'Heritage Crime Liaison Officer.'	N/A
Warwickshire Police	No	N/A
West Mercia Police	No	N/A
West Midlands Police	No: 'West Midlands Police have a subject matter expert for Wildlife Crime, Rural Affairs and Heritage Crime. The subject matter expert is a Detective Chief Inspector.'	N/A

West Yorkshire Police	No: 'West Yorkshire Police do not hold any information in relation to your request, as heritage crime is covered within a Police Officer's role.'	N/A
Wiltshire Police		N/A
Dyfed-Powys Police	Yes	Inspector and Heritage Crime Liaison Officer
Gwent Police	Yes	PC-Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Officer
North Wales Police	Yes	PC-Rural and Wildlife Crime Officer
South Wales Police	Yes	PC-Wildlife and Environmental Crime Officer