

<b>Institution:</b> University of Warwick		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D28 – History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> History, Theatre and Mental Health in Prison		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2014 - 2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Hilary Marland Rachel Bennett Margaret Charleroy Nicholas Duvall	Professor Postdoctoral Fellow Postdoctoral Fellow Postdoctoral Fellow	1 March 1996-present 1 Nov. 2016-31 Oct. 2019 11 May 2015-10 May 2018 12 Jan. 2015-11 Jan 2017
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>In a period when mental illness, suicide and violence in prisons were seldom out of the news, Professor Hilary Marland and her team have used their historical research into prisoners' mental health to work with theatre practitioners and explore these issues with policy makers, the public and prisoners. Her work has increased awareness among audiences and led to improvements in prisoners' mental health outcomes, while the project's theatre partners have developed new ways of conveying historical findings in their productions. Through performances, events and publications, Marland has also influenced policy makers and prison advocacy groups to understand how history can inform present practices.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>Marland's project is the first in-depth historical study of the relationship between mental illness and the practices of the modern prison. In particular it explored why prisons contain so many mentally ill people and how far and in what ways prisons tend to produce or exacerbate mental disorder.</p> <p>Funded by a Wellcome Trust Investigator Award in the Medical Humanities, the project team was led by Marland and included Postdoctoral Fellows Bennett, Charleroy and Duvall. The team undertook a systematic and in-depth examination of the management of mental illness in English and Irish prisons between the creation of the modern prison system in the 1840s to the present day. Drawing on under-utilised prison records, official reports, medical literature and memoirs, the research investigated how mental breakdown has been experienced and managed by prisons, prison staff and prisoners. The team mapped changes in approaches to assessment, care and treatment, and explored how decisions about mental health were made. The project engaged directly with current debates around high levels of mental illness amongst prisoners and the longstanding relationship between incarceration and mental breakdown.</p> <p>The research demonstrated the detrimental impact of prison regimes on prisoners' mental health. This was most acute in the era of 'the separate system', a system of prison discipline introduced in the mid-nineteenth century based on cellular isolation and the use of solitary confinement (3.1; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6). Severe systems of discipline, overcrowding, poor diet and living conditions, lack of socialisation, and detachment from family were also detrimental to prisoners' mental health (3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5). The findings revealed an astonishing resistance to change. Despite widespread recognition that the separate system was a failure, leading to significant and often irreparable damage to prisoners' mental health, it was implemented in full until the early</p>		

twentieth century and elements of it remain today in the use of solitary confinement and segregation (3.1; 3.4).

The research also exposed the generally low standards of treatment of mentally ill prisoners by those charged with their care, and the survival of long-held beliefs that prisoners were feigning mental illness to escape harsh prison regimes (3.2; 3.3; 3.5). It showed that new psychiatric categories emerged in late nineteenth-century prisons to bolster prison medical officers' claims to expert knowledge, and that tensions between prison doctors and specialists in mental health outside of the prison remained high; general psychiatrists and superintendents of mental hospitals were highly critical of the standard of provision in prison and the limited expertise of prison doctors (3.2; 3.3; 3.5). For critics of prisons, including those working in them, high levels of mental illness must form part of any debate about the aims of imprisonment, and the suitability of institutions for meeting those aims (3.4; 3.6).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Marland and Charleroy have published articles in peer-reviewed journals and edited collections:

1. **Charleroy, Margaret and Marland, Hilary** (2016) *Prisoners of solitude: bringing history to bear on prison health policy*. *Endeavour*, 40(3). pp.141-47. doi:10.1016/j.endeavour.2016.07.001
2. Cox, Catherine and **Marland, Hilary** (2018) 'He must die or go mad in this place': prisoners, insanity and the Pentonville model prison experiment, 1842-1852. *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 92(1). pp.78-109. doi:10.1353/bhm.2018.0004
3. Cox, Catherine and **Marland, Hilary** (2018) *Broken minds and beaten bodies: cultures of harm and the management of mental illness in mid- to late nineteenth-century English and Irish prisons*. *Social History of Medicine*, 31(4), pp.688-710. doi:10.1093/shm/hky038
4. Cox, Catherine and **Marland, Hilary** (2018) 'We are recreating Bedlam': a history of mental illness and prison systems in England and Ireland. In: Kendell, Kathleen and Mills, Alice, (eds.) *Mental Health in Prisons: Critical Perspectives on Treatment and Confinement*. Palgrave Studies in Prisons and Penology. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.25-47. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-94090-8\_2
5. Cox, Catherine and **Marland, Hilary** (2019) 'Unfit for reform or punishment': mental disorder and discipline in Liverpool borough gaol in the late nineteenth century. *Social History*, 44(2). pp.173-201. doi:10.1080/03071022.2019.1579977
6. **Marland, Hilary** (2019) 'Close confinement tells very much upon a man': prison memoirs, insanity and the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Prison. *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 74(3), pp.267-91. doi:10.1093/jhmas/jrz027

#### Funding:

**Marland, Hilary (Co-PI)**, Wellcome Trust Project Grant, 'Prisoners, Medical Care and Entitlement to Health in England and Ireland, 1840-2000' (with co-PI Associate Professor Catherine Cox, University College Dublin). Ref: 103341/Z/13/Z. 2014-19, **GBP550,578**, Enhancement Award for Research and Public Engagement Fellowship, **GBP28,335**.

**Marland, Hilary (PI)**, Wellcome Trust Provision for Public Engagement Award, 'Prisoners, Medical Care and Entitlement to Health in England and Ireland, 1850-2000.' Ref: 103341/Z/13/A, April 2017-September 2020, **GBP88,465**.

**University of Warwick**, Arts Council England Grants for the Arts, 'Past Times: An Exploration of Food in Prisons Now and in the Past.' Ref: GFTA-00074886, 2018, **GBP9,600**.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Between 2017 and 2019, Marland and her team collaborated with theatre companies to create new theatrical works about mental health in prisons. As a result, theatre companies developed

new ways of conveying historical material, audiences, stakeholders and policy-makers gained new analytical tools to contribute to on-going debates about mental health in prison, and prisoners benefitted from improved well-being.

### Theatre Companies

The project's theatre partners developed new ways to engage diverse audiences with challenging materials. In partnership with Talking Birds Theatre Company, Marland co-devised *Disorder Contained*, which was performed in 2017 in Coventry, Dublin, Belfast and London (audience numbers, 650). Marland and her team's work on women in prison resulted in a collaboration with Fuel Theatre on *Lock Her Up*: three immersive audio pieces exploring solitary confinement, the distinctive problems of mothers in prison, and women's agency in resisting the terms of their incarceration. Together with inmates at HMP Peterborough's Mother and Baby Unit, Marland and Bennett worked with playwright Helena Enright and Geese Theatre Company on the project *On the Inside*, which explored historical and current experiences of maternity and physical and mental wellbeing in prison. This culminated in the theatre of testimony production *Playing the Game*, which blended contemporary experience and interviews with historical records and was performed at the BEDLAM festival, Birmingham, in 2019 (audience numbers 196). Marland worked with Rideout Theatre Company on a series of 6 unique performances based on the team's research with inmates at HMP Hewell and HMP Stafford. These projects were brought together in Warwick's 'The Production of Truth, Justice and History', at Tate Exchange, Tate Modern (12-17 June 2018), incorporating the launch of *Lock Her Up*, film showings of *Disorder Contained*, panel discussions on *Past Time*, displays on the projects, and a curated afternoon for Coventry secondary school pupils on solitary confinement.

Theatre partners were explicit about the benefits of these collaborations. Talking Birds explained that working with the team was inspirational: 'its original research, it's something that you wouldn't necessarily have access to unless you are collaborating with a particular expert in that field'; it's 'satisfying... you've got a possibility of then presenting a greater range of opinions' (5.1). Playwright Enright commented: 'Hilary Marland and her team enabled us access to rich materials and valuable contextual expertise that we used to form the bedrock of this hard hitting piece...[their work] allowed us to make history come alive and speak to the contemporary in a tangible and accessible way for audiences' (5.1). Rideout's CEO explained the importance of these collaborative projects: 'Not only did it give us access to exceptional historical source material for us to interpret within the projects, it... allowed the men first-hand access to experts in their field, and helped encourage the participants to explore how historical research can develop a broader understanding of our contemporary culture. Furthermore, it opened up a theme of work that Rideout had not previously explored and led to some of the finest participatory performance work the company has done in its 21 year history' (5.1).

These collaborations allowed the theatre-company partners to produce powerful and effective drama. Audiences at *Playing the Game* reported strong emotional responses such as sadness or anger. One commented they feared 'improvements aren't coming fast enough' (5.2). Audiences described *Disorder Contained* as 'brilliant, vibrant and gripping', 'powerful and kept me engaged throughout', 'really drew you in to these prisoners minds' (5.2). Powerful reactions to the Tate Exchange installations featured prominently in all stages of the independent evaluation, from the conversations with student ambassadors to the feedback board (5.3, pp.49). Sound artist Rachel Mars' audio piece for Fuel Theatre on solitary confinement was for instance praised for building a strong 'sensation of confinement and restriction' (5.3 p.13).

### Audiences, sector stakeholders and policy-makers

Through these performances audiences gained new analytical tools for thinking about mental health in prisons. They reported being inspired to reflect on the direct connections between the unfamiliar material and current issues around prisons and punishment: 'Made me more aware of how imprisonment and esp solitary confinement contributes to a deterioration in mental health'; 'I hadn't given it a lot of thought in the past but the sense of claustrophobia conveyed in the

performance gave me a real sense of terror and I can absolutely imagine the mental health challenges one would endure'; 'Made me think about the long term impact of imprisonment on mental health in the past and today' (*Disorder Contained* Feedback, 5.2). Programme notes, post-show discussions and a film of the performance, articles in *Inside Time* (the UK's prison newspaper, circulation: 60,000), *Prospect* magazine (circulation 44,545), the Irish Post (print readership: 80,000) and the Howard League Bulletin further extended the project's impact to people unable to attend the performances. Additionally, Marland participated in a BBC Coventry programme and a Conversation Anthill podcast listened to 6,414 times between August 2018 and December 2020 (5.2).

Through the development of a digital toolkit, Marland and her team enabled teachers and other interested groups to engage with these topics. *Past Time Toolkit: A Learning Resources about Victorian Prisons* is aimed at GCSE learners, but has a wider relevance for, for example, groups working in the criminal justice system and drama groups. Alongside informative articles addressing key topics, the toolkit has resources to encourage discussion and reflection. 81 users downloaded the toolkit between March and December 2020, including 66 schools, and 8 public sector organisations including prisons and professionals working with the justice system. Downloaders indicated that they intended to use the toolkit with a minimum total of 2974 students in the UK, the United States, China and Ireland. The most popular reasons for downloading the toolkit were to engage users with history (selected 63 times), for a new approach to the syllabus (selected 48 times) and to engage users in creative learning practices (selected 36 times) (5.4).

The team's research also shaped policy debates. Marland's evidence on the devastating impact of solitary confinement was accepted and published by the Joint Committee on Human Rights, Mental Health and Deaths in Prison in April 2017 (5.5). The partnerships with theatre companies was specifically praised in October 2019 by the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance in their report 'Enhancing Arts and Culture in the Criminal Justice System' (5.6, p.17). The project worked closely with stakeholders to achieve impact. Policy makers, prison reform organisations (Howard League, Prison Reform Trust, Irish Penal Reform Trust), Public Health England, prison psychiatrists, probation officers, and the authors of key reports on mental health in prison attended the team's 2016 conference 'The Prison and Mental Health' at the Shard, London, to explore the enduring nature of mental illness in prison and how history can inform current work in prison psychiatry. Representatives of prison reform organisations and psychiatrists working in prisons contributed to panel discussions of *Disorder Contained*. The 2019 History, Arts and Public Engagement Conference, also held at the Shard, London, brought together prison-associated stakeholder groups, including the prison inspectorate, prison reform organisations; rehabilitation specialists (Behind Bars, Maslaha), in-prison maternity organisations (Birth Companions, Women in Prison), and prison Arts specialists (National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance, Clean Break). Summing up the conference, the Howard League's Research Director stated 'This project has taught me, as a researcher and prison reform lobbyist, so much about how relevant history is to my everyday work and how much it can influence what I am trying to achieve in terms of change and impact on the justice system today' (5.7, p.41).

### Prisoners

The team used their research to work with prison theatre specialists to co-design activities leading to enhanced well-being among prisoners. In collaboration with Rideout Theatre Company, two 'Past Time' workshops were run in HMP Hewell in 2018, engaging prisoners with the project's research on the history of prisons, food and wellbeing. Participants (15 participants per workshop) became active historians, cooking historical recipes, obtaining qualifications in food hygiene and nutrition, and created and performed unique theatre pieces for invited and internal audiences. After the Governor of HMP Stafford attended one of the performances, he invited the team to Stafford Prison to develop three further residencies. *Staging Time* explored the themes of hard labour (using physical theatre), weak-mindedness (puppetry), conscientious objectors, mental health and reform (choir), testing these innovative approaches through new theatrical forms (12 participants x 3 projects, 25 on final choral project). In HMP Hewell the team

worked specifically with Vulnerable Prisoners, and in HMP Stafford with adult male sex offenders, and with prisoners isolated due to learning disabilities or symptoms of early dementia.

As described above, these collaborations produced powerful theatre. More significantly, involvement in these workshops had a meaningful and beneficial effect on inmates' wellbeing. Independent literary review organisation Sabotage Reviews described how 'At the end of the performance [Past Time], each man was permitted to say a few words about what participating in it had meant to him. It was clear that for all of them, it had meant a lot' (5.2). HMP Stafford's Governor reported that 'Working with the historians from Warwick gave our residents the chance to engage with the wider world, normalising their experience in custody, and significantly increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem. It made them feel valued, in that people from outside the establishment were there to engage with them. This is invaluable in reducing stigma and shame, which we know are factors that increase the risk of reoffending, and damage the chances of successful resettlement as contributing citizens' (5.8).

Commissioned evaluation reports demonstrated improved mental engagement and mental health, a significant decrease in drug and alcohol abuse, reduced reliance on violent or aggressive interactions, improved relationship with family members, and the creation of new supportive groups among the men. Using the COPE inventory score (a multidimensional coping inventory to assess the different ways in which people respond to stress), behavioural disengagement decreased from a mean of 1.0 to 0.2 in group one, 1.1 to 0.1 in group two; mental disengagement from 2.0 to 1.7 and 2.2-1.1 (5.9, p.18 onwards). Evaluation also reported that participants' confidence and motivation grew, many going on to positions of responsibility in the prison. 'In the past I have always given up on things... I saw it through to the end. This showed me the importance of staying motivated' ('Jimmy'). 'From that time in the room you just felt human, making something special. It made me realise I can do things without alcohol' ('Andy' 5.10, both names changed). One participant wrote in a letter to the team, 'My confidence has grown as well as my self esteem...I have had a great experience' (5.8).

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Feedback from Theatre Practitioners (Interview with Talking Birds, Statements from Rideout and Helena Enright)
2. Performance feedback, reviews and press coverage (Playing the Game – Sample of Audience Feedback, Disorder Contained audience feedback, press articles, podcast listener figures and Sabotage Review of Past Time)
3. Tate Exchange Evaluation
4. Toolkit Download Details
5. Joint Committee on Human Rights: Interim Report
6. Enhancing arts and culture in the criminal justice system: A partnership approach (NCJAA Report)
7. History, Arts and Public Engagement Conference Report
8. Past Time: Statement from HMP Stafford's Governor and from project participant
9. Past Time Evaluation (produced by N Quinn-Walker, University of Wolverhampton)
10. Past Time Project Report