

**Commemoration, Memory and the Process of Display:
Negotiating the Imperial War Museum's
First World War Exhibitions,
1964 - 2014**

Submitted by James Wallis to the University of Exeter
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Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Wallis', written over a dotted line.

Abstract

This thesis explores the key permanent and temporary First World War exhibitions held at the Imperial War Museum in London over a fifty year period. In so doing, it examines the theoretical, political and intellectual considerations that inform exhibition-making. It thus illuminates the possibilities, challenges and difficulties, of displaying the 'War to End All Wars'. Furthermore, by situating these displays within their respective social, economic and cultural contexts, this produces a critical analysis of past and present practices of display. A study of these public presentations of the First World War enables discussion of the Museum's primary agendas, and its role as a national public institution. In considering this with the broader effect of generational shifts and the ever-changing impact of the War's cultural memory on this institution, the thesis investigates how the Imperial War Museum has consistently reinvented itself to produce engaging portrayals of the conflict for changing audiences.

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Abbreviation Reference Table

Abbreviation	Definition
IWM	Used interchangeably to represent the Imperial War Museum or (post 2011) referring to IWM London as part of Imperial War Museums
Regen Team	Otherwise known as the Regeneration Team. Curatorial team behind the 2014 First World War Galleries at IWM London
CM	Casson Mann - External Designers for the 2014 First World War Galleries at IWM London
R&I	Department of Research and Information at IWM
	For Abbreviations of Staff Members Interviewed, please see Figure 6
	For List of Initials of Staff Members involved in Regeneration Team, please see Figure 74
JW	James Wallis

Chapter 1 – Introduction



Figure 1 – *The Imperial War Museum, Lambeth, London*

(©IWM_SITE_LAM_00021.jpg)

1.1 – Researching the Imperial War Museum

The Imperial War Museum (IWM) is an institution that not only presents history; it has a complex and intriguing history of its own. This thesis seeks to illuminate its past by examining the ways in which the institution has represented and interpreted the First World War through its exhibitions over the last fifty years (1964-2014). This conflict redefined the global order through the consequential establishment of new states and political systems as well as new conflicts and revolutions. It also left Britain with a continuing language of remembrance. Thus distilling the complexity of this event into a spatial depiction has gone through multiple and distinctive iterations over this period. The Museum remains profoundly bound up in acknowledging the event which led to its founding - originally it had been crucial in establishing a national memory of this conflict through the resonance that it could generate from the objects and stories that these told. Since that time, it has utilised changing modes of display and interpretation to engage diversifying audiences, to consider the conflict in newly relevant and meaningful ways. Thus from 1920 when it was ‘...defined in the set of circumstances and ideas that create and

foster it', the Museum has continually provided opportunities for the public to study and understand the history of the First World War.¹

Coinciding with the conflict's increasing temporal distance to its visitors, the Museum's staff would place a heightened focus upon its ability to act as a dynamic site of learning. Museological understanding of how knowledge was communicated within exhibition spaces changed significantly over this time period. Studies outlined in Chapter 2 shed light upon audiences' changing intellectual requirements, engagement, and contact with the subject matter within museological pedagogy. These broader changes of 'trying to find less arrogant and more attractive and interactive ways of engaging with visitors, students or audiences' consequently altered the dynamic between museum makers and museum visitors, and shifted understanding between anticipated expectation and actual experience.²

As a museological institution in the 21st Century, the IWM has recently reprioritised its additional functions to help ensure its relevance – comprising principally of providing a commercial film and picture library, extended learning programmes and events management, as well as capitalising upon new digital technologies. The Museum's core value, however, remains in its duty of care of a national collection, and how it utilises this for display purposes. Its collections make it a storehouse, a 'repository of memory' which it continually reinstates through exhibition purposes. Implicit in this notion is that '...of memory objectified, not belonging to any one individual so much as to audiences, publics, collectives and nations, and represented via the museum collections'.³ The Museum therefore acts as a facility for preserving, shaping and constituting understanding of the First World War.

¹ Kavanagh (2000; 11)

² Macdonald (2002; 11). See Crane (2000; 6)

³ Crane (2000; 2)

1.2 – Background to the Imperial War Museum

Rebranded in 2011 as Imperial War Museums (IWM), IWM London continues to function as Britain's national War Museum.⁴ Its remit records that it will provide and encourage the study and understanding of the history of modern wartime experience relating to Britain and the Commonwealth. It has an unparalleled collection of eleven million items 'reflecting the experience of war in every conceivable medium'.⁵ The institution's genesis came out of a propaganda initiative in 1917, the penultimate year of the First World War, to be 'established as part of a short-term initiative to lift the war mood'.⁶ It was to record the involvement of all levels of society who had been drawn into that conflict. In dealing with events yet to be resolved, its founders were undertaking something without precedent, to be achieved through a policy of delegated contemporary collecting of objects that were to 'speak most eloquently of the human experience of war'.⁷ This 'radically different approach to collecting and recording' lay in the institution's determination to make its resources and collections relevant to the wartime population, and so it acquired items 'redolent of the involvement of the common man and woman in the war, whether at the Front or at home'.⁸ The Museum therefore wanted to keep the 'vents of the Great War fresh in public memory...[its] material should enable future generations to visualize the experience, hopes, fears, disappointments and triumphs of the conflict'.⁹ Recording the War's impacts upon society and acting as an

⁴ Imperial War Museums consists of four other branches: IWM Duxford in Cambridgeshire (opened 1976), HMS Belfast (opened 1978), the Cabinet War Rooms/Churchill War Rooms (opened 1984) and Imperial War Museum North in Salford (opened 2002)

⁵ IWM AV Brief 'From Near Defeat to Victory', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive

⁶ Kavanagh (2000; 61). She suggested that the Museum was born out of '...an anxiety to bolster and maintain the war mood' within political circles (1986; 5). For detailed commentary on its origins and early displays, see Kavanagh (1994; 117-151); Condell (1985); Cundy (2015a; 250-261)

⁷ Cornish (2004; 49). The Museum collected extensively 'through a series of committees on which served selected, informed and (crucially) well-connected individuals within their fields' (Kavanagh, 2000; 61), though it also prided itself on its democratic nature in collecting personal stories. Kavanagh remarked that its achievements '...in terms of contemporary collecting and its pioneer work in this respect has never been fully acknowledged by British museum curators' (1986; 28).

⁸ Kavanagh (1990; 20); Cornish (2004; 38). See also Malvern (2000); Kavanagh (2000; 61); Goebel (2007; 167-177); Charman (2008). For Jones, because the Museum seeks to represent the nation in arms, and because it was '...borne out of the sustaining ideology of war... [it functions] as much as [a] memorial as [a] museum and for this reason tend[s] not to question the rightness of the struggle that [it is commemorating]' (1996; 158).

⁹ Grundy (1917; 11) as cited by Kavanagh (1994; 105). After the 1918 Armistice, the Museum therefore took on the role of symbolizing the nation's wartime achievements, both military and otherwise (See Barrett, 2012; 3). It was duly '...joined by a variety of local, regional and regimental museums which also sought to collect and display objects to maintain the memory of the war in the

‘embodiment and a lasting memorial of common effort and common sacrifice’, the Museum opened in June 1920 with a desire ‘to consign the unprecedented “War to end all Wars’ to history’ and ‘to look back upon War, its instruments and its organisation, as belonging to a dead past’.¹⁰ One commentator termed the museum’s early success as mirroring:

‘...its public acceptance and emotional appeal as a site of memory and mourning, serving both the nation and the empire. The making of this institution signifies the search for a symbolic form that could express collective bereavement and celebrate imperial unity at the same time’¹¹

It would seek to maintain this dual role into the future; as Barrett has postulated, any museum ‘...will always carry with it the legacy of its origins, for better or worse’.¹² Only two decades on, the IWM had to confront the challenge to its existence and rationale as a warning against war brought about by a second global conflict (which concurrently doubled the requirements of its terms of reference).¹³ Seemingly unwilling to reinvent itself, it resultantly slipped into a state of disrepair.¹⁴ Under the directorship of Dr Noble Frankland from 1960, its fortunes were revived with a policy of professionalization, and a moderate building modernization programme, intended to convert the Museum into a centre of research and education. A large-scale redevelopment of the same building in 1989 saw a revamped internal structure containing new permanent First and Second World War galleries, as well as an atrium display space for large objects (Figure 2).

public’s consciousness’ (Wilson, 2013; 154). For analysis of the presentation of war within a regimental museum context, see Scott (2015).

¹⁰ Milner (2002; 11). The first and third of these quotes are extracts of King George V’s opening speech (See Reynolds, 2013; 209). The Museum was originally situated at Crystal Palace, and received two and a half million visitors in its first year before moving in 1924 to the Imperial Institute in South Kensington (Brosnan, 2010). It moved to its present site in 1936, which was formerly the lunatic asylum at the Bethlem Royal Hospital from 1815 to 1930. For details of its locational history, see Cooke & Jenkins (2001).

¹¹ Goebel (2007; 166). He suggests that the Museum’s ensuing appeal beyond the War was down to the fact that ‘...it located family stories in bigger, more universal narratives that linked individual suffering to national and imperial survival’ (2007; 186). For commentary on the Museum’s relationship between Britain and the rest of the Empire played out during the institution’s early existence, see Cooke & Jenkins (2001; 385-386). The High Commissioners of the Commonwealth countries continue to act as Honorary Trustees

¹² Barrett (2012; 112).

¹³ See Reynolds (2013; 244). The building was badly damaged by bombing during the Second World War.

¹⁴ Its term of reference were expanded again in 1953 to include conflicts since 1945, though it did not actively pursue a collections policy for this (Milner, 2002; 12)



Figure 2 - 1989 Atrium Space (©IWM_2006_056_003.tif)

Over the start of the twenty-first century, it continued on a move away from being a site more concerned with military history and a safe haven for veterans, to realign its remit within a broader and more social-cultural historical interpretation. This was implemented through the adoption of a new philosophical approach of contextualisation, aiming to uncover the multi-layered connections between war and society, whilst continuing to act in guardianship over its extensive collections that form a national record of conflict. Twenty five years on from its first major renovation, a subsequent redevelopment of the building was undertaken in 2014 that featured newly designed First World War galleries and a reworked Atrium space (Figure 3). Over the course of its existence, the Museum has therefore acquired the status of a highly symbolic space; endowed with significance because of its palpable connections ‘...with ideologically charged events that have been selected, polished and memorialised’.¹⁵

¹⁵ Osborne (1996; 26)



Figure 3 - IWM London Atrium, 2014 (©IWM_SITE_LAM_003473_jpg)

1.3 – Aims of the Thesis

The thesis is situated within the changing landscapes of remembrance, commemoration and memory of the First World War in Britain within both a recent-historical and contemporary context.¹⁶ Using this lens, it examines the politics of First World War display and audience interpretation within the IWM. It traces a recent history of public engagement with the conflict, which it does by evaluating its cultural memory and the impact of the passing of living memory, before establishing how these factors have been delineated within historical spatial representations that make up the institutionalised museum environment.¹⁷ In documenting these evolving processes of display, I contemplate how historiography, memory and commemorative practices, alongside the influence of a myriad of cumulative cultural influences, impacted upon how the First World War was understood within the Museum and in British culture throughout different decades. This is particularly timely against the backdrop of the conflict's centenary commemorations (2014-2018), which has seen academic interest, public debate and popular concern of the subject matter at an unprecedented level. In functioning as the lead commemorative site for national commemorations, the IWM continues to play a fundamental role in

¹⁶ The First World War provides a context in which critical discussions of identity, memory and remembrance can be addressed (Winter, 1995, 2006)

¹⁷ This has seen a transition from instilling facts to changing visitors' perceptions and attitudes (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994; 74)

channelling how its visitors both encounter and engage with the First World War one hundred years after it took place.

Four empirical chapters, informed by approaches and epistemologies from historical-cultural geography, trace successive phases of permanent and temporary exhibitions within the IWM since 1964. This culminates with an extensive critical analysis of the Museum's galleries that would mark the centenary of the start of the First World War. Each chapter begins with an outline of its intentions, so as to impart to the reader some of the key influences in situ that affected the outcomes in creating each exhibition set. The thesis endeavours to view this presentation of history as a production; a construction of what the past means to the present.¹⁸ The centrality of its narrative is exhibition-making, addressed through practical considerations as much as the inherent political tensions. It accounts for elements such as the impacts of physical constraints upon the reworking of exhibition spaces, the availability of the Museum's collections, and suitable dedicated resources in the form of time, budget and staff. These discussions further acknowledge the reasons as to why First World War exhibitions change over time, particularly granting consideration to the effect of commemorative anniversaries in justifying new displays, and how this is both influenced by, and affects, wider public understanding of the subject. In addition, I examine the political factors that help to shape exhibitions, including the interaction and the collaborative culture of various stakeholders involved in their making, and how their respective agendas combine to produce a final output.

Using this specific spatio-temporal location as a case study site, discussion is progressed through having drawn upon literature from historical geography, First World War studies and history, museum studies and cultural memory studies. Through such observations, my analysis within the empirical chapters seeks to illuminate new understanding relating to wider cultural debates concerning the politics of representation and changing public historical understanding within this national setting. It distinguishes the differences in approach between commemoration and memorialisation, as well as dwelling upon the importance of

¹⁸ Kavanagh reminds us that the histories we encounter '...have shape and purpose...The shape that history takes reflects something of the past, which is its content, but also something of the present in which it was made' (2000; 159).

delivering both chronological and thematic historical narrative. This is symptomatic of the nuanced challenges that the Museum faces in interweaving memory and history – two elements which the institution has prided itself in through its existence – and the subsequent outcomes that the interaction of these forces has had within the Museum's exhibition policy.

To achieve these aims, I pursued an approach that immersed me within the Imperial War Museum's exhibition-making processes, both situated within the archival sources of past exhibition practice and as they unfolded within the present. This was coupled with the completion of interviews of past and present members of staff, all of whom had agency in negotiating the successful realisation of delivering exhibitions. This granted me the opportunity to reveal the decision-making processes through my assessment of the multi-layered practicalities, processes and politics at play within both past and present exhibitions.

Adopting an inductive approach, my analysis is driven through my empirical chapters over a narrative journey, as informed by a broadly ethnographic approach. In consequence a comprehensive analytical narrative allowed me to ruminate upon those implicit understandings of exhibition making and to duly make these explicit.



Figure 4 – *Three of the Imperial War Museum’s Director-Generals, (L-R) Dr Alan Borg, Dr Noble Frankland and Sir Robert Crawford pictured at the Museum in 1998 (©IWM/98/57/5)*

1.4 – Research Questions

This thesis is guided by the following research questions:

- 1. How do the IWM First World War exhibitions since 1964 reflect the changing politics of display as understood in wider debates about the representation and commemoration of the conflict within Britain?*
- 2. In what ways have factors such as changes in audiences and the function of national museums governed when and how the IWM has repositioned and reinvented itself over the last fifty years?*
- 3. How has the Museum balanced the external influences of the contemporary cultural understanding of the First World War with its internal desire to act as a reputable site of historical understanding?*
- 4. How have the influences of the ‘memory boom’ within academia and popular culture affected the Museum’s delivery of historical knowledge within its exhibition spaces?*

5. *In what ways has the 'Cult of the Last Veteran', the consequent extinguishing of direct 'living memory' and the impacts of the conflict's centenary altered both the politics of display and public understanding of the First World War?*

These research questions have been designed to enable the thesis to serve as a source of enlightenment for the creation of knowledge production within the bounds of a museological institution. By bringing together issues of space, texts, objects, whilst also accentuating the IWM as a peopled institution with individual agency, this work sets out to critique its language of display and to determine the guiding frameworks of its interpretations. Through examining this continuum of displaying the First World War within such a specific institutional context, this research facilitates understanding of how the Museum draws upon its past in its evolution to redefine itself in the present.

This thesis now turns to Chapter Two in which I review relevant literature from museum studies and geographies before going on to consider the IWM's complex role within memorialisation and commemoration; in Chapter Three the methodological approach is outlined and justified. Thereafter follows a series of empirical chapters; Chapter Four examines the fiftieth anniversary displays between 1964 and 1968; Chapter Five critiques the permanent galleries of the First World War installed in 1990; Chapter Six reviews a number of temporary exhibitions between 1998 and 2009, and Chapter Seven focuses on the 2014 galleries created for the War's Centenary. Chapter Eight finally draws together the strings of each into a comprehensive overview of key findings.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 – An Account of the Recent Changes within the Museum Sector

This chapter reviews recent work in museum studies, historical geography, First World War studies and history to position itself within First World War literature in exhibitions. Following this, a brief outline of the Imperial War Museum (IWM)'s complex role within debates over memorialisation and commemoration culminates to explicitly sketch the ground in which the specific empirical chapters that follow, are placed.

‘Museums are powerful sites of cultural transmission and public education; they are an embodiment of knowledge and power, important hegemonic instruments’.¹⁹

‘Museums, especially national museums are invested with all kinds of public ambitions and hopes. They are expected to represent the nation and its achievements, to tell ‘us’ who ‘we’ are, to identify and conserve significant items of material culture for posterity, to engage scholarly work on the collections and to bring education and enlightenment to as wide a population as possible. They are also expected to provide a good day out...It’s an important job. And it’s a tall order’.²⁰

In reviewing the expansive recent literature within museum studies, I outline the over-arching impact and ideological shifts brought about to the sector’s practice over recent decades known as ‘New Museology’.²¹ Museums are multi-functional sites of both knowledge production and interaction between people and the material world. Analysis of their societal function has defined them as credible institutions with civic educational and socializing purposes, as traditionally linked to the nation state.²² In response to feminist, postmodern and postcolonial critiques, collections and processes within modern historical museums radically re-signified their position -

¹⁹ Noakes (1997; 90).

²⁰ Macdonald (2002; 258).

²¹ See Vergo (1989); Merriman (1991); Pearce (1994, 1997); Walsh (1992); Mclean (1997; 9-35)

²² Museums had been ‘...conceived as symbols of national identity and progress, as sites of civic education for the masses’ (Macdonald, 1998; 9). See Bennett (1995, 1996; 88); Boswell & Evans (1999); Hooper-Greenhill (1989, 1992; 61, 63); Macdonald (2003); Macdonald & Fyfe (1996).

in a 'postmodern shift from master discourses to the horizontal, practice-related notions of memory, place and community'.²³

Inspired by Foucault, it was principally the work of Hooper-Greenhill (1992) and Bennett (1995) which introduced European critical theory to Anglophone museum studies.²⁴ Museums were identified as sites for the 'classification and ordering of knowledge, the production of ideology and the disciplining of a public'.²⁵ A growing number of critiques cast these modernist museums 'in [a] disparaging light, characterising them as authoritative, elitist, exclusionary and conservative':

'In a positive sense, the museum is a respected institution that can be trusted to present factual information that has been well-documented and is widely shared among experts in a given field. In a negative sense, its authority can be patronising and/or paternalistic if an authoritarian curatorial voice presumes to deliver a singularly correct interpretation of artworks or artefacts on behalf of a so-called general public assumed to be in need of proper edification...the kinds of histories, truths and values celebrated and enacted in museum exhibitions have surreptitiously enforced exclusionary distinctions'.²⁶

Now they could no longer act as '...simply the guardian of treasures and artefacts from the past discreetly exhibited for the select group of experts and connoisseurs', but would be required to make the implicit explicit, operating as progressive sites that would reflect upon temporality, subjectivity and identity.²⁷ This increased academic attention that constituted New Museology had identified the contested nature of the museum and how it disseminated its authority, meaning that the early 1990s were a period of 'considerable institutional reflexivity'.²⁸ Museum professionals were compelled '...to examine the political implications of their practice'

²³ Andermann & Arnold-de Simine (2012; 3). For specific critiques regarding the role of collections, curatorial practice and museums' relationship with (post)colonialism during a postmodern era, see Mears & Modest (2012); Adams (2010), Kreps (2003, 2008); Simpson (1996, 2006); Lidchi (1997); Wintle (2013); Silverman (2015); Bennett et al (Forthcoming); Tolia-Kelly (Forthcoming).

²⁴ Hooper-Greenhill (1992); Bennett (1995); Foucault (1973, 1991).

²⁵ Henning (2006; 1).

²⁶ Lindauer (2007; 304-305); Macdonald (1997; 161). This questioning of the legitimacy relating to established conventions was a newfound point of juncture - that institutions could not transmit absolute knowledge or one fixed message, but only '...provide representations and interpretations of the world' (Corsane, 2005; 9).

²⁷ Huyssen (1995; 21, 16).

²⁸ Geoghegan (2010; 1464). See also Karp & Levine (1991); Harrison (2005).

and to situate their partiality.²⁹ Against a backdrop of government agendas and economic pressures exerted upon both local and national institutions, access to collections and more transparency became newfound priorities.³⁰ Museums were mutually enabled as well as restricted by new political and economic opportunities largely outside of their control; consultants were recruited to brand and market museums, demographic data about visitors was collected, visitor evaluations were commissioned to establish institutional aims and targets, and there was a more general awareness of expectations and desire to cater for more diverse audiences – the sum of which Parry has labelled as a ‘recoding’ of the museum.³¹

The implications of this collective process forced museum practitioners to address the assumption that visitors were mere consumers of curatorial knowledge.³² Instead it was now understood that processes of knowledge construction were coloured ‘...by the interplay between different factors, including economic, social, cultural and political contexts’.³³ This consequently prompted a need ‘to develop strategies to redress the exclusivity and centralized authority of the museum’, as an understanding that had emerged out of works examining museums’ collective educational role.³⁴ In organising space and time through techniques of display, museums had previously attempted to ‘direct and mould’ visitor attention.³⁵

²⁹ Lindaeuer (2006; 306).

³⁰ See Barrett (2012; 4) who notes the effect of changes in economic, social and education policies during this period. Whilst museums were increasingly expected to become more self-financing under Government policy, any public funding available came ‘with more and more strings attached in the form of what seem like constantly changing and certainly ill-defined public agendas’ (Black 2012; 5). Falk & Dierking outline that museums risk making false promises to funders ‘...that visitors will walk away from their experience having learned specific concepts, and increasingly with pre-determined changed attitudes and/or behaviours’ (2013; 107). Nevertheless this new landscape of funding has altered the importance of museums engaging with local community groups (though this is less of a priority for national institutions). Witcomb questions whether these top-level changes actually represent a break with the past or whether they are just ‘...the most recent ways in which governments make use of museums’ (2003; 28).

³¹ Parry (2007; xii). He refers to Witcomb’s (2003) ‘reimagining’ of the museum, Macleod’s (2005) ‘reshaping’ of museum space and Sandell’s (2002) ‘reframing of difference’. For extended discussion of changes to the function of museums during this period, see Orišková (2015; 163-165); Black (2012); Hooper-Greenhill (1998); Kotler & Kotler (2000).

³² Lidchi (2006; 96). For more on this reconceptualisation of the museum and audience relationship, and the new focus on providing a visual environment for learning, see Hooper-Greenhill, who argues that the ‘...concept of ‘education’ has been deepened and widened, as it has been acknowledged that teaching and learning is not limited to formal institutions but takes place throughout life’ (2000; 2).

³³ Corsane (2005; 8).

³⁴ Barrett (2012; 4). See Hein (1994, 1998, 2011); Sandell (2005); Kavanagh (2000; 153).

³⁵ Henning (2006; 3). Kavanagh reasons that a visitor’s decision to visit a museum ‘...implies a level of expectation that there will be some reward, especially satisfaction, through stimulation of interest and quality of experience’ (1990; 119).

Whilst the museum environment would remain as an environment fundamentally suited for conducting learning, the traditional transmission absorption model involving passive, mechanical visitors was discredited by Falk and Dierking (1992).³⁶ Their alternative constructivist theory stated that visitors made connections with their pre-existing historical experience and knowledge with the material presented on display.³⁷ This forced two principal outcomes; firstly that open-ended questions could be posed within exhibitions to encourage 'high-level thinking', allowing visitors '...to go beyond factual assimilation'.³⁸ Secondly, and in accordance with the first factor, visitors should be able to establish a personal connection with this material, to render their experience 'relevant and meaningful'.³⁹ Moreover, in seeing visitors as active in the meaning-making process, museums recognised the requirement to meet the needs of 'a multiplicity of audiences with different motivations, levels of understanding and learning styles'.⁴⁰ Meaning-making was thereby redefining museum interpretation by changing the relationship between the museum and its visitors. New displays would be more democratic in featuring visitor-centred goals:

'Museum teams must understand that by providing interpretative layers, or comprehensive object biographies, the galleries and their messages will

³⁶ Falk & Dierking (1992, 2000). See also Kavanagh (2000; 153). Kelly has labelled this conceptual change 'from thinking about museums as places of education to places for learning, responding to the needs and interests of visitors' (2007; 276). Correspondingly Falk & Dierking have suggested broadening the definition of learning '...to include the results of curiosity and the urge to explore' (1992; 15).

³⁷ See Kavanagh (2000); Van Eeckhaut (2011; 119). Though this forced an acknowledgement in museum theory and practice that audiences were 'anything but blank slates' (Mason, 2005; 201), it simultaneously meant that any knowledge about the past 'integrated in the present' via the media could be met with that from 'the actual witnesses and the participants of the past', as held within museum collections (Maroević; 1995; 36).

³⁸ Monti & Keene (2013; 81).

³⁹ Addy (2009; 219); Kavanagh (2000; 153). Within the context of a historical museum, visitors would bring a personal awareness of the past into the museum, and this therefore affected the meanings they constructed from the displays (See Black (2011; 415). Lester et al (2011) recently illustrated museology's own awareness of the constructed nature of museum displays in what they term 'a move towards heightened transparency within the museum walls' (2011; 32). The article revolves around the relationship between museums and identity, and it discusses a decision taken to involve visitors to the Museum of London in the production of exhibition content.

⁴⁰ Black (2012; 244). As Barrett notes, the use of the term 'public' to reflect inclusivity within museums is deployed to '...convey the museum's status as an open, democratic institution for and of 'the people'' (2012; 1,3). For wider discussion about changes in the make-up of audiences, see Middleton (1991); Hooper-Greenhill (1994a; 100-101); Powell & Kokkranikal (2014; 36); Reeve & Woollard (2006; 5, 8-13); Reeve (2006); Longhurst et al (2004).

appeal to a wider audience demographic and give repeat visitors new layers to explore'.⁴¹

In light of the changes brought about by New Museology, museums have redefined themselves as sites that are 'connected, plural, distributed, multi-vocal, affective, material, embodied, experiential, political, performative and participatory'.⁴² They enable 'encounters with materiality', enabling members of the public to come into contact with artefacts forms a '...dialogic relationship between the thinking, feeling visitor and the knowledge-orchestrating museum'.⁴³ Objects are utilised so as to stimulate visitors in visualising and projecting themselves into a particular environment:

'Personal coalescence between visitor and exhibit, expressed as interactivity or as feeling 'part of', are meaningful relations by virtue of enhanced mental processes or through the establishment of commonness with exhibition content'.⁴⁴

Exhibitions thus act as constructions to facilitate these learning experiences, encouraging visitors to actively engage and participate with the content displayed before. As a result, the shift had taken place '...from the old idea that the national museums served a community, in their case the nation, towards the more individualistic notion of the consumer'.⁴⁵ This meant that visitors had become fundamental to an institution's future, as they were now 'central to the rhetoric of exhibition construction'.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Paddon (2014; 79). Strategies of interpretation for encountering objects '...involve both the senses and the body (in apprehending new information from the environment) and the mind (in processing this information through relating it to existing knowledge). These interactive and dialogic processes make up acts of interpretation' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; 116).

⁴² Grewcock (2014; 5).

⁴³ Roppola (2012; 38). The very act of displaying objects means transferring them far from their original use, into a sterilised space situated within a broader authoritative and knowledge-driven environment.

⁴⁴ Roppola (2012; 154, 157).

⁴⁵ Macdonald & Silverstone (1999; 424).

⁴⁶ Macdonald & Silverstone (1999; 433). For some observers, institutions being susceptible to audience demands or expectations has had significant effects; 'accepting that the sense made of displays rests more with the consumer than with the producer presents a radical and unsettling challenge' (Boon, 2011; 247) for museum workers, leading to the question being asked of 'In the new museum world of active visitor-consumers, who is constructing the display?' (Macdonald & Silverstone (1999; 431).

2.2 - Historical Museum Exhibitions – Spatially Communicating Narratives of Time

‘Any museum or exhibition is, in effect, a statement of position. It is a theory; a suggested way of seeing the world. Like any theory, it may offer insight and illumination. At the same time, it contains certain assumptions, speaks to some matters and ignores others, and is intimately bound up with – and capable of affecting – broader social and cultural relations’.⁴⁷

‘No exhibition, indeed no institution, can present everything there is to know. Choices are always made, even if tacitly, regarding what, how and in whose interests knowledge will be produced and disseminated’.⁴⁸

‘What happens in museums is far more than the cold meeting of the minds of the visitors with the curator’s carefully constructed displays’.⁴⁹

Till has defined exhibitions as ‘...theatrical, staged spaces that perform selective versions of the past. Exhibition authors interpret the past by relating space, objects and written text in distinct combinations that can, in turn, be interpreted by visitors in various ways’.⁵⁰ The function of a historical exhibition has been exposed as a medium of systematic yet mediated communication, or ‘material speech’, in that it is an experiential space featuring a constructed version of the past for public consumption.⁵¹ Within this context, museums construct and transmit meaning for visitors as ‘intentional communicative acts’, through their interpretation of material evidence.⁵² They ‘...articulate or reinforce frameworks of knowledge – known as discursive formations – in display’ to convey ‘validity upon objects’.⁵³ Historical museums define a particular representation of past events, and so validate a nation’s

⁴⁷ Macdonald (1996; 14).

⁴⁸ Lindauer (2007; 306).

⁴⁹ Kavanagh (1996; 2).

⁵⁰ Till (2001; 276).

⁵¹ Ferguson (1996; 182); Kavanagh (1990; 127). See also Luke (2002; 218-230); Lisle (2006)

⁵² Mason (2005; 204). Thus when ‘...a single meaning is insisted upon, questions must be asked as to who is advantaged by the meaning made available, and whose history is denied by being suppressed?’ (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; 77).

⁵³ Newman & McLean (2006; 57). The role of semiotics affected thinking within museums (See Hall, 1997), highlighting that meaning was not fixed within assemblages of objects, images or historical resources, but ‘produced out of the combination of the object/image/site itself, the mode of presentation, what is known about its history and production, and visitor interaction’ (Mason, 2005; 203). See also Hooper-Greenhill (2000; 50).

history.⁵⁴ Exhibitions can therefore be considered as ‘strategic systems of representation’ that aims to convert audiences to particular values or intended messages.⁵⁵ Such a selection process is regulated and political in what is included or excluded (meaning that exhibitions can confer legitimacy on specific interpretations of history).⁵⁶ Embedded within the realm of cultural politics, this meaning-making process has ‘the power to define, legitimize, enforce, negotiate, claim or oppose certain meanings’.⁵⁷ In consequence, enabling these ideologically mediated strategies of display empowers or disempowers particular groups.⁵⁸

Within the context of a historical museum, a sense of the past is experienced in personal terms; meaning that displays can ‘contribute significantly to the construction of personal and shared identities’.⁵⁹ The museum is a site of ‘public memory’, as defined by ‘... the interplay between official, commercial and vernacular memory...public memory mediates between their differing accounts to produce a version of the past that may be simultaneously multivocal and hegemonic’.⁶⁰ In light of the impact of New Museology, and the changes this enacted within museums relating to their approach, message and practice, exhibitions have become more populist and more broadly redefined as spaces of community and public engagement.⁶¹ Thus situated within a state-engineered environment, narrative

⁵⁴ Trofanenko (2010; 270). Trofanenko prompts that learning about a nation’s history through public exhibitions ‘...contributes to a naive understanding of the past; history is neither value-free nor unbiased but serves a particular purpose’ (2010; 271). Sites are ‘deemed socially relevant and necessary to our society and...receive support for contributing to historical inquiry and developing historical knowledge (2010; 283).

⁵⁵ Ferguson (1996; 178); Kaplan (1998; 37); Arnold-de Simine (2013; 8-9). At the heart of each exhibition is a ‘...set of messages, narratives or facts that the exhibition-makers wish to deliver’ (Black, 2012; 242). Falk & Dierking have remarked that the museum ‘...is the best device we have developed through which to convey the concrete facts of reality to large numbers of people’ (1992; 78).

⁵⁶ Maier-Wolthausen (2009; 302). See also Kavanagh, who records that there is ‘...no such thing as neutral history, all acts of history making in museums are by their nature political, at the very least in what they include and exclude’ (1996; xii), such as in emphasizing the theme of sacrifice

⁵⁷ Mason (2005; 208). Meaning is distributed primarily through vision through ‘interrelating representational resources’ within exhibition spaces (Roppola, 2012; 52).

⁵⁸ Macdonald (1998; 4). The commemoration of the conflict formulates part of ‘the struggle of different groups and social actors to give public articulation to, and hence gain recognition, for certain memories and narratives’ (Ashplant et al, 2000; 16-17). See also Melling (1997; 255). Furthermore these histories have ‘shape and purpose’, based on the evidence that has survived, meaning that these reflect ‘something of the past, which is its content, but also something of the present in which it was made’ (Kavanagh, 2000; 159).

⁵⁹ Watson (2007; 160). For an example that considers how war museums assist in constructing national identity within a tourist context, see Gillen (2014).

⁶⁰ Hodgkin & Radstone (2006; 172).

⁶¹ See Message (2006); Crooke (2007); Watson, S (2015); Peers & Brown (2003); Keith (2012); Nightingale (2006); Onciul (2014); Fouseki (2010; 181-183). Golding & Modest (2013) additionally

exhibitions provide 'social and learning experiences' with 'opportunities for visitors to engage in critical thinking and questioning...to reach their own conclusions'.⁶² The historical museum professional's role is therefore to make public history '...[as] shaped by scholarship and research, by the need to make that information accessible, and by an obligation to be of service to the public'.⁶³ For this reason, the production of exhibitions '...is controlled by assumptions that are made about the way that it will be consumed and the meanings that visitors will take away'.⁶⁴

2.3 - Displaying the First World War through Exhibitions

'The past is not fixed, but is subject to change: both narratives of events and the meanings given to them are in a constant state of transformation'.⁶⁵

'In many ways, museums are a meeting ground for official and formal versions of the past called histories, offered through exhibition, and the individual or collective accounts of reflective personal experience called memories, encountered during the visit or prompted because of it'.⁶⁶

Historical museums '...represent public statements about what the past has been, and how the present should acknowledge it; who should be remembered, who should be forgotten'.⁶⁷ For King, the past is not retrievable, it could never be '...recovered in its pristine form; it is imagined or invented in line with the existing political hierarch and its sanctioned practices'.⁶⁸ Postmodernism prompted this perception of 'ideologically motivated' recuperations of the past.⁶⁹ This essentially involved reworking the meanings of the past as the cultural, social and political needs of the present changed, so that the persuasive messages contained within

focused specifically on how museums put community-minded principles into exhibition practice, and the agendas and agency associated with community participants.

⁶² Kelly (2007; 287). The development of an informed audience '...prepared to question not just the content but the format and substance of museums' is a '...critical ingredient in the making of better museums and more-democratic histories' (Kavanagh, 1990; 165).

⁶³ Yeingst & Bunch (1997; 155). Fulfilling this responsibility as an educational institution ensures 'that our audiences have the opportunity to explore and to enlarge their understanding' (1997; 155).

Watson has acknowledged that museums '...are part of the practice of making history' (2010; 205)

⁶⁴ Newman & Mclean (2006; 61).

⁶⁵ Hodgkin & Radstone (2006; 23).

⁶⁶ Kavanagh (1996; 1, emphasis original).

⁶⁷ Hodgkin & Radstone (2006; 12-13). Otto comments that historical museums act as '...catalysts for a cultural process of...revisiting the past' (2009; 326).

⁶⁸ King (2010; 3). See also Anderson (1991); Hobsbawm & Ranger (1986).

⁶⁹ Rossington & Whitehead (2007; 5).

these versions of the past could be consumed by the public. This was predominantly delivered didactically through the medium of text, 'asserting factual information and exuding an aura of truth or respected knowledge'.⁷⁰ Within the context of the state-sponsored Imperial War Museum, its curators remain '...under pressure to produce exhibitions that portray national history in a celebratory tone and produce a shared national identity that excludes controversy and difference, affirms civic pride and forms better citizens'.⁷¹ On the other hand, they retain a 'power to challenge people's ways of thinking and shift an individual's point of view'.⁷² These discursive constructions bring about tensions which such institutions have to address:

'How can objects be used to communicate history without presenting history didactically? How can museums return power to objects without making the experience merely aesthetic? Does the apparently unique position of history museums mean that they will remain didactic and objective, giving visitors the historical narrative through which to understand the objects, while other types of museums minimise interpretive text'.⁷³

Hereby the explanatory narrative of the First World War within the Imperial War Museum was universal in '...subsuming the experiences and histories of different communities into the one historical experience of the nation as a single community'.⁷⁴ It is obliged to perform an officially sponsored view of the past; a public role that would '...represent a broad social or at least a political consensus, producing narratives which form an integral part of national identity politics'.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Lindauer (2006; 213). Museums are seen as sources of trusted and reliable information, and exhibitions '...perceived as based on quality and rigorous scholarship' by visitors (Cameron, 2007; 331).

⁷¹ Cameron (2007; 337). As part of the social inclusion and cultural diversity agendas enacted under the 1997-2010 Labour Government, museums were mobilised '...as reformers in response to government discourses of access and equity' (See Lang, 2006; Sandell, 2002, 2005, 2007; Young, 2002; Coaston, 2009; Newman & McLean, 1998; Gouriévidis, 2014; Sutherland, 2014; Fleming, 2012; 75). Such agendas involved '...the active reshaping of individuals' behaviour to bring about change...opening people's minds to alternative views on a given topic' (Cameron, 2007; 339).

⁷² Cameron (2007; 339). This is reliant upon visitors making meaning based on existing understandings, which in turn, '...are dependent on personal and community memory and imagination, and often involve emotion and sensory experiences' (Watson, 2010; 205).

⁷³ Lord (2007; 355). It is worth highlighting the uniqueness of the historical museum in its reliance upon the interpretive tool of the written word to deliver its messages.

⁷⁴ Witcomb (2003; 155).

⁷⁵ Andermann & Simine (2012; 9). At these sites of interaction, Harrison suggests that '...being able to connect oneself to the past, and to the collective past of others via the recollection or recreation of specific memories and histories, is a form of cultural capital that relates to heritage' (2010; 245). The

2.4 - Geographers Working With Museums and the Space of Heritage

‘Museum space is now recognised as a space with a history of its own, a space active in the making of meaning and, most importantly, a space open to change’.⁷⁶

Despite Williams’ call that the importance of spatial effects in the museum experience is ‘a topic routinely neglected within museum studies’, the geographical discipline has recognised museums and their collections as a space complicit in the production and presentation of knowledge.⁷⁷ As an environment ‘created through a complex of practices and systems of knowledge’, academics have begun to make use of a geographical lens through which to explore the malleability and role of museum space, looking at both the spatial forms of exhibits and new architecture.⁷⁸ Exhibition designers have had to balance how interior space is utilised for didactic elements to ‘enable some level of engagement with the subject matter’, whilst also creating an emotive environment in which ‘...to imagine, contemplate and reflect’.⁷⁹ This role has enabled visitors to be:

‘...placed within the context of the witness, they are asked to observe the events of the conflict and bear the ‘truth’ of the war in the present. Such a perspective orientates the visitor within a particular moral, political and social viewpoint, as it requires individuals to ‘carry the burden’ of memory’.⁸⁰

Concurrently, in considering the ‘spatiality’ and spatial organisation of the museum, not only is geography well placed to contribute to these issues of knowledge, material culture and practice, this has ‘important consequences for

Museum has therefore seen the interplay between official and personal viewpoints in representing a memory consensus (See Crane, 2000; 12).

⁷⁶ Macleod (2005; 1).

⁷⁷ Williams (2007; 77). See Driver (2000).

⁷⁸ Macleod (2005; 1). See Tzortzi (2015). Another prominent example has been the attention on the ‘high-profile and communicative’ Daniel Libeskind-designed buildings of the Imperial War Museum North and the Jewish History Museum in Berlin (See Macleod et al, 2012; ix; Macleod et al, 2015).

⁷⁹ Macleod (2005; 3). This latter factor of minimalist abstract spaces connects with the rise of the memorial museum (Williams, 2007), which acknowledges the discourse of traumatic memory that has encouraged a global cosmopolitan culture sympathetic to loss. See also Chatterley (2015) and Beattie (2010).

⁸⁰ Wilson (2013; 155, 185). Wilson applies this ‘witness perspective’ to a variety of case studies (2013; 156-167).

museum professionals, architects and exhibition designers'.⁸¹ This is situated within a broader academic attention focusing specifically on studying the production of exhibitions, and who decides what should be displayed:

'What are the processes, interest groups and negotiations involved in constructing an exhibition? What is ironed out and silenced? And how does the content and style of an exhibition inform public understandings?'⁸²

Extensive academic interest in the Cultural Turn and critiques informed by post-colonialism has further harboured a recent rise in studies focusing on the multifaceted aspects of cultural heritage. Key debates had been raised in leading works by Hewison (1987) and Lowenthal (2015), who surveyed the 1980s heritage sector within a British context. Particular attention has since dwelt upon the diverse definitions of heritage - its multiple meanings and uses – in addition to considerations re-theorizing heritage as a process.⁸³ Continuing and consistent engagement with these ideas has duly witnessed the recent establishment of a sub-discipline of Critical Heritage Studies. This now serves as a 'network of scholars and researchers working in the broad and interdisciplinary field of heritage studies'.⁸⁴ The aim of this group is to promote heritage as 'an area of critical enquiry', thereby prompting academic critique through conceptual devices such as Smith's 'Authorised Heritage Discourse'.⁸⁵ Of more exacting relevance to this work is how heritage is used to contribute towards representing identities within contemporary societies, because such questioning has both fostered and progressed collective thinking on the inherent challenge of displaying difficult histories for mass public consumption.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Geoghegan (2010; 1467). She observes increasing interest in museums from geographers '...through collaborative research projects; studying museum collections; and examining questions of representation, identity-formation and the cultural history of the museum itself' (2010; 1467). She does call for geographers to explore the 'relatively understudied...behind-the-scenes world of the museum', using qualitative methodologies (2010; 1469). For an example of geographers analysing museum exhibitions, see Desforges & Maddern (2004).

⁸² Macdonald (1998; 1, 10).

⁸³ After Harvey (2001). See also Harvey (2008, 2015), Graham et al (2000); Howard (2003); Crouch (2010).

⁸⁴ Smith (2012); www.criticalheritagestudies.org/ (Accessed 09/02/16). This organisation had over 1,000 members in December 2015 (<http://www.criticalheritagestudies.org/decembernewsletter>).

⁸⁵ Smith (2006).

⁸⁶ For elaboration on the theme of heritage and identity, see Anico & Peralta (2009); Graham & Howard (2008). Cheddie cites the importance of heritage in the context of a more ethnically diverse Britain, in that it '...has an important role to play in helping all audiences understand the intricacies of history, identity and nation, not only as means to understand the past, but also as a vehicle to create and envision the future' (2012; 278).

Furthermore the field of conflict heritage continues to bloom as a recognised topic within this broader discipline, as nurtured by the sustained (and recently increasing) interest in the dynamics of commemorative processes. Geographers amongst others have developed this strand through the publication of works that have utilised a spatially-informed lens, in order to shed insight onto how the past is presented in place.⁸⁷ Strongly affiliated with this notion have been the various interdisciplinary studies that investigate the relationship between tourism and warfare, conflict and violence – principally manifested within what has become known as dark tourism, in the vein outlined by Sharpley and Stone (2009) following Lennon and Foley (2000) – which continues to attract frequent scholarly attention.⁸⁸

These cited works have, as a result, furthered understanding as to how those sites that represent war are spatially appropriated, and aided understanding with regard to the official or un-official processes or agencies that enable mediated interaction with them. Turning to museums, and given that the emphasis within this study concentrates upon one particular museological site, David Lowenthal offers the following thoughts on the relationship between museums and heritage;

‘Museums are alike beneficiaries of our obsession with heritage, and among its complicit promoters. Museums’ new-found sensitivity to empathy leaves them at the mercy of those who would bend them to national or tribalist aims or, still worse, enlist them in the generalized politics of memory, which sacralizes the emotional salience of remembrance to the detriment of historical understanding’.⁸⁹

Lowenthal accordingly terms museological sites as ‘...embattled and politicized arenas of conflict... [a] heritage realm undergoing crisis’.⁹⁰ He reasons this on the premise that, beyond retaining certain aspects of their traditional function, they face a pressing requirement to ‘...heed new masters, new merits, new remits’ - in addition to obliging populist demands that exist within the contemporary context.⁹¹ He nevertheless offers a reminder that they are ‘...more popular, more numerous, more visited, more extolled...and they are seen as the most trustworthy source of

⁸⁷ For example, see Daugbjerg (2009, 2011; 17-18); Gegner & Ziino (2012); Logan & Reeves (2008); Sørensen & Viejo-Rose (2015); Drozdzewski et al (Forthcoming); Muzaini & Yeoh (Forthcoming).

⁸⁸ See White & Frew (2013); Buda (2015); Butler & Suntikul (2013).

⁸⁹ Lowenthal (2009; 30-31).

⁹⁰ Lowenthal (2009; 19).

⁹¹ Lowenthal (2009; 29). See also Macdonald (2002; 159).

public instruction'.⁹² This ostensibly democratic ability to be seen as 'reliable vehicles of public illumination... exemplars of selfless scruples', are ascribed to their capability of allowing museum-goers to '...make of the past what they themselves decide, based on evidence that is seemingly uncontrived and objective'.⁹³

I now seek to apply some of the ideas outlined above onto a recent example – that is the widespread museological response in commemorating the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery. This featured a prominent commemorative programme within Britain over the course of 2007, which also befitted the subject of extended academic involvement and critique.⁹⁴ In a project run by the 'Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past' at the University of York, a group of leading heritage academics undertook work assessing how visitors responded to the presentation of both narratives and material relating to slavery. They simultaneously positioned this within a broader framework contemplating how museological institutions went about constructing and presenting uncomfortable and traumatic histories.⁹⁵ Working with partner museum sites in London, Birmingham, Hull, Liverpool and Bristol, the research focused particularly on determining the extent to which their displays should be challenging and provocative for their visitors, and the implications of portraying the past in particular ways.⁹⁶ Such a mind-set of wanting to engage with alternative voices fostered an approach that asked questions of the more traditional methods of delivery, as is explored in more detail by Fouseki and Smith (2013).⁹⁷ The planning process saw numerous museums partake in discussions with

⁹² Lowenthal (2009; 21-22). See also Burton & Scott (2007).

⁹³ Lowenthal (2009; 23, 29, 31).

⁹⁴ See Hall (2007); Beech (2009); Cubitt (2009, 2010, 2012); Dresser (2009); Fouseki (2010); Smith et al (2010, 2011); Wilson (2010); Rice (2012);

<http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/discussion/memory.html> (Accessed 19/02/16). This Special Issue of *Museum & Society* featured as an outcome of this AHRC-funded '1807 Commemorated' project at York. The project recorded over 180 exhibitions and displays connected to the topic of slavery at British institutions over the commemorative period (Wilson, 2010; 169). Furthermore, as would prove to be the case with the First World War Centenary, funding initiatives involving the Heritage Lottery Fund drew on a model of heritage institutions and community-based organisations working in partnership, to mark the bicentenary (Wilson, 2010; 175).

⁹⁵ Smith (2010). See also Macdonald (2009; 164-185; 2010) and Rosendahl & Ruhaven (2014). Gouriévidis (2010) similarly details representing the Scottish Highland Clearances from a museological perspective, and how the meanings and values encapsulated within such narratives are always in relation to issues of memory.

⁹⁶ Cubitt (2010; 146). Cubitt also surveys strategies deployed at a local level, in how institutions '...resorted to different combinations of tactics and techniques...to generate local meaning for the histories of slavery and abolition' (2009; 272). See also Araujo (2012) and the '1807 Commemorated' website for audience reports.

⁹⁷ Fouseki & Smith (2013). See also Prior (2007); Paton (2009); Rice (2009); Hamilton (2010); Lynch & Alberti (2010); Stearn (2014); Munroe (2016); Donington et al (Forthcoming).

community groups, which led to the formation of a collective message – that ‘...everyone was connected and part of the history and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade’.⁹⁸ However findings suggested that, in their ‘museological shaping’, certain exhibitions and displays ‘...implicitly promoted a particular ‘vision’ of the past which acted to inform and reaffirm the dominant perceptions in British society’.⁹⁹ This lay in part in the attempt to reconcile the past with the present within a national narrative, thereby playing up the positive history of abolitionism - despite the evidence of complicity prior to this.¹⁰⁰ Wilson’s analysis successively affirmed how exhibition terminology framed distancing devices for visitors, whilst simultaneously demanding ‘...a concerted emotional and imaginative engagement’ from them.¹⁰¹ The detailed considerations of these exhibitions revealed;

‘...a common spatial form for relaying the history of enslavement and abolition based upon a chronological framework...positioning the visitor in the image of ‘abolitionist’...visitor experiences are constructed in the guise of a principled, ethically-minded abolitionism, without the morally-compromising associations of connivance and responsibility’.¹⁰²

The sum of core findings surmised that alternative histories were ‘normalised’ and situated on the periphery - where dissonance was represented ‘...through a series of tactics and techniques, it was effectively *brought* into ‘the museum’, rather than disrupting, challenging or reworking’ commonly held views.¹⁰³ Addressing legacies of race and enslavement within exhibitions ‘...often involved an uncritical approach to imperialism and a tendency to uncritically celebrate a contemporary multiculturalism’, termed ‘tokenistic’ by Fouseki.¹⁰⁴ However there was acknowledgement that noted the presence of alternative voices; the 2007 *London, Sugar and Slavery* exhibition at the Museum of London in Docklands was recognised through its ability to represent dissonant histories, and thus partly able to address ‘...concerns of colonialism,

⁹⁸ Wilson (2010; 166).

⁹⁹ Wilson (2010; 165); Cubitt (2009; 260-261).

¹⁰⁰ Wilson (2010; 166, 170).

¹⁰¹ Wilson (2010; 171).

¹⁰² Wilson (2010; 172-173, 176). The findings confirmed a standardisation in approach across regional and local institutions, through delivering six key themes. See also Cubitt (2010; 143-145) and Munroe (2016; 183-187).

¹⁰³ Wilson (2010; 176).

¹⁰⁴ Fouseki (2010; 180). See also Littler (2004); Naidoo (2004, 2008).

capitalism, racism and multiculturalism' through community consultation and intercultural dialogue.¹⁰⁵

The widespread support of the Heritage Lottery Fund over this period of commemorating the legacies of transatlantic slavery saw it deemed as '...a privileged opportunity for museums seeking to promote public acknowledgement of this history and debate over its present implications'.¹⁰⁶ Such an opportunity was embraced by multiple national, regional and local museums '...with varying degrees of alacrity and varying degrees of confidence and preparedness'.¹⁰⁷ What is especially important within the settings of this study were the lessons learned in depicting and discussing a history that, in being '...emotionally demanding, socially divisive and politically contentious', bears many similar traits to that of the First World War within Britain (though it is contested in different ways).¹⁰⁸ Smith et al subsequently reflected upon what lessons had been learned from the experience;

'...Museums strove, often simultaneously, to educate a largely white museum-going public accustomed to viewing the history of slavery through the lens of abolitionist celebrationism; to persuade members of African and African-Caribbean British communities that their voices and memories and cultures and social perspectives were no longer to be excluded from the prevailing institutionally promoted narratives of Britishness; and to accredit the understanding of museums themselves as places given over not to the promulgation of an authoritative view of history and national identity, but to the facilitation of debate and the recognition of multiple perspectives. These were not easily combinable objectives, either discursively or socially, and the public circumstances of the Bicentenary – its momentary character, its emphases on commemoration, the arbitrariness of its focus on a particular historical date, its connectedness to establishment political and religious agendas – did not make it easy for museums to craft constructive and innovative approaches to them'.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Wilson (2010; 175-176); Fouseki (2010).

¹⁰⁶ Smith et al (2010; 125).

¹⁰⁷ Smith et al (2010; 125). Whether there are parallels to be drawn with how institutions engaged with the First World War centenary, remains to be seen.

¹⁰⁸ Smith et al (2010; 125).

¹⁰⁹ Smith et al (2010; 125).

Such an overview demonstrates the challenges that historical institutions were required to scale, in the face of such a significant and invested commemorative initiative. Beyond the hefty responsibility of communicating national narratives, how alternative histories and non-mainstream voices are fed into exhibitions – and, in this instance, the extent to which these were used in ‘...disrupting, challenging or reworking predominant views – serves as a timely consideration that many historical museums now seek to address.’¹¹⁰ The ‘...value and significance of knowledge from outside the museum structure’ had, in this example, been used as a means to challenge dominant narratives. One of the questions that accordingly informs this study is posed by Bodo; how does a museum that was ‘founded in order to represent and validate national, local or group identities’ become ‘...perceived as [a] place which might nurture respect for cultural differences and foster dialogue between groups’?¹¹¹

2.5 – Contextualising the First World War

‘The remembering and forgetting of war is not an object of disinterested enquiry but a burning issue at the very core of present day conflicts over forms of the state, social relations and subjectivity’.¹¹²

Within recent times, it has been predominantly historical and cultural geographers amongst interdisciplinary academics that have focused upon the spatial elements of identity, belonging and control involved with the processes of enacting memory and commemoration within a First World War context.¹¹³ Furthermore examinations of landscapes of war and memory have stressed debates underpinning commemoration and the following construction of national identities; work by Gough (2000, 2004), Foster (2004) and Heffernan (1995) have focused specifically on the First World War battlefield landscapes and its role in producing cultural memory within national contexts.¹¹⁴ Slade (2003), Scates (2006, 2009), Sumartojo (2014) and

¹¹⁰ Following her assessment on the legacy of the 2003-2009 London Mayor’s Commission on African and Asian heritage, Cheddie remarks that various histories and heritage ‘...have been under-represented within collections, institutional structures and modes of address’ (2012; 272). See also Coaston (2009) and Heritage Task Force (2009).

¹¹¹ Bodo (2012; 181).

¹¹² Ashplant, Dawson & Roper (2000; 6).

¹¹³ Gough & Morgan (2004); Dwyer & Alderman (2008); Hoelscher & Alderman (2004); Legg (2007).

¹¹⁴ Gough (2000, 2004, 2007); Foster (2004); Heffernan (1995). See also Saunders (2001). This sits within a broader literature on First World War battlefield tourism; see Winter (2009, 2011, 2015); Lloyd

Hoffenberg (2001) have deconstructed Australian collective memory in relation to the mythologized landscape of Gallipoli and to a lesser extent the battlefields on the Western Front, and how this has mobilised as an imagined community of nationhood.¹¹⁵ There has also been especial focus on Ireland in articulating the past and present roles of landscape and memory.¹¹⁶ Drawing on examples from the Second World War, countries remain entangled in representing an imagined nation, both spatially and temporally, with national narratives 'elevating and naturalizing certain elite memories whilst marginalizing others'.¹¹⁷ These authors have shown how war memorials are viewed as a dynamic inscribing of memory onto space – setting dominant socio-spatial relations in stone as they recall and represent selective histories that hide as much as they reveal. The ensuring legacy and collective memory function of war memorials has provided much inspiration for an interdisciplinary group of academics.¹¹⁸ Furthermore the commemorative practices that emerged out of the conflict '...have endured throughout the twentieth century...the motif of individual sacrifice for the national cause has remained central to the act of national commemoration'.¹¹⁹

The conflict continues to exert an extraordinary hold on the British collective imagination as a compelling theme. It was emblematic in terms of its casualties and as a pioneering experience for people and governments alike. It has since been subjected to unprecedented levels of popular and academic interest, particularly in the build-up to, and during its centenary. Much has been written on the subject; varying from works on its cultural memory (Fussell, 1975; Parker, 2009; Mosse, 1990), remembrance within a family framework and its implications (Todman, 2009,

(1998); Iles (2006, 2008); Seaton (1996, 2000). For explorations of battlefield tourism through a geographical lens, see Zhang (2010); Bigley et al (2010). See also Wallis & Harvey (Forthcoming).

¹¹⁵ Slade (2003); Scates (2006, 2009); Hoffenberg (2001); Sumartojo (2014). For broader works investigating the national concept of the Anzac, see Bongiorno (2014); Wellings (2014); Mckenna (2014).

¹¹⁶ Switzer & Graham (2010); Graham & Shirlow (2002); Johnson (1999, 2003); Jarman (1999). This work on Irish commemoration with its relationship to Britain reveals complex issues of multiple heritages and nationalism (See McCarthy, 2005, 2013) and demonstrates 'the importance that historical events play in the politics of contemporary Ireland' (Jarman, 1999; 171). See also Graff-McRae (2009); Mcauley (2014).

¹¹⁷ Muzaini & Yeoh (2007; 1289). See also Muzaini & Yeoh (2005, Forthcoming).

¹¹⁸ The topic of First World War memorialisation has been well documented. See Gordon & Osborne (2004); Borg (1991); Lacquer (1994); Mosse (1990); Moriarty (1995, 1997, 1999); King (1998, 1999); Rowlands (1999); Connelly (2002); Black (2004); Calder (2004); Stephens (2007, 2009); Benton & Curtis (2010); Inglis (2005); Gough (2008); Ziino (2007); Macleod (2013).

¹¹⁹ King (2010; 7). King argues that First World War commemoration has recently undergone 'significant re-invention to align it with current memorial practices' (2010; 23).

2008; 418, 424, 438; Winter, 1999; Wallis, 2015; Holbrook & Ziino, 2015) the material culture of the War (Saunders, 2004; Saunders & Cornish, 2009), its archaeology, (Saunders, 2007; Wilson, 2007) and key overview works by historians (Todman, 2005; Winter, 2006; Strachan, 2003; Reynolds, 2013; Stevenson, 2005; Clark, 2013; Wilson, 2013; Pennell, 2012a; Ziino, 2015; Watson, 2015; Winter, 2014).¹²⁰ Academic attention has also re-examined the contemporary remembrance role of the conflict within a British context.¹²¹ These have focused on debates around the politics of its commemoration, and the challenges to ‘...establishing ‘national’ narratives and memory cultures to mark the First World War centenary that are inclusive and yet recognise diversity in how the conflict is remembered across Britain and across its former empire’.¹²² War commemoration is therefore:

‘...primarily a political project whereby the state and its institutions mediate and order formal and inform collective memories and histories. The promotion of a homogenous national identity that references important conflicts is seen to establish symbolic continuity between the past, present and future of a nation-state’.¹²³

2.6 – Considering the Imperial War Museum’s Function as a Memorial

One of the fundamental themes that runs through my empirical chapters is the understanding that museums such as the Imperial War Museum ‘are not monolithic, static institutions...[they] have never stilled or settled’.¹²⁴ The IWM has adhered to this notion through key stages in its institutional evolution. More recently, as the most important commemorative milestone in its existence grew near – the centenary of the First World War – it chose to actively re-frame its original 1917 remit against a new contextual backdrop. In so doing, it would never veer far from the rhetoric of its origins and purpose as Britain’s national record to the victory and sacrifice of that conflict. Its inception had been ‘...justified in terms of remembrance and national

¹²⁰ Parker (2009); Fussell (1997); Saunders (2004, 2007); Saunders & Cornish (2009); Wilson (2007); Todman (2005); Winter (2006); Strachan (2003); Reynolds (2013); Pennell (2012a); Ziino (2015); Holbrook & Ziino (2015); Wallis (2015); Winter & Sivan (1999).

¹²¹ See Jones (2014a); Pennell (2012b); Todman (2010); Andrews (2011), Mycock (2014a, 2014b).

¹²² Mycock (2014; 153, 161). These are ‘...linked to broader politicised debates about political, social, economic and cultural citizenship and identity...’ (2014; 154). See also Arnold-de Simine (2016; 143-148, 154-156) and Harvey (Forthcoming).

¹²³ Mycock (2014; 154).

¹²⁴ Grewcock (2014; 5).

sacrifice, of being a memorial to a hitherto unprecedented national war effort'.¹²⁵ For that reason it has continued to serve a partly commemorative purpose in ensuring that future generations of Britons and international visitors would remember the efforts and sacrifices of the 1914-1918 wartime generation.¹²⁶ Such a position has established the politics of its displays as remaining in alignment with the general mission of a war museum or memorial.¹²⁷ This strong onus on a part-commemorative function therefore cannot be made compatible with a critical interpretive approach.¹²⁸ For Lennon, such institutions do not have the option of being truly critical of their subject matter, because they are unable to detach themselves fully 'from the sacred and emotional sides of commemoration...choosing to commemorate...is in itself an interpretive decision'.¹²⁹ Choosing to commemorate the First World War already places a value judgement upon it; 'It is in effect saying

¹²⁵ Brosnan (2010) 'IWM History', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹²⁶ The British Government did not charge the Museum to lead the nation's commemorative efforts for the Centenary, but this was a role that it decided to take on. Thus it was performing a role of commemoration, rather than memorialisation, i.e. remembering something but with the leeway to be more critical than a memorial would allow (which has become more of an important factor as time went on). Justifying its continued existence involved harking back to its original function, but this time without the pronounced raw pain of loss that the conflict had brought to the institution within its opening years. Equally it is important to note that this period of cultural policy now fell under a Conservative-led coalition. The result of changes to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport alongside the closure of the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council in 2012 (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/246985/0343.pdf - Accessed 08/02/16), meant that implementing the outputs of critical debates within the heritage sector (seen under the previous Labour Government as a key way in which to deliver policy ideas around inclusion) became more limited.

¹²⁷ The issue of whether the Museum constitutes an outright memorial is one of continued contention amongst its staff, and it is worth distinguishing that a war museum and a war memorial are not synonymous. It is arguable that the idea of the IWM being a memorial had receded, only for it to come back into the agenda during the First World War Centenary (and situated amongst broader changes in British popular culture regarding how the public might now interact with the conflict). For Andermann & Arnold-de Simine (2012; 9), state-funded war museums '...perform a public role of remembrance in which they are expected to represent a broad social or at least a political consensus, producing narratives which form an integral part of national identity politics' (2012; 9). However in contrast to the IWM, and as evidenced by its name, the Australian War Memorial is much more overt in its presence and purpose as a site of national remembrance (Roppola, 2012; 240), where it acts adhesively as a site of national memory and remembrance. Roppola later contrasts this with the Canadian War Museum's mandate to 'Educate. Preserve. Remember', which seemingly combines a commemorative and critical approach to the interpretation of war. While documenting Canada's military history and commemorating past sacrifices, the institution also explicitly addresses issues such as what war is and why different cultures engage in war, and it asks its visitors to ponder what they personally could do to facilitate peace' (2012; 293). For analysis on the Canadian War Museum's displays, see Dean (2015), and see Williams (2007) and Munroe (2016; 179-180) for discussion on the topic of memorial museums.

¹²⁸ Roppola (2012; 241) stresses that a commemorative interpretive approach 'is distinct from a critical interpretive approach', latterly describing them as 'incompatible' (2012; 259). Lennon (1999; 78) likewise concurs, remarking that '...the [memorial] museum institution lacks the possibility of being really critical'.

¹²⁹ Lennon (1999; 78).

that this is *worthy* of commemoration...the interpretation presented is in accord with the initial decision to commemorate'.¹³⁰ Commemorating the experiences of a whole generation clouds the issue, but the IWM has had to be ambivalent in terms of defining itself as a memorial over certain points during its existence. Certainly one would accept that it was not formally dedicated to the dead, in the way that somewhere such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was. That withstanding however, it has strong connections with the period in which it was founded - an intense period of national commemoration, and the original plans for the IWM were for it to incorporate a National Memorial Hall, which would have left it with a legacy whereby it was mandated to pay an unending vigil respect to those who had taken part in the First World War.¹³¹ As Lennon defines it, to commemorate is "to preserve the memory of a selected group", and the IWM would therefore fall under this category (in commemorating, rather than memorialising).¹³²

As time went on, the criteria of honouring the extent of this national sacrifice had to be made more apparent in its relevance to increasingly distant generations. The institution was at '...the crossroad of two approaches to reality - the museum in its creation of a new reality and the monument in its preservation of the original reality'.¹³³ It needed to find a point of juncture between balancing an internal desire to remain true to its original intentions, whilst recognising that external changes (both

¹³⁰ Lennon (1999; 78, emphasis original).

¹³¹ Goebel cites one of the Museum's founder Sir Alfred Mond's use of the term memorial in 1917 (2007; 167). Goebel recognises that the '...underlying tension between storehouse of artefacts and site of remembrance was never resolved...yet, in the initial phase, it was clearly projected as a memorial' (2007; 171). Cornish suggests that the Museum used public interest for it to act as a memorial site '...as a way of attracting public money for the erection of a purpose built home for the museum' ('What Goes On in War Museums' Internal Document, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). Though the convention that it was a memorial was not realised, several objects within the Museum's collections 'became imbued with a memorial significance' through their ritualized use on Armistice Day ceremonies (See Cundy, 2015b).

¹³² Lennon (1999; 76). With Huyssen proposing the notion of 'fluid' boundaries between the museum, the memorial and the monument, there is perhaps a lack of clarity regarding how memorialisation can be implemented without being a shrine (1995; 254). For example, Kuchler has argued that memorials of war can preserve a variety of different and conflicting memories to co-exist, which can '...enshrine the knowledge of the cultural past for the sake of future generations' (1999; 55, 53). Additionally Worthy had discussed the tensions of incorporating a public memorial role within a historical museum context in New Zealand; outlining the importance of where this is located nationally determining its success of fulfilling the needs of local communities of remembrance (2004; 602, 605, 617).

¹³³ Lennon (1999; 74). For Stransky, memorial museums 'exist not because of the past, but because of the present and for the future in making relevant a defined time in the past' (1983; 227 as cited by Lennon, 1999; 75). Lennon (1999; 75) further cites Lowenthal's notion that written history 'demarcates past from present' through the distinction of verbal tense, whereas artefacts 'are simultaneously past and present' (1985; 248 as cited by Lennon). It is this quality that gives a historical museum '...its role within the present and its irreplaceable value for the future' (Lennon, 1999; 75).

in museum studies and understanding of the First World War) meant that it needed to do things differently to how they had been done before. Most recently this intended outcome had been expressed as enabling the IWM to grant its audiences an understanding of what war means and how it has shaped their lives.¹³⁴ However all institutions of this ilk have remained aware of the fact that they are required to encapsulate an essentially contradictory message; that of an omnipresent factor of 'Not Forgetting' that runs deep within the institution's bloodstream, contrasted with the intentional outcome that visitors come away with an understanding of the costs of war (as bound up with the Museum's original desire not to promote war in the future).¹³⁵ Because of the fact that visitors to the IWM can now switch seamlessly from past to current conflicts, all of which form part of its displays, this can lead to 'discursive assessments of war' to surface i.e. the notion that war is an inherent waste (in contradiction to the Museum's originally stated function that emphasized the importance of wartime sacrifice).¹³⁶ On the other hand, the metaphorical message of such exhibitions is that they enable an understanding of what war is, and such an emotional involvement can help to facilitate moral lessons, because insight into war experience can promote feelings of gratitude amongst visitors:

'The politics of the war museum/memorial, the manner in which it seeks to persuade, is to instil in its visitors greater understanding and respect for [those] who have served and sacrificed in war. Reciprocally, the institution serves as a site at which visitors may feel as though they *are* paying their

¹³⁴ This was the terminology used for the Museum in its reinvented state from 2014. It would do this by highlighting the follies and perils of warfare whilst also demonstrating that war can be a force for positive change in some areas.

¹³⁵ See 1987 Exhibition Brief, which lists one of the Museum's roles as being 'A memorial to those who fought, died or otherwise took part in/experienced the wars of this century' (IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2). Roppola (2012; 242) regards that such museums have to reconcile this inherent tension, between 'ideology, a critical view, and respect, a commemorative view. How could we help people internalise the moral lesson that we should never go through war again, while still paying tribute to those who have already served in war'.

¹³⁶ Roppola's research at the Australian War Memorial reveals an 'unnerving dissonance' (2012; 244) in juxtaposing past and current conflicts, because '...by documenting the events of war, [the Memorial] catalyses affective broadening and (vicariously) experiential broadening in visitors' of more recent or current wars (2012; 242). In this way visitors '...use the institution's collections and displays as sites at which to engage in larger discourses about war...to engage in critical reflection about the nature of war in society' (2012; 244, 259). As a by-product, the inclusion of contemporary content sets out to '...shift the entire perception, the frame, of the museum out of the 'past'' (2012; 100), giving it a continuing reason and justification for its existence, in serving as 'public consciousness of the human fallout of conflict' (2012; 244).

respects, and visitors even undertake a pilgrimage to it for that express purpose'.¹³⁷

Encapsulating these roles means that its visitors consider the institution to be 'more than a museum' - it has a custodial stewardship role interlinked with its commemorative function.¹³⁸ Its potential for impact is 'unsurpassed through the depth of human experiences and in the shaping of modern Britain and the modern world...it touches everyone's lives, provokes strong reactions and raises emotions'.¹³⁹ Its event-based subject matter is 'inextricably linked with a sense of identity' because of its engaging, emotive, raw and sensitive nature, meaning it 'has to be managed and presented appropriately'.¹⁴⁰ The institution retains its museological role of conserving 'remnants of the past', its objects having retained their function to act as pieces of stimuli for remembrance within a recent context.¹⁴¹ These artefacts are used within its galleries to 'constitute building blocks that help compose the historical story line as a visual continuum...visual historiography' - meaning that the IWM defines itself by its ability to communicate the history that it records through a narrative format.¹⁴²

In summary, the Museum 'did not achieve status as the primary national war memorial', as it had originally been intended.¹⁴³ Instead in the first decade of its life, it was interpreted as 'marking a horrendous anomaly', defining the conflict as an event '...of national sacrifice, of a lost generation, of the war almost as a defeat for civilisation'.¹⁴⁴ These complex and entangled issues form the result of the struggles the Museum had initially in deciding '...whether it was to be a taxonomically based collection, a commemoration of the nation's war effort, a commemoration of the

¹³⁷ Roppola (2012; 243, 252, 254, 259, emphasis original).

¹³⁸ Roppola (2012; 91, 157).

¹³⁹ 'Exhibition Design Brief', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹⁴⁰ 'Exhibition Design Brief', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹⁴¹ Roppola (2012; 228).

¹⁴² Weinberg (1994; 231). This quote is taken from its context of applying to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

¹⁴³ Brosnan (2010) 'IWM History', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. Within the context of the War's Centenary, IWM has reengaged with its memorial role through a digital crowd-sourcing project titled 'Lives of the First World War' (<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/>; Accessed 01/09/15). For academic critique of this initiative, see Arnold-de Simine (2016; 148-153).

¹⁴⁴ Brosnan (2010) 'IWM History', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

Imperial war effort, or a war memorial', to which it ended up being 'a bit of all of these things'.¹⁴⁵ The issues this encompasses are covered further in Chapter 7.

2.7 - Final Thoughts

As an official record of the conflict, the Imperial War Museum was founded '...on dominant or hegemonic...historical narratives that seek to preserve and reinforce particular elites and ideologies'.¹⁴⁶ This sat in conjunction with its rhetoric of acting as a democratic institution within its overall public political role. Historiographic or sociological institutional analysis of the Museum has often concentrated upon this, '...rather than on the dogmatic narratives within each and every exhibition, the constituents of address which give every institution its character and tone'.¹⁴⁷ With this in mind, this thesis sets out to analyse the exhibitions on the First World War held at the Imperial War Museum between 1964 and 2014. In so doing, I view them as 'spatial representations of the past' in examining their:

'...architecture, layout, design, objects and texts in an exhibition and then situate these constellations within the larger contemporary cultural and political contexts of a society to understand their meanings. Furthermore, the multiple interpretive spaces, times and power relations between the various groups involved in an exhibition (as well as their relationships to what is on display) must be considered'.¹⁴⁸

I therefore set to understand what each exhibition wanted to achieve, and its impact in terms of its effect on public understanding of the First World War. In focusing on the resource-intensive process of exhibition making, I seek to shed light on the outcome of finished displays as a '...a long process of selection and simplification'.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore I adopt the mantra that, as Sigmond observes, 'A historical presentation often says more about the period in which it was put together than about the period it is meant to represent. It is our view of the past'.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ PC, 'What Goes On in War Museums' Internal Document, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹⁴⁶ Mycock (2014; 155). This has become more tacit during the Museum's existence.

¹⁴⁷ Ferguson (1996; 178).

¹⁴⁸ Till (2001; 276).

¹⁴⁹ Maier-Wolthausen (2009; 301).

¹⁵⁰ Sigmond (2003; 51).

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 - Introduction

This chapter reviews and justifies my research methods and the sources selected for the temporal span of my empirical chapters, before addressing the practicalities of implementing these methodologies. This thesis made use of a range of humanities-based qualitative methods, including archival and textual analysis, participant observation and interviews with former and current members of staff from the Imperial War Museum. I conducted fieldwork on-site at the Museum through attendance at meetings and observing the process of exhibition-making firsthand. Analysis took place through a sustained encounter of taking up research opportunities, which enabled me to achieve a more nuanced and critical reading of source material and situating this within the social and political circumstances in which it was created. In questioning ‘the positionality of the museum and situatedness of institutional discourse’, and in illuminating aspects of its ‘own practice, assumptions and dilemmas’, I intended my research to leave a tangible record of a peek behind the curtain of curatorial processes within this national institution.¹⁵¹

At the outset of my research, I benefitted from discussions with James Taylor, (IWM supervisor), and the Museum’s archivist, which identified potential sources of material for investigation. This listed rarely used data within the archive already in existence, to which I would then be adding new material in the form of interviews (as well as my overall thesis). The availability of these sources allowed me to adopt a more systematic chronological structure; after discussions with my supervisors, it was felt that whilst a thematic approach could be innovative, it risked being impractical to implement because of the necessity to come up with sufficient areas of commonality between the different exhibitions that took place within the fifty year time frame. For example, on setting out on my research, I considered the possibility of adopting a material-culture informed approach, based on some prior reading around this concept. I had been struck by Appel’s notion that within the context of a historical museum, exhibitions function as ‘written arguments, in which objects

¹⁵¹ Grewcock (2014; 171); Macdonald (2002; 17).

mainly serve as illustrations'.¹⁵² The selecting of objects was therefore a 'rhetorical act of persuasion' to tell a particular story, which I saw as key to my research questions.¹⁵³ I was also interested in the idea of exploring individual object trajectories through their production, interpretation and consumption, in the vein of cultural biography, within different incarnations of the permanent First World War exhibitions at the Museum.¹⁵⁴ I came to realise, however, that objects made up one, albeit a core, component of exhibition-making, and that equally important was the role of communicating an exhibition narrative, as the Museum could not rely solely on 'the aura of the authentic object as a window into the past'.¹⁵⁵

Sources were derived from my initial research questions as produced for my Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) application and outlined in Section 1.3. Based on themes of the control of space, relations between people, particular identity groups and ways of seeing and doing, my supervisory team and I had already agreed upon a methodological toolkit drawn from historical geography. This would allow me to examine a few examples in particular depth and detail, with layers of data supporting these empirical chapters to give them academic rigour, and conclusions contingent on the specificity of my project.

The timeliness of this research was an important factor, as the Museum had begun to utilise the CDA scheme to explore aspects of its institutional history, in preparation for the centenary of its creation in 2017.¹⁵⁶ Although I had visited the Museum prior to embarking on my research, I had not fully considered its inner workings or what was not viewable to the public. Now my research would be witnessing its evolution through a sea change in its exhibitions, and I was to evaluate the agency of its space and the individual actors within this. I had backstage access in the form of my staff pass (allowing me to move through certain corridors within the Museum building), a work email address for contacting members of staff, the ability to book into the Museum's archives at fairly short notice and access to computer

¹⁵² Appel (2009; 103-4).

¹⁵³ Kjeldbaek (2009; 50).

¹⁵⁴ See Kopytoff (1986); Gosden & Marshall (1999).

¹⁵⁵ Andermann & Simine (2012; 7-8). See Macdonald & Silverstone (1999; 425) and Watson (2010; 205) for comments on the role of historical narrative within exhibitions.

¹⁵⁶ In this way, my research was already being archived for the future as a 'story about a particular time as well as a particular place' (Macdonald, 2002; 6). It is worth pointing out that the CDA scheme means that there is an expectation of an outcome that will be of benefit to the host institution (See Macdonald, 2001; 93).

drives featuring internal documents and spreadsheets.¹⁵⁷ I took up opportunities to attend internal meetings such as the Staff Breakfast, at which different Museum departments would talk about their latest projects, and the 'Reappraising the First World War' seminar series in 2012 that featured papers from external academic and internal staff members.¹⁵⁸ I attended a few in-house training events on the use of the cataloguing system Adlib. Furthermore I made a conscious effort to spend time physically experiencing the institution's exhibition spaces, and taking photographs of them.¹⁵⁹

As Fenner has noted, British museums and academics are increasingly working in partnership through this collaborative studentship scheme, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, known as Collaborative Doctoral Awards (and since 2013, Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships). These offer unparalleled experiences for research students in terms of working directly with professions and specialists in the field.¹⁶⁰ Both the general benefits and challenges of this scheme have been documented elsewhere, including 'simultaneously engaging with the cultures of the H[igher] E[ducation] I[nstitution] and non-HEI' alongside the multitude of opportunities for knowledge exchange in presenting findings to public audiences, through engagement activities or via social media.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Macdonald (2002; 10) enjoyed '...being able to move, unchallenged by the security warders who manned the boundary from visitor space to curator space', which helps to stimulate a sense of belonging.

¹⁵⁸ See IWM Research Report (2012) for list of speakers; http://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/public-document/IWM_Research_Report2012.pdf (Accessed 01/09/15).

¹⁵⁹ This was particularly the case for the condemned 1990 First World War galleries, which were to be removed in late 2012 – my intention was therefore to know their intricacies before they disappeared. Conversely the knowledge I acquired in relation to their successors - knowing firsthand what had gone on to achieve the final exhibition - meant that I was able to read this space in a very different manner to how I had previously viewed exhibitions.

¹⁶⁰ Fenner (2013; 35). See also Driver (2013) and Boon, who comments that geographers have benefitted from the scheme because of their tendency for 'open-minded interdisciplinarity' (2013; 104). This topic formed the theme of *Connection, Engagement and Negotiation – When Geographers and Museums Collaborate*, some sessions I co-organised at the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference in August 2013, which featured a host of Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) students talking about their institutional research projects. This was also considered within a multi-disciplinary format at the *Making Connections: Collaboration in Research and Practice* conference, which was held at Kings College London in January 2014, co-organised by myself and fellow CDA students at Imperial War Museums.

¹⁶¹ Hess (2013; 91). See also Evans (2013); Morse (2013). Unlike some CDA projects, I had the privilege of being able to input towards the research programme I would be undertaking, which helped to give me a sense of ownership over the project.

Researching within, and in so doing, exposing the workings of an organisation was a challenge. My research programme would be functioning as ‘...a complex moving between and through, what remains and what is no longer present’ and what was yet to be.¹⁶² I wanted to position the research so as to present the Museum as more than ‘a homogenous, rational and functional machine,’ by showing its complexity through the commonality of its First World War exhibitions, and so to consider the relational politics of these displays.¹⁶³ Furthermore this would shed light upon the institution’s networks ‘...in which different perspectives contend for authority and influence...defined by position and hierarchy’ by revealing some of the hidden decision making and ‘discourses that underpin power/knowledge relations’.¹⁶⁴ Particularly in the case of Chapter 7, I would therefore be elucidating upon the mechanics of exhibition-making; the ‘hidden’ dimensions...the often-overlooked, tacitly known, or concealed dimensions of practice and meaning-making’ that operated within the Museum’s Regeneration Team.¹⁶⁵

3.2 - Ethnography

3.2.1 - ‘Following the Regeneration Team’ – An Ethnographic Account

‘Museum histories need to be exposed to questions of historical epistemology: how curators know what they know about the past and how they communicate that knowledge through techniques of exhibition’.¹⁶⁶

Grewcock has termed museums as ‘heavily, arguably oppressively, representational environments to inhabit and research’, so I recognised the need for the necessary methodological tools to highlight these practices.¹⁶⁷ One core aspect of my research was to give a detailed account of how exhibition-making operated in

¹⁶² Hasty, Forsyth & McGeachan (2012; 169).

¹⁶³ Morse (2013; 64). Typically academic studies of museums would examine a single gallery, but what this research aimed to do was to consider each empirical part in relation to its forebears and successors within a five decade continuum. Similar in its overarching aims to my project, Morse’s PhD research focused on the deployment of a Participatory Action Research framework, but she found this difficult to implement successfully on a practical level, because museum staff did not ‘...have the time [or capacity] to engage fully in all aspects...as co-producers’ (2013; 67. See 66-68).

¹⁶⁴ Morse (2013; 65, 71-2). It struck me that the process of exhibition-making and installation would make for an interesting television documentary; I noted in my Research Diary that it would ‘...show episodic moments of highs and lows + how short-lived they were. Snapshots of complicated process, cliquey departmental silos and interaction’ (JW IWM Research Diary, April 2014).

¹⁶⁵ Morse (2013; 66).

¹⁶⁶ Kavanagh (1990; 130).

¹⁶⁷ Grewcock (2014; 13).

the case of the 2014 First World War Galleries, as is documented in Chapter 7. In the knowledge that the Regeneration Team working on these galleries had to meet a mid-2014 deadline, I was able to analyse their collective experiences and interactions, through observing them undertaking their roles on a daily basis.

Macdonald has prompted the view that:

‘The great majority of analyses of museums focus on finished exhibitions, generally provide a ‘reading’ based on the content and form of that which is represented...Yet there has been very little work on the *production* of exhibitions...The question for ethnography then is: What can this give us that we couldn’t get from an analysis of the finished exhibition?’¹⁶⁸

To accompany this Team ‘through the ups and downs’ of the process of production, an ethnographic approach would enable me to become embedded within their ranks.¹⁶⁹ Field-based ethnography is ‘both a research method and a product, typically a written text’, characteristically situated within a phenomenologically oriented paradigm.¹⁷⁰ Ethnographic methods are renowned for privileging the researcher ‘...to get close to research subjects and to understand their lives through observation and through shared experience’.¹⁷¹ Emphasis is placed upon being in the field over a sustained period, enabling the researcher to identify significant themes through observation of behaviour; ‘The most important element of fieldwork is being there – to observe, to ask seemingly stupid but insightful questions, and to write down what is seen and heard’.¹⁷² Ethnographers then seek to accurately describe these situations and behaviours - witnessed over the period of data collection - for formal analysis, through an emic perspective i.e. ‘the insider’s or native’s perspective of reality’.¹⁷³ They thus ‘balance the objective collection of data with the subjective insights that result from an ongoing association with the people whose lives they seek to understand’.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁸ Macdonald (2001; 81, emphasis original).

¹⁶⁹ Macdonald (2001; 90).

¹⁷⁰ Fetterman (2010; 1, 5). It is also an inductive method of research, because it uses detail to construct ‘explanatory theories, rather than structured to test hypotheses derived from existing theories or models’ (Angrosino, 2007; 15).

¹⁷¹ Lee (2007; 188).

¹⁷² Fetterman (2010; 9).

¹⁷³ Fetterman (2010; 18, 20). The emic perspective recognises and accepts multiple realities.

¹⁷⁴ Angrosino (2007; xv).

As ethnography typically involves ‘a judicious mix of observation, interviewing and archival study’, I deemed that this approach was most appropriate to address this strand of my PhD research.¹⁷⁵ My understanding of how to conduct analysis of an exhibition’s production was greatly aided by Sharon Macdonald’s record of her experiences dealing with the creation of the 1989 ‘Food for Thought’ exhibition at the Science Museum, London:

‘Studying the makers and consumers of a science exhibition was a means of following the processes involved in ‘translating’ expert scientific knowledge into knowledge for a lay public...to consider how the specific demands of museum exhibition [sic] would shape what was presented to the public and also what visitors would make of it’.¹⁷⁶

She termed this going ‘behind-the-scenes’ in an effort to ‘find out how it works, what kinds of passions and ideas motivate practice, and whether and how this percolates into the public displays’.¹⁷⁷ I wanted to echo this in my understanding of constructing the First World War exhibitions within the IWM’s contemporary public displays, by exploring their making and the agendas that they encompassed.¹⁷⁸ This situated ethnographic study was therefore ‘interested in how [the] institution’s drivers manifest in exhibitions environments, whether these be commercial or recreational or educational concerns’.¹⁷⁹ With my access to the Regeneration Team’s ‘ways of seeing and doing’ secured through my CDA contract, I would be undertaking an ethnography, coupled with the broader historical analysis of my other empirical chapters, to:

‘...provide a fuller account of the nature and complexities of production; of the disjunctions, disagreements and ‘surprise outcomes’ involved in cultural

¹⁷⁵ Angrosino (2007; 53).

¹⁷⁶ Macdonald (2002; 5-6).

¹⁷⁷ Macdonald (2002; 5).

¹⁷⁸ See Macdonald (2002; 4). I was not initially aware of the importance of this factor, but I knew that the 2014 galleries would be a big flagship in the nation’s commemorations of the conflict’s centenary. As had been the case with Macdonald, I therefore recognised that ‘To be permitted to do fieldwork in an institution...whose actions were seen as so symbolically significant, was a great privilege’ (2002; 3). Furthermore it was not my intention to spend time recording how visitors reacted to the galleries once they had opened, so I only drew upon one or two small-scale personal observations from July 2014.

¹⁷⁹ Roppola (2012; 270).

production...agency and authorship...are contested and negotiated in ways which have consequences for the nature of the cultural product'.¹⁸⁰

In so doing, I would be producing an account of the making of these exhibitions that prioritised the peopling processes within them, and would therefore adopt a similar, albeit retrospective, approach for my chapters on the Museum's previous First World War exhibitions.

3.2.2 - The Challenges of Implementing Ethnography

My predominant interaction with the IWM would be as part of the Regeneration Team with one of my empirical chapters - Chapter 7 - focusing specifically on their endeavours, and the fact that I was associated with them formally.¹⁸¹ I was to study this Team at the micro level, maintaining 'a professional distance' to allow for 'adequate observation and recording of data'.¹⁸² The rhythm of my research meant that I would be immersed within the working environment and culture of the Regeneration Team over a long-term three year period, through to the opening of the galleries. Over this period, I envisioned 'unearthing the characters and personalities, contested spaces and interpretive practices' that resided within this section of the IWM.¹⁸³

By the time I reached my Upgrade in May 2012, I realised that a full ethnographic documentation was not feasible. My reading of related literature had driven a flawed sense of what I considered my personal involvement would be within proceedings; I had believed that I had to observe and document *all* that went on in a suitably meticulous manner, in order to demonstrate my distinctive contribution to proceedings, and so that I knew the exhibition inside out. I would then need to tell of these experiences in a compelling narrative account, interwoven with detailed analysis that disclosed the intense processes of making the galleries. Trying to balance this opportunity with the other requirements of my research, however, would have restricted me in trying to complete the former in the comprehensive manner I

¹⁸⁰ Macdonald (2002; 7-8).

¹⁸¹ This was similar to Macdonald's reasoning that 'Because all decisions about what would be finally included would have to go through the Team, it made sense to be with them' (2001; 79). My IWM supervisor, James Taylor led this Team, and his presence helped to corroborate mine (particularly when meeting external parties).

¹⁸² Fetterman (2010; 37). See also works on organizational ethnography (Neyland, 2008; Ybema et al, 2009).

¹⁸³ Geoghegan (2010; 1467).

had originally envisaged.¹⁸⁴ I was conscious of observations made in guides to ethnography that 'Field notes are the brick and mortar of an ethnographic edifice...[they] consist primarily of data from interviews and daily observation'.¹⁸⁵ 'Thick description and verbatim quotations' are the identifiable features of an ethnographer's effort to convey the feel and facts of an observed event or daily occurrences.¹⁸⁶ Such a prolonged period of fieldwork, with the level of access that I had, meant that I would have become swamped with information opportunities available to me. Concerned over my guilt over what I saw as a lack of field notes within my Research Diary, and in order to prioritise my data collection methods, I accepted that it was thus not feasible for me to craft the type of full ethnography that would convey the depth and breadth of my experiences. Instead I would continue to take notes at the meetings I was able to attend, and use my Research Diary as more of a subsidiary methodology for this part of my research.¹⁸⁷

My participation as part of the Regeneration Team was largely passive. Though data came from my unobtrusive observations gained 'while experiencing and participating in events' which I had unrestricted access to, I did not define myself as having a membership role within the Regeneration Team.¹⁸⁸ Instead I would adopt '*peripheral* membership' – still observing and interacting closely with them, but not participating 'in those activities constituting the core of group membership'.¹⁸⁹ I therefore took part in the events that made up their daily routine in an overt manner,

¹⁸⁴ Even if my thesis had been concentrating solely on this topic, and I had been based in London full-time, I still believe that its scale would not allow for an all-inclusive or even extensive documentation, because of the complexity, and number of processes and individuals involved. In comparison to Sharon's Macdonald's experiences documented in her 2002 book, I accepted that I was beyond being just 'a fly on the wall' but not as integrated as she was (she went 'to pick up faxes or to check on various exhibits' [2001; 80] and 'was regarded as a member of the Team' [2002; 105]). Though we adopted similar approaches, her data collection was far more comprehensive, as she tape-recorded team meetings and took more detailed notes on the construction process, and though I had access to documentation online, she made a conscious decision to actively collect copies of relevant paperwork for analysis.

¹⁸⁵ Fetterman (2010; 116).

¹⁸⁶ Fetterman (2010; 125). He describes such quotations as 'a sine qua non of ethnography', given that they have 'tremendous face validity' (2010; 126-7).

¹⁸⁷ As time went on, I found that my entries within this were often prompted by my emotional reaction to events immediately after they had occurred, and thus skewed by personal bias. However, accepting this form of reflexivity, Fetterman (2010; 128) notes that consciously voicing acknowledgement of being so embedded and involved within the research process is 'a significant departure from the ideology of objectivity'.

¹⁸⁸ DeWalt & DeWalt (2011; 23-25, 135).

¹⁸⁹ Angrosino (2007; 55, emphasis original). Roppola (2012; 69) also cites the methodology of acting as a 'marginal participant', with the researcher positioned as an accepted participant.

but in a position whereby I could 'question the obvious or the taken-for-granted'.¹⁹⁰ An example of this would be my attendance at the Team's Text Writing workshops, which were held in 2012 and 2013, in various museums across London. They were for the curators' benefit of writing the text for the galleries, but I was treated as an informed party, who could act in the role of the visitor confronting text for the first time. Witnessing this text writing process in its various iterations, and watching the Team find the right expressions for their boiled down messages was a process of analysis which I expand upon in Chapter 7.¹⁹¹

3.2.3 - Life with the Regeneration Team

I recognised that I had the opportunity to reveal the goings on within what is typically a closed, secretive and little-known-about process. In seeking to understand what was taking place within this environment, establishing and subsequently maintaining the relationship of trust and cooperation between myself, as the research student, and the key actors of the Regeneration Team curators, was fundamental in ensuring successful data collection for Chapter 7.¹⁹² Spending time with them was to be my first experience of an office work culture. My presence here meant that, beyond worrying about the goals and ethics of academic work, I also needed to develop rapport with them - to 'get on with the people [I was] working [with] in a personal, everyday sense'.¹⁹³ Spending time in an office environment, Macdonald's experiences of the mundane day-to-day activity that took place was very much aligned with my own:

'...writing (mostly at computers), reading, 'shuffling paper' (as routine administration is referred to), making telephone calls, photocopying, [emailing], having coffee, holding meetings, chatting and leaving and arriving

¹⁹⁰ Angrosino (2007; 57).

¹⁹¹ There were several instances in which I assisted the Team with drafting, proof-reading and reviewing gallery text in late 2013, alongside completing this at the Team's Text Writing workshops.

¹⁹² Morse's research highlights the fact that these type of 'critical observation' projects could be misconstrued by staff as being driven by an authoritarian management, 'aimed at producing recommendations for organisational change' and restructuring in straitened economic times, rather than for academic purposes (2013; 68. See also Macdonald, 1997; 164). However I would say that a growing internal awareness of the CDA scheme, led by the Museum's Research Department, had made the Regeneration Team curators aware of who I was and what I would be doing, and that I would remain somewhat independent to the Museum. The issue of staff being critical of their work place was something I did not consciously seek out, but understood was likely to arise during my research - I talk about this more in relation to my interviews.

¹⁹³ Cook & Crang (2007; 42).

for other meetings or conferences...Much of this, and its everyday tribulations and celebrations – someone going off sick, the photocopier breaking down, misplacing an urgently needed file, a promotion, a birthday, a piece accepted for publication – was very much like the routine academic milieu’¹⁹⁴



Figure 5 – The Regeneration Team Office in the Main Building

(Sourced by Author)

As expected, there were daily issues that cropped up, determined by the various staged sections of the exhibition-making process. These conversations revolved around what was happening during the exhibition making process:

‘...what to put in and where, how to deal with lack of space or a wrongly shaped location, where to get hold of the right item to exhibit a particular idea, how to express a concept simply...keep to budget, how to get all of those involved working to a time-table and simply how to manage the whole enormous multiplicitious business of creating the exhibition’.¹⁹⁵

I acknowledged the need to give out the right message by ‘presenting a personal front which mirrored that of the social actors in the field’.¹⁹⁶ Coffey shares

¹⁹⁴ Macdonald (2002; 10). One of the office’s morning rituals was James Taylor bringing in a cafetiere of coffee which was then shared around. Its potency took some getting used to!

¹⁹⁵ Macdonald (2002; 131).

¹⁹⁶ Coffey (1999; 65).

her experiences of the difficulties in knowing 'what to physically *do* in the field in order to look natural, comfortable, engaged and welcoming, while not appearing bored, threatening or judgemental'.¹⁹⁷ Communicating the right impression as a research student did become easier, as I became more immersed and familiar with those involved in the process. An example of this was the way in which I dressed when I visited the Museum. Upon setting out, my perception of the Museum and of those I had met, had somehow given me the impression that I would be required to wear a suit for work.¹⁹⁸ Conscious of wanting to fit in, I presented my appearance in a serious manner for at least a year into the process. As time went on, I realised that this was not a formal requirement, and in conversation with the more casually dressed members of the Regeneration Team, I realised that this decision actually made me stand out and risked isolating me from them. I subsequently continued to dress in more relaxed attire - joking to the Team on one occasion that they might be lucky and one day get to see me in a pair of jeans!

My understanding and telling of the Team's roles and work culture was thus reliant upon my interactions with them. Coffey discusses this situatedness and researcher reflexivity in negotiating their identity; with the onus on the researcher to create an 'interconnectedness' with the social actors in the field.¹⁹⁹ Beyond observing interactions, I took part in both formal and informal conversations in and out of the Team office – often clarifying or discussing issues, joining in with their banter, pestering individuals about particular decisions that had been taken, or just reflecting with them at the end of a working day. I remained conscious throughout of being courteous and professional, trying to act with 'a delicate step' to demonstrate my 'respect, admiration and appreciation' for what the Team was doing.²⁰⁰ There were running jokes in the office about what I would be putting in my thesis (which duly follow), such as the various dreams that the Team Members had, and the extreme quantities of jelly babies, Haribo, chocolate and biscuits they consumed

¹⁹⁷ Coffey (1999; 73, emphasis original). See also Goffman (1959).

¹⁹⁸ See Coffey (1999; 66). On one of my first trips to the Museum, I was introduced by chance to the outgoing Chairman of the Board of the Museum's Trustees, Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire. I was grateful for having worn a suit that day, and the occasion made me aware of the fact that situations like that could take place unexpectedly within the Museum Building. However, I became more adept at knowing in advance when there were occasions upon which I should dress more formally (such as meetings of the Academic Advisory Board, Press Briefings and latterly when taking VIPs around the First World War Galleries).

¹⁹⁹ Coffey (1999; 40, 48, 56).

²⁰⁰ Fetterman (2010; 133).

whilst they worked (with a direct correlation between increasing consumption levels and proximity to the galleries' opening date).²⁰¹ On other occasions, phrases of extreme exclamation that illustrated the exasperation and stresses of the whole experience of exhibition-making were accompanied with the sentence 'Don't put that in your thesis!'²⁰² This part of my research therefore aimed to go beyond acting as a scribe in merely recounting their experiences and showing that their actions had implications - like Macdonald's work, it tried to:

'...highlight the way in which certain implicit models (e.g. the 'direct through-put' knowledge model inherent in the way in which this exhibition was organized) or cultural assumptions (e.g. that 'messages' need to be expressed in words) lead to unanticipated effects (e.g. the 'screening out' of certain knowledges or an unexpected predominance of writing in the finished exhibition). It needs to show how highlighting those models and assumptions in future can help avoid such effects. This entails *analytical reflexivity*: a process of careful reflection upon the cultural context and processes examined with a view of identifying the particular formations of knowledge and practice operating within that organization'.²⁰³

Through the course of their endeavours, I fostered a sense of loyalty towards the Team, retaining a great deal of respect for their application to achieve their goal.²⁰⁴ I was able to contribute to their work on occasion; sharing the breadth of my reading by passing on recent journal articles which I thought would be of interest to specific members of staff.²⁰⁵ The office environment acted as a space of constant

²⁰¹ JW IWM Research Diary, 21/11/13. Their dreams often involved shrinking or growing showcases, objects going missing, being overwhelmed or chased by Post-It notes and a particularly unusual one involving a pet rasher of bacon!

²⁰² One of the first things I was informed of when starting out my research was that I would quickly get used to the frequency of swear words used within the office! Similarly, the Museum staff in Macdonald's research joked about being her 'tribe', and that she was observing their 'savage customs' (2002; 11).

²⁰³ Macdonald (2002; 94, emphasis original).

²⁰⁴ Macdonald (2002; 92) likewise sensed the split loyalties between having invested in the lives of those whom she worked with over a long period, countered with the contrasting emotion of feeling critical of aspects of what they had done – this made writing up '...an especially awkward process of negotiation and expression' (2002; 92).

²⁰⁵ There were instances whereby I loaned personal copies of works to the curatorial team, to assist them in their work. I gave a verbal report to one curator of a conference I had attended at the University of Exeter, on the theme of 'Representing and Historicising Les Gueles Cassées' (13/11/13). This was to inform them about new academic research happening within the field of facial prosthetics during the First World War, a theme which featured in the final section of the galleries.

change and ongoing processes of thought, and I felt comfortable in sharing my own (though there were times when I decided to sit on a potential response, to see how the issue in question might pan out in the long run). My presence was regarded as a recognisable figure amongst the Team members, as I gradually built up ‘a firm knowledge base in bits and pieces’, establishing a position from which I could ask questions, listen, probe, compare and contrast and synthesize information.²⁰⁶

I also knew that my role entailed a responsibility to those I was writing about; to convey their efforts as authentically, honestly and accurately as I was able to, but without any pressure to make my findings palatable to them.²⁰⁷ In the case of Chapter 7, I retained awareness that what I was doing would, in time, become a formal record of the efforts of the Regeneration Team – meaning that those involved in this study would expect to at least read, if not pass judgement, on what I had written (though this would be after the Team had been officially disbanded).²⁰⁸ Having fostered a good working relationship with this group, managing interest in the outcome of my research is something that risks putting ‘a distance between the researcher and the researched’.²⁰⁹ Following my upgrade in May 2012, I was encouraged to engage with the friction within the exhibition-making process, and I knew that I was within my rights - indeed expected as part of my responsibilities of being there - to challenge the Team, and their methods where possible.²¹⁰ Over time, I became more familiar with knowing how to judge when they were under pressure, and for that reason not adding to their burden, meaning that I became adept at knowing when to move in and ask questions, and when to leave individuals alone.

²⁰⁶ Fetterman (2010; 112). This meant that the issue of confidentiality was critical in maintaining these relationships, but anonymity would have been problematic amongst such a small group within a specific setting (See also Macdonald, 2001; 92).

²⁰⁷ See Emerson et al (2011; 245).

²⁰⁸ See Macdonald (1997; 171). It was therefore important for me to convey the fact that whilst the Team may have been of a finite nature, they formulated the ultimate expression of the Museum’s new direction and image, alongside its reasserted philosophical values. The Team quickly turned their attention onto their new roles once the galleries opened; my final first-hand dealings with them collectively was inviting them to attend some sessions of papers that I co-organised on the topic of geographers and the First World War, at the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference in August 2014. Afterwards they were able to chat with some delegates at an out-of-hours trip to the galleries, hosted by IWM. This was to act as a suitable closing down of my embedded PhD research.

²⁰⁹ Eberle & Maeder (2011; 67).

²¹⁰ I felt comfortable expressing my views to the Team, though in retrospect, could perhaps have done this more often. However I was always aware that doing it too frequently might have been detrimental to the sense of unity and common goal that filtered through the Regeneration Team office, and I knew that there were measures in place essentially designed to further critique the exhibitions. At occasions such as interviews, I was content to outline my position and understanding on matters relating to the Regen Team (See Cook & Crang, 2007; 45).

As Macdonald observed in her fieldwork, taking notes of unfolding episodes often made me feel conspicuous because it was ‘an act imbued with the meaning that something meaningful was going on’.²¹¹ But I did not try to act secretively in hiding the fact that I wanted to use jotted down snippets of typical conversations, such as the interaction between the curators and the designers, to illustrate their function and sketch out the dynamics of their social relationships.²¹²

3.2.4 - Working Out My Role in Proceedings

The ethnographer has to be both ‘insider and outsider’, but some entries in my Research Diary were garbled accounts of frustration regarding my positionality within the wider Team.²¹³ It was usually a provocative situation or occurrence that caused me to reflect in my field diary, meaning that these entries were often emotive and anxiety-ridden, expressing personal grievances about an event that had happened that day.²¹⁴ Beyond providing a sense of reflexivity, the field diary was therefore helpful in accounting for the pendulum swings of my mood regarding my involvement with the Regeneration Team.²¹⁵ There were instances when I wanted to go beyond being an observer, especially when my presence amongst such a small Team was so overt. I tended to question my sense of attachment to them, because I did not feel like an insider. One of the key reasons behind these anxieties about my involvement in the overall process lay in the fact that it had originally been stipulated that I would be directly contributing to the galleries by depositing some of my research findings within a specific section known as the ‘Memory Area’.²¹⁶ Thus I

²¹¹ Macdonald (1997; 164).

²¹² This was able to give a much richer insight into the processes, so the ethnographic staple of a pen and paper was important for snatching down these episodes in short as they unfolded (Fetterman, 2010; 69). I remained conscious of Emerson et al’s description of fieldnotes as very personal, ‘...a kind of backstage scribbling – a little bit dirty, a little bit suspect, not something to talk about too openly and specifically’ (2011; xv), but used them primarily to record specific instances or details relating to meetings or conversations within the office. I also accepted that such jottings were selective and inevitably filtered by my own perceptions as the researcher (Emerson et al, 2011; 130).

²¹³ Coffey (1999; 106).

²¹⁴ DeWalt & DeWalt (2011; 90) talk of ‘one of the inherent biases in observation’ as being ‘...the likelihood that unusual or rare events will be much closer observed and recorded than commonplace events and activities’.

²¹⁵ My Research Diary entries frequently referred to a sense of feeling overwhelmed by ‘endless research opportunities’ and my slow progress, before questioning whether covering my remaining list of archival material would provide me with a ‘comprehensive knowledge’, or if this wish-list of tasks was achievable (JW IWM Research Diary, 03/04/13; 10/12/12).

²¹⁶ See ‘AHRC CDA Contract’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. This stated that beyond my role as a ‘critical friend...offering an independent intellectual contribution that will directly inform the exhibition planning process’, the Museum wanted to ‘incorporate the outputs from this PhD

found that this semi auto-ethnographical style helped me to convey not so much a sense of 'being there' and of experience, but of my positionality:

'On occasion feel like extra pair of hands to relieve pressure, but that is rare. Feel like I am working independently from Regen Team. Wish I'd been able to help/contribute in more tangible ways'.²¹⁷

I enjoyed the irregular opportunities of sharing findings relating to my other empirical chapters with them (particularly when I uncovered that similar frustrations of exhibition-making had been encountered to the ones that the Team were presently experiencing). One example was when I gave a review and slideshow of the newly opened First World War exhibition at the 'In Flanders Fields' Museum in Ypres, which I visited in late 2012. However, in spite of this sense of individual reward, the timings of these always gave me an underlying sense that it would not be affecting the new displays in any major way, because the planning for them was so far in advance.²¹⁸ Nevertheless being able to share something tangible and helping the Team out was important for my sense of belonging – indeed I always felt more reassured of my involvement whenever I was able to spend a more prolonged period of time with the Team over consecutive days.²¹⁹ Macdonald similarly sensed that the

into resources such as the IWM's Memory Area, thus making knowledge available to the wider public'. The hope was for me to have 'a direct impact on audience experience' through my involvement with the Team. However, as noted in Chapter 7, the form of the 'Memory Area' changed dramatically over the course of the galleries' development.

²¹⁷ JW IWM Research Diary, 08/10/13. Not only was this view in recognition of the intensity of their plight as the process went on, it coincided with the continuing realisation that my specific role was to critique their work and practices, rather than just to document them. There were times when I felt isolated from the process, taking comfort in my recognition as a 'lone academic, lost in writing' (JW IWM Research Diary, April 2014). Contrastingly there were occasions when I wish that I had been involved with the Team in a more official capacity - to warrant my place amongst their ranks, rather than just being an additional presence - but this sense of sympathy perhaps skewed my perception of how I defined my primary role; I was not there as an extra pair of hands to assist the staff in their day-to-day practice, but to complete my thesis as a meaningful piece of original research.

²¹⁸ On the topic of sharing findings with the Team, I found it difficult to think that what I was sharing would be useful or important to them, rather than just interesting or shedding light on their former colleagues; on one occasion, I recorded an underlying sense of 'tokenism' (JW IWM Research Diary, 08/10/13). I presented my research into the exhibitions featuring in Chapter 4 at a more formal Museum seminar event in May 2012.

²¹⁹ Cook & Crang (2007; 28) talk of the researcher 'blending in' with the community under study by 'conversing in its own language as a means of gaining access to its 'culture''. One example was passing on to the Team a copy of the Caption Writing Guidelines from the 1990 First World War galleries, just before they embarked on the same process. Alongside recycling knowledge like this, there were also times when I was asked of my opinion on a matter, or to act as a fresh pair of eyes in reviewing information, which was most often in commenting on captions and text panels (See Chapter 7). More informal occasions gave me the chance to speak with Team members individually. After the Text Workshop event held at HMS Belfast on 14/02/13, the Team walked the one and a half miles back from London Bridge to the Museum site in Lambeth. During this time, I was able to converse at

daily routines in the office, the ‘gossip and jokes, and displays of frustration and anger’, flowed ‘more freely’ as she spent more time there.²²⁰ One analogy which I found particularly apt in describing this was of acting as a war reporter; I would be spending time in the front-line with the ‘soldiers’, living with them, seeing them conducting their jobs, the highs and lows that went with their daily lives, but essentially I was not there as a ‘soldier’. Rather I was there for a specific purpose, which was (in part) to convey their experiences within an academic output, for the creation of new knowledge and understanding.

3.2.5 – Practical Considerations of Implementing this Methodology

My access to the Regeneration Team was only restricted by my capability to allocate time spent with them, alongside the fact that I needed to balance this with completing the other aspects of my PhD research. Had I been geographically located nearer London, then it would have been easier to have conducted more research more quickly, and thus been better immersed in the overall process than the two to three days a week that I endeavoured to spend at the Museum.²²¹ I based this decision on the fact that my research opportunities relating to the Team would remain ongoing throughout the long-term three year period of my studies.²²² Accordingly I tended to travel up to London from Exeter via train, going straight into the Museum mid-morning, and then staying overnight with nearby friends and family. In January 2014, I was able to move up to Guildford, enabling me to go up to London more regularly as the galleries reached completion. My actual time spent within the Museum was allocated based on my prioritising of any ad hoc Regen Team meetings that I could attend, balanced with the requirement to conduct prolonged periods of archival research within the Museum’s Research Room and Photograph

length with one curator about my research for Chapter 4, taking an infrequent opportunity to speak openly about my findings outside of the confines of the hectic office environment. Accompanying the Team on the Tube on the way to meetings at the external design firm at Old Street also served as a chance to talk with them individually about work and non-work matters.

²²⁰ Macdonald (2001; 88). I would say that displays of frustration and anger, of which there were on occasion, demonstrated the passion with which the Team were imbued in their mission, and the practical challenges they were faced with in trying to realise this. In situations like Design Meetings, when the process was moving so fast, the curators had to act honestly and quickly if they wanted changes to be made, and so could not afford to be restrained in my presence.

²²¹ It had been a contractual requirement that I spend the equivalent of at least one day a week at the Museum over the course of the project.

²²² Even though the staff were well of my presence, there was a sense that it would be ‘difficult to maintain a performance’ over such a prolonged period, which meant that they were happy to act as they would otherwise, and to tell me things which I would gradually pick up on in time (Macdonald, 2001; 88).

Archive. There was a constant stream of meetings throughout the process, but I tried to prioritise informal Regen Team meetings, the Academic Advisory Board meetings and design meetings held with the galleries' external design firm Casson Mann.²²³ My presence within the office proved to be a practical challenge, in terms of having my own individual desk. I had viewed this as a symbol of recognition and presence amongst the Team's members, but came to terms with the fact that I would not be spending sufficient time at it to justify one being allocated to me.²²⁴

The key reasoning behind this ethnographic methodology was to capture the processes behind the making of the First World War Galleries as they unfolded. As Macdonald has noted, obtaining retrospective accounts 'would likely be framed within a culturally standardized account of the process: it would privilege conscious decision-making and clearly formulated plans over the contingent and messy'.²²⁵ My account would thus utilise the fact that I had witnessed this literal making firsthand, and to demonstrate this in Chapter 7 as a peopled and very human process.

²²³ On occasions when I could not attend, James Taylor would provide me with an update on any high-level outcomes, but it was not feasible to expect him to provide me with more detailed feedback.

²²⁴ I preferred working on my PhD away from the office, where I found it easier to reflect on things away from being immersed in them. Consequently there were relatively few days that I spent solely in the office, because I was usually conducting archival research or attending meetings in other locations. My supervisor James Taylor did what he could in the circumstances; I was allocated my own desk for a brief period in the spring of 2013, following the departure of a curator from the Regeneration Team, but had to revert to hot-desking not long after when additional staff joined the office. Beyond this period, I felt conscious that my desk request seemed trivial amongst the other tasks that made up James' workload. When the Team moved back into the even more crowded office within the Main Building, it was commented in a joking fashion, 'there's no room for you here...we'll have to get you a bean-bag in the corner' (JW IWM Research Diary, 08/10/13).

²²⁵ Macdonald (2001; 87).

3.3 - Interviews

3.3.1 – Approach to Interviews

To support my semi-ethnographic methodology outlined above, I conducted semi-structured interviews with individual Regeneration Team members. This were used to gather retrospective information, but predominantly to cumulatively contextualise what I was witnessing first-hand; serving representative purposes by ‘comparing responses and putting them in the context of common group beliefs and themes’.²²⁶ Through flowing dialogue, I was able to build upon the rapport with individual team members and persuade them ‘to talk about their thoughts, feelings and actions’.²²⁷ It was important to provide a space whereby my interview participants could speak freely about their experiences and involvement with their associated exhibitions, without fear of reprimand - balancing my ‘concern for pursuing interesting knowledge’ with an ‘ethical respect for the integrity of the interview subject’.²²⁸ The interviews also offered an opportunity for me to live up to my responsibilities as a tactful ‘critical friend’, and to meet this brief of challenging them through asking provocative questions or questioning their assumptions.²²⁹ It was hard to strike a balance between empathetic support and critical distance.²³⁰ I wanted to privilege the accounts and perspectives of those I was studying, but equally needed to retain distance so as to critique the overall process; my close identification with the participants should not have meant that I was reporting and interpreting everything from their perspective.²³¹ Furthermore my working relationship with them, and the ‘openness and intimacy’ of qualitative research meant that I had to be aware of the fact that they could ‘disclose information they

²²⁶ Fetterman (2010; 40-1). My interviews provided a good opportunity for me to learn about Team Members’ roles prior to their existing one, and their motivations for joining the project, within a safe space. There was no real requirement to protect their individual privacy, beyond the fact that their identities could not easily be disguised (See Macdonald, 2002; 13).

²²⁷ Cook & Crang (2007; 61).

²²⁸ Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 16).

²²⁹ One of the stipulations in my contract was to be an academic informant, to thus enable the Regen Team’s ‘ideas for the 2014 displays to be challenged, developed and also placed in context of previous exhibitionary practices...[to] explore how the Museum develops its intellectual approaches to its subject’ (AHRC CDA Contract, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). Cook & Crang (2007; 72) suggest that an ‘accidental or deliberate flouting of the rules’ can potentially lead to ‘interesting insights’, but there were only a few occasions when I decided to play the role of Devil’s Advocate during interview.

²³⁰ Macdonald (2002; 105).

²³¹ Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 75).

may later regret having shared'.²³² Even though I was hearing accounts from individuals who were all going through the same collective process, their descriptions detailing their personal understandings of the processes in play differed.²³³ Thus interview offered them time to reflect upon the themes that made up their working environment, and an opportunity for me to study these perspectives.²³⁴

My judgement and knowledge of when to intervene and how to steer interviews developed as I acquired more experience of conducting them, though the transcription process helped me recognise some personal flaws of interrupting and interjecting interview participants.²³⁵ There were some instances when this was done deliberately to save time by clarifying details or reminding them of a particular fact they were trying to recall, which I already knew the answer to. The other defence of this technique is that offering up my personal reaction or opinion gave the participant a chance to refute or confirm what I put to them. Interviews mean having to continually '...make on-the-spot decisions about what to ask and how, which aspects of [an] answer to follow up'; I duly learned that scheduling multiple interviews on one day was a mistake, simply because the effort required in concentrating, listening attentively and then coming up with follow-up questions over a long period of time.²³⁶ I had originally planned to conduct a rolling programme of interviews with the Regeneration Team to continually explore the issues at stake in their work.²³⁷

²³² Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 73).

²³³ In terms of studies of practice, Morse (2013; 66) talked of using interviews to look at 'what staff do (not just what they say they do)', in an attempt to identify any disparities.

²³⁴ What was of primary interest to me was what was 'unremarkable' to these participants (Silverman, 2011; 461). Kvale & Brinkmann similarly observe that researchers tend to 'analyse those aspects of their material that challenge their perceptions, seem puzzling in relation to the research question, or simply stand out one way or the other' (2009; 229).

²³⁵ King & Horrocks (2010; 51-53) cite leading questions, over-complex questions, judgemental responses, and a failure to listen as primary examples of poor interviewer practice. For Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003; 158-159), an interviewer must refrain from commenting on an answer, or from finishing off an answer through a potentially extraneous remark. I was guilty of this on numerous occasions, and when reading through transcripts, on reflection felt that my technique missed opportunities to probe answers further and ask more open-ended questions – something Valentine (1997; 122) terms as 'the most frustrating side of interviewing'. Similarly Kavanagh instructs that 'Listening requires your undivided attention, without interrupting' (2000; 88).

Even so, Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 100) suggest that an 'absence of a prescribed set of rules for interviewing' means that whilst the process can be seen as 'an open-ended field of opportunities', it also means that the interviewer has to learn through trial and error.

²³⁶ Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 166).

²³⁷ This was particularly the case for three interviews which I had conducted on the same day in February 2012, fairly early on in my research. Time constraints never allowed me to undertake repeat interviews; I questioned the extent to which a second batch of interviews might make my writing too reliant upon curator testimony, and would therefore dictate the flow of the chapter, rather than using

Whilst interviews granted me access and in recognising that my work was shaped by my own experiences and aims, I tried to position them within the overall vein of constructionism – that is, mutually constructed ‘in which both interviewer *and* interviewee participate actively in making sense together’.²³⁸ For each interview I conducted, I prepared a briefing document outlining the purpose of the interview (informing the participant of the specific purpose of the data being generated), background about my research project and notification that a recording device would be used.²³⁹ Consent was given in the form of ‘a verbal agreement between the researcher and researched’.²⁴⁰ All questions were submitted to participants at least a week in advance, with most having a fortnight to prepare responses if they wished. Some interview participants brought along notes, though few resorted to using them. My Regeneration Team interviews consisted of a peculiar blend of the formality of a semi-professional situation with the informality of friendly interaction with a colleague in having a conversation about working matters of which you are both familiar.²⁴¹ All

these in combination with my ethnographic observations of the process. There was also the issue of not having sufficient time to significantly increase the amount of transcribing I was able to undertake. Even though I knew I had ample material, I retained a desire to complete more interviews; I had originally intended to speak with various other IWM staff involved in its Regeneration (including Director-General Diane Lees). However I most regretted not speaking formally with the Regeneration Team’s Exhibition Manager, Becky Wakeford, whose insight into their work would have offered an additional well-positioned perspective. Wanting to get a sense of the before and after of the galleries’ completion, and for the aforementioned reasons of time and ease, I compiled an email evaluation questionnaire in July 2014 for the members of the Regeneration Team to fill out. This received a 50% response rate, because team members had moved straight onto new projects. Unfortunately my questionnaires for the designers were never completed, which I put down to their involvement with other projects. There had been suggestions for me to conduct filmed interviews with the Regen Team curators talking about their involvement, which could then feature within the gallery space or online, but regrettably this idea (alongside my desire to have a reflective group discussion with the Team as they walked through the completed galleries) could not be realised, due to other competing priorities.²³⁸ Silverman (2011; 165, emphasis original). See also England (1994, as cited by Valentine [1997; 112]). Interviews are generally situated within interpretivism, in that they are a data form that ‘prioritises the interpretation and meaning of human experience over measurement, explanation and prediction’ (King & Horrocks, 2010; 13) and are idiographic through ‘describing aspects of the social world by offering a detailed account of specific social settings, processes or relationships’ (Kings & Horrocks, 2010; 11. For comments on the postmodern emphasis on the social construction of knowledge through interviews, see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; 53).

²³⁹ As is commonplace with most research projects, I suffered at the hands of failed technology/user mishap on one occasion, though fortunately was able to re-record the interview a week later (See Cook & Crang, 2007; 85). Alongside this, the background noise of home environments did not make ideal clarity for sound recordings.

²⁴⁰ Kings & Horrocks (2010; 112). Retrospectively, this was an oversight on my part, because formal written consent forms would have allowed me to use the interview testimony more freely, though all interview participants had the opportunity to review their cited material that I incorporated within this thesis. During actual interview, some participants requested that comments about sensitive topics were made off the record.

²⁴¹ Valentine writes that sharing the same background can have a positive effect in ‘facilitating the development of a rapport between interviewer and interviewee and thus producing a rich, detailed conversation based on empathy and mutual respect and understanding’ (1997; 113).

Team members consented to being interviewed for the purposes of my investigation, providing me with a chance to talk with them freely about their experiences away from the presence of their managers.²⁴² Though one participant noted the difficulty in talking specifically to me about things that I was likely to ‘have heard them all before’, for the most part these interviews took on a semi-therapeutic manner; providing a controlled space for the curatorial team to offer up their personal thoughts about matters and the key issues of exhibition-making which they were involved with.²⁴³ Accordingly I could obtain verbal explanations of the processes in place and the common belief system held within the curator group. It becomes a means of granting the researcher a chance to:

‘...establish their credibility with participants by asking relevant questions which are seen as meaningful by the participant and which are based on an understanding of the research subject. But equally the interview is not a forum for the researcher to make a show of their own knowledge...Researchers need a degree of humility, the ability to be recipients of the participant’s wisdom without needing to compete by demonstrating their own’.²⁴⁴

My intention was thus for these interviews to ‘take a conversational, fluid form...a dialogue rather than an interrogation’.²⁴⁵ My role was to be that of an empathetic facilitator in ‘...managing the interview process to ensure that the required subjects are covered to the required depth, without influencing the actual views articulated’.²⁴⁶ The questions I compiled for the Regeneration Team were broadly similar, and derived from my prior observations of their activities. I would not be asking the same

²⁴² For one curator, our interview was an appropriate time to ask me to explain my research to them in more detail - suggesting a breakdown of the more formal role of the interviewer as ‘the neutral asker of questions’ in providing an informative response (See Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003; 140)

²⁴³ Rapley (2007; 30) observes that interviews can act as counselling environments. However the interviews were also an opportunity for me to gauge how the processes were controlled by management, through testimony from the curators.

²⁴⁴ Legard, Keegan & Ward (2003; 143). Going with the territory, all of the Regeneration Team members were well read in their subject matter, with some being particularly well versed in academic historical works. There were one or two instances during interviews when I felt like I had to prove my academic credentials, and act as an intellectual sparring partner.

²⁴⁵ Valentine (1997; 111). Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 302) similarly comment that interview knowledge is ‘not collected, but produced between interviewer and interviewee, and the meanings constructed in their interaction’.

²⁴⁶ Legard, Keegan & Ward (2003; 147). Kavanagh notes that ‘...the interviewer’s knowledge of the subject and from that the ability not only to relate to what is being said, but also to move the topic both forward and deeper through appropriate use of terms or questions which are apposite are important’ (2000; 82).

questions to each individual curator in exactly the same manner, but expected to 'gather contrasting and complementary talk on the same theme or issue'.²⁴⁷

3.3.2 - Interviews conducted for Chapters 4 and 5 Research

I completed several interviews with former IWM staff members who had worked on the completion of the 1990 First World War galleries, as well as three interviews for Chapters 4 and 6.²⁴⁸ Contact details were sought from current staff, and I had to prioritise key players from an extensive list of potential participants.²⁴⁹ Meeting these individuals for the first time meant that I had to convey a sound level of knowledge about the topic in question, so to make my participants feel at ease conversing with me.²⁵⁰ Building rapport with them was achieved by conveying my enthusiasm and curiosity for the topic, knowing that I would be obtaining fresh insight into a perspective I already knew something about. I found that this often helped in 'enabling the participant to feel comfortable in opening up' to me, and gave them a sense that I was a trustworthy researcher.²⁵¹ I dressed in a semi-formal manner so as to emphasize my status as a student researcher, but also as someone who took their work seriously.²⁵² In the case of Chapter 5, with the distance of twenty five years between the event in question and the interview, I brought along physical material sourced from the IWM archives, to help act as an aide memoire for my

²⁴⁷ Rapley (2007; 39). The questions I compiled were vetted by James Taylor, my IWM supervisor. Apart from the removal of one sensitive question for my post-2014 galleries evaluation document (which I sent out just after the galleries had opened, to capture immediate reactions and reflections), no modifications were made.

²⁴⁸ I also conducted one email interview for Chapter 6. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 all deal with previous exhibitions on the First World War, focusing particularly on work practices and experiences, from the period 1964 to 2009.

²⁴⁹ Contact was made with various individuals, but not all opportunities materialised.

²⁵⁰ Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 147). This was enacted by starting off the interview with a broad ground-mapping question, allowing the participant to begin to feel comfortable in answering questions

²⁵¹ King & Horrocks (2010; 48). Several of the interviews I conducted for Chapter 5 took place in private homes, which brought about a different dynamic – a more trusting and open one - from those held at the Imperial War Museum site (See King & Horrocks, 2010; 49). Being invited into the home of somebody you had never met before, accepting their hospitality and having such intimate access to their private life was something I recognised as a great privilege. Here conversations that took place before my dictaphone was switched on were equally important, as was the requirement not to be greedy in over-talking interview participants or out-staying my welcome. In contacting these individuals, my official IWM association gave me a degree of formal credibility, but during the actual interview, I sensed that they were happy talking frankly to me as an informed party, rather than an actual representative of the Museum. Moreover this meant that participants were happy to recall their candid recollections about the difficulties involved as much as the positives. My position in terms of being able to inform interview participants about the IWM's new First World War galleries also acted as a useful topic of interest for further discussion.

²⁵² See Cook & Crang (2007; 73).

interview participants.²⁵³ In taking on a role of asking individuals to reflect on matters within their lives retrospectively, these interviews took on a role bordering on oral history but was focused on a single issue (in this case, an individual's involvement within the IWM's 1990 First World War Galleries).²⁵⁴

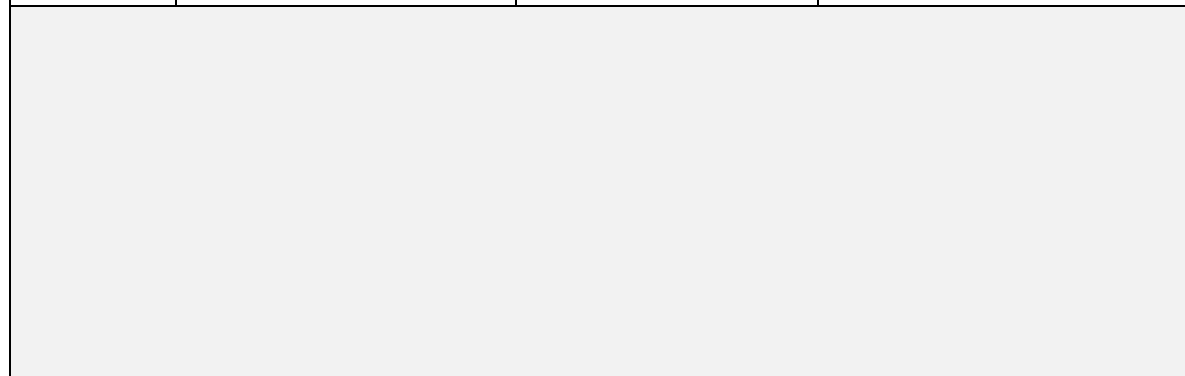
I completed my interviews for Chapter 5 within a fairly condensed period during the summer of 2013, whilst I was conducting archival research for this chapter. This helped me build up a sense of the processes and historical background that had gone on in relation to this topic, which in turn also meant that I could cross-reference information that had arisen from earlier interviews. Positing and aligning understanding in this way proved useful in trying to establish where there was consensus on a matter, or whether opinions varied - and if they varied, then I could discern as to why this was.

Recorded Interviews Conducted: 17		Period: 14/02/12 to 19/05/14	
Date	Location	Interviewee	Interviewer
14/02/12	IWM London	James Taylor (JT)	James Wallis (JW)
23/02/12	IWM London	Sophie Pigott (SP)	James Wallis
23/02/12	IWM London	Laura Clouting (LC)	James Wallis
23/02/12	IWM London	Paul Cornish (PC)	James Wallis
21/03/12	Cheltenham	Peter Simkins (PJS)	James Wallis (and Alys Cundy)
24/04/13	All Saints Annexe, IWM	Louise Macfarlane (LM)	James Wallis

²⁵³ This acted to not only personalise the interviews, but to offer concrete evidence as starting points for conversations. During several of my interviews, I brought along copies of associated photographs from the Museum's collection, which again prompted further recollections and feelings of nostalgia for those involved.

²⁵⁴ My thinking for this was informed by work such as Andrews et al (2006) and Riley & Harvey (2007).

24/04/13	All Saints Annexe, IWM	Ian Kikuchi (IK)	James Wallis
09/05/13	IWM London	Philip Dutton (PD)	James Wallis
29/05/13	IWM London	Robert Crawford (RC)	James Wallis (and Alys Cundy)
13/06/13	Cheltenham	Peter Simkins	James Wallis
18/06/13	Guildford	Mike Hibberd (MH)	James Wallis
21/06/13	IWM London	Penny Ritchie Calder (PRC)	James Wallis
05/07/13	Shrewsbury	John Dangerfield (JD)	James Wallis
25/07/13	IWM London	Alan Borg (AB)	James Wallis (and Alys Cundy)
12/05/14	All Saints Annexe, IWM	Terry Charman (TC)	James Wallis
15/05/14	All Saints Annexe, IWM	Nigel Steel (NS)	James Wallis
19/05/14	All Saints Annexe, IWM	Terry Charman	James Wallis



Email Interviews Conducted: 3		Period: 25/06/14 to 29/08/14	
Date	Location	Interviewee	Interviewer
25/06/14	N/a	Angela Godwin (AG)	James Wallis
28/07/14	N/a	Paul Cornish	James Wallis
29/08/14	N/a	Louise Macfarlane	James Wallis

Figure 6 - A Table Detailing Interviews Conducted,
including Email Interviews

3.3.3 – Transcription of Interviews

I completed verbatim transcripts of most of my interview conversations that were detailed enough to enable me to identify patterns and themes that emerged across the whole data set.²⁵⁵ I filled in basic non-verbal and interactional communication, such as laughter, extended pauses and signs of agreement, but did not categorise gestures, facial expressions, verbal emphasis or similar details, because language and such specificity was not my planned mode of analysis.²⁵⁶ I used descriptive coding to identify what was of interest in my participants' accounts, classifying these codes with single words or short phrases.²⁵⁷ Assembling the data and thinking through it critically in this manner allowed me to '...recontextualise different parts so as to be able to see new themes and patterns in it' that I may not have noticed first time around.²⁵⁸ From these tentative findings, the subsequent process of writing up brought in another layer of analysis as I refined my understanding. The only tidying up that I completed for the material used within my

²⁵⁵ See Cook & Crang (2007; 85). There were some interviews which were not transcribed verbatim due to their length and amount of extraneous material.

²⁵⁶ Rapley (2007; 50) observes that transcripts are 'always partial and selective textual representations', as do Kvale & Brinkmann (2009; 178) who term them '...impoverished, decontextualized renderings of live interview conversations'.

²⁵⁷ See King & Horrocks (2010; 152).

²⁵⁸ Cook & Crang (2007; 133).

empirical chapters was to minimise any distortion of meaning and to grant these quotations a degree of fluency and coherence for the reader.²⁵⁹

It is acknowledged within the social sciences that there is a temptation ‘to pack qualitative research reports full of verbatim quotations’, even though this can make them ‘tedious to read, voluminous in length and can easily distract from the clarity of the main commentary’.²⁶⁰ This was a difficult issue during the writing of my empirical chapters, where the multitude of interview testimony that I could draw upon needed interpretative commentary to draw out its meaning.²⁶¹

3.4 - Archives

3.4.1 - The Imperial War Museum’s Archival Material

My archival research into the Museum was all conducted within the institution’s Research Room.²⁶² Academics have acknowledged the politics and privileged space in what is often consciously preserved within the ‘repository of memories’ known as the archive.²⁶³ These have since been recognised as ‘sites ripe for geographical exploration’.²⁶⁴ Given museums’ general desire to ‘treat material things as evidence or documents of past events’, their archival holdings are vast.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁹ King & Horrocks (2010; 148) note that ‘language in spoken form is almost always messier than it is in writing’, making it tempting to ‘tidy up’ mispronunciations, mangled grammar and so on’ for fear of appearing inarticulate (See Poland, 2002 as cited by King & Horrocks, 2010; 148). However qualitative research ‘does not pretend to objectivity’, and researchers should present enough details of the process of their data collection and analysis ‘so that a reader can see how they might reasonably have reached the conclusions they did (King & Horrocks, 2010; 161).

²⁶⁰ White, Woodfield & Ritchie (2003; 290). It relates to a ‘common view that verbatim passages drawn from interviews...somehow constitute evidence of findings in qualitative research’, though their ideal use should be ‘illustrative or amplificatory, rather than demonstrative’ (2003; 312). Kvale & Brinkmann likewise comment that interview transcriptions ‘...tend to be regarded as *the solid rock-bottom empirical data of an interview project*’ (2009; 178, emphasis original).

²⁶¹ The issue with not doing this is that it means the reader is ‘asked to perform the task of analyst on only a very selective data set’ (White, Woodfield & Ritchie, 2003; 313), a role that should be being completed by the researcher.

²⁶² Though external archive sources may have benefitted this study, this research concentrated solely upon this one site for which there was more than ample multi-faceted material already held within the Museum’s collections. As my archival research went on, not only did I become more objective in knowing what to look for, but was also able to benefit from the extensive working knowledge of staff members, who often knew the location of subsidiary material which would benefit my project, or folklore tales of former staff.

²⁶³ Bradley, 1999; 108. See also Lynch (1999); Osborne (1999); Steedman (1998).

²⁶⁴ Geoghegan (2010; 1469). See also Kurtz (2001); Moore (2010).

²⁶⁵ Henning (2006; 129). See also Fink, who records that museum archives ‘serve an essential purpose...[as] holdings of self-generated records of the founding, policies and problems of the past form the basis of an institution’s identity’ (2006; 293). As she notes, these evidential records were ‘preserved mainly for the needs of the institution’ rather than for academics, and admittedly the archive is ultimately controlled by the processes deployed by the Museum’s Director-General (with the

With Ambrose and Paine asserting that museum archives act as a form of constructed institutional memory, reflecting the work and progress of an institution through time, Moser has advocated the benefits of utilising them to analyse historic displays, to reveal the processes and official records of decisions taken.²⁶⁶ She advocates using archival sources to ‘piece together some idea of the underlying rationale for creating exhibitions from primary materials held in museum archives and collections of personal correspondence’, to inform a reader about the ‘values at the heart of an exhibition’.²⁶⁷ Consulting with under-researched internal files during my period of research from the Museum’s Central Files, the Department of Permanent Exhibitions Files, Events Files and Personal Papers, I typically transcribed these at least partially, and mostly in full, onto my laptop. This included any immediate reactions I had in response to the material or things to follow up on.²⁶⁸ Being immersed in the archive over a prolonged period was frustrating in both the volume of information it contained and what was absent:

‘...[the] volume of ‘stuff’, that the archive possesses, can be tiresome in nature. There are duplicates and drafts, which are edited and re-edited, memos which circulate, resurfacing in folder after folder. There are exchanges that span years and exchanges on these exchanges. The task, therefore, is to somehow sift through to seek, sort and order history’s remnants into a narrative’.²⁶⁹

requirements of comprehensive administrative configurations more important than they had been in the past) (2006; 295).

²⁶⁶ Ambrose & Paine (2012; 208); Moser (2010; 24).

²⁶⁷ Moser (2010; 24).

²⁶⁸ Upon beginning my research for Chapter 4, I completed transcription by hand, but quickly realised that I could eliminate having to transcribe this material again digitally by using my computer. I was also able to select small quantities of material to be photocopied, which I judged especially important (I would estimate this as being around 5% of the total material I viewed). Museum policy meant that photocopying archival material had to be completed courtesy of the Museum’s Archivist and was then forwarded on to me (meaning that I was conscious of not impinging upon her time). Once I had received these, I made low quality scans to make back-up digital copies, which I stored on my desktop computer, alongside the photocopied versions for filing.

²⁶⁹ Hasty, Forsyth & McGeachan (2012; 171). There were also instances when the archive was frustrating in its absences, and allowing for ‘ghostly shadows of doubt and uncertainty’ about the definitiveness of my knowledge (2012; 172). This was particularly the case for my research into Chapter 4, in which there were various unintentional omissions which meant that what I could say about an exhibition’s intentions was limited in its conviction. There were also limitations in place, in terms of my access to some institutional records; for example, I could not consult with Research & Information Department Files that would have related to Chapter 5, because these had not been catalogued. There were also logistical issues relating to some of the Exhibition Department Files, which were in the process of being formally transferred to the Museum’s archive, and thus to a new

The type of material that I was examining ‘for contemporary historical reimagining’ - in the context of previous IWM exhibitions on the First World War - were memoranda, meeting minutes, contracts, correspondence and out-facing documents, such as Annual Reports and Newsletters.²⁷⁰ I made use of Moser’s extensive checklist of questions for researching exhibitions.²⁷¹

It was also important to distinguish what was not in the archive – partly as I might then be able to obtain this information, such as who was involved in a particular process, through my interviews.²⁷² My judgements on what folders to view was based on consulting with the archival catalogue and then prioritizing information which I deemed would grant insight into the process of exhibition-making, within the context of my various chapter themes. Particularly in the case of Chapter 5, I wanted to ensure that I consulted with a range of departmental files that were attributed to key specific individuals involved within the processes. For the non-digital material, in the form of photocopies, I filed these systematically within labelled storage boxes, relating to each empirical chapter, for future reference and consultation.²⁷³ I also photocopied material from the Museum’s Photograph Archive, which I kept in separate folders.²⁷⁴ This meant that I was left with a vast archive of material, in both hard copy and electronic format. I then subjected this to critical contextual analysis, situating within its temporal context and bearing in mind its intended audience, which was often for internal use. I then combined this with the material forged from my interviews to piece together a more comprehensive analysis.

geographical location. This meant I was only able to access a few select folders for my Chapter 6 research.

²⁷⁰ Hasty, Forsyth & McGeachan (2012; 171). I also drew upon Gagen et al (2007) and Bailey et al (2009) as guides to working with archives.

²⁷¹ Moser (2010; 27-28). This focuses specifically on the role of text, spatial configurations in terms of object alignment and use of photographs.

²⁷² I tended to conduct my interviews whilst my archival research was on-going, but so that I had completed enough to have a good sense of what was going to be discussed in interview.

²⁷³ This was particularly the case for material for Chapter 7, such as handouts and the paper pads of notes I accumulated through attending Regeneration Team meetings, or sourced from a staff member who had attended if I had been unable to.

²⁷⁴ This related to material for Chapters 4, 5 and some of 6, before the Museum began storing its official photographs digitally, which I duly accessed through the Department of Visual Resources.

3.5 - Conclusion

3.5.1 – ‘Starting Out...’

Using these various methods of data collection - from ethnography, through interviews, to archival research - allowed me to contrast institutional memory from the archive with the specific individual memories that came with my interviews. My role as a researcher therefore encapsulated a requirement to use this collective material responsibly for the purpose of recounting a version of the past. The sheer volume of data potentially available was apparent from the outset, from my meetings with the Museum’s archivist. Getting used to switching between being lost in amongst an archival document to quickly rushing off to attend a meeting relating to the 2014 First World War Galleries was a skill I took a while to perfect. I knew that there would always be more opportunities, in the form of potential interviews as well as more comprehensive archival records, for my planned research into Chapters 5 and 6 - given that their timeframe was relatively recent, being between twenty five and six years ago. I began my research programme chronologically, and so started with Chapter 4. I had few preconceptions, other than wondering whether there would be sufficient archival material for me to examine - as it turned out, there was more than enough! The gap in time since the 1960s was significant enough in limiting the amount of interviews I might have been able to conduct – for example, Sir Peter Masefield, the key figure within that Chapter, had passed away aged 91 in 2006, and Dr Noble Frankland was in his nineties, meaning that an interview would not have been especially practical. Thus combining interviews with the detail available within the Museum’s archival records would be crucial in allowing me to gain an understanding into the issues in place within the ways in which the Imperial War Museum has represented the First World War through exhibitions over its recent history.



Figure 7 – *The Author takes his requirement to become an ‘embedded researcher’ within the Museum too literally! (Sourced from Campbell, 2014)*

Chapter 4

'Oh! What A Lovely Exhibition!'

The Imperial War Museum's First World War

Fiftieth Anniversary Special Photographic Exhibitions, 1964-1968

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 - 'Then & Now' Photographic Comparisons

This chapter critically analyses the Imperial War Museum's (IWM) Special Photographic Exhibitions, created for the First World War's fiftieth anniversaries, between 1964 and 1968. It explores the politics of display embedded within them, and considers their impact at a time when the conflict was being culturally re-interpreted. The collection of official wartime photographs are used as a lens to explore how they were utilised by a variety of actors and agencies - including the IWM - in different decades, for contrasting and sometimes contradictory aims. It subsequently reveals how these new interpretations and readings would affect the intended meaning of this photographic display series.

'I hope that today's photographs will help to mark for all time the places where these great events took place, so that – in fifty years' time, when the centenary arrives, there will no difficulty in remembering'.²⁷⁵

As the aforementioned centenary has now come to pass, these photographs remain a rich photographic record of the First World War battlefields. For those members of staff at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) during the 1960s, they were a literal enactment of remembrance, encased with a strong onus on responsibility and duty, and anticipated as having an intended lifespan beyond their immediate use. The photographs are a collection of images dating back to 1964, when the IWM was commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. This was an important occasion for the institution, given that it owed its very existence to

²⁷⁵ Speech by Sir Peter Masefield at the Opening of the 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition (IWM DP2/008).

the conflict.²⁷⁶ Not all had been confident about the institution's longevity, with the War Cabinet predicting that the institution would struggle to retain public interest for more than 'a few years'.²⁷⁷ The Museum defied this and would go on to document a further global conflict two decades later, though this unpredicted event duly took its toll. By 1960, the IWM lay in a somewhat decaying state; the forced extension to its remit had squeezed rich collections into the impractical spaces of a building not equipped to act as a fully-functioning museum.²⁷⁸ It also seemed to lack resonance in what would turn out to be a contradictory decade of social change, radicalism and the declining British Empire.

The seeds of change were to be sown by the grand plans of the newly appointed Director, Dr Noble Frankland.²⁷⁹ A Bomber Command veteran turned military historian, he had derided the Museum's former galleries as 'dingy and neglected'.²⁸⁰ As a result, he would implement a large-scale extension and improvement programme; bringing about the creation of new facilities and departments, and an end to former poor cataloguing practices and leaking galleries.²⁸¹ Furthermore, '...the challenge of attempting to revive a moribund organization' would be aided by the adoption of a policy to recruit new and professionally qualified youthful members of staff.²⁸² These efforts – what Frankland himself termed the conversion of 'a warehouse full of curiosities' into historical displays, and promoting the Museum's role as 'a centre for research and education'

²⁷⁶ See Section 1.2 for details regarding the creation of the IWM, and the specific national and political context of this.

²⁷⁷ Kavanagh (1994; 135).

²⁷⁸ See Frankland (1998; 163-164). Charman records that the Museum's '...very significance, not to mention appeal and interest to the public, had now been overshadowed and overtaken by that later conflict' (2008; 104).

²⁷⁹ See Figure 8. For additional information about Frankland's appointment to the IWM, see Frankland (1998; 160-166); Coll (Forthcoming).

²⁸⁰ Frankland (1998; 160). The Museum's second Director-General, Leslie Bradley, was a First World War veteran and had been a member of staff at the Museum since its inception.

²⁸¹ Frankland outlined these changes extensively in his biography (1998; 160-174). The building extension included a Library reading room, 'three new large exhibition galleries capable of displaying heavy equipment such as tanks and aircraft and a new wing of five floors offering on the ground floor and accommodation for nine thousand works of art on sliding frames giving easy access to any of them, three million photographs, 4,260 miles of cine film and more than 100,000 books' (1998; 170). It also saw the building of a cinema 'in which to show the public some of [the] vast and steadily growing collection of film' within the Museum's collections (Milner, 2002; 12; Frankland, 1998; 166). Frankland established new Departments for Documents, Education, Publications, Research, Sound Records and Exhibitions (1998; 172).

²⁸² Frankland (1998; 162). Many of the Museum's existing staff were First World War veterans. Frankland believed that if the Museum was '...to be transformed into an institution of historical enlightenment, the staff had to be substantially reinforced by people with trained minds in various disciplines' (1998; 166).

– have latterly been credited amongst the Museum’s more recent staff with reviving the institution.²⁸³



Figure 8 – *Noble Frankland meets a First World War Veteran*

(©IWM MH 9684)

However the need to acknowledge the First World War’s fiftieth anniversary so early on within Frankland’s directorship meant that any potential exhibition would have to be produced on a limited budget and scale. By chance, in May 1963, Mr (later Sir) Peter Masefield wrote to Frankland suggesting an idea for some commemorative displays.²⁸⁴ He proposed using comparative ‘Then and Now’ photographic pairs to match up the official First World War photographs with an image of how exactly the same spot appeared fifty years later. Frankland was keen to utilise the untapped ‘visual evidence’ of the material held within the IWM’s

²⁸³ Charman has stated that Frankland’s effort of turning the institution into ‘the world’s premier museum of international conflict’, masterminded its ‘renaissance’ (2008; 104). See also Frankland (1998; 172, 170). His acquisitions of the airfield at Duxford and of HMS Belfast were also credited to his legacy. See also Cundy (2015a; 262-263).

²⁸⁴ See Correspondence between Masefield and Frankland in May 1963 (IWM DP2/008).

Photographic Library, and approval of the concept quickly followed.²⁸⁵ By and large, the photographs would depict events of the War chronologically to coincide with their respective anniversaries between 1964 and 1968. Further discussions between Masefield and the IWM finalised the arrangement, allowing the former to undertake what he came to define as his 'labour of love' in obtaining present pictures of the battlefields.²⁸⁶

The IWM's Central Files held within its archive provide an account, though limited in parts, of how this exhibition series materialised from idea through to display.²⁸⁷ Upon its conclusion, Masefield had compiled a new photographic collection, designed specifically for display, which told as much about the story of its collector as it did the authors of the original photographs.²⁸⁸ The whole concept of the 'Then and Now' comparisons had been completely reliant upon the collection of official First World War photographs.²⁸⁹ This chapter will therefore now examine how this collection came into being, and what role it subsequently played as both an official record and part of the visual culture of the conflict. It examines the photographs' production, distribution and consistent consumption within popular culture by various audiences over different decades. In uncovering these power relations, the chapter delves into the subsequent layers of meaning that these photographs accrued over a fifty year period, before their physical presentation within a national museum. By this point, an inherent tension of memory had developed, between those who had directly experienced the First World War and a group who had not, yet wanted to understand it. Visitors to the IWM consisted of both parties, but the institution had previously lent more heavily on catering for the

²⁸⁵ IWM DP2/008; Frankland (1998; 160-161). The Museum had already held one Special Photographic Exhibition, contrasting the origins of military photography (1854-1879) with a display of images from 1943 (See No Author, 1963b). This ran from 21/06/63 to 31/12/63.

²⁸⁶ See IWM DP2/008. Discussions between Masefield and the IWM were led principally by Dr Christopher Roads, the Museum's Deputy Director (1964-1979) and Keeper of the Department of Records, who would produce the comparative photographs for Gallipoli.

²⁸⁷ The IWM EN3/2/27/002 file has preserved information such as the rejected invitations to the Opening of the 1964 Special Photographic Displays (IWM EN3/2/27/003), but there is little material detailing IWM staff input towards this exhibition series.

²⁸⁸ The taking of the 'Now' photographs would also prove to be a valuable information-gathering exercise in assessing the accuracy of the captions for the wartime photographs.

²⁸⁹ Other authors have utilised the 'Then and Now' concept more recently, including John Giles who used it by juxtaposing his personal collection of photographs for three interlinked publications (1986, 1987, 1992). Nigel Steel, currently serving as the Principal Historian at Imperial War Museums London, also implemented the concept in his work on Gallipoli (1990).

former.²⁹⁰ For the first time in its history, the Museum would have to actively confront this fact that was critical to its institutional relevance, and therefore survival.

Furthermore in deciding to display the official wartime photographs, the IWM was pitting them against external interpretations over which it had no control – producing outcomes that had significant ramifications upon the future direction of the institution.

4.2 - Photography during the First World War

4.2.1 – Capturing the Conflict Pictorially

Photographs of war tell us ‘at least as much, if not more, about the mentalities and societies at war, than the reality of it’²⁹¹

The First World War was the first conflict to be pictorially captured on a large scale, with the technological development of the camera.²⁹² Contributions from amateur, press and the official photographers created a comprehensive photographic record documenting the War’s events.²⁹³ The work of this latter category has endured particularly well - perhaps none more so than the iconic and highly circulated images of the Third Battle of Ypres taken by Australian photographer Frank Hurley in late 1917.²⁹⁴ Their visual recording of soldiers struggling through the muddy conditions of the Western Front has retained its ability to leave a striking impression upon viewers. However, in going beyond what they literally depict, one can gain insight into how they acted as part of a vast official photographic collection originally designed to show those not directly fighting in the

²⁹⁰ At this point in time, the Museum was not yet especially aware that this purpose would eventually become redundant with the passing of that generation. This moment would occur nearly fifty years later in May 2011, with the passing of Claude Choules, the final First World War veteran. Henry Allingham and Harry Patch, Britain’s last First World War veterans, died in July 2009.

²⁹¹ Beurier (2004; 121).

²⁹² For details on the practicalities, see Carmichael (1989; 3, 6-14), Roberts (2012; 8-15) and Taylor (1982) for further information. Noting that photographs are ‘...produced and consumed, commissioned and collected in historically specific and carefully crafted ways’, Ryan and Schwarz have promoted the understanding that photography frames space and acts as a socially constructed, culturally constituted and historically situated practice (2003; 7).

²⁹³ In this chapter, I am dealing specifically with photographs designed for publication in the popular press, rather than for reconnaissance or intelligence purposes (See Roberts & Holborn, 2013; 500-501). Some events have fairly comprehensive photographic documentation but others, particularly those that took place in 1914 and 1915, have very little, if any at all. The IWM Handbook (1963a; 49) stated ‘For the first eighteen or so months of the First World War, the [photographic] coverage is rather poor’. I am grateful to Hilary Roberts, Head Curator of the Photograph Archive at IWM London, for discussing this in detail with me.

²⁹⁴ For example, see IWM E [AUS] 1220. Brooks’ stark images of silhouetted soldiers have also taken on iconic status (See Figure 9 and 11).

conflict what the War looked like.²⁹⁵



Figure 9 – *An Image by Ernest Brooks (©IWM Q 2978)*

By the outbreak of the War in 1914, the printing industry and the half-tone reproduction process had developed sufficiently to allow a continuous supply of illustrated material to reach many of the British population on the Home Front. War correspondents reported regularly on unfolding events, accompanied by an artistic impression.²⁹⁶ People could therefore see, through the pictures, and read, through newspapers, about this major conflict more or less as it happened.²⁹⁷ There was great demand for this format of 'illustrated news', as evidenced by the fact that the publication *The Illustrated War News* was set up as part of the *Illustrated London News* merely days after War was declared. As the conflict progressed, the public appetite for visual material quickly turned from artistic impressions to a desire for photographs. Powerful commercial publishers exerted pressure on the British Government, in spite of the latter's strongly held reservations about its potential use on the Western Front, who saw it as both a threat to security and a drain upon valuable resources. Restrictions had already been placed upon soldiers using personal cameras, even though this was consistently flouted.²⁹⁸ Popular and commercial demand for a greater number of better quality images eventually forced the issue.

²⁹⁵ Photographs are not objective but subjected to '...institutional, political, cultural and contextual determinants' (Brothers, 1997; 216).

²⁹⁶ See Farish's (2001) article, which discusses the role of the War correspondents.

²⁹⁷ Carmichael (1989; 4).

²⁹⁸ The visual records of some events - most famously the unofficial 1914 Christmas Truce, as well as the Gallipoli landings in April 1915 – were captured principally by amateur photographers (See Roberts & Holborn, 2013).



Figure 10 – *Ernest Brooks* (©IWM Q 24087)

In early 1916 the British Government responded by turning to a select band of professional photojournalists, when it gave the inevitable go-ahead for the commission of official photographs. As Roberts observes, those targeted were employed by major newspapers and magazines, some of whom had covered smaller scale conflicts prior to 1914 such as the Boer War.²⁹⁹ Ernest Brooks, an experienced professional, and John Warwick Brooke were duly appointed as the two British official war photographers.³⁰⁰ They were authorised to have unprecedented (but still restricted) access to the Western Front to produce propaganda photographs for the home press. Despite two further appointments later on during the War, the British official photographers remained a small taskforce.³⁰¹ Carmichael records that it was down to their collective skill and dedication that, even with limited resources, they were able to produce such a collection of work.³⁰² Technical improvements in camera technology now allowed the photographers to concentrate on the content of, and act of taking pictures, 'rather than the technical complexities of the process'.³⁰³ Though equipment remained cumbersome, the photographers were able to produce

²⁹⁹ Roberts (2012; 8-15).

³⁰⁰ See Figure 10.

³⁰¹ See Roberts & Holbern (2013; 500-501) and Dixon (2007) for detailed analysis about individual official photographers from Britain, Australia and Canada, and a discussion about controversies relating to 'fake' and 'montage' photographic images.

³⁰² Carmichael (1989; 60, 75).

³⁰³ Carmichael (1989; 6-9).

basic images of battlefield action. Subsequent research has revealed that a proportion of these, as well as clips of film, were staged, but this was primarily due to restricted access to the fighting zones and the ease of recording staged scenes behind the lines.³⁰⁴ Moreover, the overall aim of these photographs was to give an impression of the various aspects of soldiers' lives, rather than detailed factual information. This condition of production had been dictated by a combination of Government and media agency pressure, requiring the photographs to be reproducible en masse.



Figure 11 – *An Image by J.W. Brooke (©IWM Q 4012)*

Circulating the images formed the next part of the process, and it was in the text of a photograph's caption where the 'obvious slanting and emotive presentation occurred'.³⁰⁵ The Government had realised that the potent combination of photographs and captions could operate as vehicles of propaganda, to engage the will and support of the nation.³⁰⁶ As these photographs were a vital medium in the distribution of information about the conflict, similar levels of the strict procedures of control that had been applied to the photographs' production were now applied to their distribution. All images were censored firstly by the military, and then by the

³⁰⁴ See Fraser et al (2009); Badsey (1993).

³⁰⁵ Carmichael (1989; 144). She notes that the captions were adequately detailed for publication, but would lack the detail for a comprehensive historical record (1989; 149).

³⁰⁶ This collective group of images were therefore reinforcing a set of values, carrying '...ideological intent which was designed to persuade its audience to see the War in a particular way' (Brothers, 1997; 184-185). See also Green (2014) for analysis of how wartime propaganda posters were used to support the national War effort.

War Office Press Bureau, meaning that this highly controlled information would be the predominant visual material of note available to the British population at home.³⁰⁷ Consequently, the photographs became authoritative in the collective imagination through their wide circulation within public circles. This represented a commercially desirable result for the press agencies and the Government, with the fact that the photographs conveyed a sanitized version of the War not an important consideration for those viewing them at this time. In terms of their impact upon the British population, these images were essential in forming a pictorial understanding of the conflict, which is demonstrated by their distribution through three key methods; the Daily Mail postcard series, museum exhibitions, and weekly wartime illustrated publications.

4.2.2 – The Daily Mail Wartime Postcards



Figure 12 – A Daily Mail Wartime Postcard³⁰⁸

In August 1916, a series of colour postcards based on the official photographs were printed exclusively under licence by the *Daily Mail* in August 1916.³⁰⁹ Collecting postcards had been an extremely popular pastime before 1914, and were an

³⁰⁷ Carmichael states that the ‘...pictorial portrayal of a country’s involvement in war would become highly concomitant with its waging’ (1989; 16). Furthermore Brothers acknowledges that photographs can be used ‘...to reveal the collective imagination, attitudes and preoccupations of the societies that these images had currency in’ (1997; 2). Because these photographs spoke directly to the ‘...cultural concerns of the society at which they were directed, both in the subjects chosen for representation and in the way those subjects were portrayed’, this led to a ‘...continuous dialogue between these images and the cultures that produces and consumes them (1997; 2, 12).

³⁰⁸ Extracted from ‘<http://www.worldwar1postcards.com/daily-mail-war-postcards.php>’ (Accessed 09/09/12).

³⁰⁹ See Figure 12. Information about the postcards is sourced from Allen (2011). The profits from the postcards went towards the national war effort.

important method of communication during the conflict.³¹⁰ Altering the wartime photographs into a miniature postcard format not only upheld patriotic values, it proved a lucrative venture. Pre-sale orders exceeded all expectations, with twenty two series of eight cards, totalling 176, were produced.³¹¹ These reproductions provided engaging and highly accessible presentations of the photographic material, emphasized by their rare production in colour. Accordingly the high levels of circulation enabled the crystallization of these images within the public's imagination; even if it was not necessarily an accurate depiction, this heightened visual representation of the conflict was contributing significantly to how it was understood amongst the British public.

4.2.3 – Museum Displays of the Official War Photographs



Figure 13 – School Children Visit an Exhibition of Australian Official War Photographs at the City Art Gallery in Leeds, 1919 (©IWM Q 28577)

³¹⁰ See Doyle (2010). Filippucci (2009) has analysed how 'Then and Now' comparison postcards were used in the French Argonne region immediately after the War to illustrate the accuracy of post-war reconstructed buildings. There was a tension between the local French population that desired a return to the farming culture that had been in place before the War, with veterans who were keen for the battlefields to remain in their wartime condition. These postcards therefore reassembled the battlefields as a space in which to project a sense of local identity; portraying notions of stability and a continuity to resist disruption and adversity (2009; 222, 233, 234). It did this by depicting the 'Before and After' of the War – deliberately omitting its 'During'. In contrast, the IWM's 'Then and Now' approach in the 1960s revolved around the War – the 'during' of the conflict and its legacy upon the landscape. Designed to combat the potential forgetting of what had once happened at these sites, this shows how the same medium could be used to deliver different messages.

³¹¹ In actuality, there were only 105 photographs, demonstrating that reproduction in slightly different formats was common practice.

The second outlet for the official wartime photographs was through museum displays, both during and immediately after the War. Museums were required to support the War effort by educating and informing the Home Front population, whose support was vital for the conflict's continuation. Photographic exhibitions offered a fruitful environment in which the Government could galvanise pro-war attitudes, especially when the national war effort began to lean towards survival from the latter half of 1917.³¹² The newly created Imperial War Museum organized a touring exhibition of official photographs that visited many towns and cities in the spring of 1918. Generating much publicity and local comment, this kept both the Museum and the photographs 'in the public eye'.³¹³ For Kavanagh, the underlying purpose of these exhibitions was towards 'the war effort, and its successful conclusion'.³¹⁴ They could satisfy public intrigue by imparting information about the War whilst simultaneously instilling a 'sense of moral outrage at the enemy and pride in the allied forces'.³¹⁵ Serving this purpose would mean that once the Armistice came into effect and hostilities ceased, the popularity of these exhibitions would evaporate, which proved to be the case. Furthermore, the collection of official photographs took on a new meaning in January 1919, when the Ministry of Information's Photographic Bureau became the Imperial War Museum's Department of Photographs - symbolically transferring the photographs' role to that of a long-term national record of effort and sacrifice, housed within a sacred space.³¹⁶

³¹² See Kavanagh (1994; 65-68).

³¹³ Kavanagh (1994; 142). Simultaneously the work of the commissioned War Artists, such as Muirhead Bone, William Orpen and Christopher Nevinson was also displayed within museums and art galleries – further supporting the idea of the visual narrative being crucial to public understanding of the War. See also Mercer (2013; 334-336) for commentary on the role played by the Women's Work Sub-Committee of the IWM.

³¹⁴ Kavanagh (1994; 169).

³¹⁵ Kavanagh (1994; 69).

³¹⁶ As Figure 13 shows, the photographs were still toured around the country after the Armistice. Figure 14 shows some of them on display within the Imperial War Museum during the 1930s.

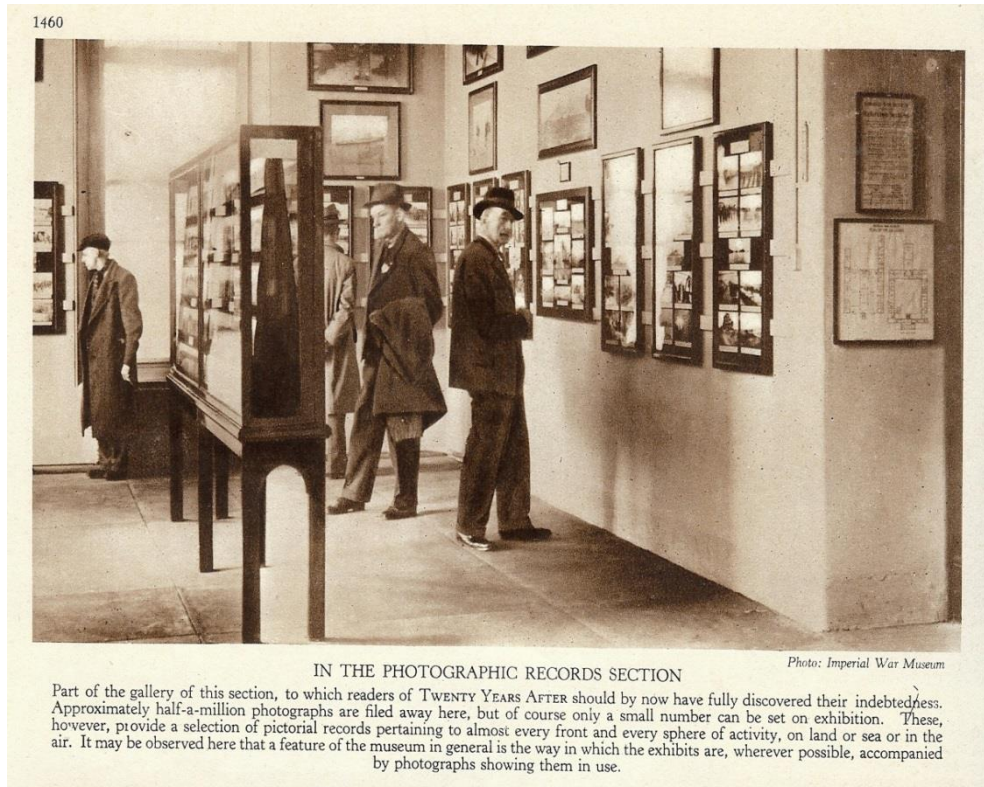


Figure 14 – An Extract from *‘Twenty Years After: The Battlefields of 1914-18 – Then and Now’* depicting the Imperial War Museum’s *Photographic Records Section*³¹⁷

4.2.4 – The Official War Photographs within Illustrated Publications

The third and most influential method of circulating the official photographs was through their appearance in weekly wartime magazines. Perhaps the most prominent of these was *The War Illustrated*, edited by Sir John Hammerton, which was one of several large scale works of reference about the First World War as it was happening.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Part 41 of Swinton, E (Ed.) (1936-7) *Twenty Years After: The Battlefields of 1914-18 – Then and Now*, London: George Newnes Publications; 1460.

³¹⁸ ‘The War Illustrated’ (1914-1919a).

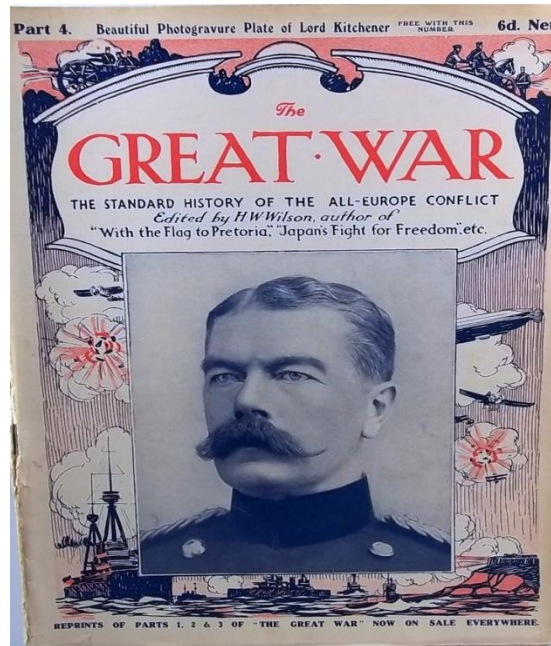


Figure 15 – Front Cover of ‘The Great War –

The Standard History of the All-Europe Conflict’³¹⁹

Hammerton’s philosophy relied upon two approaches in bringing the conflict to a mass audience; the first being a chronological historical telling of the War’s events, to be achieved through a populist publication called *The Great War: The Standard History of the All-Europe Conflict*.³²⁰ Hammerton edited this with Herbert Wilson, the military critic of the *Daily Mail*. It ran for 272 editions, ceasing in November 1919, and reached total sales of over 41 million copies.³²¹ Hammerton defined the second approach, as taken by *The War Illustrated*, as a ‘pictorial survey of the War’.³²² This was certainly appropriate, given that the backbone of its 3,716 pages (eventually produced as ten volumes) was 12, 252 illustrations of photographs, drawings and maps. In addition, it incorporated written contributions from leading authors and well-known personalities, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and H.G. Wells.³²³

³¹⁹ The Front Cover of Part 4 of ‘*The Great War – The Standard History of the All-Europe Conflict*’ (1914-1919b).

³²⁰ ‘*The Great War: The Standard History of the All-Europe Conflict*’ (1914-1919b). See Figure 15

³²¹ Hammerton (1944; 260).

³²² Hammerton, Volume VI of ‘*The War Illustrated*’ (1916; 1805).

³²³ The latter’s opening article of the first edition in August 1914, titled ‘*Why Britain Went To War*’ (Volume I [Deluxe Edition], 1915; 10-11) brought about immediate success, as newsagents were overwhelmed with purchasers demanding ‘the war paper with Well’s article’ (Hammerton, 1944; 258).

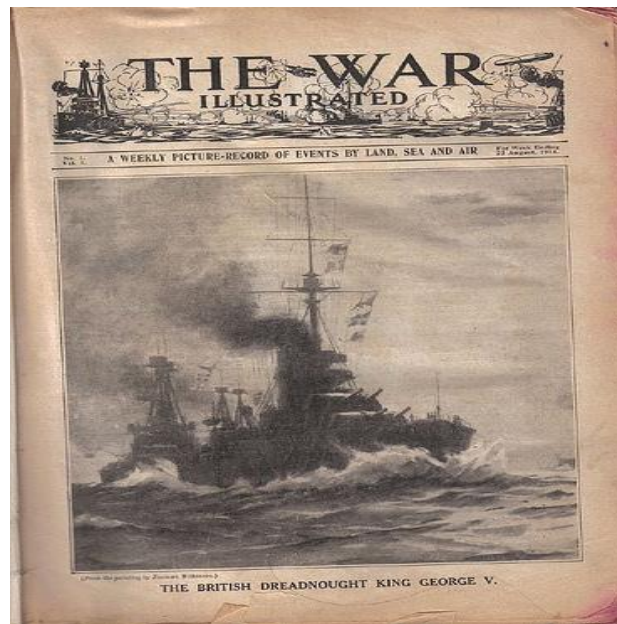


Figure 16 – The Cover of ‘The War Illustrated:

Week 1 – Preparation, Submarines and Defence of Liege’ ³²⁴

Having laid the foundations for regular subscribers, the publication’s average weekly distribution of 600,000 issues, over 234 weeks, led to a phenomenal total lifetime circulation of 75,124,500 copies.³²⁵ Hammerton was thus exploiting the ability of the photographs to show the War in a new vivid way, whilst simultaneously retaining these publications’ mass appeal by its maintenance of a patriotic tone. Moreover, their longevity meant that readers were consistently exposed to photographic material throughout the entire course of the conflict.

Entrepreneurially minded, Hammerton returned to his wartime works in the 1930s, during a wider boom of interest in the subject, and reworked them for new audiences. *The Great War – A Standard History* was modified into a six volume chronological work titled *A Popular History of the Great War* (1933-1934).³²⁶ It was sold as part of a newspaper ‘gift-book’ scheme, implying that its target audience were the young generation, ‘whose knowledge of it [the War] is for the most [part] fragmentary, disjointed and impersonal’.³²⁷ The children of the post-War baby boom, whose parents had bought the original magazines, were now considered old enough

³²⁴ Figure 16; sourced from ‘<http://the-war-illustrated.blogspot.co.uk/2007/08/week-1-preparation-submarines-and.html>’ (Accessed 09/09/12).

³²⁵ Hammerton (1944; 259).

³²⁶ ‘A Popular History of the Great War’ (1933-1934).

³²⁷ Hammerton, Vol 1 of ‘A Popular History of the Great War, The First Phase: 1914’, (1933; 3).

to learn about the event that had dominated their parents' lives. One hundred thousand sets, totalling 600,000 volumes, were sold. Notably though, the delivery of the photographic content was changed. As had been the case with museum displays of the official photographs, the previously patriotic interpretation of the War as a 'glorious struggle, involving great heroism and high adventure' now had to be adapted for the generation who had since learnt more about its realities and hardships.³²⁸ Hammerton introduced changes that were made 'in light of later knowledge', reducing their overall quantity but improving the indexes and biographies of individuals.³²⁹ Between 1934 and 1935, Hammerton updated *The War Illustrated* into a more impressionistic, yet as pictorially strong, publication titled *World War 1914-1918: A Pictured History* (1934-1935).³³⁰

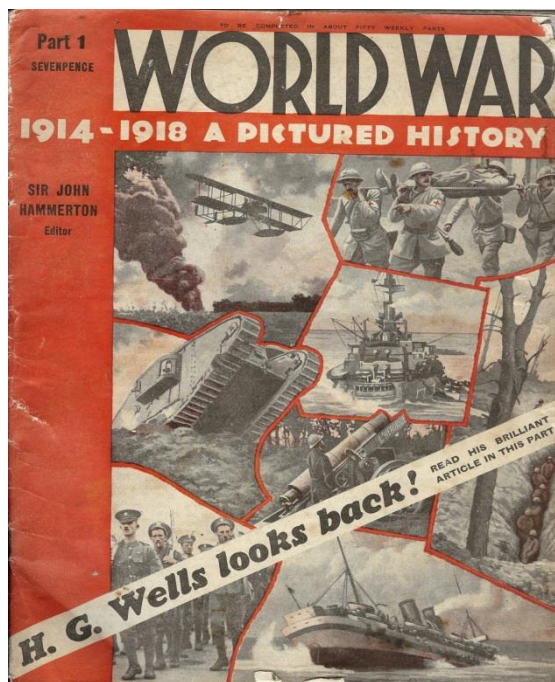


Figure 17 – A Front Cover of

'World War 1914-1918: A Pictured History'³³¹

³²⁸ Todman (2005; 23).

³²⁹ Hammerton, Vol 1 of 'A Popular History of the Great War, The First Phase: 1914', (1933; 4).

³³⁰ 'World War 1914-1918: A Pictured History' (1934-1935). See Figure 17. Hammerton commented 'For the instruction of that younger generation in our own land, this pictured history of the World War is intended to provide a carefully written narrative of events in association with a large and representative selection of actual photographs which will serve to build up such a vivid mental picture as may leave a young reader with no distorted vision of so vital a period in modern history' (1944; 287).

³³¹ Part 1 of Hammerton, J (Ed.) (1934-1935) *World War, 1914-1918: A Pictured History*, London: The Amalgamated Press.

This publication now sat within a more competitive field, given the development of new pictorial works such as *Life* and *Time* magazines. Hammerton responded by accessing previously unpublished photographs, secured from the Imperial War Museum's collection as well as from other nations. Similar to *A Popular History of the Great War*, these were presented in such a way as to provide the basis for the imaginings of an audience who had not experienced the War directly. Thus both works were examples of the official photographs being redefined to carry a new message about the War's meaning to a new audience.

Twenty years after the conflict, Hammerton found himself facing reduced control and influence over its pictorial understanding, as other individuals began to capitalize on utilizing the official wartime photographs. Between 1936 and 1937, Sir Ernest Swinton edited a weekly magazine series called *Twenty Years After: The Battlefields of 1914-18 Then and Now*.³³² Swinton was a former war correspondent who had written for a publication called *Eyewitness* during 1914-1915.³³³ The principle feature of his magazine series was to compare the official wartime photographs with images of how the same area appeared in peacetime two decades later.³³⁴ It ran for 42 editions, with a further 22 supplementary parts to form a rich source of photographs and articles. Furthermore it was very popular amongst the veteran community on two counts; firstly because of the fact that the veterans had experienced what the 'Then' photographs depicted relatively recently, so enabling the 'Then and Now' concept to function effectively. Secondly, the publication provided a literary space for veterans to reminisce and share their personal memories, based on a spirit of wartime camaraderie. The rallying together of British veterans was exacerbated by the wider war disillusionment being experienced in other areas of life during this 1930s period and this work provided an opportunity to reaffirm to this group that they had not fought in vain.³³⁵ Lloyd has likewise observed the importance of nostalgia being a primary inspiration behind these works, because they enabled former soldiers unable to visit the battlefields to compare their mental

³³² 'Twenty Years After: The Battlefields of 1914-18 Then and Now' (1936-1937). See Figure 18

³³³ See Swinton (1932); Grieves (2004). This work had been concerned with providing truthful accounts of the Front Line for distribution amongst the population on the Home Front.

³³⁴ For example, see Figure 19.

³³⁵ See Higbee's (2008) chapter on veteran and popular disenchantment with the War during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

recollections with the changing landscape.³³⁶

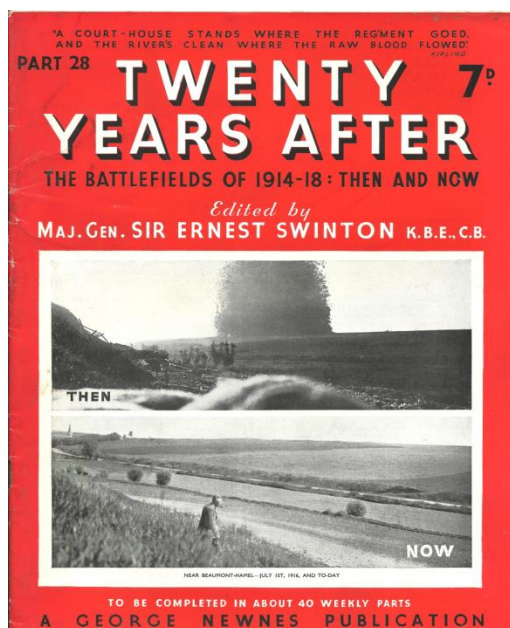


Figure 18 – A Front Cover of ‘Twenty Years After – The Battlefields

of 1914-18: Then and Now’³³⁷

The changing battlefield landscape was captured pictorially as the ‘Now’ photographs by two members of staff from the Imperial War Museum, named Jack Insall and G.T. Watson. During the War, Insall had been an observer in the Royal Flying Corps.³³⁸ After the Armistice, he became the Officer in charge of the IWM’s Air Force Section, and assembled a rich collection of aeronautical exhibits. His private papers provide a scattered account of the occasionally tricky relationship between himself and his employer, and it seems likely that after a period of absence, he returned to become Keeper of the Photographic Archive during the 1930s.³³⁹ His grandson Mike Insall stated that his grandfather ‘got the photographic bug during his war service, and as a result got involved with anything photographic after the War’.

³³⁶ Lloyd (1998; 148). See Pegum (2008) for extended discussion on the theme of veterans’ accounts of returning to the battlefield landscapes in the 1920s and 1930s and Clout (1996) who discusses the War’s physical impact upon the landscape. For examples of veterans returning to the battlefields, see Mottram (1932, 1936).

³³⁷ Part 28 of Swinton, E (Ed.) (1936-7) *Twenty Years After: The Battlefields of 1914-18 – Then and Now*, London: George Newnes Publications.

³³⁸ Insall (1970). Insall’s brother won the Victoria Cross, and some of his war items are in the IWM Collections (IWM EPH 839; IWM EPH 2772; IWM UNI 12095). IWM Q 31452 shows his items on display at the Museum in Crystal Palace during the early 1920s.

³³⁹ See IWM DOCS 14685.

³⁴⁰ This suggests that A.J. Insall saw photography as a way to contribute something tangible and beneficial from his wartime experiences, and is reinforced by the fact that he and Watson would turn the best of their photographic comparisons into a book.³⁴¹



Figure 19 – An Extract from ‘The Western Front: Then and Now’³⁴²

The title of Hammerton’s work that began in September 1938 - *The Great War – I Was There, Undying Memories of 1914-1918* – indicates a desire to capitalise on

³⁴⁰ ‘Information about Jack Insall’ Private Email Communication between Insall, M and Wallis, J (02/11/12).

³⁴¹ Anon (1938). This would latterly serve as both inspiration and a point of reference for Masfield, who picked up a copy in a Reigate bookshop in January 1952 (‘Fifty Years After Book Introduction Draft, 1916-1966’, IWM DP2/009).

³⁴² No Author (1938), Part 5 of *The Western Front – Then and Now*, London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd; 164.

the interest in this topic expressed by the veteran community.³⁴³ Its success was only halted by the onset of the Second World War, after 51 editions.³⁴⁴

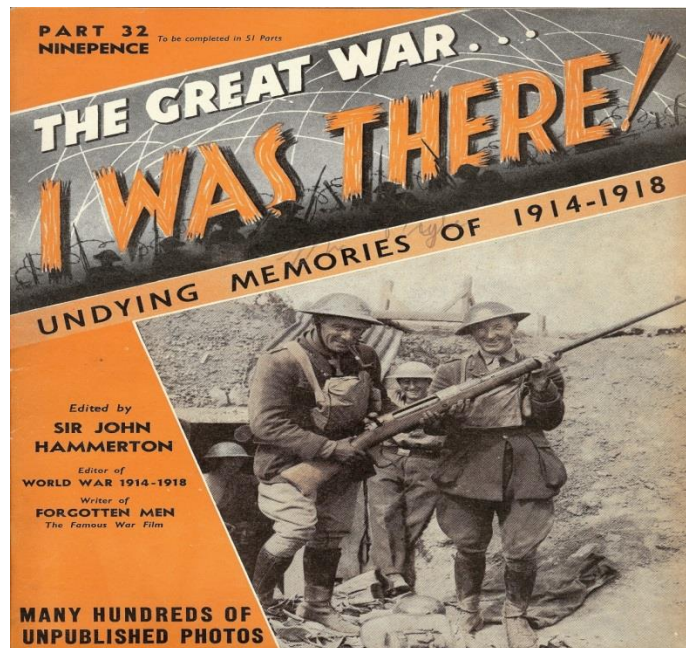


Figure 20 – A Front Cover of ‘The Great War - I Was There!

Undying Memories of 1914-1918,³⁴⁵

Over a thirty year period, Hammerton thus established a vastly successful formula of presenting the conflict pictorially to a mass audience. His ability to adapt his various but interrelated publications enabled him to produce a visual language that resonated with his faithful British public.

³⁴³ ‘The Great War – I Was There, Undying Memories of 1914-1918’ (1938-1939). See Figure 20. Hammerton cited that he had ‘...devised this work to bring together the most vivid, the most poignant, the most human experiences of those who were privileged, or doomed (as you may esteem it), to have taken part – no matter how humble a part – in those world-shaking events of twenty years ago’ (1944; 289). The symbolic trope of the veteran as authentic eyewitness is analysed by Todman (2009; 34-36).

³⁴⁴ Hammerton would also return to his earlier formulas in producing new versions of ‘The War Illustrated’ and ‘The Second Great War’ (Hammerton, 1944; 292-293).

³⁴⁵ Part 24 of Hammerton, J (Ed.) (1938-9) *I Was There: Undying Memories of 1914-18*, London: The Amalgamated Press; 955.

4.2.5 – The Wane of Wartime Photography

Nevertheless, the new ways in which the official wartime photographs were being used was unknowingly, but gradually, revealing a growing tension between how the photographs were read by those who had experienced the War directly and those who had not. For the veterans reading Swinton's publication, the photographs acted as a vehicle onto which they could project wartime memories, and reinvigorate a wartime spirit with their collective group. For those who had not experienced the War directly, the tropes of patriotism and education that had formed key components of the photograph's original make-up were still expected to resonate, even if on a lesser level. This sat in stark contrast to the fact that access to the conflict was no longer strictly controlled, and alternate interpretations, such as the boom of war memoirs in the late 1920s, were now able to portray a rather different picture.³⁴⁶ As a result, the official photographs began to lose their monopoly in their capability to inform popular understanding. Whilst they continued to be highly circulated and well received, they were now just one of a number of ways in which the 1930s post-War generation could encounter the conflict. Moreover, this changed their purpose from being active representations to passive canvases, onto which alternative understandings of the conflict could be projected.

³⁴⁶ See Watson (2006) for an extended discussion on this topic

4.3 - Sir Peter Masefield



Figure 21 - Sir Peter Masefield³⁴⁷

4.3.1 - Background

It has been outlined that the official wartime photographs established a degree of permanence within popular culture, particularly through illustrated publications, right up until the Second World War. Interest subsequently dissipated in light of this event, only to re-emerge when the Imperial War Museum's plans for the First World War's fiftieth anniversary loomed into view. The man behind the IWM's *Fifty Years After* displays, Peter Masefield, happened to be a well-connected and enthusiastic individual who worked primarily in the aviation industry.³⁴⁸ Knighted in 1972, he was appointed as an IWM Trustee during the Special Photographic Exhibitions, and later as the Chairman of Trustees between 1977 and 1978. Both his IWM file and autobiography reveal a meticulous individual; 'From an early age, I had revelled in keeping detailed records and personal accounts...I continued to fill large books and ledgers with notes, statistics and financial records'.³⁴⁹ His personal paper archive - weighing in at eight tonnes - was distributed to multiple locations. Various

³⁴⁷ Sourced from '<http://tartanterror22.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/sir-peter-masefield-1915-2006.html>' (Accessed on 15/08/12).

³⁴⁸ See Figure 21. Being Chairman of the British Airports Authority from 1965 helped in enabling take aerial photographs of the battlefield sites, because he could conduct one day trips over the Channel at relatively short notice. It is also worth noting that Masefield paid for three quarters of the costs for his expeditions to the battlefields (See Correspondence between Frankland and Masefield in January 1969, IWM EN3/3/01/015). He brought back some relics from the Somme battlefield, which he donated to the IWM. These were to form part of token exhibitions in areas adjacent to the photographic display 'to represent the roles of the armed forces at sea, on land and in the air' (1964 Exhibition Guide, IWM EN3/2/27/002/1; 53).

³⁴⁹ Masefield (2002; 224).

files were to be housed within the IWM, including personal notebooks from his 17 trips to the battlefields between August 1963 and June 1969.³⁵⁰ Masefield's longstanding and enthusiastic interest in the First World War seems to have been born out of his exposure to his father's and second cousin's experiences of the War. The latter, John Masefield, was Poet Laureate between 1930 and 1967:

All wars end; even this War will some day end...when the trenches are filled in, and the plough has gone over them, the ground will not long keep the look of War. When this War is a romance in memory, the soldier looking for his battlefield will find his marks gone...Summer flowers will cover most of the ruin that man can make...these places will be hard indeed to trace...Centre Way, Peel Trench, Muster Alley and those other paths to glory will be deep under the corn'.³⁵¹

This quote from his book *The Old Front Line* - a testimony which by the 1960s had come to pass - gives a clue in revealing Peter Masefield's motives for the

³⁵⁰ IWM DP2 012/013/015/016/019. For example of archival material, see Figure 24. Masefield's files are fairly meticulous, listing indexes of how many photographs he took per expedition and per day, what cameras he used, how many films resulted in how many pairs, to establishing a ratio between photographs taken to the number of 'good pairs' achieved (DP2/011 and DP2/013). He even worked out how long each successful photograph took to produce – with one example being an average of 18 successful images from a total of 55 taken during April 1964 (IWM DP2/013). In September 1965, he took an average of forty two minutes per photograph (IWM DP2/013). By 1967, he had taken 1200 photographs over sixty films (having covered 329 sites over fifteen sorties that totalled thirty two days) (IWM DP2/008; IWM DP2/013; IWM DP2/014; IWM DP2/015). Having made his first official 'sortie' on 15/08/62, it is not immediately apparent why he was making trips to the battlefields in June 1969, after the final 1968 exhibition had finished on 30 April 1969. Plans to publish some of his work never came to fruition, though there were intentions to pair up five hundred photographs and an introduction was drafted for a volume titled 'Photographs of the Western Front in 1916 and Fifty Years Afterwards' (See IWM EN3/3/29/004; IWM ROADS/DD3/03/013/1; IWM ROADS/DD2/05/006/4; IWM DP2/009). One published work made use of the comparisons in using the 1964 photographs produced by Masefield as well as the original wartime ones; see Smith (1965), which also pays reference to the 1964 exhibition. There was also evidence of a television programme that broadcast forty comparative pairs, accompanied by a narrative description by Masefield that featured quotes from the War Poets (Script for 'Relics of War: A Visit to the Imperial War Museum', Rediffusion Television Ltd, Director: Steve Minchin, Programme Editor: Frank Keating, transmitted between 1515 and 1615 on 08/04/68, IWM DP2/019-020). After conversations with the IWM Film Archive proved unsuccessful in locating the footage, the only evidence recovered was of letters from members of the public praising Masefield's successful use of the 'Then and Now' concept, and the desire to see the photographs produced within a published format; see IWM EN3/3/31/002. I am grateful to Alys Cundy for sharing the information in this file with me.

³⁵¹ Masefield (2006 [1917]; 75). Other veterans had also written about their experiences of returning to the battlefields; see for example Taylor (1928); Blunden & Norman (1933); Bird (1932); Brice (1925); Dafoe (1919); Williamson (1927); Pultney (1925). Swinton had responded directly to this work in his 1930s publication, writing that 'Time has worked its changes. The battle-fields today are green and gold today. Young trees are everywhere and the desolate waste of shell-hole and mud has given way to pasture-land and waving corn. Proudly on the heights stand the memorials to the fallen, and in the valleys and on hillside peacefully lie the silent cities where they rest' (Swinton as cited by Holmes, 2004; 24, 633).

comparisons.³⁵² Firstly he wanted to improve on the accuracy of Insall and Watson's photographs but more importantly, it was clear that time was rapidly moving on.³⁵³ Even if the scars of the conflict had not healed in British national consciousness, the fifty year interval had allowed sites to almost fully return to their peacetime form.³⁵⁴ The new comparative photographic pairs would for that reason act as visual witnesses to both the conflict and subsequent changes to the landscape.³⁵⁵ The archival records show that Masefield was occasionally reliant on local inhabitants' knowledge in assisting him establish where events had happened.³⁵⁶ Aware that the

³⁵² For further insight, see Speech by Sir Peter Masefield at the Opening of the 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition (IWM DP2/008). See also Letter from Masefield's father made out to him during the War (26/08/17, IWM DP2/008).

³⁵³ 'Fifty Years After Book Introduction Draft, 1916-1966' (IWM DP2/009). He accepted that their 'broadly rather than precisely comparative' nature had been the result of the time pressures of producing a commercial publication. Like Hammerton's works during the 1930s, Masefield expressed a desire to bridge the generational gap by satisfying the intrigue of the younger generation 'to whom the memory of these blood-sodden years is at best a confused and vague sense of excitement and alarm conveyed to them in the anxieties and mental anguish of their parents and elders' (IWM DP2/009). This pictured history was therefore instructing this generation 'with a representative selection of actual photographs which will serve to build up such a vivid mental picture as may leave a young reader with no distorted vision of so vital a period in modern history' (IWM DP2/009). For those who had experienced it, the photographs were '...a new record of those frightful years which, could we forget their horrors, should be thrillingly remembered for calling forth the nobler qualities of manhood and endurance in the nations that had to take up arms in defence of their liberties, and in so doing attained to high ideals of heroism and self-sacrifice' (IWM DP2/009).

³⁵⁴ For conversation on the theme of recent British memory of the War, see Danchev (1991).

³⁵⁵ Several of the descriptions in the Exhibition Guides talk about a transition from war to peace, or pre-War conditions; the 1964 Guide (IWM EN3/2/27/002/1; 45) mentions the 'erasure' of the 'scars of war'. This suggests that one of the exhibition drivers was to remind visitors what had once happened in these locations, and that they must not forget this, even though a combination of nature and mankind had reclaimed the once obliterated landscape. Equally there is a discourse about the role of truthfulness in the photographs' depiction of the battlefield landscape, which relies upon the act of witnessing and carries heavy overtones of remembrance and memorialisation. In his opening speech, Masefield stated 'if this exhibition in any way contributes to the memory of the gallant deeds of that great generation of British people, then it will be enormously worthwhile' (Speech by Sir Peter Masefield at the Opening of the 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition (IWM DP2/008). Discussion regarding the appropriateness of the Museum's exhibition space for memorialisation purposes is outlined in Section 2.2.

³⁵⁶ IWM DP2 012/013/015/016/019. Christopher Roads spoke with veterans present at the fiftieth anniversary commemorations at Gallipoli to verify details for his photographs and Masefield cited the help of Dr Alfred Caenepael, who had an extensive knowledge of the Ypres Salient (Speech by Sir Peter Masefield at the Opening of the 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition (IWM DP2/008). The fact that Masefield often took more than one image at each site, or in the case of comparative aerial photographs, 'to undertake several flights across the battlefields' (1964 Exhibition Guide; 49) suggests that, not only was he highly driven to complete his task, but that he saw the camera as an instrument of exact scientific precision; wanting to ensure absolute accuracy in the act of photography through pairing up the official wartime photographs to act as clues to what went on ('...research has been possible to pin-point and record the exact places at which the major events of the 1914-18 War took place – not in general but down to the precise foot' ['Fifty Years After Book Introduction Draft, 1916-1966', IWM DP2/009]). This document also noted that the original location of the wartime photographs had been wrongly recorded ('Fifty Years After Book Introduction Draft, 1916-1966', IWM DP2/009). Frankland's preface to the Exhibition Guides speaks of Masefield's 'scholarly and detective work of a high order' (1964; iii) and 'skilful detection' (1968; 3).

sources providing such knowledge were decreasing in number, it was a case of acquiring the knowledge whilst it was still there to be captured, and evidence that he believed the photographs would retain a degree of immediacy to a 1960s audience through their ability to collapse temporal boundaries in using a purely spatial lens.

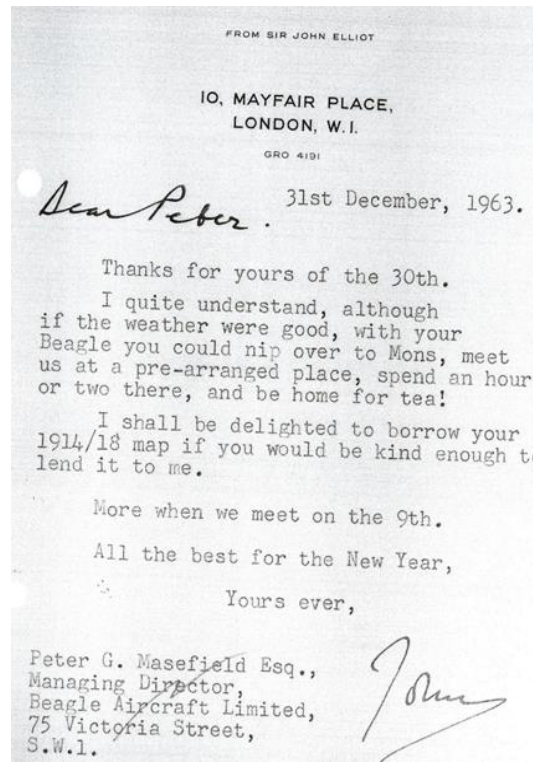


Figure 22 – A Letter from Sir John Elliot to Peter Masfield

*Regarding a Future 'Sortie' to the Western Front Battlefields (IWM DP2/008)*³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ Sir John Elliot was Chairman of London Transport from 1953 to 1959, and Chairman of Thomas Cook & Son Ltd from 1959 until 1967.

4.4 - The Special Photographic Exhibitions

4.4.1- The Dichotomy of Interpretation



Figure 23 – *A Typical Layout of the Special Photographic Exhibitions*

(©IWM MH 15656)

Visitors found the Special Photographic Displays located in various recesses and annexes in a cramped part of the Museum.³⁵⁸ The physical appearance of the displays – large thirty by forty inch black and white prints on dark gallery walls - presented a stark look. Enlarging the photographs predominantly from the printed page to theatrically staging them on a wall would undoubtedly have improved their clarity, allowing visitors to study them in more detail.³⁵⁹ As already summarized, their recognisability would have resonated with many. Even so, visitor interpretation of these displays of photographs was somewhat reliant on the contextual information that was available to them. The meaning of the photographs was steered by an Exhibition Guide that accompanied each individual exhibition, purchasable for 2/6 (no sales figures exist).³⁶⁰ Its role was to act as an explanatory and contextual narrative for the visitor in setting out the historical events of the War in chronological

³⁵⁸ See Figure 23. The Museum's permanent exhibitions during this time 'covered the three arms of service and consisted of cases of objects and trophies with little or no explanation of their historical context. There were several displays showing the technical development of such items as shell fuzes [sic], small arms, steel helmets and respirators. The Museum also included a room in which were displayed the badges of every regiment and corps in the British Army' (Milner, 2002; 12).

³⁵⁹ I am grateful to Dr Peter Chasseaud who brought this to my attention as part of his recollections of visiting the exhibitions during his youth (Unrecorded conversation with JW at IWM London, January 2013). The high quality of the wartime photographs' negatives enabled this process to happen relatively easy. It was presumably in order to maintain a degree of visual consistency with the original photographs that the 'Now' images were not taken in colour.

³⁶⁰ See IWM EN3/2/27/002/1.

order, whilst additionally providing a prescribed order of viewing. Its formal and scholarly text assigned the photographs with a sense of authority; when photographs are 'mobilized within the didactic space of the museum, they are expected to authorize and authenticate'.³⁶¹ As a result, photographs are viewed by visitors as unbiased documentary visual evidence of the past. The IWM was therefore attempting to control the viewer's vision - and hence how the images were read - through the accompanying text. It remains hard to establish with conviction how visitors actually interpreted the exhibitions, with the 1960s described as a decade of '...amazing growth in museums... [but] a low point in systematic empirical visitor studies'.³⁶² Moreover, whilst it is ascertainable that there was public appetite for the level of historical detail contained within each Exhibition Guides, it seems that this was principally context for veterans.³⁶³ Many of the descriptions in the Guides were geographical orientations, such as 'North of Amiens-Albert Road', suggesting the need for a prior specific knowledge of the battlefields' location.³⁶⁴ Others, such as 'the famous Hill 60' advocate that the IWM assumed a level of knowledge amongst its visitors, whom it expected to know about certain locations and events.³⁶⁵ Gallipoli amongst other theatres of conflict featured, but there were various absentees; the contemporary political situation presumably explains why Russia's role in the Eastern Front sat notably isolated and marginalized from the dominant Western Front narrative.³⁶⁶ By the same token, principal information about the 'Then' photographs – who made them, how they were produced, and what purpose they had served – was not present within the exhibition space. This sat in notable contrast to the very obvious presence of Masfield within the displays, particularly in the text

³⁶¹ Edwards & Mead (2013; 21). For wider literature on the role of photographs as representation and selective framing, see Tagg (1988); Sontag (2004); Butler (2010; 63-100).

³⁶² Hein (1998; 52).

³⁶³ The 1964 Exhibition Guide has sixteen pages of historical text detailing the Western Front, including the War of Movement and subsequent Trench Warfare (1964 Exhibition Guide; 5-21 (IWM EN3/2/27/002/1). However it was recognised that such a format 'represented something of a departure' in its hope that 'the visitor would feel he had purchased something more than a mere catalogue of exhibits and which would be of value even when the exhibition itself had terminated' (Department of Research and Publications Report – June to September 1964, IWM EN3/2/1/1/5).

³⁶⁴ 1964 Exhibition Guide; 48 (IWM EN3/2/27/002/1).

³⁶⁵ 1964 Exhibition Guide; 37 (IWM EN3/2/27/002/1).

³⁶⁶ This marginalisation of the Eastern Front may be partly due to a poor photographic record, but also due to the fact that it largely depicted a war of movement, and the fact that soldiers did not live in the landscape as was common on the essentially static fronts in France, Belgium and Gallipoli. There were contemporary photographs taken in 1964 of the Hedjaz railway by J.E. Dayton of the Alderton Construction Company, in association with Lawrence of Arabia's exploits in Palestine (IWM DP2/009).

of the Exhibition Guides.³⁶⁷ In the absence of the photographs' original context, the individual viewer was in a position whereby they could override the IWM attempt to control the fluid meaning of the photographs, and instead use them as passive frames onto which visitors could project their own understanding. This was accentuated by their presentation, which seemed more like pieces of arts to be studied and admired, given that their educational purpose of relaying historical information was contingent on the availability of an exhibition guide. In light of the fact that the majority of the Museum's visitors had not experienced this conflict directly, it seems likely that that the photographs were, for many, 'of other times and other places'.³⁶⁸

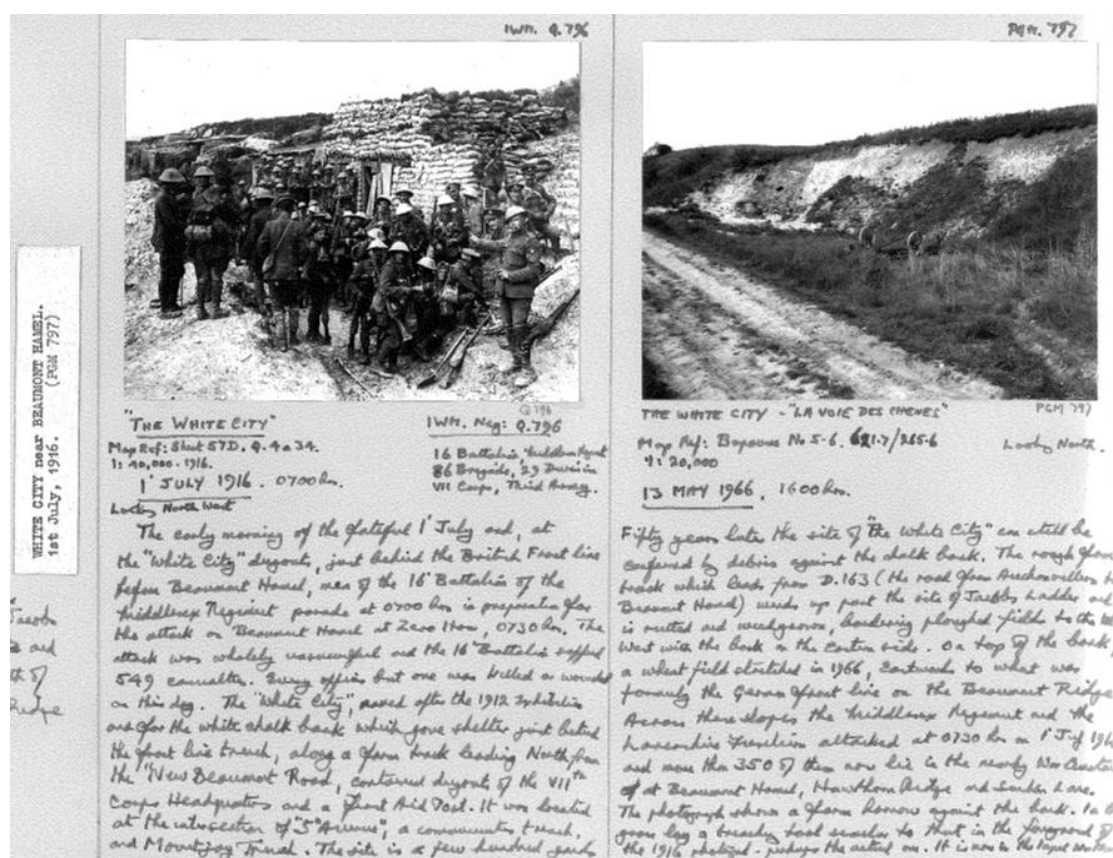


Figure 24 – A ‘Then and Now’ Photographic Comparison, featuring IWM Q 796 (©IWM) and PGM 797, accompanied by Peter Masefield’s handwritten notes

(IWM DP2/018)

Acting as a form of ‘official memory’, the IWM holds precious little

³⁶⁷ See 1964 Exhibition Guide; 43 (IWM EN3/2/27/002/1) with one caption orientated by the description of one of Peter Masefield’s sons being present in the battlefield landscape.

³⁶⁸ Edwards (2001; 17). See also Dixon (2007) for analysis of the social life of war photographs within the context of the Australian War Memorial.

photographic documentation of the displays, other than at their respective openings. These images are dominated by people in conversation or meeting and greeting.³⁶⁹



Figure 25 – *Sir Peter Masefield Greets a Guest at the Opening Event of one of the Special Photographic Exhibitions (©IWM MH 9641)*

However, this photographic record is useful in revealing the prominent featuring of veterans, with a particularly strong military presence at the 1964 exhibition opening.³⁷⁰



Figure 26 – *Veterans Studying the Photographic Displays (©IWM MH 7715)*

³⁶⁹ See Figure 25.

³⁷⁰ See Figures 26 and 27. See also IWM MH 7700 as well as MH 9401 and MH 9397 ('Noble Frankland with VC Holders Visit', 24/06/66). The opening was completed by the President of the Old Contemptibles Society, accompanied by 30 'rank and file' members of the British Expeditionary Force who had fought in 1914, including three Victoria Cross winners (IWM EN3/2/27/002/2).



Figure 27 – 1914 Veterans are Inspected outside the Museum by the President of the Old Contemptibles Society (©IWM MH 7297)

It further strengthens the idea that interpretation of the photographic content was reliant upon an individual's prior experience of the battlefield landscape and what is more, the provision of exhibitions for this particular group acts to validate their historical integrity. For those who did not have first-hand experience, understanding was gained from an emotional perspective. A parallel could be drawn with Wellington's discussion about visitor reaction to the dioramas housed at the Australian War Memorial, which experienced a similar tension of memory between those who had and had not experienced the conflict directly. She suggests the dioramas prompt:

'...[an] *emotional* connection rather than *understanding* the causal flow of events, the 'what happened', the 'then what', the 'how did that come about?' [The diorama] stimulates the viewer to emote, but not to understand...rather than inviting historical enquiry, [it] commands its viewer to *remember*'.³⁷¹

I suggest that this can equally be applied to the photographic displays; the idea of encouraging memory and connection 'with the *idea* of an event' prompted an evocative reaction from visitors, based on empathy and remembrance, rather than historical understanding.³⁷²

³⁷¹ Wellington (2012; 111-113, emphasis original).

³⁷² Wellington (2012; 117). See Figure 29 for image of visitors engaging with the photographs using the Exhibition Guide Book.

4.5 - Masefield's Use of the Official Photographs

4.5.1 – The Process of Selecting Photographs

The two sections of the chapter can now be merged together, in terms of considering the role of the official wartime photographs that had been designed for a specific purpose, and the implications of reworking them for presentation within the exhibition space of a museum. Critically there had been a strong process of sanitizing death through these images, as well as the fact that there was minimal representation of the German Army on the Western Front.³⁷³ More broadly, the topics of the official photographs naturally determined what locations Masefield was able to compare, with a case in point being the presence of the Navy. With the process of recording naval actions - that often took place over large distances - naturally difficult, no official photographer was ever permanently attached to this service. Consequently its pictorial record in the War is small, and limited its representation or presence within the Special Photographic Exhibitions. Other theatres of war, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia, were incorporated into the official photographic remit from 1917, but again these contributions were relatively small. On the other hand, there were some factors that determined the selection process Masefield employed in choosing comparative photographic pairs that can be deduced. The work of Horace Nicholls and G.P. Lewis, the two official photographers who produced 3,000 images of the British Home Front, was largely absent from the Special Photographic Exhibitions.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ See Brothers (1997; 196) who talks about suffusing photographs with an aesthetical lens – such as those images depicting injury being implanted with pathos, so that this becomes a secondary theme (1997; 168).

³⁷⁴ See Figure 28. Examples of their work include images of women working as shipbuilders in naval dockyards (IWM Q 20066, Q 20077, Q 20079) and the more recognisable images of munitions workers at Chilwell (IWM Q 30018). See Carmichael (1989; 120-139) for detailed information about this topic.



Figure 28 – *Women War Workers in Newcastle Naval Dockyard*

(©IWM Q 20079)

The reasoning behind this absence can be speculated upon – certainly tracing precise locations within building environments would have proved tricky, and Masefield may have been wary of these images' more blatant propaganda tone. However, even if his decisions were driven to a degree by cost and convenience, there was a definite hierarchical prioritising of pairing images from the Western Front landscape. Researching the precise location of some photographs taken in the midst of the battlefields, that had now altered almost beyond recognition, proved challenging.³⁷⁵ Subsequently, Masefield was forced to choose sites with recognisable features in which the general contours had not changed, such as original/rebuilt buildings on streets or roads. In doing this, the comparative pairs would be read by visitors through a prism of spectral absence; the 'soldiers with helmets, rifle and pack trudging in single file in front of a turbulent skyline' in the 'Then' photographs were hauntingly not present in the 'Now' images.³⁷⁶ As his second cousin had done fifty years previously, such connotations provided a sanitized and essentially romantic interpretation of the conflict. It was somewhat ironic, as Carmichael notes, that the role of war photographs, and the purpose of the war photographer, had shifted significantly from acting as a patriot producing

³⁷⁵ In his Opening Speech to the 1964 Galleries, Masefield referred to how difficult and laborious it was to establish where events had occurred (Speech by Sir Peter Masefield at the Opening of the 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition, IWM DP2/008). This work was carried out in tandem between IWM staff and Masefield. Much of the landscape had recovered by the extensive bombardment, and that which had been backfilled and reverting back to cultivated farmland showed little trace of trenches or shell holes. Other sites, such as the Lochnager Crater and Hill 60, survived as permanent features in the landscape.

³⁷⁶ Holmes (2010; 42).

propaganda to now acting as a witness against war (or at least neutral observer).³⁷⁷ This was especially evident in the work of Don McCullin in Vietnam, which was being distributed to support anti-war aims against that conflict, at the time of the Special Photographic Exhibitions.



Figure 29 – *Studying the Photographic Comparisons within the Exhibitions*

(©IWM MH 7710)

4.6 - The Wider Context of the 1960s

4.6.1 – Changing Cultural Interest in the War initiated through Key Works

For my research into this exhibition series, I interviewed the IWM Research and Publications Officer at the time, (Professor) Peter Simkins (PJS).³⁷⁸ PJS had written the majority of the text for the Exhibition Guides to the Special Photographic Displays, and his recollections saw these displays as ‘pretty low key’ at a ‘dynamic and adventurous time’ for the IWM.³⁷⁹ However, he stressed the importance that beyond the Museum’s walls, public understanding of the War was changing. Indeed the meaning of the term ‘warfare’ had changed significantly over the fifty year period; the generation enveloped in the ominous Cold War were all too aware of its potential

³⁷⁷ Carmichael (1989; 146). See also Brothers (1997).

³⁷⁸ Recorded Interview between James Wallis, Alys Cundy and Peter Simkins, conducted on 21/03/12 in Cheltenham. See Board Meeting on 18/11/63, IWM EN3/2/1/1/2.

³⁷⁹ Recorded Interview between James Wallis, Alys Cundy and Peter Simkins, conducted on 21/03/12 in Cheltenham.

impact, and had become more hostile towards traditional authority. In light of the morally more clear-cut Second World War, the First World War was actively targeted. Bond has overviewed this period and suggested several factors that occurred at this time - the pervasive fear of nuclear war, the rise of an independent youth culture and the ending of National Service - that he believes largely shaped understanding of Britain's role in the War today.³⁸⁰ Principally, he argues that American tactics in Vietnam of achieving victory through overwhelming numerical and material strength resonated strongly with the tactics of attrition seen fifty decades earlier. PJS likewise recalled this time of anti-establishment that attacked the War as the 'epitome of cynical, incompetent leadership, needless sacrifice and futility'.³⁸¹

Even before the fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the First World War had started, there had been a wide surge of public interest in the conflict. Numerous memoirs, including those of officers Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon, as well as biographies, anthologies and volumes of poetry, had been released or republished during this period.³⁸² Parker has documented that changing attitudes towards Remembrance Day were aired in the public arena, revealing that there were considerations to drop it from the national calendar.³⁸³ Some published works of this era 'did not so much attack the War as lament its consequences', but others were more critical in attacking those in High Command between 1914 and 1918.³⁸⁴ This was led by Alan Clark's *The Donkeys* and A.J.P. Taylor's *The First World War – An Illustrated History*.³⁸⁵ Clark's work in particular was heavily slanted and, despite its vivid style, criticised for its poor scholarship.³⁸⁶ Even so, this easily consumed history was very popular at a grassroots level. Likewise, Taylor's work, with its 'mordant, laconic style', was designed for the general reader rather than the specialist military

³⁸⁰ Bond (2002; 51-73). See also Bond (1991).

³⁸¹ Bond (2002; 54); Recorded Interview between JW, AC and PJS, conducted on 21/03/12 in Cheltenham.

³⁸² This included a major biography of Rupert Brooke in 1964 (Hassall, 1964) and collections of Wilfred Owen's (Day-Lewis, 1963) and Siegfried Sassoon's (1961) poems. Sassoon died in 1967.

³⁸³ Parker (2009; 165).

³⁸⁴ Parker (2009; 172).

³⁸⁵ Clark (1961); Taylor (1963). The work of Basil Liddell Hart was also highly influential (See Bond, 2002; 57-59). It is important to note this public appetite for these particular works in consideration of the tailored and highly detailed approach that had been adopted within the Special Photographic Exhibitions.

³⁸⁶ Historians have since suggested that he was motivated by careerism and the desire to tell a good story that prioritised healthy sales over historical accuracy; see Todman (2005; 102); Danchev (1991; 264).

historian.³⁸⁷ It became equally, if not more, influential and made extensive use of the official War photographs. The tongue-in-cheek captions that accompanied them gave them a sardonic interpretation, contrasting strongly with the formality of their presentation at the IWM.

Enthusiasm for this growing interpretation of the conflict bolstered the theatre production of *'Oh! What A Lovely War!'*, granting it commercial success. The play's director, Joan Littlewood, had yearned for a satirical depiction of the War based on her fierce hatred of the establishment and the contemporary international situation.³⁸⁸ It was the equivalent of Clark's and Taylor's work on the stage, with a similar reception amongst military historians doing little to dampen its popularity.³⁸⁹

The importance and impact of the BBC's *'The Great War'* series during this period cannot be underestimated.³⁹⁰ It quickly achieved epic status as a visually and emotionally powerful account of the conflict, with the opening credits relying on a montage of three official photographs that have since embedded themselves within British modern memory.³⁹¹ For the first time, history in the form of the archival film footage held within the Museum's collections was portrayed through the medium of television. The IWM was greatly involved in the production of this landmark series, with PJS describing the Museum's involvement and provision of advice to the BBC as 'time-heavy'.³⁹² From Frankland's perspective, it represented a great dual opportunity to showcase items from the Museum's collections, as well as contribute

³⁸⁷ Bond (2002; 61).

³⁸⁸ See Todman (2005; 105); Parker (2009; 185). Paget has described the production as '...a poorish source for knowledge about the Great War...[yet] an excellent source of knowledge about the early 1960s' (1996; 83).

³⁸⁹ Todman has since suggested that the play was 'lent an added authority' through its use of sentimental songs from the period that gave the play an 'essentially nostalgic emotional impact' (2005; 109). See also Reynolds (2013; 333-334).

³⁹⁰ The series acted as the 'centrepiece of the BBC's commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the war', and was viewed by almost one-fifth of the total viewing population (Reynolds, 2013; 337). One important reason for its success was its accessibility to families who had little prior knowledge of the conflict. See Reynolds (2013; 337-342); Bond (2002; 68-70); Hanna (2009; 32-62) and Ramsden (2002) for detailed analysis about its unprecedented nature. Bond further suggests that the originality of the series '...lay in presenting the war from the common soldiers' viewpoint; a revolutionary inversion of class precedence in the 1960s...it gave a powerful boost to the new interest in the ordinary soldiers' experience' (2002; 65, 68).

³⁹¹ See Reynolds (2013; 339).

³⁹² Recorded Interview between JW, AC and PJS, conducted on 21/03/12 in Cheltenham.

towards the War's emerging historiography.³⁹³ Indeed, the official photographs featured heavily in the television series - as implicitly emotive devices – but they were to be interpreted negatively by viewers of the programme as the haunting images of battlescapes.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, the photographs within the television series formed only part of a wide array of visual and oral material. Its collective power would have engaged an average member of the public much more so than the rather mono-sensual, static and comparatively un-dramatic exhibitions. The televised portrayal emphasized the emotional impact of the powerful and moving story that it was telling its audience. The presentation of the very same images in the IWM's exhibitions must have jarred, as visitors were likely to have projected this dynamic and powerful version of the War onto the official photographs that they might have encountered. The gulf between the two portrayals of the conflict was increased further by the fact that the television series introduced the unprecedented idea of speaking to veterans directly about their wartime experiences and recording these. In contrast to their restrained participation within the content of the exhibitions, this group was actively utilised in the BBC series to provide a connection between the past and present. As Hanna has advocated, it led to an understanding of the War 'marked by the faces' of individual participants.³⁹⁵ These faces may have been present at the openings of the Special Photographic Exhibitions, but they were absent in its largely impersonal content. As a result, the exhibitions would prove unable to compete against this new method of informing new audiences about the First World War.

³⁹³ As the programme developed, ongoing production tensions emerged between the IWM and BBC emerged, with regard to acknowledging the use of reconstructed footage (IWM Trustee Minutes, IWM EN3/2/1/1/3-6; Bond, 2002; 68).

³⁹⁴ Reynolds (2013; 339); Danchev (1991; 281); Bond (1991; 8).

³⁹⁵ Hanna (2007; 95). See also Parker (2009; 192, 203). Frankly-spoken testimonies would form the basis of a cult awareness of veterans that launched an oral history movement, led by Lyn Macdonald, in the early 1970s (See Macdonald, 2008; Bond, 2002; 68). The IWM's Sound Archive was fundamentally involved through its valuable programme of recording veterans' memories during this period.

4.7 – Conclusion

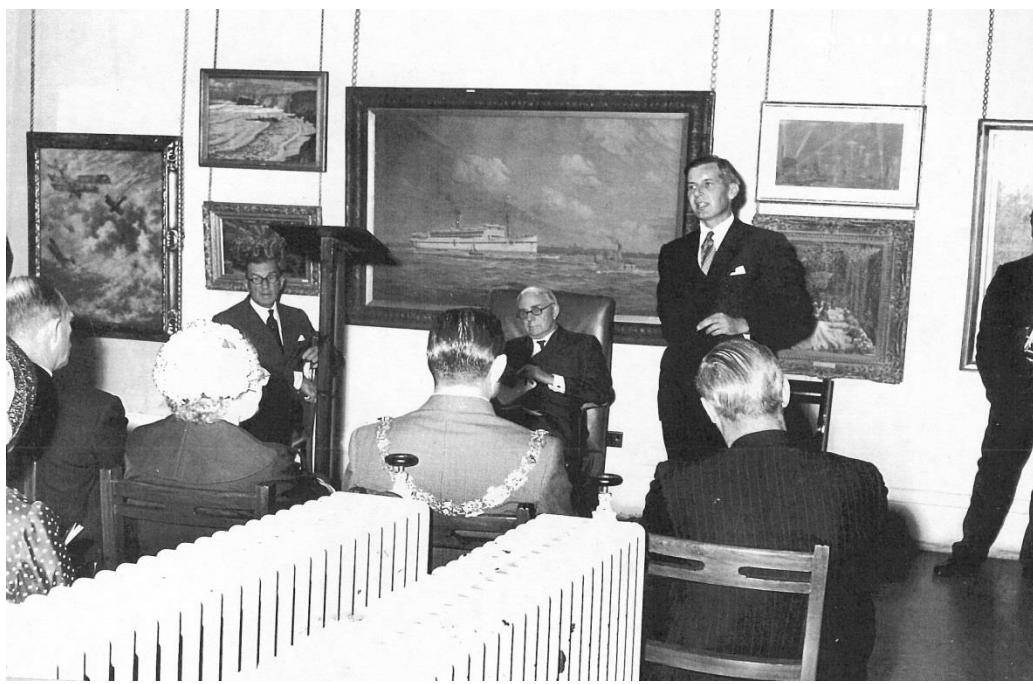


Figure 30 – *Noble Frankland Addresses Guests at*

the 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition Opening (©IWM MH 7320)

4.7.1 – ‘In a Snapshot’

The control of the collection of the official wartime photographs, or indeed lack of it, had vital consequences for the IWM. As a body of work created for a specific purpose, this photographic collection took on a new meaning, as soon as it was transferred to the Museum as a record of national effort. It was not a collection designed for the archive, but one which had essentially relied upon public consumption. The photographs were not internally bound, and they continued to be heavily distributed far beyond the Museum, as visual evidence in popular culture, over the following five decades.³⁹⁶ The photographs – as visual images, historical documents and material objects - held and embodied the past, ‘as what has

³⁹⁶ The Museum holds the original collection of photographs on behalf of the nation; as the Ministry of Information had disseminated images through press agencies during the War, copies were freely available. Subsequently, individuals did not need to travel to the IWM in order to obtain them, as the copyright was made under the Crown as a public record, rather than to the Museum itself. I am grateful to Hilary Roberts for outlining this to me. Furthermore the role of the Museum is ‘...crucial not only in its ability to provide photographs with the expert technical verification that establishes their truth value, but also with cultural verification, wherein the institution’s decision to collect and display the image establishes its cultural worth’ (Williams, 2007; 53).

been and what is no longer, perched between absence and presence'.³⁹⁷ This vacuum allowed them to be moulded and absorbed into other narratives, whereby the photographs began to have information projected onto them, rather than extracted from them.



Figure 31 – A ‘Then and Now’ Photographic Pair of the Zillebeke

Road near Ypres (© Harold Robson/IWM Q 50706 and PGM Unknown)³⁹⁸

It must be acknowledged that, though the photographic displays were given significantly less dedication and resources, Britain’s national War Museum acknowledged the war’s fiftieth anniversary through more than one output, and that the significant impact of ‘The Great War’ series made this an understandable decision.³⁹⁹ Furthermore these displays offered the best of limited practical options available to the IWM at a time when it was changing both its external structure and internal ideology through Frankland’s reforms.⁴⁰⁰ Masefield’s intentions of using the conceptual ‘Then and Now’ device were sound; the Museum had made good use of an under-used collection originally aimed at public consumption, and individual photographs were to be enacted as ‘...visual incisions through time and space’ within their own right, rather than playing a subsidiary, supporting role to objects on

³⁹⁷ Crang (1996; 442, 449).

³⁹⁸ For full captions, see 1964 Exhibition Guide (IWM EN3/2/27/002/1); 36.

³⁹⁹ Hanna has commented that even the huge resources poured into this series ‘struggled to effect a change in the way the British audience thought about [the First World War]’ (2009; 55).

⁴⁰⁰ Frankland reflected upon the exhibition series as ‘an interesting comment on the impact of war upon the landscape and the power of subsequent healing and reconstruction’ (Frankland, 1998; 173).

display.⁴⁰¹ From the practical perspective, a large collection of photographs was cost effective and easy to display, alongside the fact that display techniques were not deemed especially important during this time (especially as the most modern technique of film was already being utilised). Nevertheless, even if his intentions of attempting to make the official photographs relevant to a new audience were good, Masefield altered the photographs' meaning further by treating them as works of art, rather than as images designed for popular distribution. Such a dichotomy was always going to have limited success within the environment of a historical museum, and the intended reading of the photographs could never be accessible to all of the exhibitions' visitors. It duly became apparent that the IWM could not compete with the rival presentations and interpretations of the same photographic material, over which it could have no real influence. Moreover, this episode ensured that the Museum would in future address the fundamental issue of considering for whom its exhibitions were for, prior to them being produced. The Special Photographic Exhibitions had appealed to two key but limited groups; firstly the conservative, essentially nostalgic presentation of the photographs was designed to reinvigorate the remaining veterans' wartime memories within a space for reminiscing.⁴⁰²



**Figure 32 – Chelsea Pensioners Arrive for the Opening
of the 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition (©IWM MH 9444)**

⁴⁰¹ Edwards (2001; 3). See Figure 30. Masefield also endeavoured to circulate, and hence publicise the exhibitions (See correspondence with The Daily Telegraph, IWM DP2/012).

⁴⁰² See Figure 32. It was rather paradoxical that the wartime photographs not designed for the soldiers during the conflict were now being presented in part for their benefit.

Through these displays, the IWM risked opening up an institutional culture of admiration for a group rapidly declining in its numbers. This ran in noticeable contrast to the mass-produced works of this time that were telling the story of the War in ways that provided clarity rather than accuracy. Secondly, through its mobilization of a very specific knowledge about the First World War, the Special Photographic Exhibitions would have appealed to like-minded people to those who had created them - described by PJS as 'the gentleman historian'.⁴⁰³ With its whiffs of traditional museums for the connoisseur coupled with limited exhibition-making techniques, these displays could not contribute significantly to visitor knowledge within a space where they could expect to learn authoritatively about the conflict. Prior inaccurate understanding derived from more engaging cultural works went unchallenged, so that the content of the photographs subconsciously confirmed to visitors what they thought they knew about the conflict. In what had been intended as a conscientious recording of a disappearing present, its outcome was much overarching; that public display and popular culture were not always one in the same, and that the Museum's future exhibition efforts would have to take a much more proactive stance in order to help shape public understanding of the conflict. This ran in parallel with its remit, which meant that it *had* to have an impact on future visitor knowledge of the First World War if it was ultimately to survive as an institution.

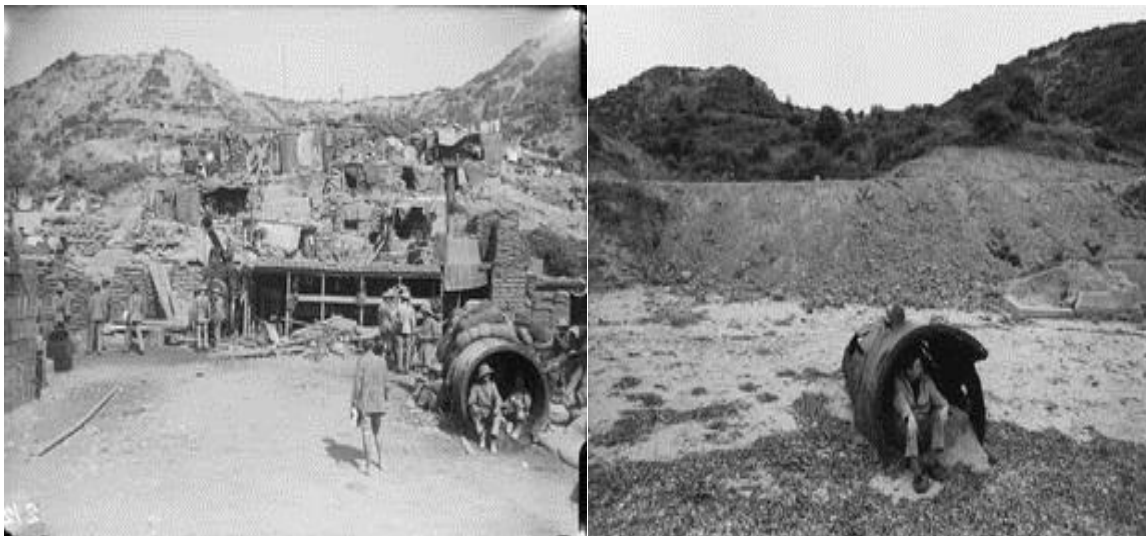


Figure 33 – A Gallipoli 'Then and Now' Photographic Pair at Anzac Cove, taken by Christopher Roads (©IWM Q 13431 and ©IWM CHR 10)

⁴⁰³ Recorded Interview between JW, AC and PJS, conducted on 21/03/12 in Cheltenham.

Chapter 5

'The Exhibition to End All Exhibitions?'

The Imperial War Museum's

1990 'Permanent' First World War Galleries

5.1 – The Art of Displaying History

5.1.1 – The Impact of Frankland's Ideological Changes

This chapter examines the creation of the Imperial War Museum's (IWM) First World War Galleries which were completed in 1990 as part of a wider remodelling of the institution. It seeks to provide an overall assessment of their display philosophy and the associated redefinition of the Museum's purpose through an exploration of the influences of the major actors involved and the broader impact of changing audiences. Using internal records from the Museum's Archive and the recollections of former staff members involved, the chapter aims to scrutinize the tensions of exhibition-making through its recognition of the processes of conception, design and construction.

The previous chapter has discussed how the seeds of change were sown within the Imperial War Museum (IWM) under the directorship of Dr Noble Frankland (NF), and that he was credited for laying down principles that remain familiar to the institution to this day.⁴⁰⁴ Upon embarking on their directorship, each Director-General takes stock of what has gone before - remaining mindful of the Museum's origins - whilst simultaneously ensuring that they take into account changes in audiences. In doing this, they are able to establish their own mark upon the institution and thus make it suitably distinctive from what had been there before. Frankland had

⁴⁰⁴ In interview, Frankland termed his chief contribution as ensuring that the institution remained in existence; salvaging it in 1960 from the perception that it had served its purpose, and rescuing it from the threat of likely closure when he had first encountered it (See Audio Recording of Interview between Frankland, N and Maclaren, V on 24/08/98, IWM Catalogue No 18532). In his biography he recorded '...a perception in the Treasury, the Ministry of Works and other government agencies, with which I had to deal, that the time of make or break had come for the IWM' (1998; 170). For continued discussion, see Frankland (1998; 160-174).

transformed the institution from what Peter Simkins (PJS), the Museum Historian and Head of the Department of Research and Information, saw as:

‘...a kind of museum of the armed services, into a historical museum...[a] fundamental and crucial change which I would interpret, as the [most] important of the IWM’s ‘redevelopments’ in mindset terms’.⁴⁰⁵

Underlying this statement was a belief that once the Museum’s ‘mind’ had been modified, its ‘matter’ would follow suit, and the institution’s Trustees’ had a large-scale refurbishment programme on their agenda. Numbers of visitors to the IWM had increased from 352,000 in 1960, to 850,000 in 1979, and the number of staff working in the Main Building had increased from 69 to 265 in the same period.⁴⁰⁶ This was predominantly due to the Museum’s decision to begin utilising mass-appeal temporary exhibitions to attract broad audiences, such as its display on ‘Colditz’, which ran from January to September 1974 and visited by 371,866 people, as well as later exhibitions such as ‘Wings’ (Jan-May 1977) and ‘Women at War’ (Mar-Oct 1977), also attracting strong visitor numbers.⁴⁰⁷ In looking ahead, it was anticipated that the annual attendance figure to the Museum in 1990 would be around 1,500,000, with a peak season daily average of 8,000 visitors.⁴⁰⁸ This predicted increase also integrated a rise in demand from schools and visitors’ wanting to use the Reference Collections, but overall attention was on realigning institutional attention onto the daily visitor, as the Museum’s predominant new clientele.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and PJS conducted on 13/06/13. PJS had originally been recruited by NF as one of the new staff members to help initiate this change in mindset.

⁴⁰⁶ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, ‘Meeting with PSA and OAL officials, 1100 16 September 1980’, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5. See also ‘Annex 4 – Analysis of Attendance Figures’ in Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum, 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8. By the time of his retirement, Frankland saw visitor numbers peak to over a million. He also oversaw a large increase in staff numbers ‘from the seventy I inherited to the 343 who were in post when I retired’, and that the improvement in their capabilities meant that ‘more and more became possible’ (1998; 174).

⁴⁰⁷ Beyond their importance in attracting significant media attention, Frankland saw these exhibitions as serving a crucial role, in that they ‘...focused the minds of the staff on the object of displaying history as opposed to collections of curios. They also signalled to the public what the purpose of the Museum now was’ (1998; 173).

⁴⁰⁸ ‘Annex 4 – Analysis of Attendance Figures’ in Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum, 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8. Page 6 of ‘Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum’, 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8. For specific analysis of these exhibitions during Frankland’s directorship, see Coll (Forthcoming).

⁴⁰⁹ The rise for the Museum’s research facilities was expected to be ‘between 5% and 15% per annum during the next decade...improved facilities should afford the opportunity of substantially larger increases in numbers of users’. ‘Annex 4 – Analysis of Attendance Figures’ in Initial Brief for the

5.2 - Structural Strains

5.2.1 – The Necessity to make the Museum Building Fit for Purpose

The history of the former Bethlem Royal Hospital that had housed the Imperial War Museum from 1936 meant it proved a challenging structure in which to operate a national museum. Dating back to 1815, its original function meant that it had not been designed as a space for mass public access.⁴¹⁰ Accordingly this had vast implications for internal accommodation arrangements and proved restrictive when it came to displaying exhibits.⁴¹¹ Whilst the majority of his reforms were ideological, Frankland had been able to adapt the building ‘...in a piecemeal manner, within the considerable constraints imposed by its original design as an asylum’.⁴¹² A partial renovation and extension plan during the 1960s incorporated the housing of reference collections, some new gallery space, a modern cinema, a sliding-frame art store, a library reading-room, storage areas and a suite of dark-rooms and photographic studies.⁴¹³ This extension was intended to provide for the next twenty years, with subsequent development expected again upon reaching that time period.⁴¹⁴ Redevelopment of the Main Building came on the agenda much sooner, with a proposed Centre Infill Scheme to replace the glass roof over the main galleries, and extensions to the East and West Wings. The £5 million scheme was abandoned in 1974, because the Trustees would not accept the required extensive closure of the Museum. The acquisitions of Duxford Airfield in 1976 and HMS Belfast in 1978 meant that a further £2.25m extension scheme for an art gallery and a block

Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum, 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8.

There was no existing separate accommodation for school parties.

⁴¹⁰ See IWM Annual Report 1983-1985; 14.

⁴¹¹ Page 2 of ‘IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building’, P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007. The principal public gallery space consisted of ‘three somewhat crudely devised single storey glass and steel structures which were put up in the courtyard when the Museum moved to the site in 1936’, and had remained largely unchanged (See ‘Imperial War Museum Redevelopment Plan’, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/10/002).

⁴¹² Page 24-25 of ‘IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building’, P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007.

⁴¹³ Introduction of Imperial War Museum Handbook, 1985, published by the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum. The extension plan was submitted by the Trustees in 1962, and completed in November 1966. A fire, deliberately started on 13 October 1968, damaged the newly built Reading Room.

⁴¹⁴ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, ‘Meeting with PSA and OAL officials, 1100 16 September 1980’, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5

in the building's south west corner was also abandoned in 1978, on grounds of cost and in order to prioritise building work at Duxford.⁴¹⁵

By 1980 it was apparent to the Museum that 'a more serious and urgent position existed than we had thought'.⁴¹⁶ Discussions took place between the IWM, the Properties Services Agency (P.S.A.) and the Office of Arts and Libraries (O.A.L.) to address the situation.⁴¹⁷ A more comprehensive redevelopment plan was accepted in principle by the Museum's Trustees on 25 June 1980:⁴¹⁸

'We strongly believe that the only economic solution that would deal adequately with the severe maintenance problems and fulfil the Museum's needs for the foreseeable future would be to completely redevelop a major part of the building (leaving the facade intact) to provide additional exhibition and storage space in a purpose built, well ventilated, easily accessible modern building'.⁴¹⁹

Frankland noted succinctly the three main reasons of a need for substantial building reform as being 'Space, Design, Existing Fabric', basing his conclusions on an internal report by Deputy Director, Robert Crawford (RC).⁴²⁰ In this, RC outlined two pressing issues. The first was the need for storage facilities for reserve collections

⁴¹⁵ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5. Expansion at Duxford was seen as serving the purpose of the Imperial War Museum institution, with its role described as 'different from, but complementary to, that of the Main Building. Together they and H.M.S. Belfast form an integrated whole which is the Imperial War Museum'.

⁴¹⁶ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 'Meeting with PSA and OAL officials, 1100 16 September 1980', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5. Barring the 1960s extension, it was believed that no structural improvements had been made to the building in 130 years (IWM Publicity Pack, 'History of the Building', IWM ExPA 0240)

⁴¹⁷ With the finances of such proposed schemes being high, it was recognised that the process would be reliant upon a continual flow of financial resources; 'The important thing... is for the Museum and ourselves, with the help of the PSA, to work out a programme which will enable both schemes to be done [Duxford and Redevelopment], bit by bit, as resources permit'. Letter from Mr Hodges (O.A.L.) to NF, 14/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5

⁴¹⁸ See IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5

⁴¹⁹ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5.

⁴²⁰ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5. Frankland still envisaged overhauling the existing galleries that 'failed to reflect any coherent, broadly-based, philosophic view of warfare' (Annex 1 of 'Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum', 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8). He therefore wanted to 'break down the barriers imposed by the existing exhibitions between naval, military, air and civilian activities, and between allied and enemy materials' (1998; 173). It was thus important that the new galleries collectively were placed within a broader context and to thus improve 'the value of the Museum's historical role to the public' (Annex 1 of 'Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum', 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8). Frankland termed the whole process of proposed reorganization 'a protracted business, involving much research and careful thought' (1998; 173).

and for conservation workshops.⁴²¹ He observed 'a grave shortage of suitable accommodation for storing, studying, documenting and providing public access to those reference collections needed in London'.⁴²² Any operational museum was obliged to provide sufficient care for its collections, alongside fulfilling its public duty of display. RC deemed the current galleries as inadequate space in which to cover 'the history of the period for which they [the Trustees] are responsible or to place a reasonable proportion of the collections on displays'.⁴²³ He corroborated this view with two further points by emphasizing the small proportion of objects from the collections on display, coupled with the expanding acquisition rate of new material.⁴²⁴

RC put the building's shortcomings in no uncertain terms, recording that '...The Trustees cannot ignore the warning that the existing fabric is unsound. They have to ensure that the institution remains viable in future'.⁴²⁵ To address the on-site strain of the trebling visitor numbers, RC's report justified the reasoning for an all-encompassing scheme of refurbishment, setting out the existing building's poor structural condition:

'The galleries are awkwardly shaped, interrupted by pillars and walls which either prevent modern methods of display or make it prohibitively expensive, and temperature, humidity and lighting are virtually uncontrollable. The galleries are not suitable for the installation of air-conditioning systems. The glazed roof over 'A' floor wastes heat and fuel, in winter and leads to excessive solar heating in summer. The galleries are particularly unsuited to the display of large objects which are crucial to exhibitions upon warfare...Stores are similarly of awkward shapes and locations, with inadequate floor-loadings.... Many collections are stored in corridors open to

⁴²¹ Large objects were increasingly being conserved at Duxford because of the lack and cost of space at Lambeth, which consequently meant that more space could be dedicated for display purposes in future.

⁴²² Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5.

⁴²³ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5.

⁴²⁴ RC cited that only 250 out of 9,000 works of art could be on display. Furthermore, by 1979, the Museum was acquiring new material per annum at a rate of 1 million feet of cine film, 70,000 photographs, 140 shelf feet of unpublished documents, 2,000 reels and 1,000 cassettes of magnetic tape, 4,500 objects ranging from aircraft to badges, 250 works of art, 5000 books/pamphlets/maps. Naturally all of this required storage space (Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5).

⁴²⁵ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 'Meeting with PSA and OAL officials, 1100 16 September 1980', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5.

staff, visitors, workmen etc... There is inadequate provision of cloakroom, lavatory, conference, teaching and staff facilities'.⁴²⁶

The testing working environment also impacted upon the increased number of staff. The recollections of Laurie Milner from the Department of Research and Information suggest that they felt unable to deliver the Museum's remit adequately:

'The Museum was by this time very dilapidated, it needed rewiring, re-plumbing, re-roofing, and the available display and office space was totally inadequate for a modern museum of conflict'.⁴²⁷

Following on from RC's report, a 1981 Feasibility Study charted the basic criteria of redevelopment, through the production of a nine phase plan. Each phase would cost between £1 and £5 million, and take approximately two years each to complete.⁴²⁸ The P.S.A. was even more scathing of the building's suitability as a museum:

'Exhibitions cannot be conveniently arranged, closed for re-arrangement or refurbishment due to the size and shape of the galleries and the lack of flexibility in layout...It is not possible to increase the amount of material exhibited and this will therefore cause the Museum to fail to attract members of the public'. (32)

'Materials cannot be properly stored and therefore decay rather than preservation would be the fate of many exhibits...In the event of fire, the building would be unduly hazardous'. (32)

⁴²⁶ Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 'Meeting with PSA and OAL officials, 1100 16 September 1980', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5.

⁴²⁷ Milner (2002; 13). The existing galleries were also termed 'not suitable for modern display' by the Exhibitions Officer, falling under a broader desire to begin the process of upgrading the Museum's image and profile (Recorded Interview between JW and PRC, 21/06/13). Laurie Milner joined the IWM in 1967 as a curator, and from 1984, had been a Historian in the Department of Research and Information (Milner, 2002; 10).

⁴²⁸ 'Imperial War Museum Diagrammatic Feasibility Study – Ten Year Development Plan', March 1981, London Region P.S.A., Museums & Galleries Group II, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/6/4.

‘The fire arms and ammunition vault is unsatisfactory for the type of climate which can be provided. It is too damp for the proper conservation of such items which are found to be corroding’. (39)⁴²⁹

Further revisions resulted in another report generated during the spring of 1982, with five pages again dedicated to accentuating the poor physical condition of the building.⁴³⁰ It made for concerning reading, especially regarding the need to replace the inner courtyard roof. This glazed roof had been erected in 1935-6, over which time it had consistently leaked; RC acknowledged that it ‘had not been weatherproof in living memory, decaying woodwork, weak floors and damp walls’, and was now beyond repair.⁴³¹ Furthermore the Museum was restricted by the building’s structural constraints, meaning the exhibition space available was inadequate in both quantity and quality. The 1982 P.S.A’s report’s concluded that the building was:

‘...no longer capable of satisfactorily providing for the current or future needs of the Imperial War Museum...in short, spatially inadequate, functionally unsuitable, uneconomic to run and maintain, and fall[s] well below current minimum mandatory standards of safety. The way forward must therefore be in redevelopment on this site or elsewhere’.⁴³²

These conclusions surmised that the existing building’s condition and accommodation arrangement was incapable of housing the ‘dynamic institution’ of the IWM.⁴³³ In the short-term, the P.S.A. advised that the Museum acquire additional accommodation in order to allow for some immediate renovation work. In the longer term, the report detailed proposed time scales and a broad estimation of anticipated costs for four potential future investment options:

⁴²⁹ ‘Imperial War Museum Diagrammatic Feasibility Study – Ten Year Development Plan’, March 1981, London Region P.S.A., Museums & Galleries Group II, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/6/4.

⁴³⁰ Pages 4-9 of ‘IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building’, P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007. See also IWM Annual Report 1983-1985; 16.

⁴³¹ Page 7 of ‘Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum’, 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8. The original roof was demolished in late 1986 and the new barrel vaulted roof raised into position in September 1987 (Page 14 of IWM Annual Report, 1986-88). Frankland’s biography noted that the galleries ‘...were vulnerable to ordinary rain...roofs leaked like antiquated greenhouses’ (1998; 166).

⁴³² Page 9 of ‘IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building’, P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007.

⁴³³ Page 30-31 of ‘IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building’, P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007.

- Reconstruction of Central Courtyard Infill
- Total Redevelopment of Site
- Relocation in an Alternative Existing Building
- New Building on Greenfield Site

The third and fourth options of relocation or the construction of a purpose-made building on a 'Greenfield' site were the most radical solutions.⁴³⁴ The open site option was seen as a three year development project, as an outline study was carried out in London Docklands, but the high expenditure costs made this unrealistic.⁴³⁵ The plan for the second option listed eight independent phases costing £35 million, with 'extensive disruption to the working of the museum for a considerable period of time'.⁴³⁶

The report had clarified that purely superficial modifications would not alleviate the building's longstanding issues, and it made clear the extent of the work and improvements that was needed to ensure the institution's future.⁴³⁷ The existing shortcomings outlined above indicated that the new museum would need to provide facilities for new audience groups and a substantial increase in the quality and quantity of display space available, beyond ensuring that the building met with modern standards.

⁴³⁴ 'IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building', P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007. The Museum considered relocating to various alternative sites, including Victoria Air Terminal and both Bankside and Battersea power stations. Though they granted the luxury of space, they were predominantly 'unsuitable for museum occupation', and the large-scale single expenditure of acquiring these sites and then fitting them out made them unviable. See also P.S.A. Report, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/2.

⁴³⁵ Page 11-12 of 'IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building', P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007.

⁴³⁶ Page 10-11 of 'IWM: The Way Forward. Report of the Present Condition and Suitability for Purpose of the Imperial War Museum, Main Building', P.S.A. Draft Report, March 1982, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/01/007. The intention of the phases was to enable the execution of a continuous programme whilst also granting the opportunity to cease or delay the scheme without severe ramifications.

⁴³⁷ One member of staff outlined to Borg that '...no amount of repairs will improve the woefully inadequate public facilities in the building'. Letter from Angela Godwin to AB (09/03/84) 'Imperial War Museum – The Benefits of Redevelopment', IWM C/F EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/2.

5.3 – The Appointment of Dr Alan Borg

5.3.1 – The ‘New’ Imperial War Museum

The proposed work programme provided a fresh opportunity to reassess the Museum’s purpose, and to re-establish the role it had to play as Britain’s national War Museum. The Museum’s Trustees had established this ‘very radical plan’ as ‘the right and only way to safeguard the future viability of the Museum’; in short, they had the duty and responsibility of ensuring the future of the IWM.⁴³⁸ When Frankland handed over directorship of the IWM in 1982, he passed on the responsibility of seeing through what was now known as the ‘Redevelopment’ programme to his successor, Dr Alan Borg (AB).⁴³⁹

Borg’s background was in History of Art, having obtained his PhD from the Courtauld Institute. He worked for eight years in the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London before moving on to the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia. His intentions from the outset were about ‘modernising the displays...making them slightly less military historical’.⁴⁴⁰ The themes and content of the Frankland-era displays had largely met with an audience desire for such subject matter, though this had been in decline. Thus Borg recognised that change needed to be instigated in the form of giving new displays a wider appeal, thus granting the institution a refreshed sense of relevance for a new generation of less specialist visitors.⁴⁴¹ In order to do this, he reasoned that the Museum’s continuing coverage of conflict had meant that its available space for galleries had become too small to fulfil this function.⁴⁴² 1983 saw the appointment of architects Arups Associates who were

⁴³⁸ Letter from NF to Mr Hodges, P.S.A., 17/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5. See also IWM Annual Report 1983-1985; 14.

⁴³⁹ Borg’s introduction to the 1985 Museum Guidebook spoke of creating ‘what is virtually a new museum in this fine old building’ (Imperial War Museum Handbook, 1985, published by the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum). Before leaving, Frankland had sparsely outlined a five phase plan (‘Internal Memorandum from RC to NF’, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5), which involved rebuilding the Air Gallery, and the demolition and rebuilding of the East and West Wings. Both he and the Trustees had wanted to retain an existing exhibition titled ‘War’, with the latter party seeing this as having a ten to fifteen year future (Internal Memorandum from RC to NF, 23/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5. For details of this exhibition, see Frankland, 1998; 174).

⁴⁴⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and PJS conducted on 13/06/13.

⁴⁴¹ In this way, it could be argued that Borg was returning to one of the founding principles of the institution, which was that it acted as a multi-faceted war museum, rather than purely a military museum.

⁴⁴² Borg, A ‘Introduction’ Imperial War Museum Handbook, 1985, published by the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum. In this, he listed many public facilities that the institution presently lacked in a manner designed to justify the radical plans of restoring and renovating the building.

explicitly briefed to significantly increase the amount of gallery space.⁴⁴³ A solution of a three stage programme was accepted by the Trustees, with planning permission for the first stage obtained in April 1986.⁴⁴⁴ Financial approval from the Minister for the Arts for the first phase expenditure of £16.7 million was granted in December 1986.⁴⁴⁵ The Museum was closed to the public between November 1988 and March 1989 whilst the building work for the Large Exhibits Gallery (known as the Atrium) and the first phase of the new historical galleries was completed.⁴⁴⁶ On 29 June 1989, HM The Queen re-opened an institution which had redefined itself as an 'entirely new museum...created within the walls of the existing building'.⁴⁴⁷ Not only was emphasis placed upon its new public facing focus, with the improved visitor facilities that included a new café and shop, but its exhibitions were pitched as innovative and 'readily accessible' to both general and specialist visitors:

⁴⁴³ IWM Publicity Pack, 'History of the Building', IWM ExPA 0240. See also Page 13-14 of IWM Annual Report, 1986-1988. In 1980, it had already been considered by the Trustees that the high expenditure involved in the process needed to return a net gain of more than 30% in available floor space (Letter from NF to Mr Hodges, P.S.A., 17/07/80, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5). When completed, the Redevelopment offered the Museum three times the exhibition space it previously had (Page 44 of The 'New' Imperial War Museum Guidebook, 1989, The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum). Arups Associates, and its Chief Architect Sir Philip Dowson, were appointed after lobbying by AB, though an architectural firm had initially been appointed by the P.S.A. Taylor Woodrow Management Contracting Ltd were appointed management contractor for the construction works, which began in September 1986.

⁴⁴⁴ See IWM Annual Report, 1983-1985; 14-21.

⁴⁴⁵ See Page 13 of IWM Annual Report, 1986-1988. The Museum's Trustees' were to contribute £4.5 million towards this overall cost. Of this, £3m was raised by the Museum as a result of a public appeal for funds. The Museum raised over £95,000 from voluntary visitor donations from December 1984 – December 1985 (IWM Annual Report, 1983-1985; 20). Having been launched in January 1985, the Redevelopment Appeal appealed for public funds under a Committee, chaired by General Sir Harry Tuzo. This made use of an extensive advertising campaign, a travelling exhibition, and an audio-visual presentation to publicise the Redevelopment plans (IWM Annual Report, 1983-1985; 19-21).

⁴⁴⁶ Primarily for the benefit of the main contractor, Styles and Wood, and the moving/fitting out of large exhibits, it was felt that the exhibitions and facilities would have been too severely restricted to have justified staying open (Page 15 of IWM Annual Report, 1986-88 and Page 10 of IWM Annual Report, 1989-1992). By March 1988, the parameters of the timetable for completing the full set of new narrative displays had been realised. It was based on the premise that the Second World War galleries would open in mid-June 1989, and then funding would support the subsequent opening of the First World War galleries (See Internal Memorandum from PRC to Heads of Collecting Departments and PJS, 'Advance Notification of Items Likely to be Required for Display in the New Historical Exhibitions on A Floor', 02/03/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/1/1). The second stage of Redevelopment, for the completion of the post-war conflicts galleries amongst other renovations, would begin in 1993 (See Page 12 of IWM Annual Report, 1989-1992).

⁴⁴⁷ IWM Publicity Pack, 'Main Features of the Redevelopment Scheme', IWM ExPA 0240. See also The 'New' Imperial War Museum Guidebook, 1989, The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum. The Museum employed the design consultancy Minale Tattersfield to create a corporate identity, which produced a highly marketable logo within the competitive commercial sector (IWM Newsletter, January-March 1989, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1). For coverage of the re-opening event, see 'The Great Day at Last', IWM Newsletter April-June 1989, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1. The revamped Museum was recognised in winning the Sunday Times Building of the Year Award (IWM EN4/41/CF/1/15/002) and the European Museum of the Year Award (IWM EN4/41/CF/1/15/004).

‘Aided by the latest state of the art technology, the schoolchild, veteran, tourist, historian and enthusiast can follow a mixture of thematic and chronological displays which tell the story of war in our century’.⁴⁴⁸

From this, the institution had renewed its sense of purpose by enabling ‘an averagely intelligent but non-specialist visitor to understand [the two World Wars], what happened, why and what it was like for those who experienced [them]’.⁴⁴⁹ There was a requirement for the displays to be ‘stimulating, lively and attractive’, so as to meet the needs of these new audiences, and evidenced through the Museum’s new Borg-produced slogan, ‘Part of Your Family’s History’.⁴⁵⁰

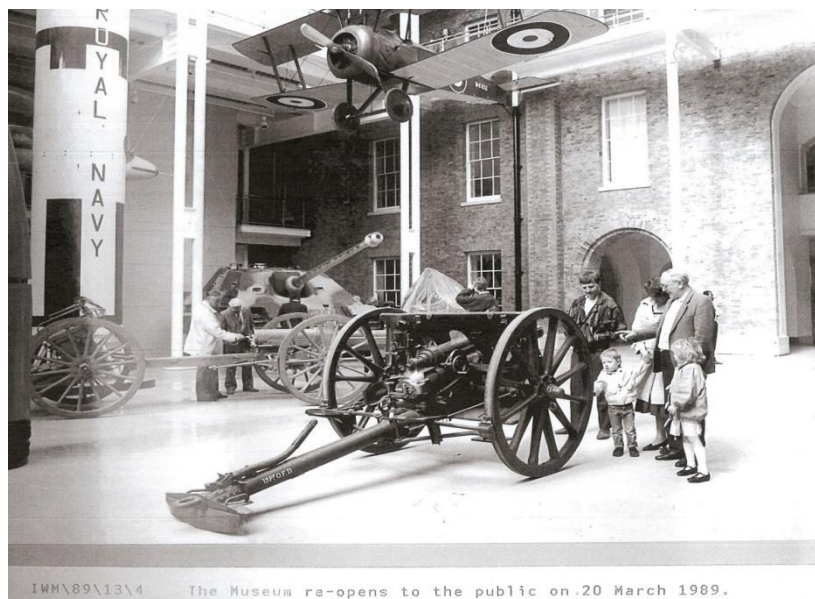


Figure 34 – ‘Part of Your Family’s History’ - The New Atrium Space

(©IWM/89/13/4)

⁴⁴⁸ IWM Publicity Pack, ‘Main Features of the Redevelopment Scheme’, IWM ExPA 0240. The Atrium was described as a ‘spectacular large exhibition hall offering dramatic views of more than fifty historic exhibits’. At the June 1989 reopening event, Sir John Grandy (Chairman of Trustees) observed in his speech that ‘The visitor these days has high expectations; there are countless highly attractive alternatives for a day out...in addition to the rebuild and general sprucing up, we have exploited new technology...to create an up-to-date and, we hope, more striking and lasting type of presentation’ (‘The Great Day at Last’, IWM Newsletter April-June 1989, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1). This demonstrates a perception that the Museum was aware of the broader competitive tourist market in which it now found itself.

⁴⁴⁹ PRC, ‘Fitting Out the New Museum’, IWM Newsletter April-June 1988, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1.

⁴⁵⁰ See Figure 34; PRC, ‘Fitting Out the New Museum’, IWM Newsletter April-June 1988, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1. This was an important and conscious statement in re-determining the personal links to the events within the Museum’s remit, and that these events directly affected visitor members’ families. This factor had to be made more explicit as time went on, and distance particularly to the First World War increased (See Recorded Interview between Borg, A and Maclaren, V, 14/08/98, IWM Catalogue Number 18531).

5.3.2 – Rethinking the Purpose of the Museum

In planning this multi-faceted ‘Redevelopment’, the Museum’s staff had undertaken various exercises to ascertain what they believed the Museum was for and, to a lesser extent, how the public perceived them. In interview, the Exhibitions Officer, Penny Ritchie Calder (PRC) recalled the issue of the institution’s ‘hugely off-putting’ name, which Borg notoriously described as the three worst words in the English language.⁴⁵¹ AB had already had to defend the new plans for the Museum, and utilised a national newspaper to respond to criticism of its change in direction:

‘Your correspondent...chastises the Imperial War Museum for abandoning the ‘Cabinet of Curiosities’ approach to Museum display. I have some sympathy with this view and believe that a good museum should cater for all types of visitor. The Imperial War Museum will be able to do this once its redevelopment scheme is carried out. Unfortunately, although the plans were presented to the government more than eight months ago, the go-ahead has not yet been received. This is as frustrating for those who work in the Museum as for those who visit it. Exhibitions cannot be planned, budgets cannot be allocated, educational programmes cannot be drawn up, and public facilities continue to deteriorate. Naturally, I hope the decision about the Museum’s future will be favourable, but most of all I hope for a decision’.⁴⁵²

Prior to the Redevelopment, it had been the efforts of Dr Christopher Dowling (Head of Museum Services) through the temporary exhibitions programme that had granted the Museum increased press coverage and publicity.⁴⁵³ For PRC, this was an important stage in beginning to reappraise the Museum’s public image:

‘...the perception of people, we weren’t seen in that golden aura of the British Museum, the V&A and the Science Museum, the South Ken lot, we were in Lambeth for a start...we were perhaps perceived as something sort-of slightly

⁴⁵¹ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

⁴⁵² Letter from Alan Borg to the Editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, 01/08/84, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/2.

⁴⁵³ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

archaic, so it was quite interesting to be able to start shedding that image and re-building'.⁴⁵⁴

5.3.3 – Redefining the Museum's Philosophical Approach

The Redevelopment was additionally required to address the renewed interest in museology of engaging larger audiences, who were not necessarily interested in the subject matter. No longer could it be a specialised military history-focused display, but needed to have meaning to a broader range of visitors.⁴⁵⁵ To realise this aim, AB requested that, alongside a proposed exhibits list, this new approach be put down in a design brief containing the aims and intentions of the new displays, and proposals as to how these might be achieved.⁴⁵⁶ He put forward his own suggestions; that the displays should aim to 'tell the story as objectively and as fully as possible' and that it would use the full range of the collections including audio-visual material and works of art.⁴⁵⁷ Angela Godwin (AG) compiled a general philosophy document for Borg in 1986.⁴⁵⁸ Defining the exhibiting function of a museum as being 'In essence to allow the public to view a representative selection of appropriately labelled exhibits covering all main subject areas', she subsequently classified what she labelled the 'Particular problems of the Imperial War Museum'. This prompted two values; that 'A Boy's Own approach might appeal to some but we would not be taking our role seriously if we followed this line', nor could a sentimental or nostalgic view be allowed 'to creep too far into our exhibitions':

⁴⁵⁴ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13. PRC promoted the idea that the Redevelopment prioritised the practical elements of remedying the gallery space suitable for modern display, but equally that it offered an opportunity to upgrade the Museum's external image and profile.

⁴⁵⁵ The Trustees had already decided by this time to levy a general admission charge for the reopened Museum, and was one of the first British museums to do so (See Harrison, 2005; 44). This changed the dynamic of visitor expectation, which was now of heightened importance to the institution's reputation. See Internal Memorandum from RC to AB, 'Notes of a Meeting of the Redevelopment Steering Group on Friday 4 December 1987', 18/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/7/7/3. See also Recorded Interview between Borg, A and Maclaren, V, 14/08/98, IWM Catalogue Number 18531.

⁴⁵⁶ Internal Memorandum from AB to PRC/AG (Cc'd to RC), 'Redevelopment Action, 06/06/86, IWM ExPA 0235.

⁴⁵⁷ Internal Memorandum from AB to PRC/AG (Cc'd to RC), 'Redevelopment Action, 06/06/86, IWM ExPA 0235. AB also listed a desire to allow for areas in which visitors could complete detailed study and for participatory exhibits. Wanting to provide visitors with a more obviously intensive experience, he reasoned that reconstructions conveyed atmosphere and the feeling of being there; 'The criticism I hear most often from our visitors is that the Museum does not give the feeling of what war was like. Reconstructions can do this, if they are good enough.... Touch, sound and smell are all important. It must be rather frightening.'

⁴⁵⁸ Internal Memorandum from AG to AB, 'Permanent Exhibition Plans: Redevelopment', 11/12/86, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/2. This was put together in consultation with PRC and Anita Ballin from the Department of Education.

‘The role of the Exhibitions Officer under your general direction is to ensure good taste and balance while not being afraid to show the horrors of war in their stark reality. The ‘horror’ is something we tend to fight shy of’.⁴⁵⁹

AG’s Brief also put some distance with the aims of the original Museum:

‘Our historical perspective has shifted and attitudes have changed...A display on conscientious objectors would not have sat easily in the Crystal Palace and Utility furniture was too commonplace to be included in the post-war museum but both belong to the museum of the eighties and nineties. In short the redeveloped museum must truly reflect the breadth of the Museum’s terms of reference. We must not be a military museum with frills on’.⁴⁶⁰

When it came to display policy, AG suggested that the new exhibitions should be situated between the extremes of a largely theatrical approach (creating atmosphere and evoking emotion) with that of a didactic approach favouring formal learning. The former was recognised as the technique favoured by visitor attractions such as the London Dungeon (tableaux, realistic dummies and sound effects to recreate historical events), to which AG noted ‘Such a style would hardly be in good taste for illustrating war – we are not the museum for cheap gimmicks’.⁴⁶¹ She considered the alternative style as the one favoured by the Frankland era Department of Permanent Exhibitions, who had sought to ‘tell a story by carefully worked sequential graphics and captions – ‘books on walls’ – supported by interactive and ‘high tech’ features’. AG termed this style ‘often dull and usually pretentious’, backing up the statement with the claim that her colleagues from the Department of Education shared the view that it was not the Museum’s job to teach in any direct way.⁴⁶²

PRC completed the Exhibition Brief in 1987.⁴⁶³ This detailed interpretative brief provided an introductory list to the historical sections of the two sets of galleries,

⁴⁵⁹ Internal Memorandum from Angela Godwin to AB, ‘Permanent Exhibition Plans: Redevelopment’, 11/12/86, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/2.

⁴⁶⁰ Internal Memorandum from Angela Godwin to AB, ‘Permanent Exhibition Plans: Redevelopment’, 11/12/86, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/2.

⁴⁶¹ Internal Memorandum from Angela Godwin to AB, ‘Permanent Exhibition Plans: Redevelopment’, 11/12/86, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/2. She advocated that some of the objects within the Museum’s collections would not need to be ‘dressed up’ in order to have impact upon visitors.

⁴⁶² Internal Memorandum from Angela Godwin to AB, ‘Permanent Exhibition Plans: Redevelopment’, 11/12/86, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/2. AG instead considered that the reference departments should be catering for those with requirements for more specialised information.

⁴⁶³ See Appendix III for breakdown of the Galleries’ Sections (IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/2).

based on an estimated guideline size for each section.⁴⁶⁴ It gave a brief indication of the nature and quantity of 2-D and 3-D exhibits available for each section, including the areas of 'special interest' which would feature collections of military regalia or cap badges.

5.4 – The Imperial War Museum's 1990 First World War Galleries

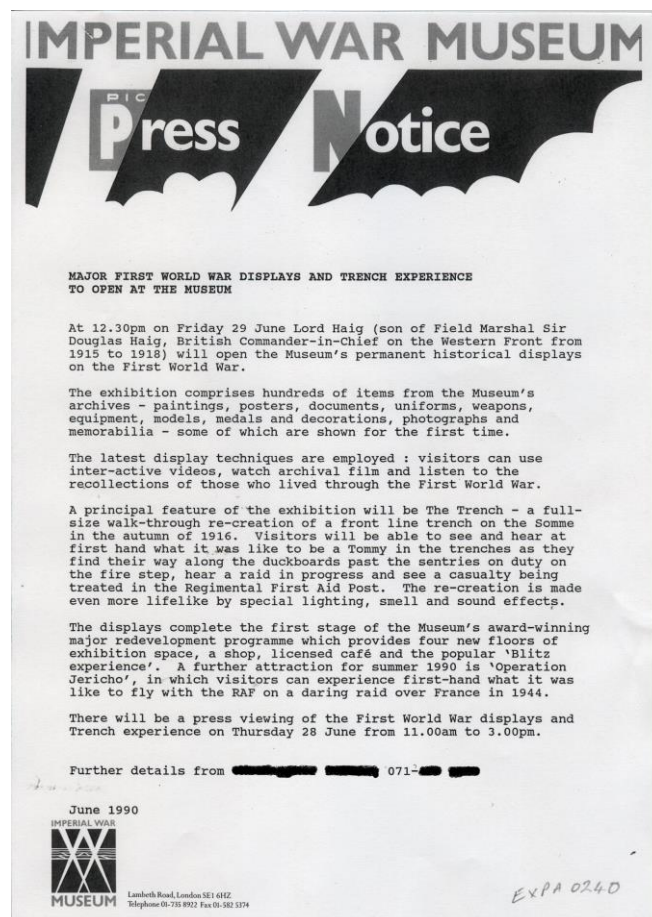


Figure 35 - IWM Press Notice for First World War Galleries, June 1990

(IWM ExPA 0240)

⁴⁶⁴ 'IWM Redevelopment Brief for the Design of Exhibition Areas on A and B Floors', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/10/001. This records that the maximum usable display in the new central gallery on A Floor was c.1400m². See 'Allocation of space for historical displays on A Floor'; this was usually based on the historical importance of the subject, in balance with the amount and size of material available.

5.4.1 – The Backdrop to the Galleries and Their Opening

This chapter now aims to examine the processes of the conception, design and construction of the Museum's First World War galleries completed in 1990, hereby providing an overall critique of their display philosophy. This is addressed by considering the influences of the major players involved in their creation, analysing records from the Museum's archive, and utilising the contemporary recollections of staff members who were involved. After the Museum had reopened in 1989, a major donation from J Paul Getty Jr enabled the construction of this second set of permanent historical galleries to begin in earnest.⁴⁶⁵ A year later, on Friday 29th June 1990, they were opened by the son of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Lord Haig, with eight First World War veterans in attendance (See Figures 35 and 36).⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁵ IWM Newsletter, January-March 1989, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1. Sponsorship and donations remained a tricky issue for the IWM through the period, amidst the 1979-1990 Conservative Government (See Lang et al, 2006; 24). RC spoke in interview about the fact that the story of war is not an investable commodity in the way that art is, and that corporate entities were never particularly inclined to support the Museum. AB was commonly acknowledged as being a very effective fundraiser (as shown by the Government contribution towards the Redevelopment being upped from £9 to £12m) and he referred to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's support for the Museum in interview, in that she hosted a reception at 10 Downing Street for the Redevelopment Appeal in October 1985 (Recorded Interview between Borg, A and Maclaren, V, 14/08/98, IWM Catalogue Number 18531; IWM Annual Report, 1983-1985; 21). Prior to schemes such as the National Lottery, certain trusts and foundations 'were prepared to give...persuaded of the educational role of the Museum and what we were seeking to do' (Recorded Interview between RC, AC and JW, conducted on 29/05/13). This was evidenced by the proposal to create a purpose-built Education Centre (IWM Redevelopment Appeal Brochures, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/4). However the 1986-1988 Annual Report noted that no funds had been forthcoming, following a sponsorship campaign for the new displays that was launched in 1988 and shown to 100 companies. See Appendix C (Page 49-51) of the 1986-88 Annual Report for a list of the IWM Redevelopment Appeal Major Donors, IWM Annual Report, 1986-88.

⁴⁶⁶ Letter from Lord Haig to Lord Bramall, 25/04/90, IWM ExPA 0240.

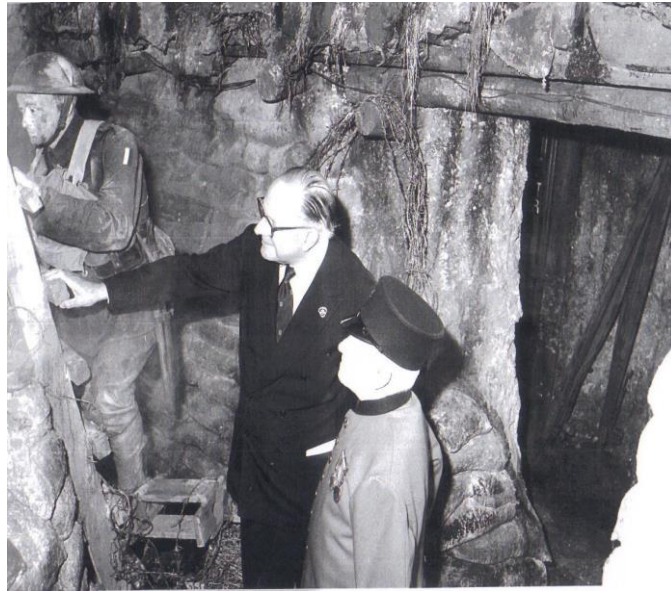


Figure 36 – Lord Haig and a Chelsea Pensioner tour the Trench Experience,

29 June 1990 (©IWM//90/53/17)

5.4.2 – The Galleries’ Structure

The exhibition was divided into ten themed gallery areas:

- Origins and Outbreak of the War
- Recruitment
- The Western Front
- The War in the Air
- The War at Sea
- The War Against Turkey
- The Eastern Front
- The Balkan and Italian Fronts
- The Home Front
- Armistice and the cost of the War ⁴⁶⁷

Each area contained ‘some of the best and most interesting exhibitions from the collections, including three-dimensional exhibits, documents, books, posters and works of art. Some have not been displayed for several decades’.⁴⁶⁸ Amongst the

⁴⁶⁷ See Appendix III and ‘First World War’ document (IWM ExPA 0266) for a more detailed breakdown of the galleries’ sections.

⁴⁶⁸ ‘Imperial War Museum - First World War Exhibition’ Document, IWM ExPA 0240.

showcases were well-known objects from the conflict; T E Lawrence's robes and rifle, the Engine from the aircraft flow by Baron von Richthofen (The Red Baron), letters and manuscripts of famous war poets (including Rupert Brooke, Isaac Rosenberg and Siegfried Sassoon), material from the 1914 Christmas Truce on the Western Front, and relics from the sunk passenger liner *Lusitania*.⁴⁶⁹ The exhibition made extensive use of the Museum's film and sound collections through three interactive videos examining the Western Front, the War against Turkey and the Home Front. Presentations on the Western Front and Russia's involvement in the conflict were shown on large video screens, whilst handsets allowed visitors to hear extracts of First World War reminiscences from the Museum's Sound Archive.⁴⁷⁰



Figure 37 – Margaret Gwyer's Camisole from RMS *Lusitania* on Display

(©IWM UNI 11978. Sourced by Author)

⁴⁶⁹ See Figure 37. 'Imperial War Museum - First World War Exhibition' Document, IWM ExPA 0240. The total number of exhibits was listed as 1,538 (IWM ExPA 0269).

⁴⁷⁰ 'Imperial War Museum - First World War Exhibition' Document, IWM ExPA 0240.

5.4.3 – The Department of Research & Information and the Collections

Survey

The initial planning phases for these galleries had begun in 1987, when the Museum's Research and Information Department (R&I) were delegated with its principal elements of exhibit research, drafting the text for all mainline historical captions and drafting all object captions.⁴⁷¹ The Head of the Department, Peter Simkins (PJS), recalled his Team's tasks:

'...so it was our job in R&I to recommend which exhibits, or documents or film or whatever, made the historical points visually, that we thought were important, and I suppose it was us essentially with contributions with a large number of other people that said these are the themes which I think we ought to reflect and illustrate, and these are the exhibits which we recommend that might be used to do it...whether there were bits of film or documents or whatever'.⁴⁷²

Falling under the remit of exhibit research, their first task was to respond to AB's request for a report detailing the strengths and weakness of the Museum's collections in historical and display terms.⁴⁷³ Taking the form of a large scale Collections Survey, this would comprise of a full examination and extensive appraisal of the holdings, to ensure 'that every item in the Museum's possession could be

⁴⁷¹ Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (16/01/87) 'Redevelopment Displays: Brief for Research and Information Staff. Brief for first stage of work to be undertaken by the Research and Information Office', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2. See also Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (CC'd to RC), 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Update on Research and Information Office Work', 24/08/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2. This gives a timeline outlining all of their major completed and outstanding tasks relating to the new exhibitions. It was an all-encompassing role, ranging from conducting film and photographic research for A/V features to proof-reading and checking all of the typesetting and artwork (See Internal Memorandum from Emma Davidson to PJS, 20/06/90, IWM ExPA 0266, requesting R&I to double check the captions against the exhibits). It should be noted that the Collections Survey would incorporate both Second and First World War objects and shared a mutual philosophy, though certain aspects of the planning for the First World War galleries would take place at a later stage. In total, the Lower Ground Floor would consist of 1500m² of display space dealing with 28 major subjects (See PRC, 'Fitting Out the New Museum', April-June 1988 IWM Newsletter, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1).

⁴⁷² Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁴⁷³ The request to conduct the Survey was sent to R&I by the Exhibitions Officer, Penny Ritchie Calder. See Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (16/01/87) 'Redevelopment Displays: Brief for Research and Information Staff. Brief for first stage of work to be undertaken by the Research and Information Office', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2 and IWM ExPA 0077. PJS' report noted that the survey 'has occupied the bulk of the Office's time and effort since 20 February 1987' (Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Report on Survey of the Collections', 20/11/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/7/1).

given due consideration for display'.⁴⁷⁴ Thus the curatorial staff would make the decisions for selection, based upon their perceived understanding of visitor needs.

ExPA 0333 D

development displays

EXHIBIT SHEET

Section No

'Comforts from Home'. In addition to their rations, soldiers at the front received presents of food and sweets from manufacturers and philanthropic organisations, particularly at Christmas. A selection of these is shown here, including chocolate from the West Indies and a Christmas pudding sent by the London Territorial Association in 1914.

dimensions (incl. weight if appropriate)

present location B Floor Displays - WWI Exhibition.

condition good

preservation required? Yes/No (give details)

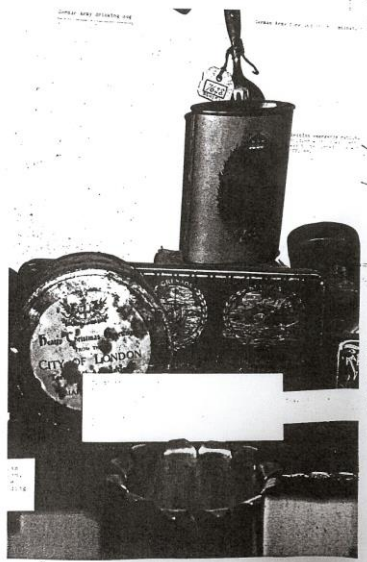
initial designation:

Essential

Desirable

Optional

other comments:



initials: PHLR

date: August 1987

Figure 38 - Example Exhibit Sheet Detailing

'Comforts from Home' objects (IWM ExPA 0333)

Information relating to every object was compiled onto an Exhibit Sheet, acting as a brief summary record, and accompanied by a photograph (See Figure 38).⁴⁷⁵ Approximately 13,000 Exhibits Sheets were compiled.⁴⁷⁶ It was intended that

⁴⁷⁴ 'Imperial War Museum - First World War Exhibition' Document, IWM ExPA 0240.

⁴⁷⁵ See Figure 38. See IWM ExPA 0295 and ExPA 0306-0334 for section listings of objects and 'Historical Exhibition - Exhibits for First World War Exhibition', IWM ExPA 0264 for a categorical list of exhibits. Single examples were used for duplicate exhibits, such as a standard Lee Enfield rifle. Several objects had already been recorded from their existing display on the B Floor exhibitions.

⁴⁷⁶ Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Report on Survey of the Collections', 20/11/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/7/1. From November, R&I started sifting the Exhibit Sheets by allocating them to

the sheets would list enough information, such as object dimensions, so to prove sufficient for completing object captions and planning the showcases.⁴⁷⁷ This process ensured that there would be a close degree of interaction and co-operation between R&I and the collecting departments.⁴⁷⁸ R&I staff required complete access to the collections, with collecting department staff on hand to assist with identification, background information and catalogue details:

‘...it was really sort-of going into drawers, poster and prints collections saying ‘I think this illustrates the invasion of Belgium in 1914’...there were literally hundreds of those developed on Polaroid cameras, it was bloody hard work...but at least we had a sort-of clearer idea about the core, about what could illustrate what’.⁴⁷⁹

It was originally estimated that the selection of exhibits would take around five months, as PRC had requested all batches of Exhibit Sheets be completed for mid-June 1987.⁴⁸⁰ However this proved an insufficient period of time. By the time June arrived, 6000 exhibits had been catalogued, mainly from the Department of Exhibits and Firearms (DEAF) with assistance from the department’s staff, Martin Garnett and Mike Hibberd (MH). At this point, the process was described in an interim report by R&I staff member Mark Seaman as ‘extremely rewarding (if on occasion laborious and time consuming)’.⁴⁸¹ It was now recognised that the scale of this ‘very substantial’ task had not been fully comprehended because ‘the time taken in unpacking, identifying, describing, measuring, assessing, photographing and

broad subject headings, and then sub-dividing these into more precise ‘topic files’. For example, ‘Western Front, 1914-18’ included separate topic files relating to battles and places; equipment; artillery; grenades; machine guns and mortars; trench routine; leave and recreation; personalities; medical services etc.

⁴⁷⁷ The Exhibit Sheets contained the following categories of information; ‘Item’, ‘Full Description’ including the catalogue number, ‘Dimensions’, ‘Current Location’, ‘Condition’, ‘Conservation Required’ and ‘Initial Designation: Essential/Desirable/Optional’. Sample Exhibit Sheet attached to Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (16/01/87) ‘Redevelopment Displays: Brief for Research and Information Staff. Brief for first stage of work to be undertaken by the Research and Information Office’, IWM ExPA 0077. See also Internal Memorandum from PRC to Heads of Collecting Departments and PJS, ‘Advance Notification of Items Likely to be Required for Display in the New Historical Exhibitions on A Floor’, 02/03/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1.

⁴⁷⁸ See Internal Memorandum from PRC to Heads of Collecting Departments (Cc’d to R&I Officer) (15/01/87) ‘Redevelopment: Exhibition Research Work’, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1.

⁴⁷⁹ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁴⁸⁰ Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC (25/11/87), ‘Redevelopment Displays: Conservation etc. Notes of a Meeting held on 4 November 1987’, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007.

⁴⁸¹ Internal Memorandum from Mark Seaman to PJS (02/06/87) ‘Survey of Museum’s Collections for Redevelopment Displays’, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1.

replacing each exhibit has been far greater than anticipated'.⁴⁸² Beyond recording items not previously known about, an absence of catalogues for certain sections of the collections made the process of identification tricky.⁴⁸³ In light of the increased time that the Survey was taking, it was recommended that it 'concentrate primarily' upon the three-dimensional objects within DEAF, with curatorial expertise and knowledge of the remaining records departments utilised to recommend suitable exhibits – rather than systematically viewing whole collections.⁴⁸⁴ Thus the trope of prior inherited staff knowledge of the collections was to become the fundamental channel through which objects would become eligible for display.

5.4.4 – The Object Selection Process

In selecting objects from the Museum's rich collections, the R&I Team consulted directly with conservation staff and often went through the stores together. Though Mark Seaman and Neil Young were new members of R&I, both PJS and Laurie Milner had been involved with the Exhibitions Department in earlier roles at the Museum, and therefore had a good sense of what objects were available to draw upon. As a primary conservator, Mike Hibberd (MH) recounted that this access to the collections fostered an integrated memory of what objects were available and where they were currently located. Some objects had now been conserved and could therefore be recommended for re-display, or potentially displayed for the first time. The co-operation between the different departmental staff was a key factor within the process, because of the consistent interaction between them; MH suggested that the

⁴⁸² Internal Memorandum from Mark Seaman to PJS (02/06/87) 'Survey of Museum's Collections for Redevelopment Displays', IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1. It was estimated that a workforce of one member of staff from R&I, one from DEAF, and the assistance of the storeman would complete an examination of the Museum's stores in 54 working days. The painstaking endeavour was invaluable in 're-discovering' some lost exhibits, and frequent reference was paid to the fact that the process could not be hurried. The deadline was extended to the end of October and further manpower recruited to help complete it (See Internal Memorandum from RC to David Penn/Angela Godwin/PJS (Cc'd to AB) (11/06/87) 'Redevelopment Exhibitions', IWM ExPA 0077). Philip Dutton from the Department of Information Retrieval and Sara Roberts from the Department of Museum Services was also seconded from June 1987, at the same time that Neil Young joined R&I (See Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Report on Survey of the Collections', 20/11/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/11/7/1).

⁴⁸³ It was noted that this difficulty was frequently offset by the 'sound working knowledge of the collections' held by DEAF as well as Laurie Milner and Mark Seaman (Internal Memorandum from Mark Seaman to PJS (02/06/87) 'Survey of Museum's Collections for Redevelopment Displays', IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1). Such a detailed working knowledge of the collections – in terms of understanding how weapons physically functioned – was a valuable asset when it came to compiling object captions.

⁴⁸⁴ Internal Memorandum from RC to David Penn/Angela Godwin/PJS (Cc'd to AB) (11/06/87) 'Redevelopment Exhibitions', IWM ExPA 0077.

whole process 'relied almost on folk memory'.⁴⁸⁵ There was an overall desire amongst those staff selecting the objects for display to:

'...present the best parts of your collection, if, well not your collection, but the collection as you see it, and very often, curators have built up, been working towards, completing a collection of certain aspects of the material they care for and, that is for the public, it's not for them, they take a personal interest but, you think, oh here is the opportunity to get this out into the public domain'.

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It is therefore apparent that a highly valuable working knowledge of the Museum's collections was thus fostered through the course of this process. It relied on the fact that there was a constant stream of established members of staff within the Department, most of whom had been involved in putting together exhibitions in the Museum since the 1970s. This process of selecting objects had consequences for the interaction between different departments of the Museum. R&I were designated as a distinctive group, as evidenced by Dianne Condell's definition of 'Peter Simkins and his merry men'.⁴⁸⁷ When asked about the negotiations between R&I and the Department of Documents and of Art, MH referred to the fact that the R&I staff who were working on exhibition selection 'were old pals' with the conservation staff, united in their mutual interest in the hardware of warfare.⁴⁸⁸ This resource was being passed down through the generations of staff within related departments within the internal structure of the Museum. One example of this detailed working knowledge was Laurie Milner's awareness of the location of objects that made up an individual British soldier's pack.⁴⁸⁹ Having consulted with kit-lists and by drawing on his own private collection of objects, he was able to compile a soldier's equipment – ranging from the purely military equipment, his webbing and the more personal and practical items such as a razor, soap, needle and thread - by assembling objects all of which

⁴⁸⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and MH conducted on 18/06/13. This was in spite of the fact that two of the R&I staff, Mark Seaman and Neil Young, were fairly new to proceedings.

⁴⁸⁶ Interview between JW and MH conducted on 18/06/13.

⁴⁸⁷ Letter from Di Condell (DEAF) to PRC (CC'd to David Penn), 'A Floor – First World War Exhibition – Exhibits Selection', 09/10/89, IWM ExPA 0254.

⁴⁸⁸ Interview between JW and MH conducted on 18/06/13. MH recalled aiding R&I staff on the technological aspects of some objects to help provide description for their captions. PJS also expressed his pride in having worked with these 'very agreeable team-mates' and 'exemplary colleagues' (Recorded Interview between JW and PJS, conducted on 13/06/13).

⁴⁸⁹ See Recorded Interview between JW and PJS, conducted on 13/06/13.

were located in different collections.⁴⁹⁰ The strength of the collections equated to an imbalance in its coverage of British involvement in the First World War, given that much material had been accumulated through official channels and given to the Museum as part of its orchestrated collection policy.⁴⁹¹ MH recounted that this wealth in these particular collections provided much choice for the curators, but caused problems in others:

‘...you were scratching around to find anything relating to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, apart from uniforms and firearms, and not a great deal, the same goes with, if you go through Bulgaria, Romania, a uniform and a flag, and a rifle, is about all you can find, and that was a challenge to find any relevant material...in some respects, a lot of the areas, it was the tip of the iceberg, in other areas, it was almost everything you had, and if you look at the campaign in South-West Africa or German East Africa, the Museum is very weak in that area, there was very little...I don’t recall any specific acquisitions being made to feed these gaps, one or two fortuitous things happened during the selection of material, one or two pieces came in, this is ideal for inclusion, let’s add it to the list’.⁴⁹²

There was therefore no desire to withhold objects on account of their fragile nature, but instead a real keenness to get objects ‘out there’ in showing a cross-section of

⁴⁹⁰ See Recorded Interview between PD and JW, conducted on 09/05/13, for praise of Laure Milner’s knowledge of the collections.

⁴⁹¹ The 450 Exhibit Sheets relating to ‘Origins and Outbreak of the First World War’ mainly consisted of items of full dress uniform of the pre-1914 period, including the collection of Imperial German uniforms, head-dress and insignia. Each section was thus provisionally assessed within PJS’ report on its strengths and weaknesses. This records that the ‘Western Front’ section was ‘the richest area of the Museum’s collections’ in terms of depth and variety, and the fact that the Museum had strong existing collections on topics such as ‘Women’s Work’. It also notes where the gaps are; PJS noted that because the Museum had little to illustrate the Sarajevo assassination, ‘We in the Museum – and, of course, the designers – will therefore have to give very careful thought as to how such topics as the pre-war alliance systems can be covered in an interesting and exciting way’. Certain areas, such as ‘Recruiting and Mobilisation’ consisted mostly of flat, two-dimensional objects, whilst the inclusion of ‘interesting items relating to the Easter Rising of 1916’ would have to be discussed in light of their possessing ‘sensitive political overtones’. Some of the non-British related sections could be adequately covered with existing limited material (such as ‘Italy and Austria’ and ‘Africa’), the ‘Eastern Front’ holdings were termed ‘relatively lightweight’, given its scale and historical importance. PJS was already aware that it would be these sections where ‘audio-visual techniques will have to be considered as a means of conveying the impact and importance of events’. Other sections, such as ‘War at Sea’, would be illustrated by a combination of ‘hardware’ with the strength of the Museum’s printed material, documents and photographic collections. PJS was aware that the curators risked being ‘beguiled by the quality of the exhibits and of giving them an emphasis that their overall historical significance does not justify’ (Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, ‘Report on Survey of the Collections’, 20/11/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/7/1).

⁴⁹² Recorded Interview between JW and MH conducted on 18/06/13.

material, varying from uniforms, weapons and pieces and equipment, upon what was essentially a public stage.⁴⁹³

5.4.5 – Completion of the Survey

The Collections Survey assignment was completed in November 1987, after an intense ten month period of findings that covered around 30,000 items.⁴⁹⁴ The thousands of exhibit sheets had been sorted into thematic groups, with a concluding survey report duly completed for the Director General by PJS.⁴⁹⁵ The report's objective had identified the strengths and weaknesses within the IWM collections – essentially to re-examine what the Museum actually had. In so doing, it improved upon the existing knowledge of the collections, and investigated areas of the Museum's holdings that had 'never been fully explored because of lack of time and resources'.⁴⁹⁶ In turn, this established the range of material worthy of merit for potential display.⁴⁹⁷ During this period of review, Borg outlined his *modus operandi* through a series of guidelines to guide the historical concept of the Redevelopment.⁴⁹⁸ This tasked R&I with drawing up detailed 'storyline' briefs for

⁴⁹³ Interview between JW and MH conducted on 18/06/13. Beyond creating a competition for space, this obligation to showcase the collections was also expressed by PD, who recalled 'Everyone acknowledged that we were cramming things in, because there was so much to cram in...we had such a wonderful collection, we had a duty to put as much as possible on display' (Recorded Interview between PD and JW, conducted on 09/05/13). However the absence of 'large' objects within the gallery space was down to the fear that such exhibits 'might be seen as unduly dominating' (See Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC, 'Notes of an Exhibition Liaison Meeting held with Jasper Jacob Associates on 4 May 1988, 12/05/88, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1). It is important to note staff awareness that 'not to display objects was itself deeply problematic in terms of public accountability' (Macdonald, 2002; 248), in order to justify their state funding.

⁴⁹⁴ Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC (25/11/87), 'Redevelopment Displays: Conservation etc. Notes of a Meeting held on 4 November 1987', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007. The collections that formed the survey were Exhibits and Firearms (DEAF), Documents, Printed Books, Film and Sound. DEAF incorporated the widest range of items, from ephemera to large exhibits, with some items stored in the reserve collections at Duxford.

⁴⁹⁵ See Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Report on Survey of the Collections', 20/11/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/7/1. AB thanked PJS for the report, calling it 'an extremely valuable document' and seeing the whole exercise as 'clearly worthwhile' (Internal Memorandum from AB to PJS (Cc'd to RC) (25/11/87), IWM ExPA 0110). There were 5,278 sheets allocated to the 16 broad subject headings relating to the First World War, based on the outline display briefs submitted by PRC.

⁴⁹⁶ Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (16/01/87) 'Redevelopment Displays: Brief for Research and Information Staff. Brief for first stage of work to be undertaken by the Research and Information Office', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2.

⁴⁹⁷ IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1. In this way, prior knowledge of an individual object's provenance would ensure its display worthiness, with PRC requesting that the research bring to light 'material which has not been displays for many decades' (Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (16/01/87) 'Redevelopment Displays: Brief for Research and Information Staff. Brief for first stage of work to be undertaken by the Research and Information Office', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2).

⁴⁹⁸ See Internal Memorandum from AB to RC/PRC/PJS (29/07/87) 'Redevelopment Displays', IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1.

each section to indicate ‘...the subjects to be covered, and their historical interpretation and the nature, extent or lack of potential exhibits’.⁴⁹⁹ Borg wanted each area to be prepared ‘in a coherent and detailed fashion, from storyline brief to agreed selection and display of exhibitions’, with PRC to liaise between departments in playing the ‘co-ordinating role’.⁵⁰⁰

5.5 – Applying the New Philosophy to the Galleries

5.5.1 – Allocating the Gallery Space and Anticipating Pitfalls

From the knowledge gathered as a result of the Collections Survey, PJS set out a document titled ‘Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays’.⁵⁰¹ This outlined the key exhibition objectives; that they should be ‘interesting, stimulating, lively and attractive’, make ‘effective use of the latest developments in museum and display technology’ and ‘should serve as a showcase for the richness of the Museum’s collections as a whole’.⁵⁰² On the other hand, it was also recognised that a temptation to cover too much would lead to ‘the impact and balance of the exhibitions [being] seriously weakened and the end product [being] diffused and unsatisfactory’.⁵⁰³ To this end, selection priority was given to mainstream ‘common experience’ topics:

‘To illustrate the experience of those who served on the Western Front or lived through the Blitz is one thing; to cover the experience of someone who spent the Second World War guarding a fuel dump in the Orkneys is quite another’.⁵⁰⁴

⁴⁹⁹ Internal Memorandum from AB to RC/PRC/PJS (29/07/87) ‘Redevelopment Displays’, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1.

⁵⁰⁰ Internal Memorandum from AB to RC/PRC/PJS (29/07/87) ‘Redevelopment Displays’, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1. See Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS, 21/12/87, IWM ExPA 0077 for detailing of the forms that needed to be completed (Summary page for each historical section and a separate form for each individual topic within each section). These were ‘not meant to tie us down to precisely the number of objects to be displayed, but simply to give the designer an idea of the range of material we would like to include’.

⁵⁰¹ Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, ‘Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays’, 11/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007. For extracts, see Appendix VII.

⁵⁰² Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, ‘Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays’, 11/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007.

⁵⁰³ Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, ‘Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays’, 11/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007.

⁵⁰⁴ Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, ‘Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays’, 11/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007. What PJS was trying to portray was that unusual exhibits or stories should not be included ‘at the expense of mainstream material, nor

The exhibitions were therefore required to ‘adequately reflect the variety and range’ of the collections without always having to convey their depth, upon which the proposed deployment of study galleries and special exhibitions would be used to highlight collections in more detail.⁵⁰⁵ It had been noted in the 1980 Redevelopment Brief that one of the key failings of the Museum’s existing permanent galleries had been that they brought visitors and exhibits into contact, ‘but very little was done to help them organize and extend their knowledge’.⁵⁰⁶ The decision to portion the exhibition space ‘into smaller areas containing chambers or alcoves large enough for groups of about ten visitors to observe some aspect of the exhibition’ can be seen in response to this; it was felt that this formatting would hold visitor attention more effectively through the partitioning of ‘relatively small, perceptually manageable areas’, with the variety of these spaces helping to ‘heighten awareness’.⁵⁰⁷

should they be given an emphasis which is out of all proportion to their real historical importance’. He gave the example of POW material from Colditz; it could be used to illustrate life in Nazi-occupied Europe, but it should not give the impression that all Allied POWs in Europe were housed in Colditz or constantly engaged in escape attempts.

⁵⁰⁵ The idea of using study galleries in practice was more difficult to implement, on the grounds of the time it would take to process information and material into a suitable form, money (the costs of basic information retrieval systems for visitors to use) and a lack of available space (See Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, ‘Experimental Study Gallery’, 05/03/86, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1. See also Recorded Interview between RC, AC and JW, conducted on 29/05/13). News areas displaying the reference collections had also been proposed by RC in 1983, to amplify the themes depicted in the main historical galleries (RC, ‘Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum – Revised Statement of Aims and General Principles’, Jan 1983, IWM ExPa 0109).

⁵⁰⁶ Annex 1 of ‘Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum’, 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8. For plans of these galleries under Frankland, see Page 54 and 55 of Imperial War Museum Handbook (1967).

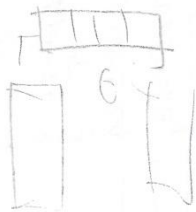
⁵⁰⁷ Annex 2 of ‘Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum’, 1980, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8. AB had also suggested an approach incorporating ‘an alternation or sequence of open and closed spaces’.

1 Architectural Space (I know where I am, can choose what I want to look at, I can plan my route, including how to get out and find the lavatories. I know I am not in an exhibition proper)
 though the space I am in may not exhibit a desirable way.

2 Historical Orientation (I know nothing about what happened in the first world war. I want a digest of key dates and events presented in an interesting way. I will expect to see read simple captions and see a generous amount of illustration including maps. Also videos. I might be any age (school child/OTAP, I might be a foreign tourist).
a) I am only really interested in the tanks and paintings. I therefore can see that I can ignore this section. I may, however, want to check later because an artist that interests me served in the same.

3 General Displays This is what I expect to find in a Museum. A mixture of exhibits well presented and clearly laid out. It will be clear to me what the sections cover and I will be able to see cased and free standing items in the same area.

4 Special features / special interest. I am extremely interested in trench warfare but the general display is just that. I want to find out more about a) what being in the trenches was like



- b) about war poets (spec. display)
- c) about the development of firearms (ind. gallery)

I can select all or some of these.

be confronted
 not wish to plough through the assassination at Sarajevo
 stumble through his trench or watch a video about womens
 work. before he can check on the exact dimensions of
 the 35m long etc. We are suggesting an anti-war approach.

- c) i Architectural space (I know where I am, can choose where I want to go. I know I am not in an 'exhibition').
- ii Historical orientation (the chronology - of special value to the school child, student, or person who genuinely wants to learn. Also a reference point to be used by all visitors at same stage of their visit.) Text, films, maps, videos)
- iii General displays (eg on trench warfare equipment, uniforms, paintings, documents. Possibly fairly formally organised along with larger 3-D exhibits). (see to iv below)
- iv Special features / Special interest. ~~Focusing the~~ This aspect of displays could be entirely flexible - we would use it when we wanted. Taking the case of the trenches one could have all sorts of specialts. tableaux (trench, dug out), an ephemera gallery, a study gallery of tapes, paintings, war poetry, badges - list is endless.)

^{convergences}
 Danger At present / 1-4 all merge into a sort of undefined general display which I think we should avoid whenever possible. Although I feel that this is the right concept its application will present ^{imposed many} challenging design problems.

The diagrammatic layouts below might make things clearer.

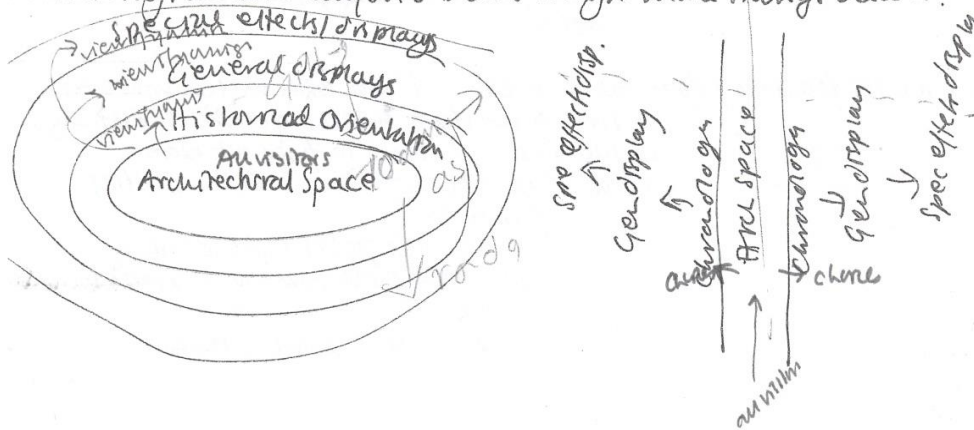


Figure 39 - PRC's Handwritten Notes for

Initial Planning of Exhibition Philosophy (IWM ExPA 0236)

From the perspective of the Exhibitions Department, PRC similarly outlined her key priorities for what the new gallery space should set out to achieve. Her handwritten notes above demonstrate her awareness of visitors' likely thoughts of being situated within the exhibition, and anticipating the information that the two opposite ends of the visitor spectrum might want; for the visitor lacking First World War knowledge; 'I want a digest of key dates and events presented in an interesting way. I will expect to read simple captions and see a generous amount of illustration, including maps'.⁵⁰⁸ The onus here was therefore to establish a vision that would enable exhibits to be 'well presented and clearly laid out'.⁵⁰⁹

Following the completion of the Second World War galleries and Museum's grand reopening, R&I returned to selecting objects for the First World War galleries between July and September 1989.⁵¹⁰ The eleven sections of this exhibition had been allocated to the four members of the Department.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ See Figure 39. In contrast, the provision of material catered towards the specialist visitor, in the form of study galleries, never really came to realisation, whilst the topic of the War Poets did latterly materialise as a temporary exhibition (See Section 6.5). Furthermore this document notes a desire to move away from the 1982 'War' exhibition from the end of Frankland's directorship.

⁵⁰⁹ Figure 39.

⁵¹⁰ See Internal Memorandum from Emma Davidson to All Collecting Departments (CC'd to AB), 'FIRST WORLD WAR EXHIBITION', 24/07/89, IWM ExPA 0255. See also IWM ExPA 0257 for Exhibition Lists for members of staff within particular departments. Objects were ranked 'Essential', 'Desired' or 'Optional', according to their perceived merit for inclusion; for example, see 'Air Raids on Britain – List of Items for Display', Handwritten Note by PJS, IWM ExPA 0319).

⁵¹¹ See Appendix III and document titled 'First World War' (IWM ExPA 0238) for outline of which of the eleven sections were allocated to either PJS, Laurie Milner, Mark Seaman or Neil Young from R&I. PJS held responsibility for four (jointly with Laurie Milner for 'Western Front').

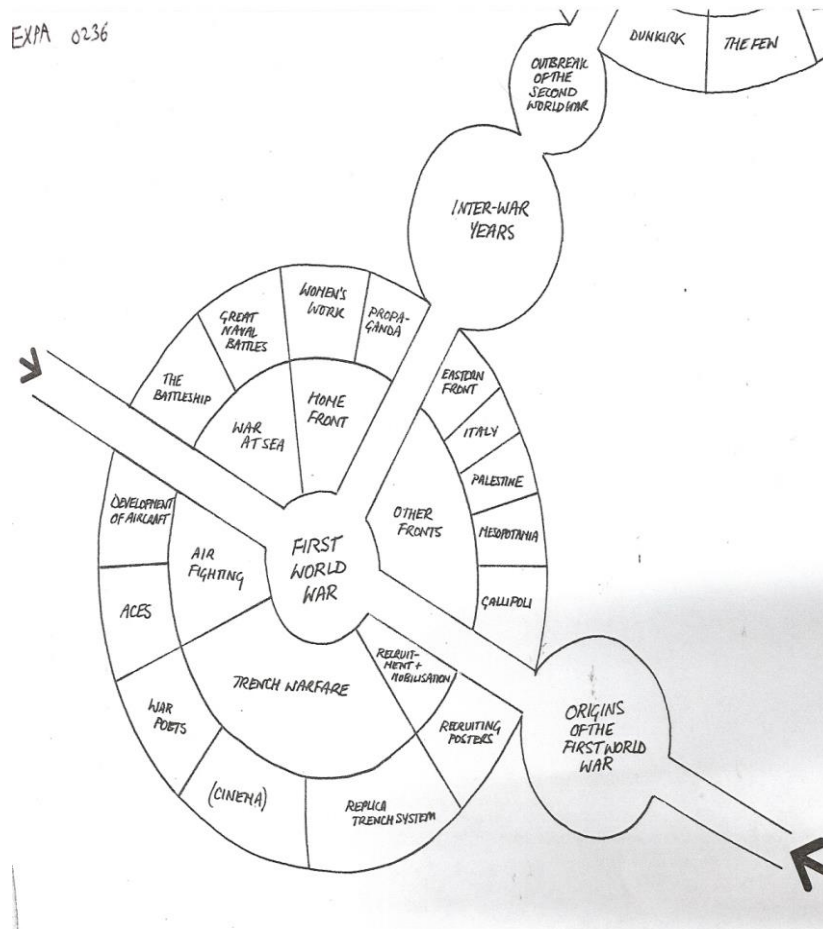


Figure 40 - PRC Planning Diagram Listing Proposed

Sections of First World War Galleries

(IWM ExPA 0236)

5.5.2 – The ‘Dress Rehearsal’ Assembling of Showcases

Learning from the experiences of the Second World War galleries, batches of objects were issued for each case, firstly to enable R&I to see the material they had chosen in its context, and then final drawings and lay-outs would be produced. This was also to be the first time that the Museum was displaying multiple collections together thematically, ‘not based on specific collections but small groupings of things’.⁵¹² As a result, material was requested in advance and issued out section by section, in accordance with a strict day by day week-long schedule throughout the

⁵¹² Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

course of July and August.⁵¹³ This acted as a form of 'Dress Rehearsal' for each showcase.⁵¹⁴ Each showcase was marked out on the floor to be viewed by the R&I staff member responsible for that section, to allow them to see the chosen material within its context.⁵¹⁵ A few days later, this would be shown to the designers and then the Director-General for subsequent approval.⁵¹⁶ Conservation Officer Mike Hibberd (MH) recalled this:

'...it took a lot of juggling and co-ordination...once material was selected, there was almost a trial, and Alan Borg and Robert Crawford would look and say well I don't really like that, do you have to include that there, and I think that's too prominent or I really like that'.⁵¹⁷

This process of directorial approval was a new dynamic in the process, which PRC found benefitted what the collective team were trying to achieve:

'...both Robert [Crawford] and Alan [Borg] had this kind of over-arching view of the Museum, what it should be there for, who its audience was, what we were trying to achieve, which, if you're involved in the minutiae of it, and you know, day to day, rushing around trying to get things done, you can easily lose sight...every single thing went through both Alan Borg and Robert Crawford...not only were they excellent proof-readers, which is always helpful, but they could stand back from it and say, this is all very balanced, or actually, hang on a second, I'm not sure we've struck quite the right note here'.⁵¹⁸

This aspect of the exhibition's construction thus provided an opportunity for reasoned assessment from two individuals with a slightly removed viewpoint. PRC saw this as

⁵¹³ This weekly issuing, sorting, labelling and returning schedule was extremely tight, with its success dependent on the collections being ready at the beginning of the week (Recorded Interview between MH and JW, conducted on 18/06/13).

⁵¹⁴ See Internal Memorandum from Emma Davidson to All Collecting Departments (CC'd to AB), 'FIRST WORLD WAR EXHIBITION', 24/07/89, IWM ExPA 0255 for the timetable of batches.

⁵¹⁵ See IWM Newsletter, July-September 1989 (IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1), which noted that the designers taped out the proposed exhibition floor area and case dimensions for each section. Exhibits were issued to the Design and Production Office and assembled into groups by the R&I staff. Following agreement from AB and RC, the designers took photographs to aid with producing detailed working drawings, and exhibits were returned to their respective departments.

⁵¹⁶ Final drawings and layouts were also then produced by the designers. The viewings were scheduled to take place from over a two month period from August to October; the timetable is listed in Internal Memorandum from Emma Davidson to AB (CC'd to RC/PRC), 'The First World War – Showcase Viewing', 27/07/89, IWM ExPA 0254.

⁵¹⁷ Recorded interview between MH and JW, conducted on 18/06/13.

⁵¹⁸ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

putting themselves in the shoes of a visitor, and that these 'very time consuming but very useful' layouts provided the chance to obtain consensus on the best object arrangement:

'...they would come along and we'd talk them through it, and they would look at it from a practical point of view, is that document close enough to the front for me to be able to read, I can't read it so how will an eighty year old be able to read it...actually this showcase is all khaki, is there a poster...where do I look first in this case...is what the graphics panel [says] relating properly to what we're actually displaying'. ⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁹ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13. See Figure 41 for Topic Breakdown of 'Aces and Personalities of the Air War on the Western Front' filled out by PJS.

Form B

Section No. 4

Topic breakdown

A) ACES AND PERSONALITIES OF THE AIR WAR ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Summary of type and quantity of key material for inclusion under this topic

General points: THIS IS A MIXED SUB-SECTION, WITH A VARIED ASSORTMENT OF MATERIAL INCLUDING ITEMS OF UNIFORM, DOCUMENTS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS, A SMALL SELECTION OF RELICS AND AN AIRCRAFT MODEL.
THE EMPHASIS ON PERSONALITIES AND INDIVIDUAL EXPLOITS IN THIS SUB-SECTION WILL, IT IS HOPED, PROVIDE A CONTRAST WITH THE TACTICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL CONTENT OF OTHER SUB-SECTIONS IN THIS AREA

Details of suggested material for showcase/s:

	Approx no.	Special details and dimensions (Where appropriate)
<u>3-D exhibits:</u>		
uniform	9-12	[FOR ITEMS OF UNIFORM SEE ATTACHED LIST] ✓
equipment	1	ROTARY ENGINE FROM THE FOKKER DR.1 TRIPLANE IN WHICH MANFRED VON RICHTHOFEN CLIMBED TO HIS DEATH IN APRIL 1918 [SEE CURRENT B FLOOR DISPLAY] ✓
weapons/firearms	—	
medals	2 plus 2 groups	[SEE ATTACHED LIST] ✓
models	1	MODEL OF FOKKER DR.1 TRIPLANE FLOWN BY LEUTNANT STAPENHÖRST OF JASTA II (6 1/2 span) [SEE CURRENT B FLOOR DISPLAY] 6.5 long ✓
other	8	RELICS [SEE ATTACHED LIST] ✓
<u>Documents</u>	10	[SEE ATTACHED LIST] ✓
<u>Printed ephemera</u>	—	
<u>Posters</u>	—	
<u>Works of art</u>	2-3 [possible]	[SEE OVERLEAF] ✓
<u>Other</u>	1	PHOTOGRAPHIC COPY OF A GERMAN MESSAGE CONFIRMING THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN ALBERT BALL, VC [SEE CURRENT B FLOOR DISPLAY] ✓

Dimensions of largest item/s to be displayed:

THE LARGEST ITEM IN THIS SECTION IS THE OBERURSEL ^{sub-}ROTARY ENGINE FROM THE FOKKER DR.1 TRIPLANE IN WHICH MANFRED VON RICHTHOFEN MET HIS DEATH IN APRIL 1918 [FOR DIMENSIONS SEE CURRENT B FLOOR DISPLAY] \approx dia. 91" x 70" ✓

* [HOWEVER, IF SPACE IS AVAILABLE, A PAINTING OF FLIGHT SUB-LIEUTENANT WARNEFORD'S VC ACTION MIGHT BE INCLUDED : THIS MEASURES 72" x 48" (UNFRAMED)] 182.88 x 121.9

Figure 41 - Form B – Topic Breakdown of Section 4 ‘War in the Air’ –

‘Aces and Personalities of the Air War on the Western Front’ (IWM ExPA 0304)

EX PA 0268

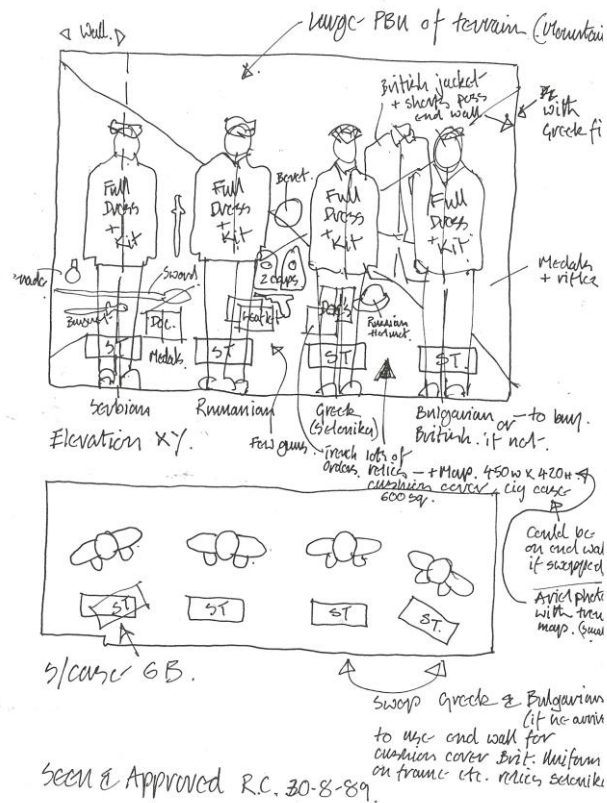


Figure 42 - Showcase Layout Diagram for Showcase 6B (IWM ExPA 0268)

5.5.3 – Justifying the Rationale in Approach

Though there was a degree of continuity with regard to the Museum's remit, there were instances which imply a desire to learn from perceived previous mistakes, and accordingly that Borg was content to put some distance from the institution's previous incarnations. In contrast to Frankland, he was more directly involvement with the exhibition-making process. As a result, he could sway the messages being given out to ensure that these aligned with his vision of a new version of the institution. At a meeting in October 1988, he expressed a belief that 'certain items should be highlighted in the displays...the criticism had often been made in the past that the Museum's most famous smaller exhibits were hidden among other items in densely packed cases'.⁵²⁰ Borg also wanted a noticeable change from the 'too many

⁵²⁰ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB, 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Showcase Layouts, Mannequins and Cost of War. Note of Points agreed at a Meeting held with JJA on 14/10/88', 28/10/88, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2. To assist with the case layout planning, one of the actions from the meeting was for a list of the key exhibits to be produced jointly by AB, RC and PRC, 'having

dressed figures in the previous exhibitions', requesting that R&I should indicate whether it was completely necessary to display a whole uniform.⁵²¹ This demonstrates two points; firstly that AB retained an ultimate power of veto over the displays, and furthermore, R&I were often required to state the validity and worth of the objects that they wanted to display to AB directly. Often this process involved deciding upon which objects could be left out, to avoid individual showcases becoming too cluttered.⁵²² On occasion it took on a more confrontational edge, when the thinking behind a decision had to be justified. PJS recalled this assembling of exhibits in the Store Room:

'...this is what we intend[ed] to put on display and why, we had to go through this sort-of cross examination, usually again from Crawford...why we'd selected this and that...that sometimes created...it got a bit heated...there weren't many occasions like that, to be fair, but that was inbuilt into the kind-of checks and counter-checks, which was the way that they [AB and RC] wanted to work.... add to that, a layer of Penny and her team, with other display possibilities, you've got a three-way recipe for potential disagreement'.⁵²³

The objectives for AB, RC and PRC were to ensure that the selected objects conveyed historical points. Subsidiary to this were that they represented the best that the collections had to offer, there was a balance between different types of material, they maintained visual interest and that they included 'items which the public, including the important category of school parties, want and expect to see'.⁵²⁴ As an example, following the mock-up layout, RC responded to the section detailing the 1918 Armistice:

taken into account Miss Godwin and Miss Ballin's views' - with no contributions desired from R&I. The list could not be located within the archive.

⁵²¹ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB, 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Showcase Layouts, Mannequins and Cost of War. Note of Points agreed at a Meeting held with JJA on 14/10/88', 28/10/88, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2.

⁵²² PRC spoke of trying to find a balance between putting enough on display to satisfy the specialists, but not enough to 'turn other people off'. Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

⁵²³ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. MH also recounted occasions when a particular object's inclusion would have to be explained, to which the response was usually that it was 'key to the period or you cannot talk about the First World War without talking about this particular item, we feel that that's got to be included'. Recorded Interview between MH and JW, conducted on 18/06/13.

⁵²⁴ IWM Newsletter, July-September 1989 (IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1).

'This also needs livening up and needs to end with a stronger statement: perhaps a design problem but we should look to see if there is other suitable material for the memorial case, for example. The whole section relies too much on documentary material but again it was hard to judge without many of the actual objects. I like Peter's idea of enlarging the front page of the Daily Chronicle'.⁵²⁵

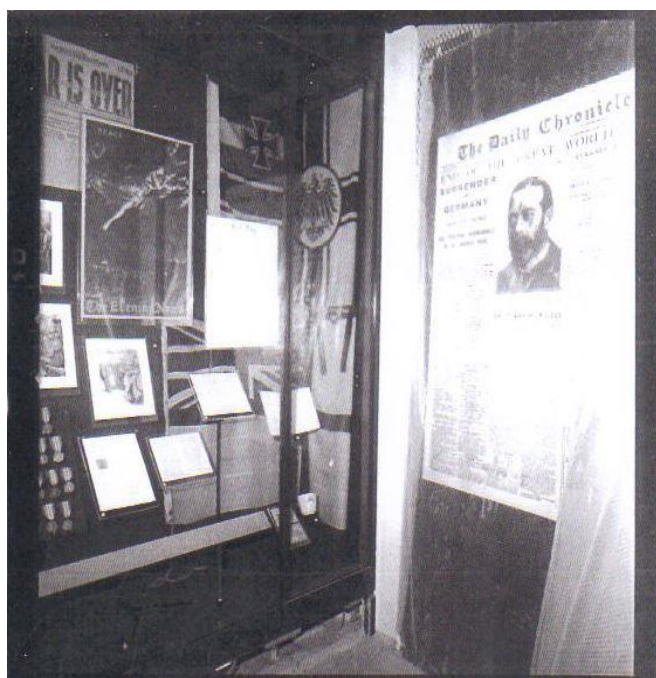


Figure 43 – *The Armistice Showcase featuring The Daily Chronicle*
(©IWM/90/51/5)

From this, RC's concerns about the visual aesthetic of the gallery section are apparent, in communicating one over-arching message.⁵²⁶ Remaining aware of potential spatial restrictions, he was happy to work on the organic process of exhibition-making, by developing ideas and suggestions raised at these meetings.

⁵²⁵ Internal Memorandum from RC to PRC/PJS, 'First World War Exhibition', 05/10/89, IWM ExPA 0254.

⁵²⁶ In the same memorandum, he discusses the physical allocation of space to certain topics and the order of objects in relation to their chronology; 'The naval aviation exhibits are visually appealing but I wonder if they should really be the first thing the visitor sees on entering the section' (Internal Memorandum from RC to PRC/PJS, 'First World War Exhibition', 05/10/89, IWM ExPA 0254). He also expressed a concern about whether the scope of naval operations was sufficiently covered in its existing form; denoting his capability to balance the practicalities in place with the importance of the related historical themes.

5.6 – The Role of New Museological Technology

5.6.1 – Alan Borg and his Desire for Spectacle

Whilst AB took interest in the exhibition-making process, analysis of the Museum's overall philosophy approach suggests that his primary concern was the idea of the visitor experience, as evidenced by the fact that he spent time sampling the new technology deployed within various European museums. It was a visit to the Epcot Centre in Disneyland Florida that revealed to him the vast amount of new technology now available to museums.⁵²⁷ Considering it important to see these developments whilst the planning for the IWM Redevelopment was still at a formative stage, Robert Crawford recalled targeting museums that employed display techniques which the IWM wanted to harness:

'...it was a practical quest for examples of good designers, new technology, new ideas...what we were primarily interested in [was] new designers' work, so we were looking to see work that we felt was of national quality but appropriate to a story-telling museum'.⁵²⁸

Having visited the La Villette and the Musee d'Orsay in France, AB shared his reflections with the staff leading the Redevelopment:

'The ultimate lesson is perhaps that no amount of new technology will make up for the old fashioned museological virtues, including proper display, proper labelling, making the visitor feel welcome, telling him where he is, what to see

⁵²⁷ Recorded Interview between AB, AC and JW, conducted on 25/07/13. See also Internal Memorandum from AB to RC, 'Redevelopment Displays', 24/08/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1 and 'Visit to the Epcot Centre and New York' (No Author), 25/09/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1. It seems likely that this was written by AB, as it discusses the technical sophistication of Epcot, and what lessons the IWM could learn from its success (as well as how to utilise sponsorship). In interview, he stated that the trip was about researching not what they did but how they did it, such as the handling of large crowds (Audio Recording of Interview between Borg, A and Maclaren, V on 24/08/98, IWM Catalogue No 18531). Borg was eventually able to utilise the Museum's film collection in the guise of simulators. Using the plentiful 'action footage' of the Second World War would give the proposed simulator a 'unique attraction...making it a bit more than just a ride' (Internal Memorandum from AB to RC, 'Simulators', 06/03/90, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/1. This memorandum also noted that a genuine Battle of Britain programme 'might steal some of the RAF Museum's market' to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of this event). In June 1990, the Museum installed its 'Operation Jericho' simulator that utilised archival footage of the RAF raid on Amiens. This was a 14 seater Super X Venturer Simulator, one of the most cutting-edge available at the time (See IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/010/4) - Borg thus believed that the use of sensory technology would appeal to visitors in granting them an exhilarating take on historical events (See Macleod et al, 2015).

⁵²⁸ Recorded Interview between RC, AC and JW, conducted on 29/05/13.

and where to go. If we can do that, as we must, and add some of the technical sophistication of La Villette we should certainly achieve something'.⁵²⁹

Arguably traditional museums had been more successful at isolating their visitors through obfuscated interpretation designed for experts within particular fields. Furthermore, the theme of 'what to see' illustrates that the visitor to the new Museum was not expected to take in everything on display – instead they would be advised by guidebooks to lead them to subjects based on a personal interest. AB wanted to prioritise this idea of visitor engagement, and he became heavily involved in re-interpreting the new spaces of the IWM. In a memorandum to Angela Godwin regarding the displays on D Floor, he recorded that these should have '...quite large and dramatic exhibits...Whatever we do, it needs to be imaginative and eye-catching'.⁵³⁰ This desire for spectacle is most clearly illustrated through the design of an Atrium space, the first encounter visitors had with the new Museum.⁵³¹ This took root in what RC had outlined in 1983 with regard to the Museum possessing:

'...many large and spectacular exhibits such as aircraft, tanks, vehicles, artillery pieces, missiles and boats. These have a special fascination for most visitors, especially children, and they must be displayed to full advantage, as objects in their own right, separately from the educational and informational displays'.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Internal Memorandum from AB to RC/PRC/PJS, 08/01/88, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1. Having attended the opening of the *Memorial de la Bataille de Normandie* at Caen, Mark Seaman from the Research & Information Department noted similar concerns with the new-fangled technology, observing '[the technical problems] certainly raised the question as to whether some of the time and money devoted to their development might not have been better spent on securing more artefacts' – thus serving a more traditional museological purpose (Seaman, M 'Memorial de la Bataille de Normandie' in IWM Newsletter, July-September 1988, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1).

⁵³⁰ Internal Memorandum from AB to AG (Cc'd to RC and PRC), 'D Floor Displays', 29/12/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/7/1.

⁵³¹ See Recorded Interview between Borg, A and Maclaren, V on 24/08/98, IWM Catalogue No 18531, for further discussion of this topic in which AB talks of creating a large elegant space to act as a dramatic staged environment.

⁵³² RC, 'Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum – Revised Statement of Aims and General Principles', Jan 1983, IWM ExPA 0109. See Figure 44.

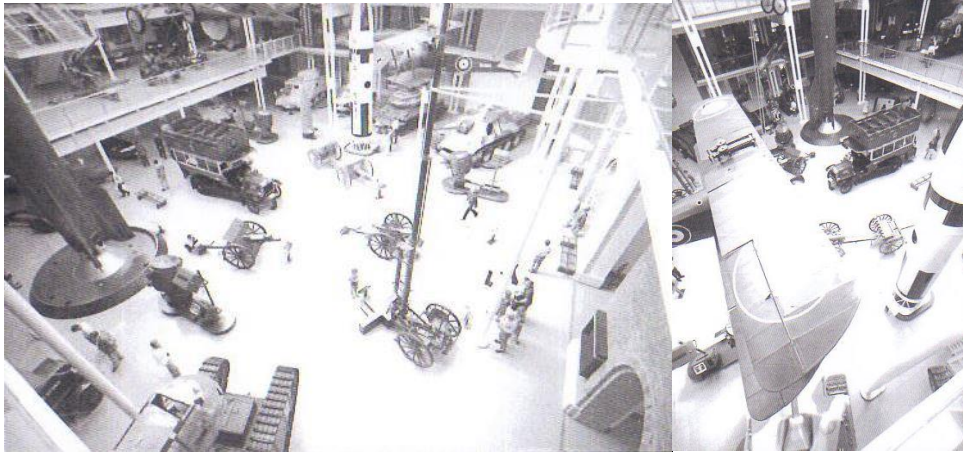


Figure 44 (Chapter 5) – The Atrium Courtyard

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The intention was that these ‘breath-taking exhibits’ would be clearly separated from the historical galleries in the basement, with the suggestion that they be housed within a vast hall with viewing walkways and balconies situated in the Museum’s courtyard area that would act as a dramatic entrance point for the visitor.⁵³³ Realising this ambition, AB defined the function of the space in a memorandum to the Head of the Art Department:

‘...the atrium display is intended to be de-personalised. The objects are to be seen as abstract in some degree, treated as sculpture, making the shock of the addition of the human element on A floor all the greater’.⁵³⁴

The extent to which the human element was present within the hardware heavy permanent galleries is perhaps open to interpretation, but it nevertheless reinforces the view that Borg considered the Atrium a performative and staged space in which visitors could be awed by the machines of war. Whilst this ambition for encapsulating the spectacular was a key priority for Borg, others were less sure about its place within in a historical museum, because of its apparent lack of intellectual content. PJS stated some ambivalence towards a desire for a ‘Wow’ factor:

⁵³³ RC, ‘Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum – Revised Statement of Aims and General Principles’, Jan 1983, IWM ExPA 0109.

⁵³⁴ Internal Memorandum from Angela Weight to AB, ‘Up in Arms: Central Saint Martins Exhibition’, 10/09/92, IWM ExPA 0236. Angela Weight forwarded this onto PRC, adding ‘I am sure you will find the D.G’s description of the atrium’s *raison d’être* useful for future reference’. Borg also described the exhibits on display in the Atrium as ‘symbols and almost art objects’ (Internal Memorandum from AB to PRC/Angela Godwin (Cc’d to RC), ‘Redevelopment Action, 06/06/86, IWM ExPA 0235).

‘...never quite convinced that having a selection, impressive objects in a big Atrium space was actually telling you anything, so...my museological head said ‘Good idea’, my historian head said ‘so what?’⁵³⁵

Borg had also intended to integrate a newly commissioned work of art into the new Museum, with sculptor Anthony Gormley invited to complete this.⁵³⁶ As it turned out, too many other challenges halted the development of this idea, including its projected cost. The timing of the discussions seemed to coincide with the mass structural changes being orchestrated by Arup Associates, and a consensus amongst the primary parties could not be finalised to fit in with the overall programme.⁵³⁷

5.7 - Departmental Interaction

5.7.1 – The Benefits and Challenges of Working Together

The above sections have demonstrated that the process of making these exhibitions was influenced by multiple factors, such as Borg’s personal vision for the institution and the interaction between the Collecting Departments and the R&I staff. The procedure involved different interactions between different stakeholders, all of whom acted as filters for sifting down the mass of information into a comprehensible format. Compromises formed a key part of the decision making, and the interaction

⁵³⁵ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. PJS had involvement in selecting the ‘dramatic’ exhibits for the Atrium. Borg’s desire for the spectacular occasionally came at a price. Nearly nine years after the Atrium opened, an issue involving the four large shells on display was raised, as members of the public had taken to rocking them. The Museum’s fear naturally lay in the potential for a serious injury to a visitor if a shell was tipped onto them. The correspondence, from the early years of Crawford’s reign as Director General, reveals that Borg had originally vetoed the securing of the shells by straps, on grounds of aesthetic appearance. Email from David Penn to PRC/MH, ‘Health & Safety: Shells in the Atrium’, 08/06/98, IWM ExPA 0334m. Robert Crawford agreed for fitted straps to be designed that could harness the shells (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, ‘Safety of Shells in Gallery’, 11/06/98, IWM ExPA 0334m). For details on the security of exhibits within the displays, see IWM ExPA 0266. A specific memorandum dealing this topic during the dressing of showcases was also sent around – see Internal Memorandum from PRC to Derek Needham/Design and Production Staff/R&I Office/David Penn/Chief Museum Assistant/JJA/Styles and Wood/Plowden and Smith/LDP, ‘First World War Exhibition: Security of Exhibits during Showcase Dressing’, 10/04/90, IWM ExPA 0266.

⁵³⁶ Internal Memorandum from Gill Smith to AB (Cc’d to RC), ‘Note of a Meeting with Anthony Gormley to Discuss the Commission of a Work of Art for the New Galleries’, 21/07/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1. See also Audio Recording of Interview between Borg, A and Maclaren, V on 24/08/98, IWM Catalogue No 18531, which recalls that the proposed artwork could have been perceived as a potential anti-war statement, in an overall environment which should be objective and neither anti nor pro-war.

⁵³⁷ There would be a sculpture in the First World War galleries, commissioned by sub-contractors Kimpton Walker, which was of a British soldier based on a maquette of a 1919 work by Sergeant Charles Jagger (See IWM ExPA 0249).

between different departments affected the way in which the exhibitions were compiled. One example of this was the expectation of utilising the Museum's Sound Archive to feature within the new galleries. The new displays offered an opportunity to showcase the range and quality of this collection, and it was agreed that there would be five audio handset locations, each with two handsets.⁵³⁸ Their purpose was 'to enhance points made in the exhibition either in the showcases or on graphics panels' as well as 'to cover aspects of the subject which cannot otherwise be illustrated because of lack of space, no appropriate exhibits etc'.⁵³⁹ From PRC's list of desirable requirements, these recordings had to offer succinct yet 'vivid descriptions of daily life', and of the conditions experienced, which would accordingly provide contextual background to the objects on display.⁵⁴⁰

PRC asked the Sound Archive staff to source recordings that covered particular topics. This content would therefore depend on staff members' on-hand knowledge of the collection, or operated on hear-say, such as Laurie Milner mentioning 'a recording from BBC Radio Leeds of Morris Fleming which might be of use'.⁵⁴¹ Though PRC wanted to 'use something new rather than going back to things we've had in past exhibitions', this was contingent on the 'luck of the draw' of the Sound Archive staff coming across something new within their collections, or an acquisition being made.⁵⁴² Each recording clip within the gallery had to be short, so that a loop totalled roughly seven minutes. This greatly frustrated those in the Sound Archive with Margaret Brooks noting wryly, 'Our collection is now so big that choosing short extracts is extremely difficult...the Public are too impatient!' ⁵⁴³

⁵³⁸ Internal Memorandum from PRC to Keeper of Sound Records, 'AUDIO HANDSETS (Sound Recordings)', 20/03/90, IWM ExPA 0290. These were situated in the sections 'Western Front', 'War in the Air', 'War Against Turkey', 'War at Sea' and 'Home Front'.

⁵³⁹ Internal Memorandum from PRC to Keeper of Sound Records, 'AUDIO HANDSETS (Sound Recordings)', 20/03/90, IWM ExPA 0290.

⁵⁴⁰ Internal Memorandum from PRC to Margaret Brooks/Peter Hart (CC'd to Allan Morrow), 'WWI Exhibition: Sound Recordings', 24/05/90, IWM ExPA 0290. These could then provide a personal account into a particular famous episode of the war, shed light on its little-known aspects, and give a sense of how the War was changing peoples' lives.

⁵⁴¹ Internal Memorandum from PRC to Keeper of Sound Records, 'AUDIO HANDSETS (Sound Recordings)', 20/03/90, IWM ExPA 0290.

⁵⁴² Internal Memorandum from PRC to Margaret Brooks/Peter Hart (CC'd to Allan Morrow), 'WWI Exhibition: Sound Recordings', 24/05/90, IWM ExPA 0290.

⁵⁴³ Internal Memorandum from Margaret Brooks to PRC, 'First World War Recordings', 25/04/90, IWM ExPA 0290.

Such engagements summarized one of the primary challenges in the overall process of working between departments - the fact that they all tended to operate at different speeds and have different methods of working, as PRC recounted:

‘...one of the issues is always communication...if curatorial departments felt they hadn’t been kept up to speed with what the timetable was, and what the needs were, and you can do that to a certain extent, but suddenly there’ll be a flurry and you need this and you need that from them, and they tended to, as an exhibitions department, we were used to rush, used to high pressure, things needing to be done, and with curatorial departments, and partly this is a good thing because it means they can focus and concentrate, they do things at a slower pace and a more careful pace, which is a hundred percent right, but trying to get them to understand the speed at which we did need responses was quite tricky’.⁵⁴⁴

All of the curatorial departments saw these new galleries as a rare opportunity to showcase their own material, but others were unsure about the decision to assemble objects together from multiple collections. PRC described the ‘hugely enthusiastic’ Department of Documents staff as ‘little Labrador puppies...wanting to have their stuff on show’.⁵⁴⁵ On the other hand, staff from the Art Department were concerned with how a major painting would look ‘in what they perceived as a bit of a jumble sale of other things around it’.⁵⁴⁶ As with the whole process of sifting, consensus was gradually reached through various degrees of compromises. PRC reflected that such debates were a vital part of the process:

‘...you need to question all the time, whether what you’re doing is right, and if you have people who say hang on a minute, or being Devil’s Advocate or, just challenging, questioning, it’s very healthy, and although it can be frustrating at the time, you suddenly realise actually that was really good, and that led to a much better outcome’.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

⁵⁴⁵ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

⁵⁴⁶ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

⁵⁴⁷ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

For R&I, the same process operated in a slightly different manner. Decision-making was often done at an internal level and with more of a defensive mindset, as PJS recalled:

‘...decisions going on for month after month as to what was the best to get this particular point over...and my colleagues in R&I would all be going through the same processes and our well-known Soviet meetings that we had, daily or weekly, in R&I, how do you think we can do this’.⁵⁴⁸

Following the selection of objects for display, the next stage was to complete the drafting of the gallery text panels and object captions, and this next section scrutinizes how these factors affected the outcome of producing text for the First World War galleries.

5.8 – Writing the Galleries Text

5.8.1 – Process and Politics

Writing the text panels and captions for the First World War galleries was undertaken by the Museum’s Research and Information Office. Presenting this historical information was derived from the format utilised in the 1986 temporary Second World War exhibition, which had preceded the now permanently installed Second World War galleries.⁵⁴⁹ Penny Ritchie Calder (PRC) had outlined the merits of this to the Director (AB) and Deputy Director (RC), reasoning that this approach had been reached ‘after considerable thought and experiment by staff with a combined total of over forty years of caption writing experience, that had been well received by Museum staff, visitors and teachers accompanying school parties’.⁵⁵⁰ The second clause hints at a reliance on the success of previous endeavours, and moreover that such a weight of experience would outweigh any change in audience requirements in their capacity for information. This format relied upon:

⁵⁴⁸ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁵⁴⁹ See IWM ExPA 0013. The First and Second World War temporary exhibitions in 1986 had provided a test-bed for how one might convey the story of the World Wars in a more expansive permanent exhibition, as testified by PRC (Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13).

⁵⁵⁰ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC (22/12/87), IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1. In interview, PRC mentioned the ability of PJS to convey his academically rigorous knowledge in an accessible manner. Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

‘...economy of wording, a simple structure incorporating basic historical facts and explanation, and clear presentation’.⁵⁵¹

This would be adhered to closely in an era where there was growing recognition that visitors should not be swamped by masses of facts or extensive narrative detail.⁵⁵² Even so, PRC had expressed the view that ‘no matter how many interactive displays we are able to install’, the Museum’s foreseeable future would retain a need for graphics panels and objects captions.⁵⁵³ This subversively ensured that the institution continued to serve its original function, which was to label objects and present these for public presentation in a way that stressed their history and provenance.⁵⁵⁴

5.8.2 – The Text Hierarchy

The total amount of text within the First World War galleries added up to around 60,000 words.⁵⁵⁵ This was a reasonable amount, though it is unknown whether this included the interactive stations. More importantly, its density in approach by listing detailed technical information relating to pieces of military hardware would be deemed too dense by the standards of today’s museum visitors, as well as impersonal and lacking in meaning.

The hierarchy of text for these galleries operated as follows;

- ‘a) Key statements (introduction to each section) – 20-30 words
- b) Mainline panels (in showcases) – 120 words maximum
- c) Subtext panels (in showcases) – 100-180 words

⁵⁵¹ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC (22/12/87), IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1.

⁵⁵² See Falk & Dierking (1992).

⁵⁵³ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC (22/12/87), IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1.

⁵⁵⁴ It was perhaps also a reflection of the fact that an interactive granted the visitor the option of choice, and that it was not a particularly easy change in mind-set for the Museum’s historians to digest the fact that people might want to choose what to read of their work and what not to.

⁵⁵⁵ This is based on a calculation extracted from information within a memorandum. It stated that there were 130 mainline and subtext captions of c.120-150 words, 80 photograph captions of c.25 words each, and 1,300 object captions of c.30 words each. The longest of the eleven key statements was 41 words (Internal Memorandum from PRC to Simon Bourne (18/12/89) ‘Typing of Captions for First World War Exhibition’, IWM ExPA 0280).

d) [Photograph] Captions (on mainline or subtext) – 15-25 words'.⁵⁵⁶

Key statements acted as narrative introductions for each section of the gallery, consisting of broad, top level information. Stark black text on a white backdrop and vertically mounted, they marked the beginning of each of the eleven gallery sections. The purpose of these key statements was to outline the essential historical narrative for visitors, to then set up context for the expanded detail within the related showcases:

'The Western Front

By the end of 1914 the war on the Western Front had reached stalemate. The trench lines extended from the Belgian coast to the Swiss frontier. The opposing armies were to suffer enormous losses before the deadlock was broken in 1918'.⁵⁵⁷

Even this factual caption – particularly the terminology used in the last sentence - was influenced by the agendas of those who produced them, and this theme will be duly expanded upon. The mainline panels were mounted vertically on the back of the showcases, and often featured captioned photographs and maps as illustrative information. The subtext panels were positioned 100mm from the ground towards the bottom of each showcase, alongside the object captions.⁵⁵⁸ This angle enabled them to act as accessible reference guides for the visitor to be able to correlate the broader historical detail of the subtext panels with the object captions.⁵⁵⁹

The creation for the gallery text began with the production of section briefs that detailed the topics of the text panels.⁵⁶⁰ 'The Western Front' formed the largest

⁵⁵⁶ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB (CC'd RC) (20/11/89), 'First World War Exhibition Graphics: Word Lengths and Submission Timetable', IWM C/F EN4/41/DD/1/11/014/2 and ExPA 0280. Text was also produced for the maps, the A/V screen captions, the audio handsets and scripts for the interactive stations (See Western Front Interactive Video Scripts, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/014/2). See also 'Exhibition Captions: Guidelines on IWM House Style', IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/1.

⁵⁵⁷ All the key statements are listed in 'WWI Exhibition: External Graphics Schedule', IWM ExPA 0273.

⁵⁵⁸ Internal Memorandum from Karen Eyre to RC (CC'd to AB) (12/09/88), Minutes of the Exhibition Review Meeting held on 26 August 1988, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2. For archival material relating to the researching of photographs by the R&I Department for these panels, see IWM ExPA 0272 and 0274.

⁵⁵⁹ A basic numbering system was utilised to allow visitors to link the caption text with the objects on display.

⁵⁶⁰ R&I produced these for the exhibition designers, which were essentially lists of items from the collections. They covered the 28 different sections of the First and Second World War, the inter-war years, and the post-war conflicts area. See Internal Memorandum from PRC to Heads of Collecting

section, being made up of five parts. The first of these was section 3a 'Trench Warfare', which consisted of four subtext panels.⁵⁶¹ Key topics to cover within this succinct text were listed in the briefs, as was the inclusion of maps. Maps were utilised as illustrative devices to help convey complex information that would otherwise have occupied valuable text space.⁵⁶² In total, twenty three appeared on the mainline and subtext panels within the showcase graphics.⁵⁶³

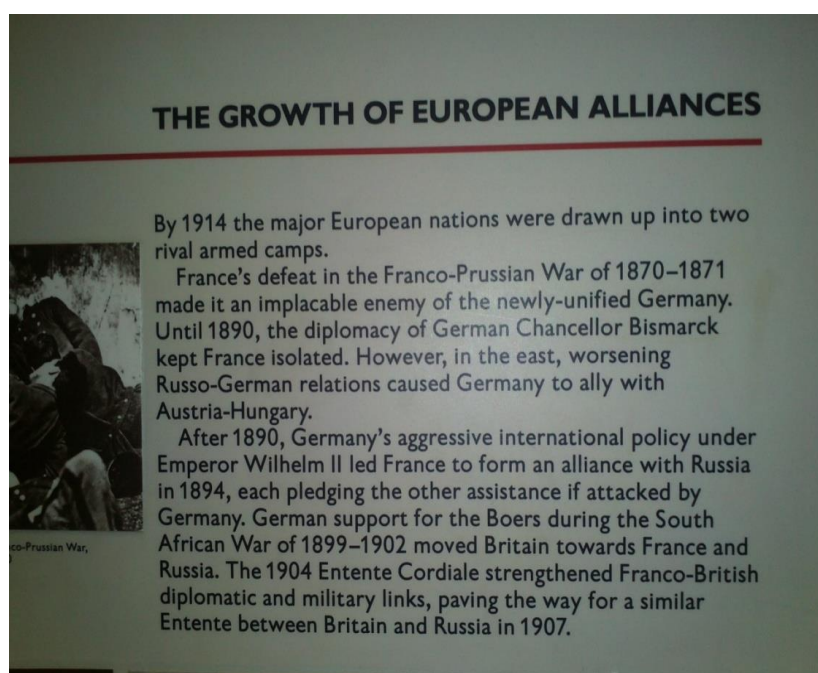


Figure 45 – *An Example Mainline Text Panel*

(Sourced by Author)

Departments and PJS, 'Advance Notification of Items Likely to be Required for Display in the New Historical Exhibitions on A Floor', 02/03/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1.

⁵⁶¹ Section Brief for 'Trench Warfare', IWM ExPA 0109.

⁵⁶² These were able to explain the movement of armies, alongside invasions or the broader impacts of the War on particular countries, such as Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Italy.

⁵⁶³ See Appendix IV and 'Maps for the First World War Exhibition', IWM ExPA 0275. Maps of particular interest include 9A 'Pursuit of the Emden 1914' (Subtext) in the Falklands and 8A/8B 'Germany's Pacific and African Colonies 1914' (Mainline). They were also used to illustrate the actions of particular campaigns, such as Gallipoli (5C), Mesopotamia (5E) and Palestine (5D). IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/014/2 'First World War Exhibition: Showcase Graphics' also shows that 11 of the maps were used within sections 5 (Middle East/War Against Turkey), 6 (Italy & Balkans), 7 (Eastern Front), 8, (War in the Colonies) and 9 (War at Sea) – to position the information within a context that visitors could appreciate or relate to.

5.8.3 – The Text Approval Process: Negotiating the Demands of History and Visitors

The process of submitting material for approval by the Director and Deputy Director was adopted for the production of all gallery text. Adhering to a strict timetable, it was drafted by hand by the R&I Team from November 1989 onwards. The drafts would then be passed on to PRC or Emma Davidson, to be typed up by the typing pool staff on the Design & Production Office's word processor. These were returned to R&I for corrections, re-typed if necessary, and sent back to R&I for a final check.⁵⁶⁴ This copy was finally submitted to PRC, according to the 'Programme for Submission of Graphics Copy', before being passed to AB and RC.⁵⁶⁵ It was a procedure of rigour that required understanding from both principal parties – the R&I office and PRC – of what was expected of the other. Insight into this process of creation can be expanded when examining the captions for the large objects on display in the Atrium, and the politics of their final form.⁵⁶⁶ These captions were predominantly drafted by hand by Peter Simkins (PJS), in correspondence with Mike Hibberd, and were typically longer than they could afford to be (in the knowledge that they would be edited).⁵⁶⁷ PRC would proof-read them from the visitor's perspective by funnelling the 'history' and simplifying occasionally convoluted phrasing words, before they were sent on to AB and RC.⁵⁶⁸

RC's archival files give insight into what the Deputy Director and Director wanted the captions to achieve, in delivering key historical information and facts to visitors. What might be seen as markings of PJS' draft captions show that he and

⁵⁶⁴ Internal Memorandum from PRC to Mark Seaman (18/12/89), IWM ExPA 0273.

⁵⁶⁵ IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/014/2. See Appendix V.

⁵⁶⁶ 'Guidance Document', IWM ExPA 0100.

⁵⁶⁷ The original handwritten draft for the British 13-Pounder Horse Artillery Gun was one and a half pages of A4 (IWM ExPA 0099). For a complete example of a final caption, see Appendix VI.

⁵⁶⁸ See Appendix III. For example, an early iteration of the caption for the 'German 7.7.cm Anti-Aircraft Gun' has been edited heavily by PRC, in terms of simplifying its language and flow, whilst also shortening its length (IWM ExPA 0099). The text for the key statements of the galleries' eleven sections was submitted in November 1989. The text for the mainline and subtext panels was then submitted in two batches over the period 22 January – 19 February 1990. Following approval, the caption would be passed on to the graphics designer, Crispin Rose Innes, for typesetting (See IWM ExPA 0279). The remaining categories – photo captions, A/V captions and the chronology and biography panels – were submitted during February and March. The first drafts of the object captions were sent to PRC at the end of March. See Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB (CC'd RC) (20/11/89), 'First World War Exhibition Graphics: Word Lengths and Submission Timetable' and 'Programme for Submission of Graphics Copy', IWM C/F EN4/41/DD/1/11/014/2 and IWM ExPA 0280.

PRC combined to become extremely diligent at tightening up their structure through their grammatical tweaks, formatting, and ability to omit superfluous words or detail.⁵⁶⁹ Their structure thus consisted of a general overview to convey a broader historical point; the caption for the 'British First World War Mark V Tank (Male)' stated why the tank had been developed, and then some detail about it was an improvement on earlier versions.⁵⁷⁰ The secondary part of the caption acted as a platform with moderate detail of the object's provenance and service history. This tended to focus on the military and technological aspects of its involvement in warfare, such as an artillery piece's maximum range, calibre or the type of ammunition used, rather than information regarding those who used these objects.⁵⁷¹ RC recorded a desire to see a level of consistency in the information displayed on all captions; pointing out that various technical categories included on the 'British 13 Pounder Quick Firing Gun Mark I', such as elevation, weight in action and number of crew, were missing on the 'British 18-pounder Mark II field gun' and the 'French 75mm field gun and limber'.⁵⁷² The decision must therefore have been taken that this information retained enough relevance for some audience groups within the new Museum to justify its inclusion.

This process encompassed nodes of tension and compromise through the delivery of pure historical information to a larger mass audience, and the compromises that eroded specialist detail through the course of refinements. One example was to be the tone of the draft captions for the field guns, in which PJS placed emphasis upon the idea that these objects 'saw action'.⁵⁷³ This seems a turn of phrase more familiar with individual soldiers, particularly within a contemporary context. The language used emphasises the active nature of the gun, although the critical role played by the crew that manned it is absent. The list of the major First World War battles it 'took part in' denotes a degree of choice – as if it was the service history of an individual who had survived nearly every key event of the War – and purports the gun to be an active member of the Western Front. Information focuses on the gun's notable involvement in firing the first British artillery round of the

⁵⁶⁹ See ExPA 0096 and 0099 for versions of captions before they were re-typed and sent to AB and RC, including the British 60-pounder Field Gun, the Sopwith Camel and the Jack Cornwell gun.

⁵⁷⁰ IWM ExPA 0096.

⁵⁷¹ See captions of Atrium Large Objects in IWM ExPA 0096.

⁵⁷² IWM ExPA 0096. This information may have acted as a point of contrast for some visitors.

⁵⁷³ Caption for 'British 13 Pounder Quick Firing Gun Mark I', IWM ExPA 0096.

conflict (a worthy fact reinforced by its repetition in both sections of the caption), alongside mentioning that it featured in the latter stages of the British Army's retreat and advance in 1918. PJS, the author of this information, was compiling it from his detailed specialist knowledge of military hardware and information.⁵⁷⁴ It was then necessary to translate this draft into a form that could be comprehended by, and would appeal to, a mass audience. RC's archive reveals his comments for the 'French 75mm field gun and limber'.⁵⁷⁵ In one of the margins, he took issue with the phrase 'One of the finest artillery pieces of the First World War', and noted 'another slogan!' It seems a telling remark of some of the tensions bound up in the process of text writing. RC is clearly aware that such a judgemental remark will not appeal to audiences who might claim that the IWM was glorifying the conflict. Equally querying this remark directly challenged Peter Simkins' ability to recount such information for portrayal in a visitor-friendly manner. The statement is not incorrect in itself, because the French 75 was highly effective at its job, which was as a weapon designed to kill and maim soldiers. Herein lies that process of compromise that would create captions to satisfy the majority, rather than please a minority.

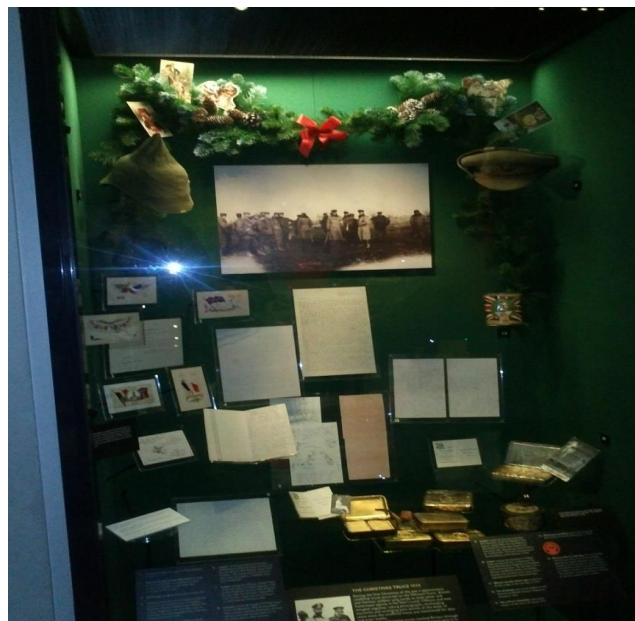


Figure 46 – *The Christmas Truce Showcase*

(Sourced by Author)

⁵⁷⁴ MH spoke of how PJS had always been somebody who had always 'double double-checked his facts before he commits to paper' and that he was 'extremely, absolutely meticulous' in double-checking (Recorded Interview between MH and JW, conducted on 18/06/13).

⁵⁷⁵ IWM ExPA 0096.

The subtext panels often expanded upon themes or key historical events of the War.⁵⁷⁶ The style of the text was mostly explanatory narrative, with the occasional inclusion of facts. Their content was precise and accurate in its aim of enabling visitors to understand key details efficiently. Its tone might seem to be lacking drama to the visitors of today, but it retains its original ability to distil large quantities of information into sparing, clear history:

'The Christmas Truce 1914

During the first Christmas of the war a spontaneous unofficial truce occurred on the Western Front. British and German soldiers sang carols to each other and fraternised openly in No Man's Land. Officers and men mingled together, taking photographs, exchanging souvenirs and arranging joint burials of the dead. In some areas the unofficial truce was maintained for days and even weeks.

News of the Christmas truce reached Britain through letters written home by those who had taken part in it. Newspapers subsequently reported this extraordinary event in great detail. It was to be the only widespread unofficial truce of the war. By the following Christmas strict orders had been issued by both sides prohibiting any future fraternisation'.⁵⁷⁷

This panel imparted information about the War's human impact on its participants, and expanded upon the factual detail of this episode, which many visitors were likely to have come across prior to visiting the Museum. It builds upon this by integrating the impact that this event had on the Home Front through the discussion of national propaganda. Thus when coupled with the objects and their captions, it met the requirement to inform visitors about what happened, how, and to an extent, why it happened and what its impacts were.

⁵⁷⁶ This included descriptions of major battles, such as Loos (1915), the Somme (1916) and Arras (1917). This was very broad in its information, and focused largely on tactical outcomes and impacts from national perspectives.

⁵⁷⁷ 'Typeset Subtext Panel', IWM ExPA 0277.



Figure 47 – The Machine Gun Showcase

(Sourced by Author)

Conversely other subtext panels were more problematic; the one for ‘The Machine Gun’ describes it as the weapon ‘largely responsible for the trench deadlock on the Western Front’:

‘Firing over 600 rounds per minute, a single machine-gun was capable of halting the attack of hundreds of troops, forcing them to take refuge in trenches.

As the number of machine-guns in each army increased and the trench systems grew more complex, frontal attacks on prepared positions could be made at a prohibitive cost in casualties’.⁵⁷⁸

This text seemingly provides an explanation for why the War went on for so long, which is certainly a laudable aim for instructing visitors about the length of the conflict. But it subversively reads almost as a justification for why those in command ended up with such high casualty figures, which deserves further attention. It reads as the words of PJS as a revisionist military historian. He was part of a core group

⁵⁷⁸ IWM ExPA 0277. See Figure 47.

maturing what is now known as the revisionist approach to the First World War.⁵⁷⁹ Semi-academic interest had been stimulated by the creation of the Western Front Association by John Giles in 1980, which slowly brought about a sea-change in attitudes for those interested in the strategy and tactics used during the conflict. The fluidity between academic rigour and amateur specialist knowledge seem to combine to co-create this organisation; here was a group united by their desire to use archives and establish a school of thought against what it perceived to be an injustice held by the media and general public. MH recalled military historian Brian Bond and PJS forming what became known as the 'Birmingham crowd', based at the Centre of First World War studies, who wanted to 'question the images that everybody had about, to get away from Somme-centric, there is more to the First World War than the first of July, and there's an awful lot to be known, to be researched, and this was beginning to happen'.⁵⁸⁰ RC reflected on how PJS had become involved in this, and where the Museum stood on their viewpoint:

'...I guess the reality was that the Museum had never bought the...'Lions Led by Donkeys' 60s thesis of the Great War, we never bought Alan Clark and that generation...not least because I think the Museum's understanding of the Great War was driven by its veterans, and those who had formed the collections of the Museum...these 60s ideas, the 'Oh What A Lovely War!' and the over-emphasis that used to irritate Peter [Simkins] hugely of the poets' interpretation of the War, or at least, peoples' interpretation of what the poets said about the War, which is a different thing, was a betrayal of, and a misunderstanding of the records we'd got here in the collections, and of the people and why they had served, and what they had believed in, and one of the things that was always, a source of some anguish really, was to see a gentleman in his nineties being interviewed and regurgitating the futility and horror stuff, and of course it was horrific, but it wasn't futile...in a way that was the antithesis of what he had written himself from the trenches, sixty years earlier, and that's how the received wisdom of public opinion distorts the

⁵⁷⁹ See Simkins (1991). Published just after the First World War galleries opened, this provides an overview account on the development of this military history movement which would in time incorporate the 'Learning Curve' theory, as advocated principally by Sheffield (2001).

⁵⁸⁰ Recorded Interview between MH and JW, conducted on 18/06/13. He suggested that interest in the FWW was now coming up equal to the strong general interest in the Second World War during this time period.

record and how important it is to go back to the original record and judge it and what people did, and what they thought, by their values and not by, by those of subsequent generations. So I think Peter and his colleagues and our curatorial staff were actually holding that standard, this is what the papers [Museum files] say all the way through, and in exhibition terms, in terms of what the Museum did'.⁵⁸¹



Figure 48 – *The Biography and Chronology Panel*

(Sourced by Author)

5.8.4 – The Chronology and Biography Board

The presence of PJS as a reputable military historian was additionally evidenced in designing the chronology and biography board, which would act as aides in helping visitors with the key figures and dates of the conflict. Commenting that the gallery plans lacked ‘famous personalities’, the idea for biography panels had been pushed by AB. It was duly assigned to PJS as Head of the R&I Office.⁵⁸² The best approach of selecting twenty five worthy personalities was debated, and whether a standard approach could be adopted i.e. one politician and one military figure from the major combatants. This was decided against, on the grounds that it would restrict the number of certain key figures from various nations to feature (suggesting that there were figures that the IWM staff had in mind that warranted sufficient merit to be included in an essential narrative of the conflict). From PJS’

⁵⁸¹ Recorded Interview between RC, AC and JW, conducted on 29/05/13. See Chapter 6 for further discussion on this topic.

⁵⁸² Internal Memorandum from AB to PRC (CC’d RC/PJS/Schools Officer/Keeper of Museum Services), 31/10/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/1. Also IWM ExPA 0280.

opening short list, nine individuals were British politicians and military figures, five individuals each from France and Germany, and PRC added in three Russians to form a total of twenty eight.⁵⁸³ Two further suggestions were Winston Churchill (recommended by Alan Borg) and Leon Trotsky (recommended by Clive Coultass).⁵⁸⁴ Photographs of each individual were obtained from the Photograph Archive, and submitted for R&I approval.⁵⁸⁵ Upon agreement, the short biographies requested by PRC had to be 'short, snappy Who's Who style entries' of around fifty words, before their submission to AB.⁵⁸⁶ He had requested that these give a short top-line explanation of why the person was famous, or particular policies/events for which they were known.⁵⁸⁷ In response to PJS' drafts for the sample biographies for 'General Falkenhayn (Germany)' and 'General Pershing (American)', and aware of a wider public uneasiness towards his reputation, AB observed 'slightly soft options however! These two are easy. What about Haig?'⁵⁸⁸ to which PJS responded:

'Field Marshal Earl Haig (1861 – 1928): British. Commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force from December 1915 to the end of the war. He has been widely criticised for the costly Somme and Passchendaele offensives but he displayed great tenacity during the German attacks of March-April 1918 and, between August and November that year, he won a succession of major victories'.⁵⁸⁹

It read as a compromise solution between demonstrating loyalties towards a military historian-minded audience, which was more familiar territory, whilst also relying upon visitor engagement with a familiar name, even if this was within a negative

⁵⁸³ Internal Memorandum from PJS to PRC (06/11/89) 'Biography Board: First World War Displays', IWM ExPA 0273. Also IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/1.

⁵⁸⁴ Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (28/12/89) 'First World War 'Biography Board'', IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁸⁵ Internal Memorandum from PRC to Mark Seaman (Labelled incorrectly as 15/03/90, rather than 15/02/90), 'WWI Biography Board', IWM ExPA 0278. PRC ironically notes 'There's no huge rush on this (shock horror)'. PJS seemed unhappy with many of the photographs offered, and requested that more be selected (PJS in response to memorandum). See also PRC 'Biography Panel' Checklist (IWM ExPA 0272).

⁵⁸⁶ Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (28/12/89) 'First World War 'Biography Board'', IWM ExPA 0278. See also IWM ExPA 0272 for Biography Panel Submission Timetable, which includes the negative numbers of the photographs used from the Museum's Photographic Archive.

⁵⁸⁷ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB (CC'd to RC) (15/03/90) 'First World War Exhibition: Biography Panel', IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁸⁸ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB (CC'd to RC) (15/03/90) 'First World War Exhibition: Biography Panel', IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁸⁹ IWM ExPA 0278.

context.⁵⁹⁰ PJS was always keen to promote Haig's role in 1918 as the 'Year of Victory', and it must have been agreed that this caption would withstand possible public criticism. AB further responded to PJS' biography for Woodrow Wilson:

'President Woodrow Wilson 1856-1924: American. As President of the United States throughout the war, Wilson strove to keep his country out of the conflict. Not only did he fail to achieve this aim but his plans for the League of Nations were ruined by the US Senate's refusal to ratify the Versailles Treaty'.

⁵⁹¹

AB recorded this as being too negative - referring to the fact that Wilson had been fundamentally involved within the negotiations for the Versailles Treaty.⁵⁹² From this, it becomes apparent that the role of the Director-General was critical in determining the content of what was said, and how it was said within the space of the galleries, as AB's understanding of the historical events in questions influenced what information would be presented to the public. Equally the factor of PJS' influences further affected the content; his assessment of the politicians that featured within the biography board typically had a more critical tone, whereas the failings of military figures were underplayed.⁵⁹³ Blame was ascribed to individuals' involvement in failed campaigns, such as Winston Churchill with Gallipoli in 1915, Lord Jellicoe's dismissal as Admiral of the Fleet in December 1917, and Marshal Joffre's removal after the Battle of Verdun in 1916. As a result, the biography board consisted of a mixture of politicians, a large proportion of military figures and various Heads of State and Royals, whose presence was deemed necessary to propel the story of the conflict through the decisions they made, and the impact these had upon the War's progression.⁵⁹⁴

The production of the chronology panel went through similar acts of filtration.⁵⁹⁵ Again beginning with a hand-drafted version produced by PJS, following

⁵⁹⁰ Illustrating this point was PJS' biography for Winston Churchill in the First World War galleries, which referred to him as an 'outstanding national leader in the Second World War' (IWM ExPA 0278).

⁵⁹¹ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB (Cc'd to RC) (26/04/90) 'First World War Exhibition: Biography Panel', IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁹² Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB (Cc'd to RC) (26/04/90) 'First World War Exhibition: Biography Panel', IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁹³ See 'Final Copy of 'Final First World War exhibition: Biography Panel Copy'', IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁹⁴ See 'Final Copy of 'Final First World War exhibition: Biography Panel Copy'', IWM ExPA 0278, for the completed list and biographies of the 27 individuals.

⁵⁹⁵ See Figure 48.

consultation with his R&I colleagues, it was distributed amongst other staff for their input – essentially to determine whether to support the proposed contributions, or notify any possible omissions.⁵⁹⁶ This produced around twenty entries for each year, and so totalled around 100 dates altogether. In response to this list, AB stated:

‘...the fact that they [events on the Eastern Front] will be unknown to our average visitors makes their inclusion pointless. We can & should include Eastern Front material, but along the lines of ‘Russia invades Poland’ – i.e. in a format which will mean something to the reader...I have crossed out the ones that I think definitely ought to go & put queries where I think we should delete or make more explicit – e.g. no point in saying Russians capture Przemyśl unless you know where this is & why it was significant’.⁵⁹⁷

It summed up another difficulty faced by R&I in delivering more complicated historical information in a gallery-friendly format. They considered that this information warranted due attention, in explaining the First World War. However, AB questioned listed inclusions, such as the Battle of the Masurian Lakes, and crossed out entries such as ‘1915 – 22 June - Lemberg recaptured by Austrians’ – assessing that such information, at least in that format, would not resonate with the visitors for whom it was being presented.⁵⁹⁸ The desire amongst R&I staff members to grant visitors the opportunity to learn about the First World War in a comprehensive manner could not be realised. Instead AB requested the inclusion of broader-based events, citing the introduction of conscription, at the cost of some of the military engagements. RC similarly concurred, noting ‘...it’s a bit of a landing list of battles and lacks a ‘home front’ element’, and accordingly requesting some entries be omitted.⁵⁹⁹ It was hence those at the summit of the Museum hierarchy passing judgement on what type of information that would be accessible to the Museum’s audiences, based on their review of what was presented to them by the R&I Department. AB and RC thus moderated this presentation of history in acting as

⁵⁹⁶ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB (Cc’d to RC/Christopher Dowling/Schools Officer/Senior Keeper) (21/05/90), ‘First World War Exhibition: Chronology Panel’, IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁹⁷ Internal Memorandum from AB to Christopher Dowling (24/05/90), ‘Chronology Panel’, IWM ExPA 0278. As it turned out, the entry regarding Przemyśl was included in the final version (IWM ExPA 0278).

⁵⁹⁸ Internal Memorandum from AB to Christopher Dowling (24/05/90), ‘Chronology Panel’, IWM ExPA 0278.

⁵⁹⁹ Internal Memorandum from RC to PRC (23/05/90), IWM ExPA 0278.

sounding boards to establish what information visitors might be familiar with, but also to ensure that this was pruned to a standard so as to withstand potential critique. Even twenty years on, PJS considered this process of approval frustrating and contentious:

‘...the thing which infuriated me most was...having to have one’s writing or contributions passed by a kind-of board of inspection, which mainly consisted of Borg and Crawford, so if I wrote 120 words on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, it had to go to Borg, who would then make his comments and then it would go to Crawford, who would make his comments...sometimes the comments were perceptive and quite justified, and in other cases, in my view, they were rubbish...I can’t remember the exact example, but I stated in one caption about, I think, about War at Sea in the First World War, ‘In 1917, through the U-Boat, Britain came nearer to defeat than at any other time in the War’. I think, I may be mis-remembering this, but I think I got a comment back, a sort-of scribbled comment back from Borg, ‘Is this really true?’...I think I replied ‘I wouldn’t have written it’, unless, you know, who’s the historian here? You pay me to do the research and through my research, and not exactly original research but at least I’d checked my facts in the Reference Library, why do you think I wrote it if I didn’t think I could back it up’.⁶⁰⁰

Thus PJS was occasionally frustrated by the caption-checking process, when his historical judgement appeared to be called into question, though he accepted that this was the same reasoning as that behind the dress rehearsal exercises for the showcase layouts, in that AB and RC were able to view things from a top level strategic view. However he regarded the system as ‘a little excessive in retrospect’:

‘...while I can understand why they wanted to make sure that what was going out was acceptable, this in a kind-of sense, emasculated what the historians might have been putting forward as a view, so there was an inbuilt tension there, I would say’.⁶⁰¹

⁶⁰⁰ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶⁰¹ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

Both PJS and Laurie Milner were accomplished historians of the Western Front, and in accordance had 'a particular view which other people might not share'.⁶⁰²

However, the crucial issue for PJS was that they were the ones who were spending their time studying it at great length:

'...you objected to your views being challenged to some extent because you thought, well 'that's what you pay me for, mate', is to be your expert on this...I was quite happy to take responsibility for what I wrote because I was confident that if I had written it, then it was backed up by evidence...I think others in my office felt the same'.⁶⁰³

PJS therefore wanted his Team to be respected for their endeavours, defining his colleagues as a group of historians that 'did get a little pompous about it on occasion', and this distinctive identity meant that PRC and he did not always see eye to eye:

'...the design, quite often, clashed with the historian, and our view was that the history was the most important point, it was what you were trying to convey, rather than the way in which it was conveyed, that was most important, and that did lead to tensions on occasion'.⁶⁰⁴

Often these minor run-ins were in relation to the prescribed length of captions, and the difficulties in deciding what needed to be said versus how it would be said:

'I would say look, what's more important here, the actual statement of what the Somme is about or your design...'why can't we have five photographs instead of four on this main caption panel?' Those kind of, looking back, stupid debates and points actually got quite heated at the time...but it did display the fact that we were motivated and passionate about what we were doing on both sides, and therefore, in the long run, I think that was all to the good'.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰² Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶⁰³ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. See 'Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays' (11/12/87), IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007' for Borg's handwritten observations on PJS' report.

⁶⁰⁴ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶⁰⁵ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

5.8.5 – The Art of Conveying History

On reflection, PJS acknowledged that AB and RC ‘were carrying the ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the displays, and were therefore, in hindsight, perfectly entitled to check things in detail’.⁶⁰⁶ Likewise he credited PRC as achieving the primary task of getting the displays open on time, ‘despite our sometimes prickly debates’.⁶⁰⁷ The interview was thus an outlet in which PJS could air his remarks containing his frustrations of the issues of the exhibition-making, and a twenty five year gap allowed him to ‘put what all seemed so important at the time into its proper perspective’. What effectively came out of the interview was that PJS objected to having his capabilities as a historian questioned, but for AB, RC and PRC, it was vital that the expertise of this knowledge was adapted to fit the expectation that would it provide for a public and non-expert audience. The issue was exacerbated by the fact that PJS targeted his work at a particular audience group:

‘...there was a kind-of amalgam of, if Professor Brian Bond of the Department of War Studies at Kings came in and read my captions on the Battle of the Somme, I didn’t wanna feel ashamed...on the one hand, it was aimed at academic respectability, therefore if you take that as an example, what Laurie Milner and I might say about the Battle of the Somme, one would hope one wouldn’t be embarrassed if an academic peer came in. On the other hand, you aimed at making it intelligible for somebody, accessible to somebody who was reasonably interested in the subject without being a fanatic...an intelligent sixth former or a member of the Western Front Association or Mrs Higgins who came in to see what Uncle Alf had done in the First World War, would not be interested in the minutiae of Haig’s tactics on the 1st July 1916, but would have been quite interested in the fact he would have carried a pack which contained the following items, which the galleries also did’.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ Email between PJS and JW, ‘IWM PhD Student – Use of Interview Material’, 03/09/15.

⁶⁰⁷ Email between PJS and JW, ‘IWM PhD Student – Use of Interview Material’, 03/09/15.

⁶⁰⁸ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. In his Philosophy Document, PJS recorded that there was a need to be aware of current scholarship, but that ‘the new historical displays are not the place for detailed analysis or academic debate’ (Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, ‘Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays’ (11/12/87), IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007).

Aware of the different levels and attempting to meet the respective expectations of this layer cake, he targeted the general interest visitor through ‘trigger-points’, or the deployment of noteworthy objects that might catch their attention. As a practising historian, his philosophy was not as accommodating as the standards of today might dictate, in his view that ‘if you aimed at the lowest common denominator, you were failing’.⁶⁰⁹ The way to counter this was achieved through combining objects and text in a way that would make audiences think, and thus the job of putting together showcases was one of ‘sign-posting...to present a structured series of facts and ideas which might educate them in the basic subject or hopefully to stimulate them to become more interested’.⁶¹⁰

PJS defined his role in proceedings as the ‘historical conscience of the exercise, a kind-of guru, if you like...a unifying role, to steer the historical boat and to ensure that there was a unified interpretation’.⁶¹¹ The worthiness of individual topics was for that reason governed by their perceived importance to the historical narrative:

‘...most of those in control of the displays agreed that the Western Front should occupy a major proportion of the displays...we nevertheless acknowledged that...Palestine, Gallipoli, the war in what we called the Colonies, obscure things like naval operations on Lake Tanganyika, the Russian Revolution in particular...should be at least mentioned and acknowledged, the problem was that, for the Russian Revolution, we hadn’t actually got much... but we did our best by using film instead of exhibits, so the touch-screen videos were an absolute vital part of where we didn’t have

⁶⁰⁹ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶¹⁰ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. An example of this was the inclusion of six cases next to the immersive Trench Experience featuring poignant objects that ‘...just made you stop, it was one of those things that one hoped lodge[d] in a visitor’s brain’ (Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13). It was intended to feature items ‘which never see the light of day... [and have] an interesting/poignant/funny/story behind them, relating to an individual if possible’ (Internal Memorandum from PRC to Department of Exhibits and Firearms, ‘Additional ‘Ephemera’ items for WWI exhibition’, 16/05/90, IWM ExPA 0249). See also ‘Trench Showcases’ List, IWM ExPA 0249, including items of trench art, sketches by Army Chaplain The Reverend Canon Cyril Lomax showing life on the front from July 1916 to April 1917, soldier souvenirs and letters.

⁶¹¹ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

artefacts, you used film and commentary to make sure that the topic was covered'.⁶¹²

Touch screen videos, as something new to feature within the galleries, were able to convey historical points in a different manner, with PJS a big endorser of utilising this technology:

'...how you best convey the historical point that you're trying to make...which may be that the first day of the Somme was a disaster, that by 1918 tactics had improved and so on...if you try and put that on an exhibition label, it's a big turn off, even I, as someone who relies on the written word would acknowledge the fact that, 99.9% of the public would turn off at the end of the first sentence, but we decided quite early on that those kind-of historical narrative, as to the learning curve of the BEF or whatever, was best done in touch-screen videos with film, and a commentary, we soon learned, though I was a bit of a luddite in some respects about using that sort-of thing, I was very soon convinced that I, as a historian could actually say a bloody sight more through that medium than I could on an exhibition label, and therefore I was a convert, I was quite happy to utilise that to the maximum extent that we could...in some cases, sound and film can make the point quicker and better than written text or even an object'.⁶¹³

Though existing within a broad chronological 1914-1918 framework, the galleries were thematically led, with the intention that this would allow visitors to decide upon either a broad storyline or focus in on particular topics of interest to them that would interlink with other sections.⁶¹⁴ The advantage was therefore that each separate

⁶¹² Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶¹³ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. He felt that if you wanted to say more than 150 words, then a touch screen video was a more effective way of getting your point across.

⁶¹⁴ See 'Considerations affecting the historical structure of the displays' in Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays', 11/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007. AB had previously observed that the temporary First World War exhibition in 1987 did not succeed in achieving its arrangement within a broadly chronological framework (Internal Memorandum from AB to PRC/Angela Godwin [Cc'd to RC], 'Redevelopment Action, 06/06/86, IWM ExPA 0235). The issue to resolve this was discussed at length, but PJS's document lists the reasons against adopting a strictly chronological approach; concurring that '...such a treatment would increase the risks of cluttered and repetitive displays and would defeat our objective of keeping the outline story simple'. An exclusively British thematic perspective was considered, as well as 'following the experiences of successive generations of one or more typical, if fictional, families (i.e. the 'common experience' writ large). After discussion, it was agreed to adopt a thematic

section could stand alone as a separate entity, and would provide suitable detail in one location for any visitor interested in that particular topic.⁶¹⁵ As the driving force behind the deployment of history within the galleries, PJS had been adamant that a chronological approach would involve too much cross-referencing and repetition:

‘...it was obvious to us that if you kept saying ‘In 1915, there were these battles’, it would get a) boring and b) repetitive therefore it was best to deal with...the conditions and equipment on the Western Front as a kind-of ‘catch-all’’.⁶¹⁶

The galleries were therefore mindful of their potential audience, with this rationale intended to offer ‘a simpler and less confusing of explaining the complex threads’ of the First World War.⁶¹⁷ The approach would accordingly rely upon a Western Front backbone, with corresponding sections addressing other theatres or aspects of the conflict.

5.9 - The Recruitment of the Exhibition Designers

5.9.1 – Who to Carry Forward the IWM’s Vision?

The process of making the displays was equally reliant on the input of external designers, who were to be recruited via an open competition. AB utilised his contacts for recommendations, including James Gardner, the designer who had overseen the 1951 ‘Festival of Britain’. He responded:

approach, based on the one used on the previous B Floor displays (though improvements would be made by devoting more attention to events and personalities).

⁶¹⁴ Testimony on this topic in interviews was contradictory. For PRC, the different events happening in different theatres consecutively meant that one couldn’t use a ‘purely chronological way of doing it, you [had] to break it down into thematic areas’. She saw this as an advantage, because visitors had the option to pick and choose particular sections; ‘if you were an ‘air-buff and you wanted to know about war in the air, you could go straight there’. However RC stressed the importance of the galleries’ overarching chronological thread, and suggested that conceiving of a truly thematic approach would be ‘very difficult to do, and impossible for a visitor to grasp’, describing the galleries as ‘essentially chronological’. Likewise AB suggested that it was important to begin with a chronological sequence for visitors to latch onto (Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13; Recorded Interview between RC, AC and JW, conducted on 29/05/13; Recorded Interview between AB, AC and JW, conducted on 25/07/13).

⁶¹⁵ PJS’ brief stated that ‘...each individual section can be viewed as a self-contained ‘mini-exhibition’ with its own internal historical structure, chronology and balance’ (‘Considerations affecting the historical structure of the displays’ in Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, ‘Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays’, 11/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007).

⁶¹⁶ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶¹⁷ PRC, IWM Newsletter, July-September 1989, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1.

‘The answer to your question is not, I think, just passing you of a name. There are a number of up and coming young people who design exciting exhibits, but when one wishes to deal with a whole complex of activities and indicate a sequential historic background to them evoking the atmosphere of the times – without which your exhibits would become artifacts [sic], curios, impressive, but in themselves dead – one has a problem’.⁶¹⁸

Tellingly AB continued to buy into this mind-set; that the objects within the collections needed drama in their design, and a spectacular backdrop to fulfil their new sense of purpose. To this end, many of the shortlisted designers had involvement with theatre stage productions, such as Robert Crowley who worked at the Royal Shakespeare Company (though several were already working on existing projects). There was a rather innocuous encounter with one designer:

‘One general exhibition designer who has approached us is Jasper Jacob (ex Higgins/Ney). Penny saw him a couple of years ago + wasn’t thrilled. She tells me I saw him too but he clearly made little impression. He did most of the interior design for the Museum of London and did the Riyadh exhibition last year. He is ex-BBC head of set design. I can find out more if you are remotely interested’.⁶¹⁹

The IWM produced a brief for its potential designers for them to respond to, stating that the displays should:

‘...exploit the full range and quality of the Museum’s collections in an objective and carefully planned manner. It should be the intention to make it easy for visitors to learn something about the nature of warfare in the twentieth century. As the two world wars recede into the past, fewer and fewer of our visitors can relate directly to the experience of warfare. The Museum has to try to make this experience accessible to them, not in a clichéd, nostalgic or sensationalist way but by structured, subtle means, so that they come away

⁶¹⁸ Letter from James Gardner to AB, 06/01/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002.

⁶¹⁹ Internal Memorandum from AG to AB, 04/02/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002. Jasper Jacob was, at this time, part of Higgins Gardner & Partners, Chartered Architects Designers and Urban Planning Consultants (See Letter from Professor H C Higgins to AB, 30/01/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002). In her consideration of Sir Hugh Casson’s (1910-1999) suitability to the design work, PRC noted that he was ‘probably too old to consider’. He had been the Director of Architecture for the 1951 Festival of Britain and President of the Royal Academy from 1976-1984. In a twist of fate, his daughter Dinah was joint founder of the design practice who took on the IWM’s subsequent 2014 renovation.

with a realistic impression of what it must have been like to live through a war as a serviceman or civilian'.⁶²⁰

The brief required the designers to respond to these philosophical ideas through plans for the new exhibitions - including conceptual designs, initial schedules, and an outline plan for a section on 'Trench Warfare'.⁶²¹ 16 designers were selected for interview.⁶²² Firms were asked to give presentations featuring illustrative material (plans, visuals or models) alongside a written paper covering costs and schedules. Angela Godwin, from the Department of Museum Services, categorised the presentations for AB and RC as:

'Format' galleries (competent but not distinguished)

Stylish/neutral (often art gallery influenced)

Adventurous (i.e. a gamble to use them)

'Decorative' style

'Disneyworld'.⁶²³

She lamented that the Museum seemed unsure as to which style to choose, remarking 'In a sense we can only decide who to use if we know what sort of Museum we want'.⁶²⁴ This suggests that the Museum's new identity was still in the process of being established. Three design practices were shortlisted and then commissioned to produce a feasibility study; Barry Mazur (who had previously worked on the B-Floor displays and some temporary IWM exhibitions), Maria Lecka (an opera designer) and Jasper Jacob.⁶²⁵ With Mazur's proposal deemed 'insufficiently worked out' and lacking 'innovative flair', Jasper Jacob emerged as the

⁶²⁰ IWM Redevelopment – Design Brief, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/1.

⁶²¹ Redevelopment: Outline Design Concepts, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002. The four panels listed by the IWM to act as historical orientation for this section were titled 'How Trench Warfare Came About', 'Trench Systems', 'Four Years of Stalemate', and 'The Commanders' ('Introduction to Detailed Historical Section: Trench Warfare on the Western Front 1914-1918', IWM Redevelopment – Design Brief, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/1). The Museum also sought clarification on the role of sub-contractors.

⁶²² Internal Memorandum from Suzanne Bardgett to AB, 'Note of a Meeting of the Redevelopment Steering Group held at the Museum on Friday 6 March', 16/03/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/7/7/2. See also 'Designer Interview' questions, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002.

⁶²³ Internal Memorandum from AG to AB/RC/PRC, 16/02/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002. See also 'Designers Interviewed for Redevelopment', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002.

⁶²⁴ Internal Memorandum from AG to AB/RC/PRC, 16/02/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002.

⁶²⁵ Internal Memorandum from Suzanne Bardgett to AB, 'Note of a Meeting of the Redevelopment Steering Group held at the Museum on Friday 6 March', 16/03/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/7/7/2.

front runner.⁶²⁶ It was decided to build upon his ‘interesting ideas’, and that he should present a revised proposal in September for the consideration of the Trustees.⁶²⁷

5.10 – The Appointment of Jasper Jacob Associates

5.10.1 – Fine-tuning the Design Approach

The initial design presentation of Jasper Jacob Associates (JJA) had largely bought into the IWM mind-set of reinterpreting its overarching remit. Acknowledging that visitors were likely to have been affected directly or indirectly by the two World Wars, their principal focus lay in wanting to exploit the ‘tension’ between war’s awesome technological power and the human qualities that exist in the wartime environment.⁶²⁸ The proposal contained many ideas – one of which suggested situating a memorial in the entrance foyer, designed in the manner of a cenotaph, gate, or sculpture. The IWM was not keen on this, but were more struck by the proposition of walk-through sequential experiences using audio-visual techniques, with sequences that enabled a highly sensual visitor experience through the use of dramatic lighting and special effects.⁶²⁹ Interactive video stations were also proposed, allowing the playback of photographs, maps, graphics and film. The intention here was that visitors would gain an increased understanding of the material on display by it being supported with supplementary layers of information.

⁶²⁶ Internal Memorandum from AB to Heads of Department, ‘Design of the New Gallery Displays’, 21/05/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1. Jasper Jacob was noted as being ‘articulate and thoughtful with all the right answers’ at his presentation. He had previously worked on the Museum of London with a previous firm, Higgins & Ney, and on the D-Day Museum in Portsmouth (See ‘Designers Interviewed for Redevelopment’, No Date, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/10/002 and Letter from Jasper Jacob to AB, ‘Consultancy Services – Museum Thematic Displays’, 01/06/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1).

⁶²⁷ Internal Memorandum from RC to AB, ‘Notes of a Meeting of the Redevelopment Steering Group’, 05/06/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/7/7/2. The revised scheme would be prepared in liaison with IWM staff, though Borg emphasized to Jasper Jacob that there was no guarantee that they would agree to proceed with their design scheme (implying that the current plans were not sufficiently evolved; see Letter from AB to Jasper Jacob, 05/06/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1). In view of this, Jasper Jacob requested to meet with AB and RC at the end of June to ‘set the character and aims of the displays’, and subsequently with PJS, PRC and Angela Godwin to discuss the exhibit schedules and theme headings (Letter from Jasper Jacob to AB, ‘Consultancy Services – Museum Thematic Displays’, 01/06/87, IWM EN4/41/DD/11/1).

⁶²⁸ JJA IWM’s Redevelopment Programme Interim Design Presentation, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002.

⁶²⁹ This included a predecessor of what would become the Trench Experience (though the Museum had already expressed a desire for an immersive experiential display), and a planned ten minute ‘multi-image programme’, intended to evoke some of the intangible issues of warfare to visitors as an illustration of ‘global issues or human experience’. JJA had a strong belief in capitalising upon the use of new technology, as was evidenced by their thinking that ‘War cannot be explained by way of objects, manuscripts alone. Some of its aspects, its intrinsic nature or its devastating psychological effect need[s] a different treatment’ (JJA IWM’s Redevelopment Programme Interim Design Presentation, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/002).

The reworked JJA design proposal offers insight into how negotiations between the IWM and the designers worked, and where there was common ground. The proposed deployment of technological features still dominated, though many of these ideas would actually never materialise.⁶³⁰ This time around, more attention was paid to the actual gallery space; neutral backgrounds would give objects 'great individual presence ...to reinforce the thematic story line'.⁶³¹ There were propositions of 'architectural spaces for rest and contemplation' and planned 'changes in mood and pace...created through placement of major objects and reinforced by the exciting displays', with a variety of experiences helping to ease museum fatigue.⁶³² There was a new sense of viewing the process from the visitor's perspective, helping to 'formulate appropriate responses to their needs'.⁶³³ The designers recognised that the majority of information would be conveyed visually, meaning that the lighting of artefacts would 'direct[s] the viewer's perception and influences [their] interpretation of all visual information'.⁶³⁴ Finally the permanency, and required robustability, of the galleries was addressed with the conclusion that the Museum would need to last into the twenty first Century.⁶³⁵ JJA were confident that all of this could be achieved through their 'elegant and practical' design approach, which in turn, would lead to a 'lively, exciting and very informative series of displays':

'In providing an enlarged museum with improved access the Imperial War Museum will be able to educate a wider public, continuing in its role as a Historical Museum, a Memorial, a Major Archive and an Educational

⁶³⁰ This included a nine television monitor video wall in the entrance foyer (Technical Details, Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003). Angela Godwin had similarly proposed the idea of First and Second World War mini-cinema 'Odeons' in the galleries; see Internal Memorandum from AG to AB, 'Permanent Exhibition Plans: Redevelopment', 11/12/86, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/2.

⁶³¹ Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003.

⁶³² Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003.

⁶³³ Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003. See also JJA 'Schedule of Drawings' in IWM ExPA 0334a.

⁶³⁴ Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003. Contrastingly for the Atrium exhibits, '...a relatively high contrast and emphatic quality is envisaged within which artefacts can be revealed and amplified in a style which is, to a degree, theatrical'. The approach would distinguish between the natural light of the Atrium with the spotlights in darkness of the A Floor galleries.

⁶³⁵ Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003. PRC later re-emphasized to JJA that these permanent galleries needed to have staying power and longevity; their design and styling need to 'quite classic[al] rather than leading edge', because they couldn't start looking dated after a five year period (Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13).

Institution: in truth a museum of influence in the United Kingdom and the World'.⁶³⁶

Contract discussions with JJA were already underway by this time, and a subsequent Press Release stressed that the designers represented one stakeholder within the whole process.⁶³⁷ They would have to work alongside the Museum's curators to 'define the most applicable way of displaying the history of conflict in the twentieth century...with museum display techniques using advanced technology within structured architectural spaces'.⁶³⁸

5.11 - Interaction between JJA and the IWM

5.11.1 – Designers + Historians + An Exhibitions Officer

+ Two Directors = ?

The relationship between Jasper Jacob Associates (JJA) and the IWM was that of a contractor and a client.⁶³⁹ The designers did interact with Alan Borg and Robert Crawford, but their predominant involvement was with Exhibitions Officer, Penny Ritchie Calder (PRC) and staff from the Department of Research and Information (R&I). The process of making the exhibitions would be contingent on the input of the Museum staff's historical expertise with the flair and vision of JJA's designers. As had been demonstrated by their attention to the visitor perspective in their design proposal, JJA expressed concern from the outset about the need to avoid the 'book on the wall' and large quantities of text syndrome, bringing on an onset of claustrophobia and fatigue amongst visitors.⁶⁴⁰ JJA believed this to be the result of

⁶³⁶ Conclusion, Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003.

⁶³⁷ Though discussions started in June, JJA were fully commissioned in November 1987 to produce designs, working drawings and specifications for the Redevelopment exhibitions. See Appendix II for a broken down overview of the contract; 'Redevelopment Exhibitions – Divisions of Responsibilities', IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1. See Appendix I for the division of responsibilities between JJA and IWM. JJA's design proposal was completed in September 1988 (Page 15 of IWM Annual Report, 1986-88).

⁶³⁸ '9th June 1987 – Imperial War Museum – Press Release', JJA, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1.

⁶³⁹ See Appendix I for formal detail of responsibilities. JJA's team included specialist and experienced subcontractors who had worked with them on previous projects; Crispin Rose-Innes Associates (graphics), Triangle Two Ltd (A/V) and Lighting Design Partnership (lighting). In interview, PRC noted that JJA being a complete team was advantageous, as it aided the job of co-ordination - everything could be done through one company and one contract, which 'made the whole thing from a practical point of view much easier' (Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13).

⁶⁴⁰ This also proved to be a concern of some IWM staff. The initial Redevelopment brief had recorded that the Museum had 'no wish to force them [the Museum's visitors] into a historical straight-jacket and propel them along a series of exhibition paths which can only be escaped at the final exit' (Initial Brief for Redevelopment of Main Building of Imperial War Museum, November 1980, IWM

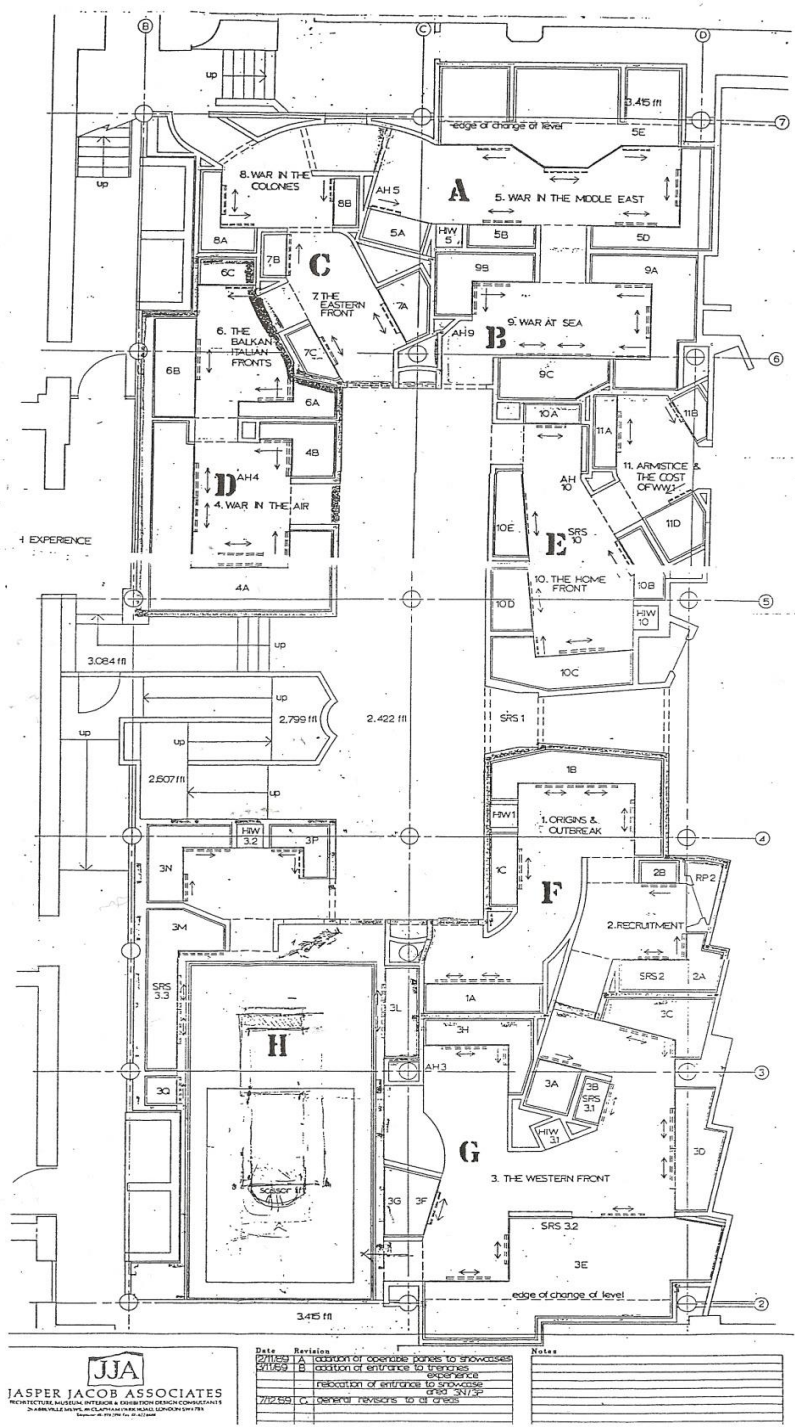
an insistent author anxious to include every fact and detail – thus avoiding it would require a ‘very close link between author/curator and graphic designer’ to ‘arrive at a very exciting and lively solution’.⁶⁴¹ JJA also articulated a desire to use photographs sparingly, and more specifically, to utilise less famous images of conflict.⁶⁴² Setting out the iterative process of plotting the exhibition space would now determine the extent to which the visions of these two parties - of curators and designers - would unite.

EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8. Angela Godwin had further recorded in the build-up to the Redevelopment scheme; ‘visiting museums is a tiring and time-consuming activity and it is essential to have somewhere for numbers of the public to be able to sit and relax and to be able to get something to eat and drink... without these facilities, many visitors feel worn out when they have only seen half the museum and so they cannot make the most of their visit’ (Internal Memorandum from AG to AB, 09/03/84, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/2).

⁶⁴¹ Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003.

⁶⁴² Jasper Jacob Design Proposal, 1987, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003.

EX PA 0266



JJA
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Date	Revision	Notes
07/12/10	A	Adoption of observable panels to showcases
07/12/10	B	Adoption of entrance to experience
		Redesign of entrance to showcase
07/12/10	C	General revisions to all areas

Figure 49 – The Layout of the First World War Galleries (IWM ExPA 0266)

5.11.2 – The Design Process in Action

The layouts for the First World War, Inter-War, and Second World War displays were approved in June 1988, enabling JJA to begin detailed layouts for each case with help from R&I staff.⁶⁴³ Insight can be gained into the partnership between JJA and the IWM by examining what each side expected from the other - as illustrated by the first occasion of dressing the showcases, which left the Museum feeling underwhelmed:

'I must admit to being disappointed by the lack of style. Although the exhibits are not desperately exciting, someone with an eye for composition could have given the whole thing a 'lift' by much more imaginative positioning. There were obvious errors, such as the medal group hidden by the mullion, which I hope will not be repeated, and less obvious but equally important things like the clumsy design of the fabric covered plinths.

I am concerned about overall composition. We have always said that the dressing will be *the* most important element of the exhibition, and that we are relying heavily on a creative approach to make the cases visually exciting. I do hope it was simply the fact that the speed at which the case had to be dressed left no time for trying out more imaginative layouts. Some reassurances on this would be welcome'.⁶⁴⁴

PRC was thus emphasising that the showcases relied upon a degree of flair in order to make them 'visually exciting' - harking back to the intention of employing JJA as designers who would employ their expertise to engage visitors in a sensorial way. Borg expressed a similar sense of disappointment regarding the layouts for the Second World War displays:

⁶⁴³ Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, 'Note of an Exhibition Review Meeting held on 22 June 1988. Lower Ground Floor Progress', 26/06/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2. See IWM ExPA 0104 for the JJA Draft Programme, 26/10/87, that outlines a timeline for the completion of their responsibilities.

⁶⁴⁴ Letter from PRC to Jasper Jacob, 'Prototype Showcases', 12/03/89, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2 (emphasis original).

'...judging from the first results we are seeing, JJA's approach is perhaps rather too static – needs rather more verve & movement, through the use of interesting angles & juxtapositions'.⁶⁴⁵



Figure 50 – *Dressing One of the Showcases*

(©IWM/90/49/6)

Clouding the issue of who was actually completing the design work, this matter rumbled on through to the completion of the Second World War galleries. PRC reasserted her concerns, believing that they were yet to be fully addressed:

'...the cases I have seen so far are badly composed, lacking any degree of style or excitement...having seen cases with a good mixture of objects, I remain very dissatisfied with the standard of composition. The approach is wooden and lifeless, and seems to be dictated far too closely by the draft case layouts which we were assured were guidelines only. We had hoped for a far more dynamic approach, but no[w] finds [sic] ourselves in the position where our staff are having to produce the ideas we are employing JJA to come up with'.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁵ Internal Memorandum from Emma Davidson to AB, 31/03/89, IWM ExPA 0211. RC also felt unimpressed by these same showcase drawings, describing them as 'wooden and unimaginative' (Internal Memorandum from RC to Emma Davidson, 'Batch 3 Case Layouts', 30/03/89, IWM ExPA 0211).

⁶⁴⁶ Letter from PRC to John Dangerfield, 'Showcase Dressing', 06/04/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2.

This issue of who should be fulfilling certain roles remained a common source of frustration amongst the partnership of the Museum's staff and the external designers. It was typically exacerbated when one side perceived that they were doing the role expected of the other. What is more, the overall process meant that progress was reliant upon approval from both sides, and so burdening one with extra requirements or commitments was often counter-productive. The IWM kept a firm grip on ensuring that their staff members were on hand during the period of dressing the showcases. As already outlined in this Chapter, the showcases were dressed and presented to AB for his approval, to assess the quality and style of the case dressing. Before final composition was achieved, it was often Laurie Milner from R&I who was brought in 'to share his knowledge of how our exhibits can be displayed to their best advantage'.⁶⁴⁷ Consequently the responsibility for communicating historical points remained solely with IWM staff, rather than the designers, who would do what they could to prioritise objects' visual aesthetic. This point of tension caused clashes, to the point that JJA sought further clarification from PRC in defining their specific responsibilities:

'Often an exhibit is chosen with a distinct purpose in the narrative. It is not always possible as a designer to identify what that purpose is. I do not think that JJA should define exactly the story being told through the Museum's collection...I think our job is to make clear the intentions of the narrative'.⁶⁴⁸

It therefore seems that JJA wanted the IWM to be present to ensure that any historical points being delivered by objects were being communicated clearly through their presentation. Furthermore it stated that there was not a requirement for the designers to have detailed historical knowledge or for them to grasp the specific reasons of inclusion for a particular item. Instead it was the presence of Laurie Milner that '...made a great difference to the composition of the cases, which are now beginning to look as good as I hoped they would'.⁶⁴⁹ In consequence, this meant that the ultimate say over the look and the messages of the showcases rested firstly with R&I, followed by an ultimate decision by AB.

⁶⁴⁷ Letter from PRC to John Dangerfield, 'Showcase Dressing', 06/04/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2.

⁶⁴⁸ Letter from Calum Storrie to PRC, 13/04/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2.

⁶⁴⁹ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC/Derek Needham, 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Updating Report. 3. Lower Ground Floor Courtyard Galleries - Dressing', 23/04/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2. PRC was again aggrieved that Laurie Milner seemed to 'be doing much of JJA's work for them'.

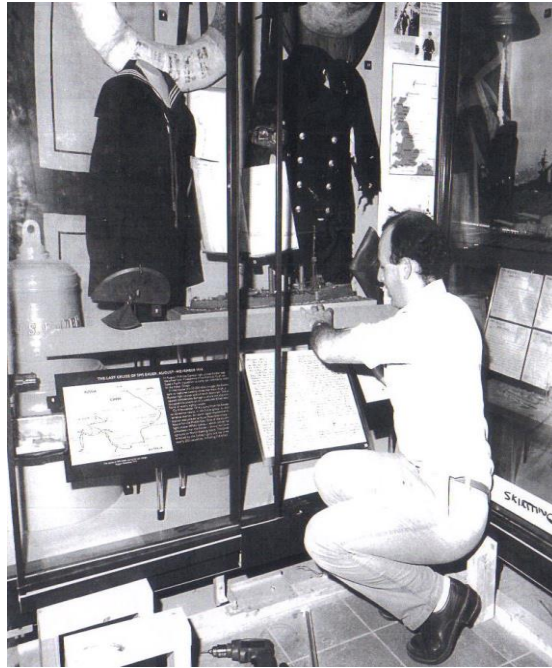


Figure 51 – Dressing the Display Cases (©IWM/90/51/6)

Based on their experiences of working with JJA, the IWM weighed up the advantages of taking them on again for the completion of the First World War galleries.⁶⁵⁰ By this point in time, the Museum had realised that it would have to spread out the completion of the Lower Ground Floor galleries, and that with the availability of funds, these galleries would be delayed until 1990-1991.⁶⁵¹ PRC felt that the designers had taken ‘an inordinately long time (over a year) to produce ideas for certain key elements’, which had led to things being rushed through in order to meet the Museum’s reopening date.⁶⁵² She additionally felt that the combination of JJA and showcase dressers, Plowden & Smith, was ‘not enough to give us the

⁶⁵⁰ PRC drafted up the pros and cons of continuing JJA’s contract. The former listed a continuity of style, the fact that the tight programme could be completed by already-briefed designers, and their familiarity of the IWM set-up, staff and working methods. The latter revolved around ‘a general lack of flair + creativity’, ‘staleness of approach’ and a concern that the project management would be weakened if the current chief designer was not involved (Continuing Contract with JJA’, PRC Handwritten Document, No Date, IWM ExPA 0238). For details of individuals involved, see Letter from Pamela Bell to RC (05/09/89) ‘Design Team’, EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/1.

⁶⁵¹ A provisional timetable drafted in January 1989 listed the showcase dressing period as taking place between September and November 1990. As it turned out, this timetable was brought forward substantially; by the time of the Museum’s reopening, work already completed by R&I by this time meant that the timescale of working on these galleries could be condensed to August 1989 and April 1990, before they opened in June (Internal Memorandum from PRC to PJS (CC’d to RC) ‘Redevelopment Exhibitions: Update on Research and Information Office Work. First World War Exhibition’, 11/01/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2 and ExPA 0105. See also Letter from Pamela Bell to RC [20/06/89], ‘Imperial War Museum. Historical Exhibition – First World War Galleries’, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/1).

⁶⁵² Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC/Derek Needham, ‘Redevelopment Exhibitions: Updating Report. 1. General. A) JJA’s Performance’, 23/04/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2.

results we had originally been promised'.⁶⁵³ The Museum retained reservations over aspects of their dealings with JJA, particularly the lacklustre quality of their design work.⁶⁵⁴ On top of this, the dynamics of the working relationship between the two sides had been put under strain by certain episodes. One such instance occurred in April 1988, when PRC wrote to Jasper Jacob regarding some briefs that had been submitted by R&I to JJA, as a matter of urgency, by the end of March. The Museum staff subsequently discovered that the designers had 'hardly begun to look at them', in spite of the pressure exerted on R&I to produce full display briefs by this deadline.⁶⁵⁵ R&I were 'understandably aggrieved' over the incident, and PRC wanted JJA to appreciate her concern over what had happened.⁶⁵⁶ Frustrations were intensified when 'specific instructions given by R&I about certain exhibits and the way they should be displayed [had] been ignored'.⁶⁵⁷ PRC kept AB and RC informed about the continuing fact that 'the designers have failed to take into account much of what was conveyed to them by R&I about the way in which certain things should be shown'.⁶⁵⁸ For their efforts, JJA always strove to smooth out occasional tensions, and to repair eroded trust; a letter from Jasper Jacob to RC explicitly mentioned that 'we [JJA] think of ourselves as part of a team of which the other is the Imperial War Museum' – thus asserting their partnership, but not really addressing the nature of its problems.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵³ Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC/Derek Needham, 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Updating Report. 1. General. A) JJA's Performance', 23/04/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2. The Memorandum latterly noted that although Plowden & Smith had been on site for nearly six weeks, various problems had meant that not one showcase had been completed.

⁶⁵⁴ An Exhibition Review Meeting talked of 'the lack of design input and seeming lack of flair which JJA had shown to date' (Internal Memorandum from Karen Eyre to RC, 'Minutes of the Exhibition Review Meeting, Tuesday 26 April 1988. 3) Lower Ground Floor', 11/05/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2).

⁶⁵⁵ Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, 21/04/88, IWM ExPA 0105.

⁶⁵⁶ Letter from PRC to Jasper Jacob, 'Progress on Design of Lower Ground (A) Floor Displays', 21/04/88, IWM ExPA 105. Jasper Jacob had to assure PRC 'that their work was not in vain – the fruits of their labour will soon be apparent in the plans we are preparing' (Letter from Jasper Jacob to PRC, 'Progress on Design of Lower Ground (A) Floor Displays', 25/04/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2).

⁶⁵⁷ Letter from PRC to Calum Storrie, 'Showcase Layouts', 10/10/88, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2. This may have been aggrieved by the fact that, through the early design phases, R&I and JJA tended to operate primarily through PRC, rather than dealing directly with each other.

⁶⁵⁸ Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC/AB, 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Case Layouts', 10/10/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2. This supports the earlier idea that PRC considered R&I staff were dictating the look of the showcases more than the designers.

⁶⁵⁹ Letter from Jasper Jacob to RC, 22/06/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2. In spite of this, PRC insisted that the relationship was not equal, and that the IWM was contributing above and beyond to this partnership. At the point of decision with regard to the First World War galleries, she recorded '...on the basis of present performance...we are having to bail them out by producing ideas and staff expertise ourselves, we should resist any further payment...' (Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC/Derek Needham, 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Updating Report. 1. General. B) Fees',

In the event, the IWM decided that it was a case of 'better the devil you know'.⁶⁶⁰ JJA were accordingly contracted to complete the First World War galleries and the Trench Experience, and the aforementioned frustrations and tensions that ran throughout the creative process would remain absent from view within the final exhibition space.⁶⁶¹ To examine why this was, the following section draws upon the interview testimony of John Dangerfield, who led the Design Team from JJA responsible for designing and delivering the IWM's historical permanent galleries for the two World Wars.⁶⁶² The purpose is to further consider the role of the key players within the exhibition-making process, by utilising the observations of someone with a less direct affiliation to the IWM.

23/04/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2). This issue of payment referred to JJA's request for additional design stage fees. There were various wranglings and financial disputes - principally JJA claiming the costs of additional fees over the winter of 1988 (IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2; including letters from RC and a Treasury solicitor, who was used to clarify proceedings, as the dispute was based on the technicalities of the contract). See Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, 'JJA Fee Request', 22/05/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2.

⁶⁶⁰ There were practical concerns during the construction of the First World War galleries, because the adjacent Second World War galleries had to remain open to the public. Screens were erected to limit sound breakout, but dust proved problematic (Recorded Interview between JW and JD, conducted on 05/07/13).

⁶⁶¹ See Internal Memorandum from PRC to AB/RC 'First World War Contract with JJA', 06/09/89, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2. See IWM/EN4/41/DD/1/11/2 for various drafts of the original contracts from 1987 between JJA and the IWM, which also summarises the specific responsibilities of the Client (IWM). The final version was produced on 04/05/88. With most of the design issues already addressed, PRC suggested in interview that their familiarity with proceedings meant that the decision to re-appoint them was 'a given', once the complication over fees had been resolved satisfactorily (Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13). Showcase dressers Plowden & Smith were also retained in view of their good performance and the lack of alternative firms (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, 'Redevelopment Exhibitions: Phase 2. Note of a Meeting Held on 28 September 1989 at the Imperial War Museum – Phase 2 Exhibitions [First World War]', 02/10/89, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2).

⁶⁶² For the First World War galleries, this consisted of Alistair McCaw, Robin Rye and Gabriele von Wittken, all of whom had been based on the IWM site since October 1989 ('Exhibition Design – Jasper Jacob Associates', IWM Publicity Pack, IWM ExPA 0240). JD was responsible for the interactions of the vast network of sub-contractors; Electrical Design & Construct Partnership, Profile Products, Kimpton Walker PLC, Plowden & Smith Ltd, Electrosonic Ltd, Service Photography & Display Ltd, Modern Alarms Ltd and Borley Brothers. Styles & Wood were the main contractors (IWM Publicity Pack, IWM ExPA 0240).



Figure 52 – *Exhibitions Officer Penny Ritchie Calder, Designer Jasper Jacob and Projects Manager John Dangerfield are presented to HM The Queen by Alan Borg (©IWM/89/26/B/7)*

5.12 – John Dangerfield (Jasper Jacob Associates’ Project Officer)

5.12.1 – Reflecting Back on the Tensions of Representation

John Dangerfield (JD), as do many exhibition designers, came from an architectural background. He brought this benefit of experience, having already worked on various sites with large teams and institutions before arriving at the IWM.⁶⁶³ The interview process provided a great deal of catharsis for him in recounting his memories of the project, and he evidently looked back on the whole productive experience with a great deal of fondness.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶³ JD designed many other national and international museological and historical interpretation projects after his work on the IWM Redevelopment, alongside his involvement with a small exhibition on Belsen at the IWM in 1991. This included work at the Royal Armouries, the National Museum of Scotland, Oxford’s Bodleian Library, the National Science Museum in Thailand, Fort Siloso in Singapore, the National Maritime Museums of Malta and South Korea, and the Royal Welch Fusiliers Regimental Museum at Caernarfon Castle. PRC recalled how, as a trained architect, JD had ‘some sensible things to say about the Arups scheme, having that architectural, not just purely museum fit-out perspective’ (Recorded Interview between JW and PRC, conducted on 21/06/13).

⁶⁶⁴ Remembering it as ‘incredibly hard work, but one of the most intensive creative experiences’ he had, he stated that it had spoilt him ‘for ever more’, because it had ‘never ever been equalled’ during his sixty year career (Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13).

JD's involvement with Peter Simkins led him to develop and apply his life-long interest in military history.⁶⁶⁵ This was brought about when both of them had travelled to the Western Front battlefields in 1987, as part of their IWM research. In interview, both recounted the shared experience of a reading of the poem 'Beaucourt Revisited' by A. P. Herbert at Beaumont Hamel:

'...then there was my trip with Peter to the Western Front... entirely his initiative, and, yes it was jolly important...he insisted that we go out there together, and we stopped at Beaumont Hamel, and I leapt out to fill the bag, the plastic bag with soil, and, did he tell you that, then we went onto Ulster Tower and somebody read 'Beaucourt Revisited' on the top of the tower, on a windy November day, and Peter always said that when we were under Lutyen's [Blomfield's] arch at Ypres, that he looked at my face, and he said I really think for the first time that, I'm sort-of misquoting it, for the first time, I realised that you had understood what this meant, and I guess I did, it's a very moving experience, being there, we were there on the 11th November, it would be difficult not to be moved...to meet the people who cared as much as they did about what we were looking at, whose fathers had fought there, and Beaumont Hamel, Beaucourt Revisited, funny that he should remember that, it meant obviously a lot to him too'.⁶⁶⁶

This episode goes to show how the gravitas of the topic being depicted within the format of an exhibition was one that could affect the individuals involved in emotively powerful ways; visiting the battlefield landscape granted JD a newfound empathy with the subject matter. On the other hand, his presence in the creative process was to act as a foil to the extensive knowledge and enthusiasm PJS had for this topic, and this manifested itself through his view of featuring objects on display. From a design perspective, JD's objectives targeted the visual aesthetic of the showcases, and doing what he could to ensure that these had a measure of clarity. Yet he

⁶⁶⁵ MH recalled that JD 'had a great feel for it all', and that his personal enthusiasm for the subject came through a lot (Recorded Interview between JW and MH, conducted on 18/06/13).

⁶⁶⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13. PJS stated that he struck up 'an immediate rapport' with JD, also remembering the recital of the poem and JD collecting a bin bag of soil from Beaumont Hamel for the Trench Experience (Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13). He had similarly been inspired by a whistle-stop one day trip to Ypres in 1967, organised by IWM Staff Member Rose Coombes (Personal copy of PJS article from Bulletin 91, Oct-Nov 2011, Western Front Association).

suggested in interview that this was hard to enact, because he believed that the Museum's staff were partly guilty of obscuring the institution's mission:

'...achieving a consensus about the effectiveness of the display of individual showcases, they seem to result in a regrettable accretion of exhibits, because of personal favourites, an arcane historical point or the desire to fill every square millimetre of space, a lava like progression viz Lawrence of Arabia...Alan [Borg], Robert [Crawford] and Penny [Ritchie Calder]...Plowden and Smith were there, and Jasper [Jacob] turned up, and I don't think I had much to do with it, I had too much on my plate, but I did go along, and what happened was, you had an empty showcase, and then the large exhibits would go in...and then more artefacts, and I remember very well walking past a case dealing with the war in the desert, and Lawrence's dishdasha, and some other things were there, and it looked absolutely wonderful, simple message coming straight out at you, and the next day I went by, and there were more artefacts, the next day more artefacts, and they went on and on and on, until, as I see, the clarity was completely obscured, perception eclipsed, and you had a sort of visual presentation indigestion, it just overwhelmed, stuff, and that's the problem with the IWM, they've got such a huge collection...it resulted in something which was completely inflexible'.⁶⁶⁷



Figure 53 – *Lawrence of Arabia Objects within the 'War in the Middle East' Showcase (Sourced by Author)*

⁶⁶⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

The theme of cluttering the individual showcases became a common criticism of the exhibition, reaching a point where such a mass of objects would defy visitor comprehension. JD allocated much responsibility for this with the IWM curators:

'...there must have about 14,000 objects in the galleries, it was stuffed with stuff... [Alan Borg] had endless tussles with Peter, far too many words, particularly with captions, and I've sat in on meetings with that...Peter just nit-picked every single detail [laughing], if he could bring in General Maxse he would, that was his favourite, has he not mentioned Maxse to you, oh God, he's the only man, he won the War all on his own'.⁶⁶⁸

After considering the effect of personal interests and favourites, JD subsequently reflected upon PJS's involvement with the broader group of specialist military historians in the Exhibits and Firearms departments of the IWM, and how this had a profound effect on the way in which he wanted to present the First World War:

'He's part of a circle, now I don't know whether the circle reflects his, or projects his attitudes, which is very much, well this type of gas shell had green paint on the top, that sort of thing...I was very influenced by the fact that he was always working with me on detail, where did they come from, what sort of kit would they have been in...I remember him lecturing me about the major killer, which was not the machine gun, it was the artillery, and that put me very straight on that'.⁶⁶⁹

With this eye for the minutiae dictating the politics of the displays, JD suggested that, as a result, the galleries were essentially 'Peter's interpretation...that's inevitably distilled'.⁶⁷⁰ PRC had seen this as a skill – being able to make something as specialist as military history more accessible to someone less inclined to read it, and countered by the influences of her own agendas, as well as those of AB, RC and JJA. JD, on the other hand, felt that this was insufficient in granting an overall focus on the bigger picture, 'the global significance, the human significance of what was

⁶⁶⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13. TC also observed that '...in Pete's mind, Maxse was one of the best training generals of the B.E.F. and it meant something to Pete' (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14).

⁶⁶⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

⁶⁷⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

happening'.⁶⁷¹ For JD, this gave warrant to the charge of whether the IWM was actively sanitizing its representations of conflict. He felt that the institution had a historical duty to convey what happened in a comprehensive yet translucent way, whilst simultaneously offering a dignified acknowledgement of the suffering inflicted upon those caught up in the conflict. Asked outright whether he thought that the Museum was guilty of glorifying war, he responded:

'It's a good question, I don't think so, certainly not, consciously I think the trouble is that if the way, if you sanitize it, then you propagate that sanitized message, it becomes a glorification, that's the danger...I think subconsciously there is an element, an element of glorification, of some big boys playgroup...at times'.⁶⁷²

Strongly paralleled to this, JD felt that the galleries were for that reason guilty of significant omissions:

'...the one thing I've come to realise about this entire exhibition is there's no illustration of death, of the huge number of casualties...there's a sort of sanitization process, is that reasonable?...Death is always implied, it's not actually explicit, it's not there...[it was as if the Museum was] fearful of the grief, the suffering'.⁶⁷³

In spite of these views, JD accepted the significant challenges of how one might go about trying to explain such narratives of loss to a generation of visitors far removed from the conflict, and even whether it would work (accepting that this forms the IWM's ongoing challenge). Equally the danger was about going too far the other way by placing too strong an emphasis on remembrance, with JD observing 'It's not

⁶⁷¹ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

⁶⁷² Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

⁶⁷³ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13. Having modified his views on the difficulties of representing warfare within the space of a museum, JD's perspectives on what the galleries did say, and more importantly did not say, had changed significantly in the ensuing time period. He criticised omissions that he felt had not been depicted sufficiently, such as the War's cultural legacy, and its long-term consequences. He felt that these debates needed to be dealt with when presenting war, stressing that 'it can be diagrammatic film, video form, whatever you like...these are essential elements of it,...one's consideration of the war, if not of one's understanding of it'.

about playing [George] Butterworth, whilst looking at the Dead, if you see what I mean'.⁶⁷⁴

Achieving the institutional remit formulated the primary task for Alan Borg and Robert Crawford. As has already been demonstrated, the various stakeholders involved in achieving this all had invested interests – meaning that tensions and conflict were inevitable, because of different Museum departments all having their own axes to grind. JD believed that this was where AB and RC's influence really materialised:

'...the secret was to keep the ship on an even keel, and I think that Alan tended to be pretty dogmatic, and he could afford to be....he's a tough operator, or he certainly was...they [AB and RC] were undoubtedly responsible behind the scene for maintaining project equilibrium...they demonstrated consistent interest in what we were up to, and great knowledge of it...what was finally created was very much their vision, well particularly Alan's...I think Robert must have been a superb support to Alan... [with] Alan, I was always slightly guarded, he's one of these people who commands authority, respect...as far as I was concerned, he was Doctor Borg for probably the first year'.⁶⁷⁵

JD identified AB as an excellent fund-raiser, but not necessarily as a historian – instead defining him as '...a conceptualiser of how war is portrayed...a very different thing'.⁶⁷⁶ This was in contrast to the 'considerable [historical] knowledge' of Crawford, which formed an effective partnership.⁶⁷⁷ But in JD's eyes, achieving a coherent vision between JJA and the IWM was only achievable because of the vital link and mediatory role enacted by PRC:

⁶⁷⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13. Butterworth was a young English composer killed at the Battle of the Somme.

⁶⁷⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13. JD commented on AB's 'built-in respect for the Trustees', and recalled Chairman of Trustees Lord Bramall as being 'a huge influence' on him. In interview, AB spoke of Sir Michael Howard and David Dilks, both well-known historians and IWM Trustees, and that PJS also consulted with renowned historian Professor Michael Howard regarding the galleries (Recorded Interview between AB, AC and JW, conducted on 25/07/13).

⁶⁷⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

⁶⁷⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13. RC also led the financial aspects of the Redevelopment, and JD recalled the rigorous Cost Control, arguing out the level of overspend at the end of the project. The overall budget for the galleries was just under £3 million (Internal Memorandum from RC to AB (24/11/89) 'First World War Exhibition Budget', IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/1).

‘I would have followed her to the Gates of Hell, she can push me through, and I’d have been quite happy, she was, the marvellous thing about her was she listened to you, and there was a sense of working together, she was a superb organiser, Alan was very demanding, and I never saw her rattled’.⁶⁷⁸

Recalling that ‘there was always a lot of moaning...bloody Exhibits and Firearms want this, somebody wants that’, JD recognised PRC as a ‘supreme diplomat, conciliator’ who ‘played a big part in suppressing any real fire-fighting’.⁶⁷⁹ Her endeavours were crucial to ensuring that the working relationship between the Museum and JJA was first and foremost productive, if at a cost of being harmonious. Her role as Exhibitions Officer was essentially to broker the demands of these two groups, creating a mutual understanding of respect, and ensuring that they could utilise their respective skills to produce a positive outcome. In this way, mediation and compromise remain the key components of exhibition making, and seeing this through from vision to reality.



Figure 54 – ‘Origins and Outbreaks of World War One’ Showcase

(Sourced from IWM Regeneration Network Drive)

⁶⁷⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

⁶⁷⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13.

5.13 – Visitor Response to the Displays

5.13.1 – A Favourable Reception

Public reaction to the displays was favourable and positive. Such satisfaction provided rewarding testament to the Museum's staff and JJA, who had seen the galleries through to realisation, achieving what they had set out to do.⁶⁸⁰ But for some of those involved, it had brought about a degree of change, with the requirement that the galleries were aligned to provide adequately for a broader audience spectrum.⁶⁸¹ Peter Simkins (PJS) had to deal with the fallout from those specialist interest visitors, and a small number of errors within the galleries were quickly pointed out by its more observant visitors:

'I noticed what I believe to be an error on your 'Edith Cavell poster' label.

After naming Cavell and others as sentenced to death, the next batch of 'condamnes' is described on the label as receiving 'five years' hard labour. The poster itself reads 'quinze ans', fifteen years.

I promise I don't make a habit of being a smartass – just thought you'd like to know (if you didn't already). I am looking forward to revisiting your marvellous galleries as often I can. They really are first rate'.⁶⁸²

At a broader level, PRC reflected that the galleries 'stood up pretty well' in fulfilling their remit of being durable permanent installations:

⁶⁸⁰ The Museum had continued to benefit from a high public profile from the large media interest generated by its reopening in 1989. It won the 'Museum of the Year' and 'Building of the Year' award respectively in 1990, and market research projects indicated 'a high level of public satisfaction and value for money' (See Page 26-29 of IWM Report, 1989-1992). A new Department of Marketing and Trading was duly created in August 1989, based on the rapid growth of the Museum's commercial activities, and to help generate revenue. It was able to self-generate income in charging publishers and broadcasters access to its more market-orientated film and photographic collections. AB recognised that the Museum had had to become more business-like and commercially orientated; using its collections for enterprises with financial gains, and corporate entertainment now an important part of the institution's economy (See Recorded Interview between Borg, A and Maclaren, V, 14/08/98, IWM Catalogue Number 18531).

⁶⁸¹ PJS termed this panoply of people as ranging from the repeat visitor interested in the subject, to the school children who came in with a work-sheet, to those people who merely came in to shelter from the rain (Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13).

⁶⁸² Letter to IWM, 17/02/95, IWM ExPA 0294 – Caption Corrections. Other items identified as being incorrect were the map of Central Europe in Case 24, which marked Budapest as Bucharest and vice versa; in the Gallipoli section, the Australian soldier's waterbottle faced inwards rather than outwards and in case 25, 'The Turkish Wars', the Arabic caption was observed as being displayed upside down (IWM ExPA 0294).

‘...we had to do very little in the way of tweaking...I don’t think we changed any information on any graphic panel...we’d got the basics right, we’[d] got the history right, which is the crucial thing’.⁶⁸³

Nonetheless, two perceived omissions were gradually levelled as criticisms of the galleries; that there was insufficient focus on women and their roles during the conflict, or on the Commonwealth contribution.⁶⁸⁴ There was also the ‘bugbear’ design problem of legibility and writing, which PRC remembered as ‘always up in the top five complaints; that the lighting’s too dim, can’t read the captions, can’t read the documents’.⁶⁸⁵ She had since reflected on the changed role, and therefore involvement, of the Education Department’s, which would have added another dimension to what was eventually produced:

‘...although the Museum has always been strong on learning, there was less of a sense that it was essential to have learning input into what we were doing, so she [Anita Ballin, Head of Education] would comment on text and would read it to make sure that it was understandable and that sort of thing, but less of a pivotal role than I suspect learning would have these days’.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸³ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13. The galleries’ lifespan was meant to be around fifteen years. The snagging connected with the Second World War exhibitions had already revealed that the galleries had stood up well to general wear and tear. The major damage noted was dirty walls, chewing gum on carpets, some graffiti and interference with large exhibits (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, ‘Update on Exhibition Matters’, 20/08/89, IWM ExPA 0239). PRC shared that ‘things will get kicked, things will get pulled, things will get written on...all surfaces, all the showcase manufacture, all the graphics panels, everything that people can touch, get access to, has to be as robust as possible’, given that the exhibitions ‘were in it for the long haul’. In 2003, discussions were had regarding Plowden & Smith undertaking a full cleaning and remounting of the A Floor exhibition showcases. They quoted £9957 per case, meaning that the total figure came to over £800,000 (Email from PRC to Jane Carmichael/Shirely Collier, 09/04/03, IWM ExPA 03341). PRC latterly suggested that there was ‘a debate to be had about whether in fact it makes sense to put a large sum like this towards the bigger project of rebuilding the entire A Floor galleries in a more up to date way’ (Email from PRC to Jane Carmichael, No Date, IWM ExPA 03341).

⁶⁸⁴ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13. It seems likely that these topics gained more momentum with wider public awareness of them, after the galleries had been open for a decade or so (See Mercer, 2013; 337). There had been a temporary exhibition in 1985 titled ‘Mummy, what did YOU do in the Great War?’ which was a display of uniforms, photographs and ephemera showing aspects of women’s work during the conflict. The broader theme of women and warfare was the topic of temporary IWM exhibitions in 1977 and 2003-04 (Mercer, 2013; 337).

⁶⁸⁵ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

⁶⁸⁶ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

5.13.2 – Staff Reflect Back on their Involvement

PJS felt more of a mixed reaction to the galleries' completion, ranging from affection to 'buttock-clenching cringing' on things which he latterly felt should have been done better.⁶⁸⁷ He expressed pride in having updated the Museum, especially through using different media such as touch-screen videos and sound to communicate historical ideas. He considered that the staff behind the Redevelopment had made best use of the available exhibits, and that the Western Front core of the display narrative was the correct balance – 'we fulfilled our objectives as laid down in the famous planning documents, the sort of historical view of the galleries document'.⁶⁸⁸ However, PJS did judge the showcases as too cluttered, as a conservatively displayed mass of objects.⁶⁸⁹ He accepted part responsibility for this alongside his R&I colleagues, but recorded that it was a 'collective sin' because AB and RC 'had said we ought to have more on display, which slightly drove that philosophy'.⁶⁹⁰ The showcase dress rehearsals had offered the two Directors a chance to inspect the quantities going into each individual case, retaining an ultimate power of veto. Moreover PJS felt that that too much on display was better than not enough, because of the fortuitous way in which visitors operated:

'...the things were there if you wanted to look at them...I just believed that probably 98% of the public are like chickens in a farmyard, pecking at odd bits of corn and most don't approach the displays systematically...if you observe a

⁶⁸⁷ PJS did not look back favourably on the 'corny' opening section dealing with the shooting of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, which he now wished had been done differently (Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13) MH felt that the galleries aged faster in their second ten year period than their first, largely because of the major changes in technology and audio-visual developments (Recorded Interview between MH and JW, conducted on 18/06/13).

⁶⁸⁸ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶⁸⁹ PRC likewise expressed regret over the crammed nature of some showcases, terming them 'too jumble-sale', and that the 'less is more' approach now seemed more appropriate. She additionally countered this with the fact that the collection had so many extraordinary things to show (Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13). MH reiterated the fact that there was not sufficient resource to expend large amounts of time and space on individual objects, but that these could 'provide a basis for further thought...publicise the fact that there is more in the collections through displaying a part of it' (Recorded Interview between MH and JW, conducted on 18/06/13). However the intention that the displays might spark interest, as a gateway to the collections, was not carried out as a conscious effort according to AB (Recorded Interview between AB, AC and JW, conducted on 25/07/13). By contrast, the displays of the 1960s and 1970s had been more minimalist (Recorded Interview between AB, AC and JW, conducted on 25/07/13).

⁶⁹⁰ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. In his Redevelopment Brief, PJS had called for 'a certain degree of ruthlessness in our selection of exhibits and illustrative material', particularly given the richness of the collections in some areas, or when one specimen could make the same point as ten (Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays', 11/12/87, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007).

museum visitor, they probably walk past most showcases with no more than a casual glance, and they'll suddenly stop at something, read something intently and then go on'.⁶⁹¹

For JD, it was important to look back on the galleries as very much cutting edge at the time of their inception, particularly in reference to the sophisticated showcase dressing.⁶⁹² But what made them seem more dated was the huge advances and availability of new technologies to the museum designers over the course of the 1990s and beyond 2000. This staggering advancement of predominantly digital innovation has since enabled designers to be much more creative in their overall design approach, and for this reason affected their sway and the dynamics of the curator-designer relationship.⁶⁹³

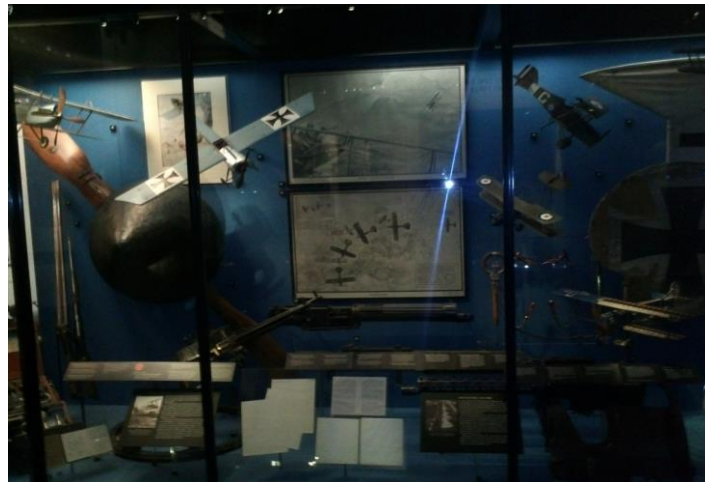


Figure 55 – ‘The War in the Air’ Showcase

(Sourced by Author)

⁶⁹¹ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13.

⁶⁹² Even so, JD lamented the fact that new materials such as MDF, which were ‘tough, easy to work, self-finishing to a great extent’, were not on the market during the late 1980s. Furthermore lighting technology now offers vastly improved longevity, when the technologies of fibre optic and LED lighting were only in their expensive infancy at the time of the Redevelopment (Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13). The IWM did opt to feature fibre optic lighting and non-reflective glass ‘sparingly’ - see Internal Memorandum from Karen Eyre to RC/AB, ‘Minutes of a Meeting held to Inform JJA of the Design Works which the IWM are Capable of Financing, 28 October 1988’, 04/11/88, IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2/2. JD surveyed that the strictly regulated and limited capital costs available ended up proving problematic, because it essentially led to increased maintenance costs later on. For example of JJA being tasked to achieve savings by reducing the number of doors required and simplifying the case interiors on showcases, see Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, ‘Notes of an Exhibition Liaison Meeting held with Jasper Jacob Associates at the IWM on 2 August 1988’, 26/08/88, IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2.

⁶⁹³ JD remained wary towards some of these technological elements, feeling that the concept of interactivity risks destroying the culture of the Museum (Recorded Interview between JW and JD, 05/07/13).

At a top-level perspective, these galleries reveal that the Museum was endeavouring to engage more people in this subject matter, focusing on width rather than depth. Borg was described by RC in interview as ‘having a strong sense of audience and an acute knowledge of the role of design...he wanted to make an authoritative history and its material evidence genuinely engaging to a broad audience’.⁶⁹⁴ This masked the commercial necessity to adopt a more family-orientated approach, and become a more customer focused institution. Even if this meant displeasing and alienating its former visitor base of individuals with specialist interests, particularly in military history, it was an inevitable move if the Museum was to survive within the new competitive tourist market place.⁶⁹⁵ In his introduction within the Museum’s new guidebook, Borg placed specific emphasis on the institution’s broader message, and with a stated recognition that it was dealing with ‘controversial and often unpleasant topics’.⁶⁹⁶

5.13.3 – Concluding Thoughts: The Legacy of the Galleries

This chapter has shown how these galleries sat within a larger pretext of an ideological and structural revamp of the IWM. The building had been modified so that it would enable the Museum to serve a redefined purpose. Realising this within the format of the galleries was an intense and at times arduous process. In interview, PRC summarised her thoughts of what the Museum had wanted to achieve through these First World War galleries:

‘...fundamentally, what we always wanted to do was to make sure that everything we said or did or displayed was done so in a very objective way, and a very non-judgemental way, so that visitors could make up their own minds, and so I think it was just trying to get a balance, trying to show people what happened, but not necessarily make a comment on it, I mean obviously, when you interpret something in an exhibition, you’re subconsciously making, if you’re writing text or writing a caption or producing a film, you do have an agenda in a matter, you can’t be a hundred per cent objective, but I think with

⁶⁹⁴ Recorded Interview between RC, AC and JW, conducted on 29/05/13 and email from RC to JW, 02/09/15.

⁶⁹⁵ This was stressed through the conscious linking between the lives of the Museum’s new visitors being ‘shaped in some way by the great conflicts of this century’ (Borg, 1989; 1) and the instruction for them to ‘Learn from it’.

⁶⁹⁶ Borg (1989; 1). This broadening of the institution’s message was also referenced with the phrase ‘...we are as interested in the conscientious objector as we are in the military hero’.

the way in which we organised exhibitions, and the people who were involved ensured that, actually, on the whole, once things have gone through the processes of approval, it was as non-judgemental and objective and as interesting and as factual and informative as we could make it. Whether people saw it as that, I don't know, but that was definitely our intention'.⁶⁹⁷

As has been argued throughout the chapter, the whole exhibition-making process was fraught with friction. Trying to balance the inputs often led to compromise, rather than consensual agreement. Curators and historical experts have particular perspectives, whereas designers come from a different vantage point, because they are 'thinking about the audience and who is going to be looking at who is this exhibition for, whereas historians and curators tend to be thinking about their material and the story and the detail of the story'.⁶⁹⁸ PJS was of the view that 'the designer should serve the historian, rather than the other way around', and he deemed it to be of the utmost importance to be able to communicate history as he interpreted it.⁶⁹⁹ However the essential requirement to alleviate this lay in the ability of the person who found themselves in the middle. Being able to manage the 'argy-bargy' over 'the amount of space that can be allocated to something or the needs of design over content' was a balancing act that PRC was largely capable of sustaining through the course of the process.⁷⁰⁰ She recalled discussions about curators writing for their peers, which she felt was an inevitable tendency, because there was a desire for mutual respect:

'...there was a lot of discussion about dumbing down, and about reducing things to the basics, and about leaving out detail, but I think we'd had enough

⁶⁹⁷ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13. She also spoke of the personal burden of responsibility felt, and that this was heightened within the IWM context because of the potentially contentious subject matter.

⁶⁹⁸ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13. She observed that designers were always 'thinking of the visual, they're thinking of the audience', so both sides came from different directions.

⁶⁹⁹ Recorded Interview between PJS and JW, conducted on 13/06/13. He believed that the historian 'did triumph over the designer' in the case of these galleries.

⁷⁰⁰ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13.

experience to know that you do have to keep text short, you do have to keep captions short'.⁷⁰¹

What eventually became a close working relationship between the curators and designers could only operate on the premise that they each understood where the other was coming from, and that compromises would be necessary in order to achieve coherence. Herein lies the inherent tensions of exhibition-making; the balance between using objects as evidence and combining it with a historical narrative, whilst not forgetting your audience. Throughout this chapter, I have assessed the extent to which these galleries were able to do this – where they succeeded and where clarity was lost. Questioning and challenging those involved during their making had been a vital part of ensuring that the displays would stand up to scrutiny, and be more refined as a result. But as emerged from the reflective interviews, the processes and methods of delivering detailed historical information to ever-changing audiences were already changing, as will be demonstrated throughout the next chapter.⁷⁰²

⁷⁰¹ Recorded Interview between PRC and JW, conducted on 21/06/13. PRC also praised the interactive video stations that 'enabled us to put in a greater depth of information' and kept the word-count down.

⁷⁰² See Appendix IX for images of the removal of these galleries in October 2012.

Chapter 6 –

'Not All Quiet on the Museum Front!'

Temporary First World War Exhibitions

at the Imperial War Museum, 1998 – 2009

6.1 – Introduction

6.1.1 – The Imperial War Museum's Use of Temporary Exhibitions

This chapter draws upon seven temporary exhibitions covering the First World War held within the Imperial War Museum to evaluate the impact of both historical understanding and cultural memory of the conflict during the period 1998-2009. By the end of this time, the Museum had experienced a significant evolution in the approaches it deployed to inform its audiences about the conflict, from the use of military history to conveying personal experiences through emotive objects. The tensions of these contrasting interpretations are gauged as the chapter expands upon the politics in play during these processes of meaning-making that occur within exhibition construction.

In a 1983 document outlining envisaged aims and principles for the Imperial War Museum (IWM) Redevelopment Programme, (Sir) Robert Crawford (RC) had said of temporary exhibitions:

'The Museum maintains a vigorous programme of special exhibitions aimed at (a) increasing the small proportion of its total holdings which can be permanently displayed (b) keeping the Museum in the public eye (c) attracting visitors and (d) furthering public knowledge of modern military history'.⁷⁰³

Twelve years on, Crawford was at the helm of the IWM ship. Alan Borg had resigned as Director-General in order to take up the Directorship at the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), meaning that RC now had an opportunity to not only build upon

⁷⁰³ RC, 'Redevelopment of the Main Building of the Imperial War Museum – Revised Statement of Aims and General Principles', Jan 1983, IWM ExPA 0109.

their close working partnership over the previous thirteen years, but to put his own imprint upon the institution.⁷⁰⁴ A second stage of the Museum's Redevelopment Programme was completed in the summer of 1995, creating new art galleries, temporary exhibition spaces, and the 'Conflicts Since 1945' displays to accompany the First and Second World War Galleries. Plans for the third and final phase were underway by the time RC began his directorship. Focus for this would be on providing new purpose-built educational facilities, a conference suite, and a refurbishment of the Cinema. On the exhibition front, there would be two new permanent installations documenting 'The Holocaust' and 'Crimes against Humanity'. The former was opened by HM The Queen in June 2000, and the final phase of the Redevelopment Programme culminated with the completion of the 'Crimes against Humanity' displays in December 2002.⁷⁰⁵

Those exhibitions which had come out of the Redevelopment Programme - the permanent historical galleries that included the First World War displays alongside the Atrium space - were now seen as firmly established features of the Museum's new identity. Seen by an increased numbers of visitors, they had been inaugurated as statements of a new museological identity for the IWM. This identity would now be enacted further through the use of temporary exhibitions. In comparison to the measured approach adopted in the creation of permanent galleries, as Chapter 5 documented, temporary exhibitions were assembled relatively quickly. The resulting key impact meant that the effect of combining the multiple inputs from those stakeholders who had been involved in 1990 was suitably reduced within this format. This consequently left more scope for individual members of Museum staff to deliver their own interpretation of historical events, without being subjected to the same processes of compromise between different parties. In turn, this created a pendulum effect, whereby a more slanted interpretation of this particular topic adopted by one exhibition tended to force a reactionary exhibition that depicted a contrary view. Members of staff from respective departments within

⁷⁰⁴ Borg was Director and Secretary of the V&A from 1995 to 2001.

⁷⁰⁵ The details of the subsequent phases of the Redevelopment Programme have been extracted from an internal IWM document, 'The Museum Redevelopment', produced by the Museum's Archivist in November 2007, distributed via email to JW in 2011. For a detailed critique of the IWM Holocaust exhibition, see Lawson (2003); Vandervelde (2014; 236-238), and for other Holocaust exhibitions, see Patraha (1996); Steyn (2014); Witcomb (2013b); Chametzky (2008); Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2015). For broader discussion about the impact of the Holocaust on Memory Studies, see Young (1993); Levy et al (2002); Rothberg (2009); LaCapra (2014).

the Museum were able to exploit the opportunities of depicting the First World War, according to their personal understanding and knowledge of the conflict. The first swing of the pendulum would veer strongly in the direction of the approach favoured by the Department of Research and Information (R&I), when the opportunity arose for the Head of the Department to deliver an exhibition derived largely from his own specialised interpretation of the conflict.

6.2 – ‘1918 – Year of Decision’

6.2.1 – Peter Simkins and the First World War Revisionist School of Thought

In 1997, Peter Simkins (PJS) was rewarded for his thirty five years’ service and dedicated research at the Museum with the opportunity to organise a temporary exhibition, in what was commonly acknowledged amongst the Museum’s staff as his ‘swansong’. Its focus would be one of his specialist subject areas; 1918 as the pivotal year of the First World War, with its title suitably cast as ‘1918 – Year of Decision’.⁷⁰⁶ It was an unprecedented chance for him to illustrate the ‘often overlooked British military successes of the period’ in exhibition format, before he was to retire from the Museum (See Figure 56).



Figure 56 – *Peter Simkins and Penny Ritchie Calder embrace at the former’s Retirement Lunch, 26 March 1999 (©IWM 99/25/28)*

⁷⁰⁶ ‘1918 – Year of Decision’ ran from 12 December 1997 until 29 November 1998. It was held within Gallery B21 (121m²) and designed/dressed in-house by the Museum’s Design & Production Office.

Throughout his career, PJS was consistently surrounded by practising historians, including Sir Michael Howard during his graduate courses at Kings College London, First World War veteran Sir Basil Liddell Hart (for whom PJS had worked as an archivist and research assistant in the early 1960s), Professor Brian Bond (Professor Emeritus at Kings College London), and upon beginning his career at the IWM, Dr Noble Frankland.⁷⁰⁷ His various roles at the IWM meant that he became adept at ‘translating historical concepts and ideas into a visual form’ for its exhibitions.⁷⁰⁸ The other major aspect of his time at the Museum was in conducting detailed research, which he had pursued in the form of examining the role of Kitchener’s Army and the operational aspects of the First World War.⁷⁰⁹ He was widely respected, both within and outside of the Museum, for this expert knowledge and understanding.⁷¹⁰ As portrayed throughout Chapter 5, he had been a vital cog in producing the historical content for the permanent First World War Galleries. However his ability to convey his historical knowledge to the degree that he desired was diluted by the combined influences of the Exhibitions Officer, the exhibition designers, the Deputy-Director and Director-General, in what had been a very intense collaborative process.⁷¹¹ Over the period since these displays opened, PJS had contributed towards the burgeoning canon by work on the First World War by military historians; including a 1996 book chapter which assessed the performance of the British generals in 1918, alongside a more general examination of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and his commanders.⁷¹² He had found solace in pursuing

⁷⁰⁷ See Section 5.1.1. Before becoming Director-General of the Museum, Frankland had been the Official Historian of the 1939-1945 Strategic Air Offensive against Germany, and PJS recorded that he had learned much from him ‘about the need for rigorous scholarly methodology’ (Simkins, 2014; xvi). He latterly wrote of his admiration for military historian Professor Brian Bond’s standards of scholarship as offering ‘a constant benchmark of excellence to which I have always, if sometimes inadequately, aspired’ (Simkins, 2014; xvi). See Section 5.8.5 in which he referred to drafting the captions for the First World War galleries with Professor Bond as a judge of his work.

⁷⁰⁸ Simkins (2014; xvi). Harking back to the 1990 First World War Galleries, he noted wryly ‘Having to summarise the Battle of the Somme in 175 words at the insistence of an exhibition designer was unquestionably a useful discipline to master!’

⁷⁰⁹ Simkins (1988). See also ‘Imperial War Museum Newsletter’, October-December 1988, for a brief acknowledgement of the book’s launch event at the Museum, and a photograph of PJS with the 3rd Earl Kitchener (IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/1).

⁷¹⁰ His book on Kitchener’s Army had been awarded the Templar Medal of Military History in 1988. The year after his retirement, PJS was awarded the Douglas Haig Fellowship in 2000 (Unrecorded phone conversation between PJS and JW regarding ‘1918 – Year of Decision’ Exhibition, conducted on 21/05/14).

⁷¹¹ See Section 5.13.3. Essentially the same restrictions on input from designers or the crucial factor of exhibition fatigue would not be operating to the same extent in these situations.

⁷¹² Simkins (1996a; 1996b), He continued to produce written work on similar topics after his retirement; see Simkins (1999; 2000; 2004). For other works in this topic area produced at the same

this due to the fact that he considered the Museum's temporary exhibitions policy over the 1990s to be almost solely socio-cultural in its focus, dealing predominantly with topics related to the Home Front during the Second World War.⁷¹³ Now he had a chance to demonstrate the sea change within British military historical thinking about the First World War to the Museum's visitors. Retrospectively he sensed an overarching sense of tokenism about the episode, which was shared by his like-minded colleagues from R&I, but they did not want to shun the opportunity to rectify the perceived imbalance in the content and style of the temporary exhibitions programme. Moreover, as some of the experts within this growing field, this set of Museum staff believed that their efforts would help galvanise the institution's reputation externally as a centre of military history, in leading a new wave of First World War scholarship.⁷¹⁴ This had already been established informally in the form of a specialist circle of like-minded academics and museum professionals known as the 'Friday Club':

'...[this] sat over many pints of beer and discussed operational details to the nth level, it was a good area of learning about the cutting edge of the BEF as a fighting force...this was about what made 51st Highland Division good, and that second line Territorial Division bad, what were factors which drove all of that, this was looking at battle performance...all around, [PJS had] done a lot of that kind of work with a lot of other people who have gone on to write many different books from that type of perspective'⁷¹⁵

time, see Bond & Cave (1999); Harris & Barr (1998). Writing in 2014, PJS took stock of the 'Revisionist Movement', arguing that its views of the British Expeditionary Force had now become mainstream within most academic circles (Simkins, 2014; xv). See also the updated versions of his earlier works 'Everyman at War' Revisited' (2014; 1-11) and 'The Lessons and Legacy of the Somme: Changing Historical Perspectives' (2014; 12-58) for an account of the development of recent First World War historiography.

⁷¹³ He repeatedly argued his cause for a military history exhibition that would offer a contrasting style and approach at internal Exhibitions Group Meetings (Unrecorded phone conversation between PJS and JW regarding '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition, conducted on 21/05/14). He conveyed that he found support for this aspect of the Museum's remit through the interest of the outgoing Chairman of Trustees, Lord Bramall.

⁷¹⁴ PJS noted that the IWM was especially regarded and recognised for this reason within Australia during this period (Unrecorded phone conversation between PJS and JW regarding '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition, conducted on 21/05/14).

⁷¹⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. The intertwining of museum staff and academics suggests that there was a belief that the two professions were united in their desire to contribute high quality, academically rigorous work, and to promote this understanding before it became historical consensus. However working on such a specialist level was becoming less of a

PJS also listed the Club's activities in the nearby pubs close to the Museum:

'...over sausage, egg and chips, and a pint or two of IPA, one invariably engaged in lively discussions on historical issues of mutual interest, ranging from the identity of Jack the Ripper to the BEF's tactics in the 'Hundred Days'. It is, I believe, no facile exaggeration to claim that, for a period in the 1990s, the IWM's 'Friday Club'...made a notable contribution to the then current 'revisionist' debate and thereby reinforced the Museum's growing reputation as a centre of excellence in First World War studies alongside King's College London, the University of Birmingham and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst'.⁷¹⁶

This latter point was key; those IWM members of staff with this expertise were contributing to debates as part of a larger group not bound by the Museum, but wanting to use its credibility as a historical institution to further their research aims.⁷¹⁷

PJS now had the opportunity to transport this accumulated scholarship into the museological arena, so that this knowledge could be conveyed to a public audience.⁷¹⁸ The exhibition would therefore provide a new view of the British Army; uncovering its transition into a highly effective fighting force, by focusing on the British and Dominion units on the Western Front as the 'decisive area of operations in 1918'.⁷¹⁹ Its physical form would be as a 'robust historical exhibition, trying to explain in a popular way, the phenomena of how the [British Expeditionary Force]

priority amongst national museums, who were instead focusing on providing for their more generalist audiences.

⁷¹⁶ Simkins (2014; xvii). He praised this group of colleagues – including Dr Bryn Hammond, Mike Hibberd, Chris McCarthy, Laurie Milner, Dr Simon Robbins, Mark Seaman, Nigel Steel, Rod Suddaby and Dr Neil Young - for helping to shape his historical thinking. By this time, Chris McCarthy had published his own work (1993) that featured an introduction by PJS.

⁷¹⁷ PJS recorded the importance of the groups' co-operation and mutual support doing '...as much as anything...to place First World War studies – particularly in this country – on a really solid and scholarly footing for the first time' (Simkins, 2014; 38). This revisionist school of thought was being championed by various British military historians (See Griffith, 1994, 1996; Travers, 1992; Philpott, 1996). Others leading proponents included Dr John Bourne, Dr Bob Bushaway and Dr Jonathan Boff at the University of Birmingham.

⁷¹⁸ Building upon the work of military historian John Terraine, PJS had summarised these views in a brief two page article (See Simkins, 1998). He essentially wanted to obtain public recognition for what he saw as a forgotten victory for the British Army, to balance out the predominantly negative stereotypes; he took objection to the fact that if the public were to castigate Haig 'for his mistakes on the Somme and at Passchendaele, one should also give [him] due credit for their victories in 1918...to recall *only* the tragedies and horrors of the conflict and to overlook the courage, comradeship and achievements of the average front line soldier is to do an immense disservice to all those who fought, endured and died during those terrible years' (1992; 219, emphasis original).

⁷¹⁹ '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition Brief, IWM EN4/15/D/37.

had come to the edge of fighting technology, and at the forefront of Allied victory in 1918'.⁷²⁰



Figure 57 – PJS at the Launch Event

for '1918 – Year of Decision' (©IWM 97/100/34 and IWM 97/100/31)

6.2.2 – The Exhibition's Content and Philosophy

The '1918 – Year of Decision' exhibition was strengthened by the fact that it could draw upon a large quantity of IWM material, relying particularly on the strong photographic records and film footage available that related to 1918. But more importantly, the exhibition set out to illustrate how the nature of warfare had changed, through a clearly laid-out narrative story:

'The first half of the exhibition will look at events in the early part of 1918 when the Germans launched a series of massive offensives against the Allies on the Western Front (including the Michael offensive in Picardy in March and the Georgette offensive on the Lys in April.

The second half will cover the Allied offensives in the 'Hundred Days' from August to November 1918 where the British Army, in particular, won possibly its greatest ever (but now largely forgotten) succession of victories and broke

⁷²⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. The exhibition set out to elucidate upon how, after the costly campaigns of the Somme and Passchendaele, the Allies withstood the rapid German advances in the spring of 1918, and eventually countered with their own advance, paving the way to victory in November that same year (See Badsey, 2005; Steel & Londey, 2008; 18).

through the Hindenburg Line. The crucial part played in these operations by the Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders would give the exhibition a strong Commonwealth flavour. The contribution of the United States would also be mentioned'.⁷²¹

Only eight years on from the opening of the permanent First World War galleries, '1918 – Year of Decision' represented an opportunity to showcase those items of personal diaries, letters and uniforms within the collections that had not made the cut in 1990. In addition, it could make use of recently acquired material, as well as an Orpen portrait of Lieutenant General Sir Travers Edward Clarke (Quartermaster General to the Armies in France from 1917 to 1921).⁷²² It also offered an opportunity for R&I staff to draw on their private collections, with Laurie Milner supplying the exhibition with unusual pieces of kit, such as the cuff bands for a German soldier's uniform.⁷²³ The pen used by Admiral Sir R Wemyss to sign the Armistice on behalf of the British Government was obtained via a private loan.⁷²⁴ After the exhibition had opened, the IWM were able to secure the loan of a riding crop used by Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig during the conflict.⁷²⁵ Alongside objects, it utilised display graphics, such as the 'Creeping Barrage' map to chart the advances in technology and tactics - which required a reasonable grasp of knowledge from the visitor's part in order to gain benefit from it. Nevertheless, the display encapsulated what R&I believed an exhibition should primarily be about; a focused, nailed down theme that made a series of points in predominantly visual and

⁷²¹ '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition Brief, PRC, 12/06/97, IWM EN4/15/D/37. There were fifteen sections of the exhibition.

⁷²² IWM ART 2400. Section 9 'The Hundred Days: The Forgotten Victory' would utilise portraits from the Art Department of the five British Army Commanders during this period. Furthermore the combination of photographs with maps was seen as necessary in showing the impact of the strategic advances of both sides (See IWM EN4/15/D/37).

⁷²³ NS testified that Laurie Milner lent a number of objects from his own personal collection, as he developed the content of the exhibition with PJS (Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14). Five uniformed mannequins of a German storm-trooper, a French Poilu, a British Lewis Gunner, and a Belgian and an American soldier were used. These were produced by Rosi and Mike Compton, who had created the mannequins for the permanent galleries (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, '1918 Exhibition – Australian Coverage', 27/11/97, IWM EN4/15/D/37).

⁷²⁴ Letter from RC to PJS/PRC describing temporary acquisition of pen, 21/10/97; letters of thanks from RC to lender, 12/11/97 and 09/11/98, IWM EN4/15/D/37.

⁷²⁵ This crop had been presented by Haig to Lieutenant General Sir Richard Butler (Haig's Deputy Chief of Staff from 1916 to February 1918) as a personal memento, and was loaned to the Museum for the purpose of the exhibition (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, 06/01/98, IWM EN4/15/D/37). It is noticeable that these object loans related to high-profile military figures, in line with the top level exhibition narrative.

audio form.⁷²⁶ The consistency of this formula had been derived from the creation of a successful text narrative within the Museum's existing permanent First World War galleries:

'...the fact that [1918 – Year of Decision] look[ed] perhaps like the permanent galleries, I think is probably a reflection of the fact that, for him, exhibition design, whilst he [PJS] would look for something that engaged and explained, it was not part of the interpretative process, he just wanted a nice, straight-forward classic way of putting his message out, for him, his message was in his words, what he wrote on the text panels, what he told people...delivering solid history, in crisp, clear language at the right point'.⁷²⁷

Its effectiveness was therefore in using sentences of utter clarity to carry the story, and then through captions, illuminating the richness of detail from objects.⁷²⁸ The display cases housed a range of items, from important documents and letters, to medals, weapons and uniformed mannequins – much in the same vein as the permanent galleries.

6.2.3 – Reactions and Future Implications

The exhibition's reception amongst visitors is hard to gauge, as systematic audience evaluation of the type museums now undertake was still in its infancy. Though praising the absorbing 'thematic unity of the displays', one online reviewer commented that the 'only failing' of the exhibition were the 'densely-written display boards which detail the concluding stages of the war'.⁷²⁹ NS described PJS as a

⁷²⁶ Unrecorded phone conversation between PJS and JW regarding '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition, conducted on 21/05/14. There was also extensive use of sound recordings from the Museum's collections (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, '1918 Exhibition: Sound Recordings', 08/12/97, IWM EN4/15/D/37).

⁷²⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁷²⁸ The Introductory Text Panel to the exhibition that minimally outlined the historical events of the War was only 142 words long (IWM EN4/15/D/37). Having viewed the mainline text captions for the exhibition, RC responded 'The text I think is excellent and very succinct' (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, '1918 – Year of Decision Exhibition', 17/10/87, IWM EN4/15/D/37). With maps used in almost every section, the pace and drama of the exhibition's story was led by the fact that, by 1918, the conflict had returned to being a war of movement, with relentless actions and offensives between both sides pushing to knock out their rivals, before the Armistice. The drafted text for the respective sections of the exhibition can be found in IWM EN4/15/D/27. It focuses chiefly on the nations, or the numbers of soldiers and guns involved, the key military figures, strategy and infantry formations, and a major emphasis on the deployment of new tactics.

⁷²⁹ Online Article 'The Last Push for Peace' by Laurence Alster, published in TES Newspaper on 6 February 1998, updated 11 May 2008. <https://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=76031-> Accessed on 06/02/15.

'master story-teller within galleries, but he was telling a very particular type of story'.⁷³⁰ This reaction suggests that the appetite for historical text delivered on wall panels was seemingly diminishing, critically in an exhibition where the emphasis was on the message rather than the medium.⁷³¹ Furthermore, the position of the message left its viewers with little doubt as to its intentions:

'The BEF's successes in the final offensives of 1918 – won against the *main* body of the *main* enemy in the decisive theatre of war – represent the greatest and most rapid series of major victories in the British Army's history. Yet today the names of those battles are largely forgotten'.⁷³²

Those members of R&I had hoped that they would be sharing their recently attained knowledge with a broader public, who would be receptive to this.⁷³³ The exhibition's aim had been to rectify a perceived omission in public understanding about the achievements of the British Expeditionary Forces in 1918, and the performance and lessons learned by its commanders. From such a *carte blanche* position, it would be the last time that R&I were given such free reign to produce an exhibition with such an overt agenda. Certainly the notion of challenging audience perceptions was *bona fide*, but it would seem that this was too specialist for the new and more diverse audiences of the Museum. Whether by default or design as a result of this episode, many future outputs from R&I were to be within a published format. One such example of this was the *Imperial War Museum Review*, which was a semi-academic style journal, produced annually in-house, featuring articles on aspects of twentieth

⁷³⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. This is further supported by the fact that PJS was later commissioned to write narrative volumes on the First World War for the 'Essential Histories' series by Osprey (See Simkins, 2002).

⁷³¹ As part of a broader trend within museum studies, Kavanagh summarises the '...move from a connoisseurship approach (displays determined by developed expertise) to a forensic one (based on evidence of what visitors want)', but this display fell more into the former category, driven by a perception that the broader public knowledge of the conflict should be confronted and challenged (1990; 71).

⁷³² Draft Text for Section 9: 'The Hundred Days: The Forgotten Victory', emphasis original, IWM EN4/15/D/37. This was unlikely to have matched up with many visitors' understanding of the conflict, and a lack of evidence means that one can only speculate as to the effect the display might have had on this.

⁷³³ There were various military historians in attendance at the exhibition's opening event on 11 December 1997, including Brian Bond, John Terraine and (Sir) Alistair Horne (See IWM EN4/15/D/37). This opening was conducted by Earl Haig, who had opened the First World War galleries seven years earlier (See Figure 3, Chapter 6; Opening speech and draft programme within IWM EN4/15/D/37). Haig latterly wrote to RC 'I am glad that you think my speech may help towards a fairer assessment of my father's achievements' (Letter from Earl Haig to RC, 05/01/98, IWM EN4/15/D/37) and declared to Christopher Dowling that he had been 'very impressed' by the exhibition (Letter from Earl Haig to CD, 15/12/97, IWM EN4/15/D/37).

century history with illustrations and photographs.⁷³⁴ Contributions were mostly from IWM staff, but with some external authors. Having been started in 1987 with PJS as Historical Editor and Suzanne Bardgett as General Editor, it was sold primarily for a historically-minded audience, as evidenced by the fact that it was published by Leo Cooper/Pen and Sword Military History. Thus R&I were having to turn to focusing their efforts on published outcomes as one of their responsibilities, alongside dealing with historical enquiries, involvement in exhibition planning and leading tours of the permanent galleries. They believed that the Museum had a duty to honour all aspects of its remit, which included military history, but they were to find that the most successful way of achieving this was through the medium of published works or through conferences. Through practising their trade in this manner, its members, and the Department as a whole, were entrenching themselves as scholarly experts, risking their isolation within the Museum.⁷³⁵

This issue was to be aggravated further in the way that other departments within the Museum were actively distancing themselves from this approach. Particularly in the case of the First World War, popular understanding of this event fell more in line with the work of those historians who took a much broader perspective, and who capitalised upon the public fascination with personal testimony.⁷³⁶ Malcolm Brown was one such individual. By this time, he had established a longstanding and good-natured relationship with the IWM.⁷³⁷ He had previously worked on televised historical documentaries, including one in 1976 that had focused on individual soldiers' accounts relating to the first day of the Battle of the Somme.⁷³⁸ From this interest sparked his desire to become a freelance historian, and in partnership with the IWM, he was to produce several highly successful tie-in

⁷³⁴ See for example Bardgett & Simkins (1993). Having initially been published more frequently, the publication ceased not long after PJS retired.

⁷³⁵ In the early 2000s, longstanding key members of R&I left the Museum. This would grant the Museum an opportunity to not only re-align the make-up of the department and its duties, but more broadly steer the institution's reputation away from being known first and foremost as a powerhouse of leading historical research and academic thinking with regard to military history.

⁷³⁶ Hodgkin & Radstone have suggested that memory is increasingly used as a 'tool with which to contest 'official' versions of the past', though they note its use to determine the truth of the past is 'problematic' because of the ways in which 'particular versions of an event may be at various times and for various reasons promoted, reformulated, or silenced' (2006; 2, 5).

⁷³⁷ See 'Acknowledgements' in Brown (1991; xiv-xv; 1996; xiv-xv; 1998; xiv-xv) for his high regard towards those IWM staff whom he worked with. Whilst the nature of his books meant that he worked most closely with Rod Suddaby's Department of Documents, he utilised the staff's expertise to scrutinize his manuscripts, remarking that his book on 1918 was greatly improved having been subjected to PJS' 'expert examination' (1998; xiv).

⁷³⁸ See Brown (1978); Hanna (2010; 109-110, 117-118)

publications.⁷³⁹ In 1998, he had a work published titled 'The Imperial War Museum Book of 1918 – Year of Victory'.⁷⁴⁰ Confusingly the link between this work and the similarly-named exhibition was not especially direct, and moreover, it showed that the trajectory of two distinctive ways of interpreting the First World War did not align well with each other.⁷⁴¹ It was a point of contention with PJS that this form of work – even as popular history, rather than specialist military history – was an opportunity being outsourced to essentially an external party.⁷⁴² It remained a mystery to him as to why these works were not produced in house; firstly by Museum staff who had the expertise to complete them, and secondly because they would have represented an ideal platform for a strong internally-led marketing strategy. The Museum's staff were fundamental to the creation of these works – their nature meant that they required a vast input from the Department of Documents, and additionally PJS amongst others advised on the draft manuscripts, for which they were duly credited. What this seems to suggest is a perception that the different Museum departments lacked the ability to delve away from what were seen to be their strengths; R&I were viewed by other Departments as being about 'military history', with the inherent assumption that this was not 'popular history'.⁷⁴³ Despite the efforts of PJS writing an article on the BBC News website for the eightieth anniversary of the Armistice, there was a belief that knowledge of military history could not be made accessible to appeal to a lay

⁷³⁹ Christopher Dowling had helped develop the idea of the series during the late 1980s, and it also included works on the Second World War by Major General Julian Thompson. The series was awarded the Duke of Westminster's Medal for Military Literature in 2005. See Brown (1991; 1993; 1996; 2004).

⁷⁴⁰ As with his other works, it had been written to coincide with the respective eightieth anniversary commemorations of the topic it featured.

⁷⁴¹ See Brown (1998). Though the Exhibition Brief proposes a link between the two and certain objects featured in both, there was no direct overlap and Malcolm Brown would actually contribute more towards the forthcoming 'The First World War Remembered' exhibition. Perhaps the 1997 exhibition offered a more appropriate advertising arena for his work; NS suggested that whilst his pragmatism and expertise – by virtue of the fact that he knew the archives 'inside out' - meant that he was a natural person for the IWM to turn to, but that his work was 'very much within the personal testament based type of history' and thus notably different to the type of book that PJS might have produced (Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14).

⁷⁴² Unrecorded phone conversation between PJS and JW regarding '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition, conducted on 21/05/14. PJS recalled a shared sense of frustration amongst R&I that they were not undertaking this type of work.

⁷⁴³ There was a tension between the Museum broadening out its remit, and hence diluting the presence of military history in making it compete with other historical interpretations, in contrast to R&I who wanted it to remain more aligned with the understanding that the institution needed to actively function as a centre of research.

audience.⁷⁴⁴ The sense of co-ownership and joint effort, in combination with the stages of filtration employed to make the permanent galleries, could not operate as effectively within the scope of a temporary exhibition. Instead the more specialist knowledge of R&I, and to a lesser extent, the Department of Exhibits and Firearms, were contrasted with the skills of giving something mass appeal led by the Department of Exhibitions, and these were not so easily inter-twined in this format. As a result, minor divisions between the two departments – both of whom were fundamental in working together to make exhibitions - started to appear. This was about to be antagonised by the latter's effort to consciously steer the Museum in a new direction in how it went about displaying and exhibiting the First World War.

6.3 – ‘The First World War Remembered’

6.3.1 – A Point of Contrast to ‘1918 – Year of Decision’

With a ‘combination of erudition and detail’ that had made ‘1918 – Year of Decision’ ‘very powerful and convincing’, the eightieth anniversary of the conflict’s final months had been duly documented.⁷⁴⁵ The noticeable public interest in this commemorative anniversary led to the decision to mount another exhibition which would illustrate the War’s lasting impact. This would be the antithesis to ‘1918 – Year of Decision’, by balancing out the former’s military history approach with a representation of the conflict’s socio-cultural impact. It would be a display that prioritised intimacy over historical thesis, to be achieved through the use of personal mementoes and telling individual stories. Nigel Steel (NS), based at this time in the Department of Documents, suggested that the Museum was providing a literal representation of the heads and tails of the same coin in one single site; it was telling the First World War in two complementary ways, in which ‘...neither was more correct; neither was superior to the other. Yet through them visitors could remember in two different ways...for the first time, the Museum was able to look at these two sides’.⁷⁴⁶ He drew a parallel from this by contrasting the types of books that presented the First World War from a popular history perspective, and those that

⁷⁴⁴ ‘Lions Led By Donkeys?’ Online Article by PJS, 05/11/98, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/10/98/world_war_i/197586.stm, (Accessed 06/02/15). This essentially calls for a public re-assessment of Field Marshal Haig.

⁷⁴⁵ Steel & Londey (2008; 18).

⁷⁴⁶ Steel & Londey (2008; 16). Angela Godwin likewise saw them as ‘entirely complementary...examples of how the IWM could successfully cover related subjects in very different ways’ (Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14)

draw upon official sources to assess the performance of the individual units or armies on the battlefield. In this way, the former might be publications by historian Lyn Macdonald - reliant on individual testimony from the period which would inform its reader about aspects of the First World War - in a way that a work by military historian John Terraine will likewise provide its reader with new knowledge about the role of Field Marshal Haig.⁷⁴⁷ This was to be the concept behind this parallel exhibition, appropriately named 'The First World War Remembered' ('TFWWR'). The deliberate intention was that visitors would, or could, learn about the importance of military historical thinking in the First World War in '1918 – Year of Decision' before walking seamlessly into the adjacent room to view different elements depicted within 'TFWWR'. It was an admirable ideal; utilising the complimentary yet contrasting approaches to enable visitors to at least contemplate two alternative perspectives on this subject matter. It would prove to be the case that one of these exhibitions would end up greatly influencing the Museum's attitude, in determining how it would go about displaying the First World War through temporary exhibitions over the next ten years.

'The First World War Remembered' examined the British nation's reaction to its heavy losses of almost one million individuals killed during the conflict. Its conceptual, design and creative development was led by Angela Godwin (AG), Deputy Head of the Department of Museum Services.⁷⁴⁸ Her time at the Museum had allowed her to explore the collections, and to build up a 'pretty good picture' of these, but also to see where there were opportunities to bring in loan items, or work with external experts, through temporary exhibitions.⁷⁴⁹ Her interest in the topic of the First World War had been derived from reading the works of Wilfred Owen during her teenage years:

⁷⁴⁷ Steel & Londey (2008; 18). The analogy is helpful, but does not stress the fact that whilst the audience for military history may have been increasing, it was not doing so on the scale that it was for popular history on the First World War.

⁷⁴⁸ This role incorporated a series of inter-related areas, such as Education, Public Relations, Publishing, and Retail, but she considered that exhibitions were her 'greatest joy, as they linked everything together' (Email Interview between JW and AG, conducted on 25/06/14).

⁷⁴⁹ Email Interview between Angela Godwin and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. This mantra was not universally approved of because it meant that the most was not made out of internal expertise; Terry Charman recorded that it 'didn't help improve morale...the fact that people weren't called upon' (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14).

‘My interest has always been in the personal experience of war, and I have always been very interested in art and literature. The exhibitions I worked on have always been about social history (e.g. women and war) or art/literature’.

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AG’s role accordingly meant that she interpreted the IWM’s purpose from a slightly different angle from those based in the R&I Department; having acknowledged the Museum’s primary goal as being to collect, catalogue, conserve and display material relating to its terms of reference, she deemed that it should be providing access for the ‘widest possible audience’:

‘From a personal perspective I always wanted to make people think about war and, for me, the way I found of doing this was through communicating personal stories which brought history to life and engaged the heart as well as the head’.⁷⁵¹

It was a timely mantra to have during a period in which the Museum was seeking to increase its audience demographic, as a factor that had been established within the broader aims of the Redevelopment.⁷⁵² This mass-appeal approach, as led by Angela Godwin, and to a lesser extent Penny Ritchie Calder (PRC), sat in stark contrast to the more targeted approach to exhibitions adopted by R&I.⁷⁵³ It seems that those in charge of the Museum wanted to find a happy medium between these two approaches. As Terry Charman (TC) suggested, the danger was that whilst the topics of the earlier ‘popular’ temporary exhibitions (often relating to women during wartime, fashion or life on the Home Front during the Second World War) did fall within the Museum’s subject matter, this were not contrasted with a ‘more serious, sombre exhibition...the sharp end of war side...the impression was that we were

⁷⁵⁰ Email Interview between Angela Godwin and JW, conducted on 16/03/14.

⁷⁵¹ Email Interview between Angela Godwin and JW, conducted on 16/03/14.

⁷⁵² See Section 5.3.3 and Section 2.3. In 2001, free entry was reintroduced at nearly all national museums under the Labour Government, and there was an increased onus upon them to get visitors ‘through the door’ to demonstrate their worth. This was to influence the idea that museum audiences were no longer consumers, but customers (See Macdonald & Silverstone, 1999; 424). Consequently museums had had to become ‘more open, more democratic, more responsive and more professional’ (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994; 2).

⁷⁵³ One of the principle requirements of temporary exhibitions is that they attract sustained visitor numbers, even if different audiences are targeted.

seeing too much of the frippery'.⁷⁵⁴ The Museum constantly needed to underline the understanding that war is about killing people; by putting on series of displays that concentrated more upon social history, it was felt that this gave a misleading impression of how the institution tackled its remit, in selecting more appealing and marketable aspects over others.⁷⁵⁵

6.3.2 – The Exhibition’s Mantra – Memory over History?

Unlike the vast majority of the previous IWM exhibitions on the subject of the First World War, ‘The First World War Remembered’ took the theme of memory, rather than history, and the Armistice of 1918 as its starting point.⁷⁵⁶ It had four sections of ‘Memorials’, ‘The Personal Stories’, ‘The First World War in Art and Literature’ and ‘The Legacy’.⁷⁵⁷ With this simple storyline and structure, its overarching aim was to look at commemoration, or ‘how we did and have continued to remember the war’:

‘The first space was relatively dark and intimate and dealt with the main national memorials – the Cenotaph and the tomb of the Unknown Warrior (we found and played part of the original recording of the burial service at Westminster Abbey). This opened up onto a large, light, open gallery with a wall of images by Malcolm Brown. Visitors could look at other kinds of memorials with the photographs [a]s a constant backdrop. I wanted to create an immersive experience. Smaller ‘rooms’ leading off this were devoted to personal stories (this included documents, small albums for visitors to explore,

⁷⁵⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14. There were various exhibitions over this period, such as ‘Forties Fashion and the New Look’ in 1997 (See Breward [2003] for analysis and IWM/97/9/20 for photographs) and ‘Women at War’ in 2003. TC referred to the 1999 ‘From the Bomb to the Beatles’ exhibition, which focused on post-war Britain from 1945-65 and was designed by Sir Terence Conran, as stretching the institution’s subject matter to its limit (See IWM/1999/021 + 022 + 023 for photographs)

⁷⁵⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14. TC shared his belief that the Museum had neglected certain aspects of its broad remit through its temporary exhibition programme – not only limiting the presence of military history, but also regarding how it portrayed the political, diplomatic and economic aspects of warfare.

⁷⁵⁶ This onus on remembrance and its forms could be put down to the recent academic interest in memory within the social sciences, as well as the fact that national attention was now turning to the small number of surviving First World War veterans, which prioritised their individual memory of their experiences over historical accounts. This was also important in determining how their understanding was moulded to fit broader existing cultural narratives within the public arena (See Wilson, 2013; 134).

⁷⁵⁷ Internal Memorandum from AG to RC (Cc’d to CD/PRC) ‘THE FIRST WORLD WAR REMEMBERED FESTIVAL – DRAFT EXHIBITION OUTLINE’, 21/04/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42

and a showcase of ephemera - from trench art to commemorative pottery and textiles. The exhibition ended with creative responses to war – art, memoirs poetry, music, theatre, cinema and so on from the First World War to the present day'.⁷⁵⁸

AG had high ambitions for the exhibition, but these were met with various challenges, such as the integration of art works. She sent an internal memorandum to RC outlining what she perceived to be inhibiting factors:

'...we are getting to a point where we really don't have enough material. In view of this I wonder if we really should be doing this exhibition at all. We could well be criticised for showing inferior work and it certainly doesn't help with marketing if we can't mention big names like Nash...We are now in the position of having to mount an important exhibition commemorating the Great War without being able to show a painting by perhaps the most notable British war artist...I really do think that without key works of art being released...we will be faced with mounting a very time-consuming and expensive flop'.⁷⁵⁹

What can be drawn out here is an important point with respect to what were seen as particular 'jewels' within the IWM's collections. AG considered that there were 'really significant and appropriate' paintings already on display on D-Floor which could attract a higher level of interest, were they to feature within the temporary exhibition of 'The First World War Remembered'.⁷⁶⁰ She deemed some of the most iconic First World War paintings as symbolising the planned exhibition's theme.⁷⁶¹ This related

⁷⁵⁸ Email Interview between Angela Godwin and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. Art and sculpture formed a major part of the display, as examples of formalised remembrance. AG wanted to use art 'as a way in which we remember war – e.g. the paintings of Nash and Nevinson speak to us of the horror of war in the way that the poems of Owen and Sassoon do' - a view not held by many of the historians within the Museum. There was also a nine minute film on a loop, created by Malcolm Brown. NS noted that MB acted as a historical advisor for several of the exhibitions that Angela led, including this one, adding that 'he was very sympathetic to the way they went about it' (Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14).

⁷⁵⁹ Internal Memorandum from AG to PRC (Cc'd to RC/CD) 'THE FIRST WORLD WAR REMEMBERED', 17/03/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42. RC underlined the statement about the perceived lack of material, and put an explanation mark in the margin.

⁷⁶⁰ This issue of where First World War paintings would be best showcased rumbled on between Angela Godwin and Angela Weight, the Head of the Department of Art, with RC eventually settling the dispute (See Internal Memorandum from Angela Weight to Angela Godwin (CC'd to RC/Heads of Department/Head of Exhibitions), 'Youth Mourning', IWM/EN4/15/D/42). The painting which had caused the fallout, *Youth Mourning* by George Clausen (IWM ART 4655), would end up forming the final section of the subsequent exhibition 'Anthem for Doomed Youth'.

⁷⁶¹ This mindset also denotes a belief that any exhibition on a similar theme would have to feature these same objects on a consistent basis – that the Museum could not hold a display without

back to the fact that AG saw temporary exhibitions as a marketing platform, which would be best achieved through the display of work by the War poets and artists, alongside more contemporary representations of the conflict that visitors might have already encountered.⁷⁶² On top of this, she planned for a festival of events to support the exhibition's broader themes of cultural memory and remembrance.⁷⁶³



Figure 58 – Visitors studying objects at the Launch Event for

'The First World War Remembered', 17 September 1998 (©IWM 98/54a/11)

featuring its most prized items. Indeed several of the items in the exhibition section relating to the War Poets would be reused for the 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' exhibition in 2002.

⁷⁶² See 'The First World War in Art and Literature' section of the Exhibition Brief. *Birdsong* and *Oh What A Lovely War* were cited as recent material to include (Internal Memorandum from AG to RC (CC'd to CD/PRC) 'THE FIRST WORLD WAR REMEMBERED FESTIVAL – DRAFT EXHIBITION OUTLINE', 21/04/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42). The use of material representing the conflict, and significantly after it had taken place, was an unusual step for the Museum. Having viewed the brief, RC remarked that AG should 'consult and involve Peter Simkins' – perhaps pre-empting that there might be a split in their respective styles of exhibition.

⁷⁶³ Following a press and private viewing of the exhibition on 17/09/98 (See Internal Memorandum from CD to RC, 'LAUNCH OF 'THE FIRST WORLD WAR REMEMBERED', THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER', 15/09/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42), this would include an evening talk on Wednesday 28th October by the chief art critic of The Times and author of *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art of the Great War*, Richard Cork on the topic of the First World War and Modern Art. Other talks were given to coincide with new publications; on the subject of 'Women and the Great War', a biography of Siegfried Sassoon by Dennis Silk (22/10/98), Lyn Macdonald's work on the Spring of 1918 (13/10/98) and Malcolm Brown's *1918: Year of Victory?* (18/11/98). See Event Posters in IWM/EN4/15/D/42; see also Internal Memorandum from AG to RC, 'Entrance Hall', 28/09/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42 for AG's request for space for promotional posters to advertise these associated events.

6.3.3 – Use of Personal Objects from the Museum’s Holdings

The exhibition’s interpretational approach revolved around the notion of personal stories. NS was working as Deputy to Rod Suddaby in the Department of Documents, meaning that the large number of documents used in ‘TFWWR’ all passed through his hands when he issued them for display. Under Suddaby’s watch, the Department had evolved to become an unparalleled repository of memory filled with a wealth of privately donated personal papers. One might view them in some respects as the middle ground between those in R&I, who had a good working knowledge of its collections, and those staff in the Exhibitions Department, who interacted and liaised with the Documents Department to issue objects. NS recalled ‘a close involvement’ working with the staff involved in creating ‘TFWWR’, but only ‘a very slight involvement’ in ‘1918 – Year of Decision’, perhaps because R&I already had an understanding of the material they wanted to use.⁷⁶⁴ NS distinguished the styles of the two exhibitions, stating that ‘1918 – Year of Decision’:

‘...was not an exhibition absorbing the new type of personal testament based history, beginning with Lyn Macdonald, Martin Middlebrook, that had risen up, giving the ordinary man in the trench a voice, this was an exhibition by expert historians, very well researched, very clearly understood, which was putting that story across, with explanations and reasons, it was a nice exhibition, it was very clear and it was well laid out, and it had a good selection of objects’.

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In contrast, AG’s desire for ‘TFWWR’ to be an ‘intuitive, emotional response to the First World War’ would concentrate on telling personal and emotive stories, in

⁷⁶⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. NS had always been interested in documenting the individual stories of conflict, and was able to build upon this vision shared by Rod Suddaby. This approach of sourcing personal documents for display had already been adopted within the temporary exhibition ‘Forces Sweethearts’, which was held at the Museum in 1993. ‘Focusing as it did on ‘personal feeling and emotions’, it was considered as a ‘new, if not quite controversial, departure for the museum’s trustees’ (Jolly, 1997; 105). NS would apply this knowledge more recently when working as a consultant on a volume about the Museum’s First World War collections, which cited objects from the 2014 Galleries in Chapter 7 (See Hughes-Wilson, 2014).

⁷⁶⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. In a revolutionary work, Middlebrook (1971) provided the reader with the very personal experiences of nearly 550 British and German soldiers on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, as well as insight from official records extracted from the then Public Records Office. For PJS, ‘It is difficult to overstate the immense impact which this book had – and still has – in stimulating serious study of the First World War’; it sparked ‘a whole succession of new books (and television programmes) of a similar *genre*’, including the work of Lyn Macdonald in the 1980s, which swung the spotlight ‘decisively away from Passchendaele and back to the Somme as the symbol of the First World War in the public mind’ (Simkins, 2014; 28-29).

tandem with objects sourced from the Department of Documents (See Figure 58).⁷⁶⁶ Because 'TFWWR' considered the cultural impact of the War on the British people, NS was well placed to express his personal interest in these stories. He could thus contribute material that he had come across during his time working in the Department, to present to PRC who would come and view his pre-selected material relating to eight 'strong, powerful' personal stories that could be told in two or three objects.⁷⁶⁷ These were to be contained within a series of boxes with lids, with the name of the individual to whom it related viewable on the outside. The visitor could then lift the lid to view the letters or items relating to that individual, in order to learn about their life. It was the 'reveal' - the physical action of getting the visitor to open the box - that NS deemed as critical to enabling their engagement with the story inside:

'...you saw Alan Lloyd, 1892-1916, and you had no idea what it was, and you opened the lid and there's a grave marker and a letter, and on the thing is his story and you read it...it's that entry into it'.⁷⁶⁸

This technique was 'one of the first times that the Museum had gone down this kind-of direct route' - of utilising the once private and intensely personal material contained within the Museum's holdings to tell stories. NS was thus taking his expert knowledge and feeding this on to PRC:

'...we weren't going to go to write these stories, even if I tried, they were being written by Penny, who knew how to write the stories, but at the same time, we were feeding, I would feed in all the information [JW – *Acknowledging*], so it was nice, and it was very rewarding'.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. AG singled out the Department of Documents' help, support and expertise, and praised its staff's professionalism and efficiency (Internal Memorandum from AG to Jane Carmichael (CC'd to RC), 'The First World War Remembered', 23/09/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42). She deemed their collection 'played a key part in the exhibition' (Email Interview between Angela Godwin and JW, conducted on 25/06/14).

⁷⁶⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁷⁶⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. See IWM/98/54A/5 and IWM/98/61/51 for images of the boxes. NS exported the same principle of engagement to the Experience Silo at IWM North with the use of filing cabinet drawers which visitors could open slightly. The principle was used again in the 2009 Lord Ashcroft Gallery, having explained the 'moment of lifting' to the external designers, Casson Mann.

⁷⁶⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. NS had been working in the Department of Documents since 1988.

Again one can see the distinctions of specific responsibilities within this quote; NS' knowledge of the objects within the collections was required to be filtered by the eyes of PRC, who would ultimately provide the narrative content (as had been the case with the permanent galleries). Anyone with specialist historical knowledge of the collections had to harness this through a filtered format so that an average visitor to the Museum could make sense of it. The process of doing this between the Department of Exhibitions and the Department of Documents was being married up in a more harmonious way than had been the case with R&I.⁷⁷⁰ This also meant, as a consequence of this turn towards individual witnessing to carry the historical narrative, the Museum's story-telling style was developing as one that increasingly relied upon the authority of testimony - at the cost of its specialist experts.⁷⁷¹ The Museum was able to draw on its objects that had been accumulated during its active collections policy in the years immediately after the conflict, and by this virtue, tended to be imbued with a value of remembrance in relating to either the official processes of commemoration (such as one of the poppies sold during the first British Legion appeal) or the more personal mementoes of a lost relative.⁷⁷² As evidenced by the showcases of 'Fine Arts', 'Last Letters' and 'Personal Mementoes', displaying these objects alongside works of literature, art and music, placed an emphasis on visitor empathy before historical understanding.⁷⁷³ It had capitalised upon the combined power of design elements and objects to develop an exhibition in stark contrast to the vastly de-personalised permanent First World War galleries on the

⁷⁷⁰ TC recalled that PJS's 'services' or expertise were not brought in to any great extent during the making of 'TFWWR', suggesting that this may have been down to the fact that he had gained a reputation of continuing to wave the flag of specialised First World War knowledge (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14). PJS latterly reflected on the exhibition as 'fancier looking' when it came to the design input, but that it had 'less substance' in relation to its historical content (Unrecorded phone conversation between PJS and JW regarding '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition, conducted on 21/05/14).

⁷⁷¹ For an expansion on this theme, within the context of a national institution, see Noakes (2009; 143, 145-6).

⁷⁷² IWM EPH 10794. The exhibition featured a recording of the Unknown Warrior's burial along with Lutyens' design sketches for, and a model of the Cenotaph (IWM ART 4207).

⁷⁷³ The exhibition also featured cultural items, such as the original handwritten draft of *Journey's End* by R.C. Sherriff, and a costume from the original stage production of *Oh! What A Lovely War* together with programmes and posters connected to both wartime and post-war films ('THE FIRST WORLD WAR REMEMBERED – Contents List', IWM/EN4/15/D/42.) There was also a showcase with objects relating to the establishing of the IWM, and the 'Great Victory Exhibition'. The exhibition's ending touched upon contemporary aspects of the First World War, such as the pardoning of executed soldiers and the death of Lt Colonel Mike Watkins, who was killed excavating the underground tunnels at Vimy Ridge in August 1998. The key change in approach was that emotion was being used as a method through which visitors could see how people understood or felt about the situations they found themselves in.

floor below. The devices used to achieve these intentions was critiqued by NS, such as the use of emotive music that would ‘sweep you along...and the poor old soldiers would wave and they’d all disappear into the distance...that’s the gist of what ‘The First World War Remembered’ was trying to get’.⁷⁷⁴ In spite of internal uncertainty as to its historical integrity, the exhibition met with a receptive public audience, and approval from higher authority; it was described by the Director of Visual Arts at the British Council as ‘incredibly affecting and beautifully presented...in a class of its own’.⁷⁷⁵ What is more, it met with the expressed approval of the Director-General and the Museum’s Trustees.⁷⁷⁶



Figure 59 – A Leaflet for ‘The Trench’ Exhibition⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁷⁷⁵ Letter to RC, 27/10/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42. In response, RC labelled the public response as ‘very positive and touching also’ (Letter from RC, 30/10/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42).

⁷⁷⁶ RC gave his congratulations on ‘a most imaginatively conceived and designed exhibition’, and that Lord Bramall, the Chairman of Trustees, had been very impressed by it (Internal Memorandum from RC to Keeper of Marketing & Trading/CD, ‘First World War Remembered’, 23/09/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42; Internal Memorandum from RC to CD/Keeper of Marketing & Trading, 29/09/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42). The Board of Trustees congratulated all who had contributed to making the exhibition, according ‘special thanks’ to AG for its concept, curating, and design (Internal Memorandum from DG to Keeper of Marketing & Trading/CD, ‘First World War Remembered’, 20/11/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42).

⁷⁷⁷ Sourced from ‘<http://www.khakidevil.co.uk/Trench%20Exhibition.html>’ – ‘The Trench Exhibition – IWM’, No Author (Accessed 17/03/15).

6.4 – ‘The Trench’ Exhibition

6.4.1 – Teaming Up with Television

Four years on, the Museum seized upon a ‘classic piece of IWM opportunism’.⁷⁷⁸ On the back of the Museum’s awareness of the public appetite for historical/public engagement programmes, AG and Christopher Dowling, Head of the Department of Museum Services, quickly established links in bringing about a new partnership with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (See Figure 59).⁷⁷⁹ Simultaneously building upon the popular success of the Museum’s already installed Trench Experience, a new hands-on temporary exhibition of a walk-through recreation of a British trench system was to tie in with the 2002 BBC Two television series, ‘The Trench’.⁷⁸⁰ Initial input was led by Neil Young from the Research and Information Department but it would become ‘a Penny Ritchie Calder show’.⁷⁸¹ Its primary intention was in offering a popular engagement with the First World War, ‘in parallel with the same message coming out of the television series’.⁷⁸² From the producers’ point of view, partnership with the Museum granted the series a degree of authenticity and credibility. What made the series particularly attractive from the Museum’s perspective was that they could rely on a supply of archaeological material sourced from contacts who had worked on the programme (primarily historians Philippe Gorczynski and Peter Barton, who had surveyed the site of

⁷⁷⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁷⁷⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. This series was considered a first attempt to situate its participants within a non-domestic historical environment (following the 2001 Channel 4 series, *The 1940s House*). See also Hanna (2009, *The Great War on the Small Screen*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; 147) for discussion about viewer empathy for characters placed within historical environments.

⁷⁸⁰ A free entry exhibition, it ran for an extended period from January 2002 to May 2003, which was much longer than a typical temporary exhibition. The television series aired in three instalments on BBC Two in March 2002 (Dir. Dominic Ozanne). An excerpt preview screening was held in the presence of Jane Root, the Controller of BBC Two (See ‘The Trench Launch Event Overview – 12 March 2002’, sent by Nadia Fulgoni, Events Unit of BBC, 27/02/02, IWM/EVE/2002/011). A Press Launch took place the following morning, with a photo-call of First World War veterans and the volunteers from the television series (See Fax from Victoria Main [IWM PR Officer], 07/03/02, IWM EVE/2002/011 and ‘Private View of ‘The Trench’, 13 March 2002’, IWM/EVE/2002/013). The carer of veteran Arthur Halestrap sent a letter on his behalf to thank the Museum for its hospitality, and expressed delight ‘that there was so much opportunity for young people to explore what life in the trenches was like’ (Letter to RC, 16/03/02, IWM/EVE/2002/011).

⁷⁸¹ Neil Young researched the 10th Battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment through examining the War Diaries and Unit Histories held at the National Archives, as requested by PRC. Laurie Milner was also involved in curating the uniforms and soldiers’ equipment displayed (See Figure 8, Chapter 6)

⁷⁸² Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. Because of the tight timeframe in which the exhibition had to be completed, NS recycled some unused written material produced for the First World War galleries at IWM North, which had opened earlier that year. He had recently taken over as the Head of R&I at this time, the implications of which are discussed in due course.

filming in France), on top of the fact that the exhibition 'set' could be constructed in-house for a fairly low cost:

'...they built an exhibition area which was like a trench, and into the sides, they put showcases...the construction was pretty homemade, but it included places you could crawl into, things you could go and smell, it included dark areas...you'd have a little bit dealing about lice, you'd have letters home...the kids and everybody else liked the smellorama bits, the smell of phosgene gas, the smell of latrines, they actually put those in kind-of latrine like spaces'.⁷⁸³

It thus targeted a young family audience through its hands-on interactivity, deploying sensory technology to achieve this through uniforms to try on and equipment to touch in a 'Handling Collection'. The use of four sounds, such as the single rifle shot designed to illustrate the dangers of peering over the parapet, were effectively employed as devices to aid understanding within a deliberately engaging environment. NS described it as 'simple' and 'straightforward' because 'it was just about life in the trenches', with the Museum already knowing that the formula of a recreated environment was popular with visitors (See Figure 60).⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸³ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. The television series was linked in with the National Curriculum from Key Stages 1 to 4 (See Hanna, 2009; 146, 158). The exhibition featured a collection of material showing how the series had been made, and original exhibits were used to illustrate what life was like in a British trench on the Western Front during 1916. An associated book was published by Richard Van Emden (2002), but featured minimal IWM input.

⁷⁸⁴ Indeed, the public desire for this format would be successfully rebranded again in 2009 for a new family audience in the guise of the 'Terrible Trenches' (part of the 'Horrible Histories' series). In keeping with this brand, emphasis was placed less on authenticity but more on humour and on discovering historical facts through the use of interactive and sensorial devices. See *Horrible Histories: Frightful First World War*, <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/exhibitions/horrible-histories.html> (Accessed 22/03/15).

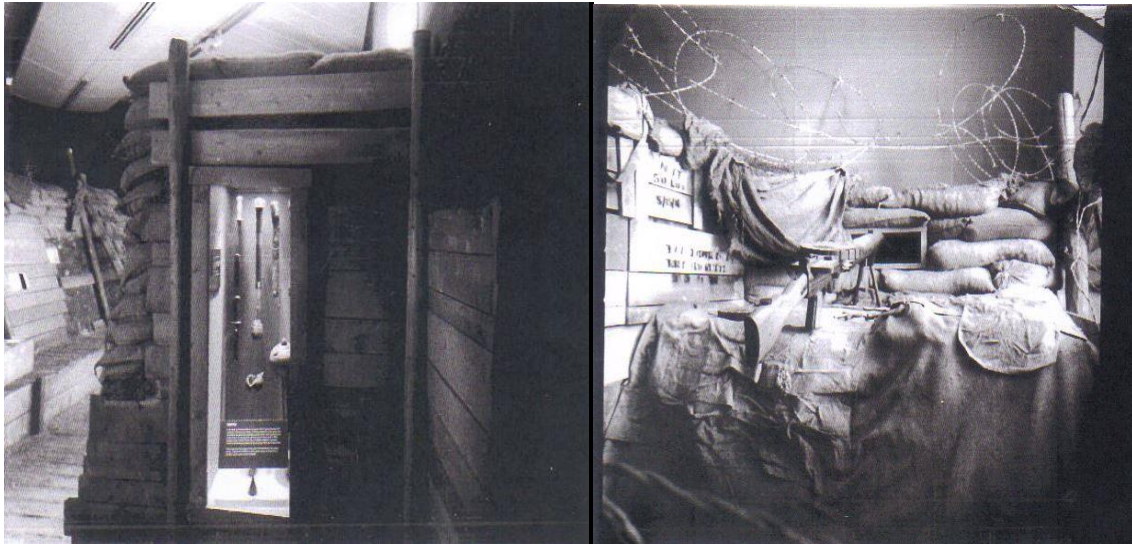


Figure 60 – *The Parapet and Embedded Showcases of*

'The Trench' Exhibition

(©IWM 02/50/28; IWM 02/50/26)

6.4.2 – Questioning its Historical Intentions

In keeping with the earlier internal mutterings about the historical integrity of these temporary exhibitions, there was 'a certain amount of disquiet' amongst some members of Museum staff, who in spite of the clear emphasis placed upon this exhibition's educational message, were concerned about the Museum's name being associated with a perceived 'dumbing down' of history.⁷⁸⁵ It seems that these had taken root in the questioning of the television series' intentions within the wider media.⁷⁸⁶ Though the series had averaged a relatively healthy 2.51 million viewers, by the time it aired, much had been made of its perceived 'reality-show' nature, and linked this with questions of taste in falsely recreating battle for the sake of

⁷⁸⁵ The timing of the television series sat amongst a multitude of Second World War commemorative events (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14).

⁷⁸⁶ The three part experimental series aimed to portray life in a front line trench, following the Battle of the Somme, for a group of volunteers all recruited from Hull to represent a Pals Battalion. Taff Gillingham of *The Khaki Chums* operated as a military advisor, with the 25 male volunteers equipped as infantry men with authentic clothing and replica equipment (though the series had to operate within modern day health and safety guidelines, and shelling was simulated, the mental strain of the noise affected the volunteers). See <http://www.khakidevil.co.uk/The%20Trench%20Documentary.html> (Accessed 17/03/15). It is interesting to note that this overall emphasis on authenticity and ensuring the historical accuracy of this material largely went unnoticed within the overall recreation (as was the case with the Museum's 1990 Trench Experience). Critics instead chose to focus on what the medium could not do, which was to accurately convey the danger of warfare. For more detailed analysis of the programme and its making, see Hanna (2007, 2009; 144-162).

entertainment. Pre-empting this unwelcome press, the producer of the series had written to potentially concerned parties, including the IWM's Head of Documents, to allay any fears:

'I want to assure you that this programme will be handled in a responsible and sympathetic way...Although we know we can't recreate the full horror of life in the trenches we think it's valuable to bring home to a modern generation what their grandfathers and great grandfathers did and why. The origin of the idea was a survey that revealed 64% of under-18s do not know the dates of the First World War...Our aim is to use Regimental war diaries and other documents to recreate as accurately as possible the first two weeks in November 1916 for a particular platoon'.⁷⁸⁷

Whilst the series promoted these aspects of human interest in conjunction with the everyday conditions of trench warfare, its tagline of 'bringing home the horrors of the war to a generation that knew little of the conflict' did not wash with its critics.⁷⁸⁸ NS was the Museum's spokesman for the series, and having defended it at the time in the *Daily Mail* as 'a serious attempt to create a scenario situation...trying to explore the type of life their grandfathers would have experienced', latterly recalled his conviction that the whole concept worked better than it was given credit for:

'...it wasn't trivialization, there were a lot of bits in it which were quite interesting to watch, disorientation of arriving in the trenches, the shock of suddenly finding out one of your people's disappeared, you can't put people under fire, you can't make them go over the top into a machine gun burst, but

⁷⁸⁷ Letter from Dick Colthurst, Executive Producer at BBC Documentaries Bristol, to Roderick Suddaby, 28/06/01, IWM EVE/2002/011. This credited the fact that the series had been 'meticulously researched' by Dr David Olusoga and Richard Van Emden, both of whom had worked on previous television programmes on the First World War.

⁷⁸⁸ See Hanna (2009; 147-149, 152). For commentary pieces in the media, see <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2001/jun/25/bbc.realitytv>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-104739/BBC-cashes-horror-trenches.html> (Accessed 17/03/15) Critics' opinions ranged, with one particular sceptic describing the programme as 'one of the most depressing and defiling things' he had seen on television (Hanna, 2009; 148-149). The cited *Daily Mail* article's headline read 'BBC show cashes in on horror of the trenches', going on to describe the programme as 'a tasteless stunt'. However like NS and the programme's makers, Hanna argued that these omitted what the programme had been trying to achieve - 'that not every British soldier thought or behaved like a disillusioned war poet, and that there was more to war experience than sitting around, waiting for imminent death or injury' (2009; 148-149). Indeed, she suggested that the controversy 'only appeared to help its success in the ratings' (2009; 167).

at the same time, you can [give] them a sense of how scary and disorienting it is, and they managed to do that'.⁷⁸⁹



Figure 61 – Laurie Milner of the Department of Research and Information stands next to the uniform and equipment of a member of the 'Hull Commercials' in 1916 (©IWM/02/11/26A).

What can be drawn out from this encounter between these two national institutions was how one ended up affecting the other. The BBC was promoting a new type of television programme in which historical expertise and integrity – as had been provided with earlier collaborations with the Museum during the 1960s and 1970s with the series' *The Great War* and *The World At War* – was no longer the

⁷⁸⁹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-104739/BBC-cashes-horror-trenches.html> (Accessed 17/03/15); Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. See also Daugbjerg et al (2014). The exhibition enjoyed strong attendance, amid one commentator observing that it had not been 'open to the charges of bad taste which beleaguered the television programme' (Bostridge, 2002). The volunteers' emphasis on boredom and fear, as well as the effect of enduring the cold, required little encouraging from producers, whilst the events relating to fighting that took place was based on both the regimental war diary and the personal diaries of soldiers from the original battalion. The programme also detailed how the trenches were repaired and maintained, and how the infantrymen rested, were paid and were punished (Field Punishment Number 2 was given to one recruit for not shaving [Van Emden, 2002; 272]). The limited amount of time (five to ten days) that infantrymen spent within the frontline was stressed within each episode. To add a degree of realism, volunteers were 'killed off' at the producers' bequest, and one volunteer left of his own accord (See Hanna, 2009; 150). Van Emden recorded being impressed by the comradeship and camaraderie fostered by the volunteers through their experiences (2002; 273).

guiding criteria that it had previously been. Instead the overall exercise for the Museum had been more about obtaining publicity and as a business opportunity - attempting to attract visitors through the use of marketing - than it had been about the rigour of its historical inquiry.⁷⁹⁰ This latter factor was becoming sacrificed in ensuring the Museum's continued survival amongst a more competitive market place. Instead instructional history was being partly sacrificed in the name of entertaining history for a mass public and non-specialist audience, which acted as a more lucrative venture. The other notable and connected influence within this was how the small number of surviving First World War veterans were incorporated into both the exhibition and the television series. Robert Crawford had described the presence and contribution of Arthur Halestrap as 'crucial to the occasion' in granting the exhibition a degree of corroboration.⁷⁹¹ In contrast to the *Daily Mail's* assertion that had suggested 'the few surviving veterans are horrified by what they see as the BBC's attempts to make light of the ordeal of those who made the ultimate sacrifice', the testimonies of four of the most prominent remaining veterans formed a crucial part of the series.⁷⁹² These recollections gave gravitas to the series, and when included with contemporary footage blended with original archival film, this helped to quantify the programme as a documentary, rather than just based on the recreated elements. It did not try to convey a grand historical narrative, nor did it rely upon the 'guidance of poets or novelists, and even without the explicit help of expert historians in front of the camera'.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹⁰ See Section 2.3. Barry has argued that 'the museum is increasingly expected to respond to the public's demands rather than simply tell the public what it needs to know' (1998; 98). Conversely any funds raised by a commercially successful exhibition would allow the Museum to produce a more elevated exhibition in future.

⁷⁹¹ Letter from RC, (Cc'd to CD/Victoria Main/Katherine Hogan), 20/03/02, IWM/EVE/2002/011

⁷⁹² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-104739/BBC-cashes-horror-trenches.html> (Accessed 17/03/15). In fact, one veteran, Arthur Halestrap had visited the recreated trench with the Khaki Chums and Harry Patch described how a Lewis gun operated. Producer Richard Van Emden was crucial in all of this, as he had established good relationships with the veterans through his books which used their first-hand testimony (See Hanna, 2007; 538; 2009; 152).

⁷⁹³ Hanna (2009; 150-154, 167). Whilst suggesting that the overall lack of historical narrative was to ensure the show retained a broader appeal, she records that veterans had varying opinions on the series' worth; Harry Patch expressed 'deep reservations about the capacity of any medium to effectively recreate what men experienced on the Western Front' (2009; 153). On the other hand, Richard Van Emden observed that the veterans had not tended to talk about the day-to-day practical activities of trench life, and the programme was primarily interested in conveying aspects of daily routine that the soldiers completed regularly.

6.5 – ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’

6.5.1 – The War Poets’ Exhibition

Overlapping ‘The Trench’ - perhaps conceived in the same spirit of putting on a duo of exhibitions that adopted different approaches to the same subject – there would be a new temporary exhibition on the lives and works of twelve of the major First World War poets, titled ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’ (‘AFDY’).⁷⁹⁴ This would be overseen and directed by Dr Christopher Dowling, the Museum’s Director of Public Services. Professor Jon Stallworthy (Oxford University) provided academic expertise, following his involvement in October 1974 with an IWM exhibition on the same theme.⁷⁹⁵ In contrast to this earlier iteration, at which there had been concern that the exhibition’s appeal might limit its audience to that of the war literature specialist (by virtue of the fact that manuscripts, some of limited legibility, could dominate such a display), this display would prioritize highly emotive material including photographs, diaries, letters and objects. Beside this, efforts were made to integrate works from the Museum’s Art Collection, such as the poet Isaac Rosenberg’s wartime self-portrait (1914), Paul Nash’s canvases ‘We are Making a

⁷⁹⁴ The exhibition developed a story line based on a series of small mini exhibitions, one for each poet, that acted as an integrated whole. It made use of an audio tour guide included in the cost of an entry fee, and it ran from 31 October 2002 – 3 April 2003. It was opened by Baroness Tessa Blackstone, the Minister for the Arts at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, on the 29th October (See IWM/EN4/15/D/51 for her Speech notes and an invitation from RC to open the exhibition [01/07/02]). The poet Seamus Heaney had been due to complete this, but was prevented from doing so by his teaching commitments at Harvard University (see correspondence with Christopher Dowling, IWM/EVE/2002/036). See also IWM/03/06/29, IWM/03/06/31, IWM/03/06/39 and IWM/03/06/45 for photographs of the exhibition space and ‘Anthem For Doomed Youth: Draft Mainlines’ for biographical captions of each poet (IWM/EN4/15/D/51).

⁷⁹⁵ Jon Stallworthy was selected as literary advisor, having edited *The Oxford Book of War Poetry* and a biography of Wilfred Owen. His tie-in publication analysed many of the poets’ works, accompanied by the black and white official wartime photographs and images of drafted manuscripts (Stallworthy, 2002). Edmund Blunden had been scheduled to open the 1974 ‘Poets of the First World War’ exhibition, but died prior to its opening (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14). TC noted that this exhibition had gone up against the Museum’s extremely popular temporary exhibition on the Home Guard, ‘The Real Dad’s Army’, but it proved more popular than had been expected. Both Christopher Dowling and AG were involved in the 1974 exhibition. By 2002, AG she was acutely aware of the wider popular appeal of their work – particularly on the back of Pat Barker’s (1992) work, *Regeneration*, which featured Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen and Robert Graves. ‘AFDY’ thus represented an opportunity ‘to do something on a larger scale and to cover a broader range of poets for new audiences’. Because the 1974 exhibition had featured only six poets, there was also a desire to both go beyond the household names and to incorporate private soldiers, such as David Jones (who had died in 1974). ‘AFDY’ consisted of eight officers and four soldiers who had served in the ranks – three of whom won Military Crosses, and seven of who did not survive the conflict – with all ranging in their various responses to the War (Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14). Upon completion it was considered to be the largest and most comprehensive exhibition ever mounted on the subject (See Internal Memorandum from CD to RC, ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’ Exhibition, 04/10/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51).

New World' (1918) and 'The Ypres Salient at Night' (1918) and Tonk's works depicting facial wounds, added to the potency of Siegfried Sassoon's cynical verse.⁷⁹⁶ Nevinson's painting 'Paths of Glory' (1917), originally censored because it depicted dead British soldiers, accompanied the section on Wilfred Owen.⁷⁹⁷ All of this would be given further weight and meaning through the sourcing of personal material from the families of each poet:

'...Personal memorabilia is always crucial to help to bring the subject to life but, sadly, not much exists and material that we had borrowed from the Sassoon family for the 1974 show was impossible to track down. Nevertheless we gathered enough to make it work'.⁷⁹⁸

Some of the featured personal mementoes included Siegfried Sassoon's pistol, his protest statement against the war, Wilfred Owen's binoculars, Robert Graves's kitbag, a lock of Rupert Brooke's hair and his school-boy cricket cap, Owen's Military Cross which his mother wore on a chain around her neck, Edmund Blunden's Military Cross and his Royal Sussex Regiment uniform, Ivor Gurney's piano, a blood-stained map carried by Julian Grenfell when he was injured by an exploding shell and a pocket watch belonging to Edward Thomas which stopped at the moment of

⁷⁹⁶ IWM ART 6372; IWM ART 1146; IWM ART 1145.

⁷⁹⁷ IWM ART 518. See Exhibition Content List, IWM/EN4/15/D/51. The exhibition contained the original manuscript of Owen's poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' (with Siegfried Sassoon's amendments) and a draft of his most well-known work 'Dulce et Decorum Est'.

⁷⁹⁸ Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. The 1974 exhibition had enabled the IWM to establish contact with many of the families and descendants of the poets (including Siegfried Sassoon, Edmund Blunden, Robert Graves, Isaac Rosenberg, and Wilfred Owen), and in 1978 it had notably acquisitioned an important collection of Isaac Rosenberg manuscripts as a result of that display. Following support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Dulverton Trust, in 1982 the Museum purchased at a New York auction the working manuscript of Siegfried Sassoon's 'Memoirs of an Infantry Officer', which had been displayed in 'The First World War Remembered'. Some manuscripts held within major collections were loaned for the exhibition, but emphasis was also put upon the poets' lives and personal items; Peter Owen loaned a chest bought by Wilfred Owen at Ripon (Letter from Peter Owen to AG, 'Wilfred Owen', 31/07/02, IWM EVE/2002/036), Margi Blunden loaned Edmund Blunden's cricket bat and his mug from Christ's Hospital and Joseph Ledwidge loaned Francis Ledwidge's spectacles and inscribed Bible. Many of the relatives were invited to a 200-guest strong private viewing of the exhibition on 30th October 2002, including Edmund Blunden's daughter and David Jones' nephew (See IWM/EVE/2002/036 for the RSVPs to the opening event and IWM/EVE/2002/037 for a 'Full Lender List' of the twenty six donors or institutions that loaned a wide range of objects. I have previously written about the importance of family heirlooms providing tangible evidence of an ancestor's experience of the conflict (See Wallis, 2015; 27-28). Within IWM/EVE/2002/036, there is also a guest register for the private viewing that included John Dangerfield (See Chapter 5), Malcolm Brown, and Dinah Casson and Roger Mann from the design firm Casson Mann.

his death.⁷⁹⁹ The onus was to ‘establish and interrogate the link between ‘life’ and ‘work’’, and provide insight into the personal nature of each individual poet.⁸⁰⁰ Not only did this buy into the thinking of the ‘personal stories’ approach of ‘The First World War Remembered’, it meant that the exhibition would bring together an international network of museums, galleries, archives, poetry societies and private collectors to compile a group of manuscripts rarely available for public view. This again rattled some members of Museum staff, as another example of outsourcing specialist knowledge and expertise. NS noted his regret that R&I’s expertise ‘wasn’t required’ and was particularly frustrated by the fact that he was not given an opportunity to contribute to a topic in which he was well versed, having completed a three year post-graduate study into First World War literature at Oxford.⁸⁰¹ Beyond this, NS felt exasperated by the ‘self-contained’ and safe mindset, by which he implied lacked institutional ambition. In this instance, academic respectability had been outsourced; perhaps it was not expected to find sufficiently specialist knowledge of this particular topic, which was not one traditionally found within a historical museum. But again the reasoning was dictated by the broader picture; AG was adhering to the Museum’s potential to prioritise partnerships and collaborations with wider institutions, whilst also bringing together resources to benefit the Museum’s external reputation and appeal.⁸⁰² This outsourcing of the exhibition-making process, and the bringing in of other parties and influences, was becoming a bone of contention. It meant that the topic of these exhibitions, and hence what the Museum stood for, was being viewed with increasing disregard by some Museum departments; that, having taken root in ‘The First World War Remembered’, the

⁷⁹⁹ ‘Opening of ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’, Tuesday 29 October 2002: Speech Notes for Sir Jock Slater’, IWM/EN4/15/D/51. See <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/42/anthem/captioninfo.pdf> for a full list of objects and their captions (Accessed 23/03/15). The fact that many items belonged to individuals who were subsequently killed enamoured them with an emotional charge and haunting, memorial-like quality.

⁸⁰⁰ Motion (2002).

⁸⁰¹ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. NS recounted doing ‘little bits’ of research for AG, such as sourcing material from the battlefields and examining panoramic wartime photographs. The issue jarred because NS believed that the Museum already had sufficient knowledge and items within its collections to put on a display about the War poets – indeed he labelled AG’s knowledge of First World War poetry as ‘quite extensive’. Likewise CD was deemed as ‘a considerable authority on the war poets’ (‘Opening of ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’, Tuesday 29 October 2002: Speech Notes for Sir Jock Slater’, IWM/EN4/15/D/51). This is evidenced by the exhibition’s text; the introductory text was ‘handcrafted and honed to perfection by our resident expert on lit crit, Dr Christopher Dowling’, which RC deemed ‘Very well polished!’ (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’, 16/10/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51; ‘Introductory Text – Anthem for Doomed Youth – Twelve Soldier Poets of the First World War’, IWM/EN4/15/D/51).

⁸⁰² See Ball (2002).

broad themes of 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' were the next instalment of a cultural legacy continuum through which AG understood and interpreted the First World War.⁸⁰³ The history – a core theme on which the Museum had prided itself for previous decades – was becoming both isolated and seemingly on the wane. War poetry was considered as having broader mass appeal. Though NS lamented 'AFDY' for not being historically based - advocating that 'it wasn't an opportunity to try and explain what the content of the battle of Loos was, where Sorley was killed, it's just about Sorley' – the Museum was being forced to change its priorities.⁸⁰⁴ It had to place more value on factors such as providing for the key demographic of school parties, since the War Poets had recently been reintroduced to the 'A' Level English syllabus.⁸⁰⁵



Figure 62 – *The Chairman of the Museum's Trustees, Admiral Sir Jock Slater and Angela Godwin examine an 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' showcase at its Launch, 29 October 2002 (©IWM/02/54/3)*

⁸⁰³ NS suggested that there was an inherent understanding that the topic could be done again by rehashing slightly different variants on a top-level theme (Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14). TC was in agreement, drawing the link between the 1974 exhibition and 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' as being 'a bit...thirty years on, very similar to that exhibition, sort-of same type of exhibits' but done in a more visitor-friendly format (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14)

⁸⁰⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14

⁸⁰⁵ Internal Memorandum from Christopher Dowling to RC, 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' Exhibition, 04/10/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51. As a theme, poetry was one that could easily feed into broader Museum activities, such as book launches, special talks, or educational activities and courses (95,000 children and accompanying teachers were visiting the Museum as school parties at this time – See 'Opening of 'Anthem for Doomed Youth', Tuesday 29 October 2002: Speech Notes for Baroness Blackstone', IWM/EN4/15/D/51). The 'especial value' of this exhibition to students had already been noted by Baroness Blackstone (Letter from Tessa Blackstone to RC, 05/07/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51). Similarly Andrew Motion recorded in his review piece that the exhibition would '...introduce these poets to a new generation of readers, and to do so in a way which makes remote history seem recognisable and familiar' (Motion 2002)

6.5.2 – Audiences and Reactions

One review of the exhibition was ironically telling for the Museum; having praised the combination of ‘personal and poetic drama’, it noted ‘How plodding and forgettable the researches and statistics and claims of historians (who were not there) seem to our facile minds besides Owen’s vision of hell or Sassoon’s satire and anger’.⁸⁰⁶ This summarized the growing dilemma that the Museum was facing; that the fastidious historians, agonizing over petty details, could not compete with the raw drama of the War poets. The institution could afford to drown out the minor set of dissenting voices of specialist historians with the banner of increased visitor and commercial interest. RC congratulated those behind it, recognising their ‘extraordinary commitment’ to its creation and labelling it an ‘astonishing exhibition, one of the most impressive and important the Imperial War Museum has ever mounted’ (See Figure 62).⁸⁰⁷ That it had been ‘conceived, planned, researched, designed, negotiated and put into place in barely six months’ was ‘an outstanding achievement’.⁸⁰⁸ Visitor reaction was correspondingly positive, with the Director-General receiving many letters praising the exhibition and thanking those who had worked on it.⁸⁰⁹ These focused on the empathetic nature of visitor reaction to having viewed the objects; ‘thank you for giving me a profoundly moving and uplifting

⁸⁰⁶ Egremont (2002). One pointed out the omission of the French and German war poets, describing the exhibition as ‘a sombre but quietly triumphalist celebration of English lyricism’ (McCrum, 2002). See <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/42/anthem/review.htm> (Accessed 23/03/15) for digitised copies of newspaper reviews of the exhibition. See also IWM 24823 for BBC Radio 4 review of exhibition (03/04/2003); <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80023276> (Accessed 05/09/15).

⁸⁰⁷ Internal Memorandum to Director of Public Services (CD), ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’, 30/10/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51. RC remarked that its visitors would not know about this level of commitment, but that they would be hugely impressed and rewarded by what had been brought together. He also noted in a letter to a visitor that the exhibition had been achieved ‘entirely unaided, or even, hindered, by me!’, suggesting that he granted CD and AG a degree of trust to produce expected results (Letter from RC to Head of Museums & Art, Harrogate Borough Council, 23/12/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51).

⁸⁰⁸ Internal Memorandum to Director of Public Services (CD), ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’, 30/10/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51. The necessity of speed did lead to some errors being picked up on by observant visitors; one letter listed eight misspellings or factual errors within the captions (Letter to RC, 14/02/03, IWM/EN4/15/D/51). Another queried grammatical statements, but saw this as a minor fault of a ‘magnificent’ exhibition that made ‘the most important type of contribution’ for the future by demonstrating the ‘horror, pity and dreadful waste of war’ (Letter to RC, ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’, 15/01/03, IWM/EN4/15/D/51). Emphasis was thus not on the minutiae but on the overall sense of what the exhibition imbued upon the visitor and made them feel.

⁸⁰⁹ See IWM/EN4/15/D/51. Christopher Dowling also reported that the exhibition attracted a high number of media enquiries (Internal Memorandum from CD to RC, 08/10/02, IWM/EN4/15/D/51).

experience...the cumulative effect was at times unbearably poignant'.⁸¹⁰ Another online review observed that the displayed poems acted as witnesses to the conflict, that they 'somehow help to bring the reality of it home...the Imperial War Museum is the perfect setting for the exhibition, as it undertakes to encourage an understanding of wartime experience'.⁸¹¹ Already the vision of Alan Borg's Atrium space, with its collection of warfare hardware, was being re-defined by visitors through the perceived potency of this exhibition (See Figure 69). Not all temporary exhibitions would enjoy such praise, and it is important to point out that though the condensing of the creative exhibition-making process into such a short period was remarkable, the topic was not a particularly new venture for the Museum, given the legacy of the 1974 exhibition and inclusion of poetry as a theme in 'TFWWR'. Internal praise was good for some within the Museum, but the exhibition style had an ability to antagonise others about the institution's broader purpose and role. It also demonstrated that the ability to make exhibitions was still a coveted resource amongst departments competing for opportunities to showcase their own messages and ideas.

6.6 – 'The Somme' Exhibition

6.6.1 – Utilising Online Exhibition Technologies

This growing split between how the Museum achieved its overall purpose through its exhibitions came to a head again in 2006, the year of the ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. By this time, many of the institution's staff had accepted there was a requirement to balance sound history with the need to cater for visitor desire for engaging exhibitions. Armed with limited resources, NS and Laurie Milner as representatives of the Department of Research and Information decided that they wanted to develop an online exhibition on the subject of the Battle's commemoration, in recognition of its importance as a historical event; '...we said we could do this, and put it forwards...roll[ed] up our sleeves and got on with

⁸¹⁰ Letter to RC, 10/03/03, IWM/EN4/15/D/51. Not all visitors agreed; RC received one complaint that the volume of the piano recordings by the poet Ivor Gurney playing in the gallery space was too loud and overwhelmingly distracting (Letter from RC, 27/03/03, IWM EN4/15/D/51).

⁸¹¹ Evans (2002). Visitors could view the original manuscript as it was read out loud on audio guides by actors – thus allowing them to interpret the poets' work beyond just visual means.

developing what we'd tried to make'.⁸¹² Its concept was to be simple, being based on traditional web pages featuring carefully selected and very limited amounts of text and photographs. The lack of involvement from the Exhibitions Department denoted an increasing sense of disjuncture, with the two departments becoming more defined as separate entities, fostering the belief that one could operate without much input from the other. NS wanted to take the successful format of AG's 'personal stories' approach and combine this with 'solid history', brought together within the context of populating the Battle of the Somme using personal objects from the Museum's collections – in other words, using the 'principles of a 3-D exhibition on a digital platform' through the use of hot-links across the pages:

'...you could print out, if you wanted to, the twenty stories, and you could then print out the three routes, and it would drive you through the battlefields of the Somme, 1916, using the twenty stories and the Museum's objects, and give you, basically, a bespoke battlefield tour, and so we were trying to put these stories of these people into the landscape of the Somme, because we wanted people to understand the impact of the Somme from within a strong historical context'.⁸¹³

⁸¹² Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. For a link to the exhibition sections, including 'The Battle', 'Personal Stories' and 'The Somme Revisited', see <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.2164>; <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.2165> <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.2166>; <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.2167> (Accessed 22/03/15).

⁸¹³ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. See Figure 10, Chapter 6. The idea behind the online system was that visitors could pick up on one personal story, such as Alan Lloyd, which then provides the user with new links, such as to where he is buried at [Bécordel-Bécourt](#) [Accessed 19/03/15] to which a route and possible itinerary could be uploaded as a variant on a battlefield tour programme. Geographic connections could be made on the battlefield by interweaving the proximity of each of the personal stories. See Parry (2007) for discussion about the rise of changing museum technologies.



Figure 63 – ‘A Visitor at one of the Kiosks for the Online Exhibition’
(©IWM/2006/037/009)

NS defined the exhibition as a half-way house that met the requirements of the two schools of thought which had dominated the style and philosophy of earlier temporary exhibitions:

‘...there’s an element of the old ‘Simkinsian’ principles, which both Laurie and I brought to the table, and yet at the same time, there’s a strong element of the ‘Godwinian’ principles, which I’m bringing to the table to a certain extent, where it’s about intuitive and emotional responses, so it’s about cracklingly great stories...Alan Lloyd...Harold Cope...we were able to do again, by getting stuck into the Museum’s collections and doing collection research’.⁸¹⁴

It combined pithy historical narrative with compelling personal stories from the perspective of British, Commonwealth and German soldiers who experienced the Battle. Equally the format was capitalising upon the opportunities of the new webpage technology to deliver Museum content. In so doing, it benefitted the Museum by establishing a definitive and tangible link with the battlefields of the Western Front.⁸¹⁵ From NS’s perspective, he had produced an exhibition in-house, with limited financial resources and limited external influence. Its success was recognised by Mark Whitmore, the Director of Collections, who lobbied for the

⁸¹⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. He had hoped to complete a similar exhibition populating the battlefields of Ypres, because the Museum had many ‘really strong stories’ about it within its collections, but this never materialised.

⁸¹⁵ A few years earlier, the Museum had initiated a ‘Battlefield Tours with Experts’ scheme in 2002, featuring its historians (See IWM Diary 2002-2003 ‘Launch of Battlefield Tours with Experts’), but it was not able to achieve what it had set out to do.

concept to be granted some physical recognition within the Museum. A space for some computer terminals and a small selection of objects, including Harold Cope's jacket, was made available near the Art Galleries (See Figure 64).



Figure 64 – *'The Somme' Exhibition Space* (©IWM/2006/037/001)

The exhibition encapsulated a new trend amongst the Museum's departments. The effect of R&I's reduced input into the programme of temporary exhibitions meant that they were gaining a reputation for wanting to pursue exhibitions in solitude. They became more exasperated by what they considered to be misrepresenting the Museum's remit by overplaying particular aspects of it. TC recounted another small scale exhibition R&I had produced in 1997, titled 'Gothas and Giants', which had examined the German aeroplane raids on Britain in May 1917. Led by Neil Young, it encompassed photographs, models of the German aircraft that existed within the collection and some diary entries – again with a format focusing very much on its historical appeal. These were now seen as a certain type of exhibition, to which TC added '...[it's] a pity we don't mount more often really'.⁸¹⁶ As with 'The Somme' online exhibition, the emphasis for the historians was on the quality of the product – that it had been developed through the practice of research and rigorous history, and then presented in a way so as to be of interest to

⁸¹⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14. In 2000, there was also an R&I produced temporary exhibition on the topic of the Korean War.

visitors.⁸¹⁷ But by this time such ambitions were not considered as important, and ironically risked isolating R&I from being involved in future temporary exhibitions.

6.7 – ‘My Boy Jack’

6.7.1 – Telling the Tale in Partnership

In 2007, those staff members who had been primary drivers behind the aforementioned temporary exhibitions were affected by departmental changes. NS embarked upon a temporary position based at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, whilst AG became the Director of the Department of Public Services. She was to lead curatorial and design efforts on the next temporary exhibition examining a new - if related - aspect of the First World War. As had been done with ‘The Trench’ exhibition, this would be tied in with a televised production – only this time, rather than a historical documentary with a defined educative purpose, this would be a scripted dramatisation of the real life story of the well-known literary figure, Rudyard Kipling, and his only son John.⁸¹⁸ AG was particularly keen to draw upon the emotive power of the story, trying to find the balance between Rudyard’s love of Empire and a national figure, contrasted with the deeply personal loss of his son

⁸¹⁷ See Todman (2008; 435), who praised the exhibition as ‘an excellent example of good practice’ by virtue of its ‘variety of routes’, and that the online format allowed for the presentation of more objects than a physical exhibition space would have done.

⁸¹⁸ For link to exhibition webpage, which provided digitized online content relating to the major themes of the display, see http://admin.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/81/exported_html/ (Accessed 21/03/15). For exhibition content, see IWM Press Notice ‘My Boy Jack – Imperial War Museum, London, November 2007 – 24 February 2008’ (‘My Boy Jack’, Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin). The exhibition detailed the emotive story of how, having secured a fast track commission into the Irish Guards with the help of his father’s influence - in spite of having been turned down on three previous occasions, due to being medically unfit on account of severe short-sightedness - Lieutenant John Kipling was killed at the Battle of Loos in September 1915, aged 18, only forty days after arriving in France. His parents were devastated but remained hopeful that an extensive high-profile search through official and personal channels would help piece together John’s last movements (based on the fact that he had originally been reported wounded and missing, [See Page 8 of The Times, 7th October 1915, ‘Photo and Newspaper Research’, ‘My Boy Jack File’, Research, Technician’s Notes] Rudyard would go on to interview some twenty members of the Irish Guards [The National Archives, WO 339/53917]). They finally accepted his death in May 1919 following a letter from the War Office. Rudyard subsequently became a commissioner of the Imperial War Graves Commission, sourcing many of the biblical inscriptions used in their memorials. He also completed the Irish Guards Official Regimental History (1923) in memory of his son (IWM/DPB/KO1/983). These aspects gave the exhibition a strong focus on memorialisation and remembrance (See Exhibition Research Document and Showcase Captions, ‘My Boy Jack’, Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin). For photographs of the exhibition’s Press Call, see IWM/2007/072. Kate Clements acted as Personal and Project Assistant to AG during this exhibition, and I would like to express my gratitude to her for talking to me off the record about it.

'from which he was never to recover'.⁸¹⁹ Sourced from one of Rudyard's poems, the exhibition and the television programme were titled 'My Boy Jack'.⁸²⁰ External contacts of the production company, the Kipling Society, the University of Sussex Library, which held Rudyard's archival papers in its Special Collections, and the National Trust, which owned Batemans (Kipling's Sussex home from 1912) were contacted to source exhibitable material:⁸²¹

'The first part of the exhibition...focused on the dramatisation of the story and included a representation of a trench and the Kipling family home. This led on to a small, quiet gallery that was about the real story of Jack [John] Kipling told through photographs, manuscripts and exhibits. Visitors could look at either or both sections of the exhibition'.⁸²²

The exhibition was thus drawing on two previously employed and bankable ideas; the incorporation of a recreated trench and the splitting of the gallery space to cater for multiple visitor opinions. As had been an intention with 'AFDY', the subject was designed to appeal to younger visitors, through the section of the exhibition that focused on making the television dramatisation (featuring props such as John's pince-nez and Certificate of Mobilization, as well as production photographs and clapperboard).⁸²³ More importantly in this regard was the fact that Jack Kipling had

⁸¹⁹ Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. Two commemorative-style books were produced for the exhibition, titled "My Son John": Rudyard and John Kipling, A Family Album' (2007, IWM Copy Number: 08/2097, Shelf Mark: 22[=41]) and "My Boy Jack: Correspondence between Rudyard Kipling and John Kipling: Mary Postgate' (2007, IWM Copy Number: 08/2096, Shelf Mark: 23(=41)/3. With John growing up at boarding school, the affectionate correspondence between father and son raised both the value of expectation and patriotic duty (derived from Kipling's published work supporting the war effort) and duly the loss of a son as key messages explored within the exhibition (University of Sussex Library, Kipling Archive – Letters from RK to members of family).

⁸²⁰ 'My Boy Jack' originally started life in 1997 as a play written by David Haig (who played Rudyard in both the stage and TV version). The television production by ITV and Ecosse Films aired on Remembrance Day 2007. For detailed analysis of the programme, see Andrews (2011; 364-366)

⁸²¹ See 'My Boy Jack – Workshop & Construction File' (Held by IWM Exhibitions Department) for a full list of objects loaned by the National Trust and for specific correspondence between Fiona Reynolds (Director-General of the National Trust) and RC, 26/06/07, IWM 'My Boy Jack', Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin.

⁸²² Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. The free-entry exhibition was situated near the front of the Atrium, and thus was fairly small-scale. See 'My Boy Jack – Conversion Works/CDM/Threemet Tender' (Department of Exhibitions) for details of transforming office space into gallery area and 'My Boy Jack', Dressing – Master File; Exhibition Registrar's Master Dressing File (Department of Exhibitions). See also IWM/2007/072 for photographs of the completed exhibition.

⁸²³ See Email from Kate Clements to Hannah Warren, 'Email for Hannah Warren re 'My Boy Jack'', 17/10/07, 'Correspondence and Emails File', 'My Boy Jack File', Research, Technician's Notes. The exhibition displayed the costumes of John, Rudyard and Carrie Kipling from the television drama. As had been the case with 'AFDY', there was a necessity to not rely solely on the large amount of written material that drove the exhibition's storyline. By using replicated objects that were so crucial to the

been portrayed in the television production by the popular young actor Daniel Radcliffe.⁸²⁴

The inner exhibition area devoted to John's story was told 'in a pretty conventional though empathetic way' (See Figure 65).⁸²⁵ To illustrate the British offensive at the Battle of Loos, and the reasons for why it failed, rather than using historical text and graphics, objects were combined with short sound bites edited from the Museum's Sound Archive, to grant visitors personal insight into what had occurred. Audio handsets with selected extracts from veteran reminiscences' focused on the heavy casualties, the personal differences between those who were in command that contributed towards the failure of the offensive, and the fact that the use of poisonous gas by the British backfired, when the wind changed direction.⁸²⁶

emotive story that the exhibition was telling – such as the pince-nez – they became worthy substitutes for the absent 'real thing' in visitors' minds (one planning document recorded that the Museum needed to 'ensure we get spectacles' from the production company ['My Boy Jack' Planning Document, 'My Boy Jack – Workshop & Construction File', held by IWM Exhibitions Department]).

⁸²⁴ When it aired on ITV in November 2007, the television dramatisation had high viewing figures of just below six million. TC recalled interest in the exhibition from younger visitors as spawned by the televised production, which was also confirmed by the link to Daniel Radcliffe fan sites on the exhibition's webpage (See http://admin.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/81/exported_html/links.html, Accessed 22/03/15). Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14.

⁸²⁵ Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. See Figure 12 and also 'Showcase Captions' in IWM 'My Boy Jack', Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin.

⁸²⁶ See 'Script for Sound Document', 'My Boy Jack', Angela Godwin Black File I, held by IWM Exhibitions Department. A small selection of the official wartime photographs was also used to help illustrate the battle; see IWM Q17374, Q60742, Q49289, Q49236, Q56655 and Q28982 as examples referred to in 'My Boy Jack', Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin.

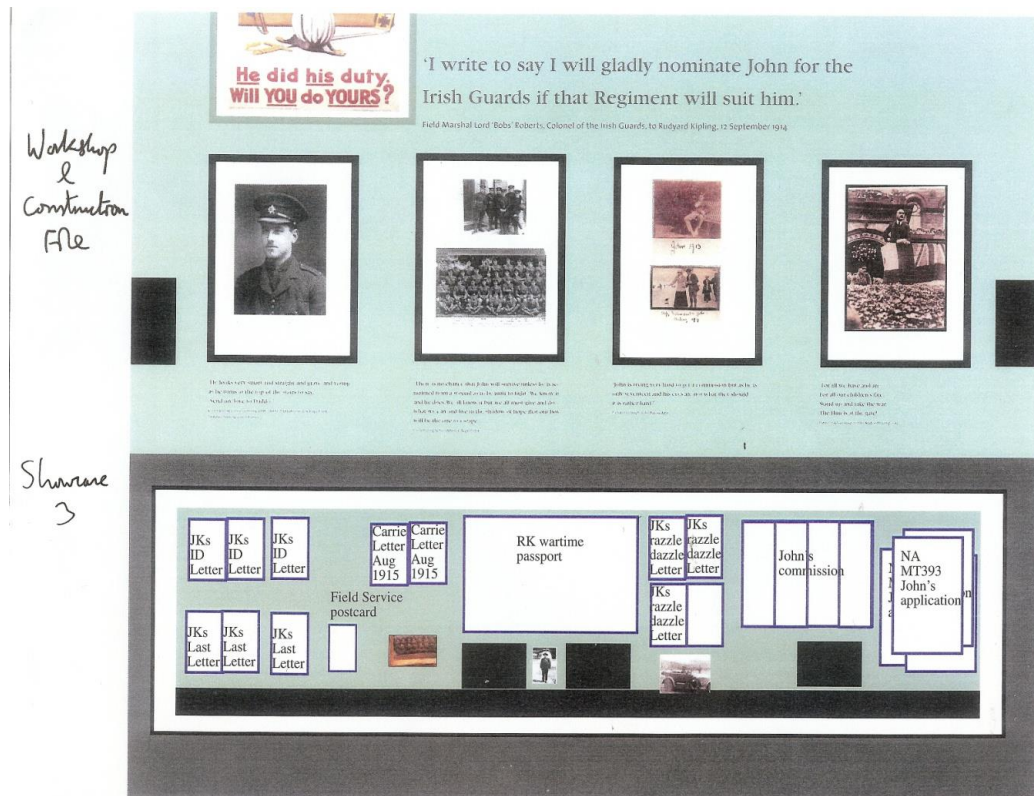


Figure 65 – ‘Showcase 3 Layout’

(My Boy Jack – Workshop & Construction File’, held by IWM Exhibitions Department)

6.7.2 – The Story Approach

The exhibition outline was unusual in detailing the very specific story of one individual – albeit the son of one of the most distinguished literary figures of the age – and the impact that this event had upon his family. One might define it as the ultimate ‘personal story’ approach, particularly in regard to its detail and drama; the opening section of the exhibition, prior to the outbreak of the War, paid attention to the rural idyll of John’s childhood and the Kiplings’ domestic life at Bateman’s, as shown by the display of private photographs depicting Rudyard in his study. Such a theme was not one typically found within a war museum. There was a heightened sense of telling a potent story of bereavement, and the pain that came with this.⁸²⁷

⁸²⁷ Able to capitalise on the high profile nature of the television dramatisation, the timing of the exhibition coincided with the traditional period of remembrance and the Museum put on several commemorative-infused events over this time. The display of the IWM’s Bugle (IWM EPH 3202, played by the 1st Battalion the Gordon Highlanders (1st Gordon’s) at the Battle of Loos) introduced remembrance as a key element of the display. This had been used to play the Last Post on Armistice

This message was conveyed through objects, such as Lutyens' model of the Cenotaph which had also featured in AG's earlier exhibitions on the theme of national remembrance. The art gallery-like white wall and bright light styling was equally similar to 'The First World War Remembered', and this exhibition continued the trait of outsourcing potential Museum involvement and expertise by relying upon the supply of objects not within the Museum's collections to supplement its own.⁸²⁸ Consultant expertise was sourced by the leading battlefield tour guides Tonie and Valmai Holt. AG knew them personally, recalling that they 'offered invaluable help and advice' on the exhibition.⁸²⁹ The Holts had written a book on the subject of Kipling and his son, focusing primarily on the disputed identification of the latter's body within a Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery, which was updated and republished on the back on the TV dramatisation.⁸³⁰ As it happened,

Day within the Museum during the 1920s and 1930s. The display of John Kipling's Next of Kin Memorial Scroll (University of Sussex Library, Kipling Archive, Papers of JC Personalia [32/3]) additionally acted as a memento mori for visitors ('Initial Exhibition Outline – My Boy Jack', 'My Boy Jack', Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin).

⁸²⁸ By combining its own material (such as W Haines' letter of 26th September 1915 confirming John Kipling's death [IWM/DOCS/98/2/1], a badge for the 2nd Battalion, Irish Guards [IWM/INS/8023] and embroidery relating to the regiment [IWM/EPH/8741]) with material held within the Public Records Office/The National Archives (see extracts regarding John's last known location from Sgt Kinnelly and Letter from Lt Col L Butler [2nd Battalion, Irish Guards] to Rudyard Kipling, 02/10/1915; WO339/53917), and material from external institutions, the Museum designed the exhibition as a complete story. It was achieved through the display of John Kipling's birth certificate, his commission (University of Sussex Library, Kipling Archive, Papers of JK Personalia [32/3]) and last letter home (University of Sussex Library, Kipling Archive, Papers of John Kipling Correspondence [32/2]), followed by Rudyard's letter to the War Office asking for his son's personal effects (Copy of Letter from Rudyard Kipling to the War Office, 14/12/1915, within 'My Boy Jack', Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin), a letter of sympathy from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (07/10/1915; University of Sussex Library, Kipling Archive, Corresp. a.ii. [19/15]) and finally a letter of condolence from the King and Queen (Letter from Keeper of the Privy Purse, Privy Purse Office, Buckingham Palace to Rudyard Kipling, 04/07/1919, University of Sussex Library, Kipling Archive, Corresp. a.ii. [19/15]). This was crucial in driving the exhibition's emotional pull, because it was able to display the wholeness of John's short life.

⁸²⁹ Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. The Holts' were impressed with AG's grasp and sensitivity towards the subject - see their comments on a version of the Initial Exhibition Brief, in 'My Boy Jack', Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin'.

⁸³⁰ Holt and Holt (2008). This overviewed similar themes – John's life, his parents' search for his body, the difficulty of identifying and burying the War Dead before an examination of disputed evidence. This latter category acted as a post-script to the exhibition; the Holts' research had disputed the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's 1992 claim that the remains of an unknown British officer had been identified as John, though he had been buried as an 'unknown Irish Lieutenant' in St Mary's Dressing Station Cemetery at Lone Tree, near Loos. The Holts felt that the identification arguments would be of interest to visitors in investigating the evidence for themselves, wanting to poll their opinions on the matter (See Email from Tonie Holt to Angela Godwin, 26/06/07, 'My Boy Jack', Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin). The element of mystery concurrently gave the exhibition a sense of contemporary relevance, because it spoke to debates regarding the process of identifying and 'reclaiming' the War Dead. Concurrently this demonstrated that the Museum was happy to accept disputed and multiple interpretations of historical events, sitting in contrast to the historical definitiveness of its earlier exhibitions.

IWM historical expertise was called upon, but almost in reverse; prior to the exhibition taking place, TC had provided input by reviewing and correcting the mistakes within the television script.⁸³¹ He would subsequently polish the exhibition text to ensure that its consistency and factual accuracy (See Figure 66).

CHILDHOOD

Mainline

'My son John'

John, born on 17 August 1897, was the much-loved only son of Rudyard Kipling, one of the most distinguished and widely-read authors of the age. Father and son enjoyed an unusually close and affectionate relationship for a wealthy family at the turn of the century.

Tragedy struck the Kiplings in 1899 when John's oldest sister Josephine died of influenza, a disease which nearly proved fatal for Rudyard too. In 1902, the family moved to the Jacobean house, Bateman's, in East Sussex. It was here and in the rambling grounds and surrounding countryside that John and his remaining sister, Elsie, spent a happy childhood and provided the inspiration for several of their father's stories. Rudyard and his wife Carrie were to live in Bateman's for the remainder of their lives.

John initially attended St Aubyn's preparatory school in nearby Rottingdean before being sent to Wellington College in 1911. His academic record was undistinguished but he showed some success on the sports field. His career, however, had been mapped out from birth – his destiny lay in the Navy or the Army. But much to John and Rudyard's disappointment, he failed his medical examination for a Commission because of his severe short sight, a condition which afflicted father and son alike.

[208]

Handwritten notes:

- "disorder" rather than "disease" - OUP Dict DEFINITION.
- Enjoyed
- a career
- OR ELDEST?
- necc? ✓
- which? ✓
- bit?
- Shortsightedness?

Figure 66 – Example of Terry Charman Editing Draft Exhibition Text

(Mainline Captions, 'My Boy Jack' Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin)

⁸³¹ In interview, TC gave various examples of historical errors within the script that he duly corrected; these included steel helmets featuring at the Battle of Loos in September 1915, and Rudyard Kipling speaking to the boys at John's school on the day when war was declared, when this actually took place during the school holidays. Rudyard's support of the War effort in recruiting soldiers in speeches and published articles was emphasized, so as to make the exhibition's conclusion all the more poignant (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14).

6.8 – ‘In Memoriam’

6.8.1 – The Passing of Living Memory

The theme of remembrance was coming into increasing importance, as the national spotlight turned onto the increasingly few number of First World War veterans. The Museum had taken it upon itself to orchestrate a commemorative exhibition dealing the theme of First World War remembrance, to be titled ‘In Memoriam’.⁸³² This anniversary inspired and high-profile exhibition was launched on the 29th September 2008, in the presence of serving Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and High Commissioners from the Commonwealth.⁸³³ It was to be the last exhibition that the IWM produced during which there were First World War veterans alive.⁸³⁴ It was thus designed to summarize the key issues that this moment of slipping beyond living memory would entail:

‘Every anniversary has its own importance, but sadly this is likely to have been the last major anniversary where survivors will still be alive to remind us of their part in what was thought to be ‘the war to end all wars’. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the First World War not only in its historical context, but also in the world in which we live today’.⁸³⁵

⁸³² See <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/remembrance/museum-remembers.html>; <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/remembrance/remembrance-weekend-events.html> (Accessed 27/03/15) for a listing of the related Remembrance events that the Museum hosted over the ninetieth anniversary commemorations of the signing of the Armistice. It included gallery talks, lectures, and film screenings to coincide with the exhibition. Pursuing this idea of the Museum as a site of remembrance was important for its future, as it was recognising that the Museum would attain a reputation of being a key site connected with public understanding of the First World War, as they began to look ahead towards commemorating the conflict’s centenary in 2014. Thus rhetoric relating back to the Museum’s founding principle of being a ‘lasting memorial of common effort and common sacrifice’ was emphasized (<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/founding/2020.html> - Accessed 27/03/15).

⁸³³ See RC’s Version of ‘Launch of In Memoriam: Remembering the Great War’, Monday 29 September 2008, IWM/EN4/15/D/62. For link to exhibition webpage, see <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/exhibitions/in-memoriam.html> (Accessed 22/03/15). This free and relatively large exhibition ran from 30 September 2008 to 6 September 2009, and was the same size as ‘Anthem For Doomed Youth’. A tie-in publication was written by Robin Cross (2008), with a forward by Ian Hislop and introduction by Malcolm Brown. The exhibition would be named ‘Joint Winner for the Best Touring or Temporary Exhibition’ at the Museum and Heritage Awards for Excellence in 2009 (See IWM Annual Report 2008-2009).

⁸³⁴ Henry Allingham, Harry Patch and Bill Stone had attended the exhibition’s opening, but all three passed away during its existence. Photographs and brief testimonies from them welcomed visitors to the exhibition, highlighting their role as witnesses to these far-removed events.

⁸³⁵ Exhibition website; <http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/collections/collections.html> (Accessed 16/03/15).

6.8.2 – A Commemorative Exhibition

The move to a broad contemporary commentary through a socio-cultural historical approach was now at its highest ebb. This point would also mark the end of two respective IWM eras – Robert Crawford’s directorship, and the retirement of Angela Godwin.⁸³⁶ Nearly ten years after Peter Simkins, Angela Godwin was to be granted the same privilege of curating her own exhibition immediately prior to her retirement.



Figure 67 – *The Entrance to ‘In Memoriam’*. *The steel helmet in the bottom left of the image had been excavated from France earlier in the summer of 2008*
(©IWM/08/051/006)

‘In Memoriam’ operated on AG’s concept that she had first established within ‘The First World War Remembered’ – that of powerful individual stories.⁸³⁷ The exhibition featured around ninety of these, which was a coincidental rather than deliberate move in taking place during the ninetieth anniversary commemorations for the Armistice. Each story required a photograph of the individual (naturally ruling out many), and an ‘interesting’ personal object or document ‘small enough to be accommodated in tiny showcases...everything was as small and intimate as we could make it’.⁸³⁸ On the gallery walls, large contextual images of scenes on the

⁸³⁶ Though the exhibition would be completed under Robert Crawford’s directorship, Diane Lees became the first female Director-General of the Museum, beginning her role on the 1st October 2008, just after ‘In Memoriam’ opened. AG retired on 30 September 2009.

⁸³⁷ One reviewer defined this as a ‘cast of characters, ranging from soldiers, survivors, civilians, conscientious objectors, and prisoners of war to assassins, generals, poets, painters and flying aces’ (Moss, 2008).

⁸³⁸ Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 16/06/14. The exhibition featured many objects and documents from the Museum’s own collections. An attempt was made to borrow the

Western Front were accompanied by statistics, to provide some contextual themes. Even so, the intent remained to concentrate upon covering the 'breadth of personal experience'. In AG's mind, this exhibition was 'totally different' to the permanent galleries in the building's basement.⁸³⁹ She considered that the design of these had been 'to tell the story of the war under various broad themes' (with these illustrated through the inclusion of personal objects), whereas 'In Memoriam' aimed to cover human narratives chronologically, 'individual stories in their own right... [to give] a sense of the war as a whole'.⁸⁴⁰ The philosophy that 'the visitor was not required to follow things one by one but could pick and choose and reflect at will' seemed to fly in the face of the methodical layering of built-up information adopted within traditional historical galleries. Instead the gallery space was given a reflective tone, delivered through angled plinths with showcases and drawers that listed the name of each individual. Many objects were permeated with a sense of loss amongst the heavy use of white walls and showcases lit subtly – 'almost like candlelight' - to enhance the sense of intimacy and poignancy (See background of Figure 68).⁸⁴¹

uniform won by Archduke Franz Ferdinand at the moment of his assassination in Sarajevo in June 1914, which was housed at the Military History Museum in Vienna. Though this was not possible, its Director offered substitute loans of one of the pistols carried by one of the Archduke's assassins and a piece of a bomb-damaged car-window (See Letter from RC to Dr Ortner [CC'd to AG], 24/05/07, and Email Message from Dr Ortner [Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Wien, Austria] to RC, IWM/EN4/15/D/62). Additionally Wilfred Owen's cigarette case was displayed amongst loaned items acquired from other institutions. Paintings by War artists Nevinson, Wyndham Lewis, the Nash brothers also featured, which made use of the approach of 'Anthem For Doomed Youth' to explore their work and their lives as inter-related entities.

⁸³⁹ See Appendix X for Exhibition Planning Document.

⁸⁴⁰ Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14. 'In Memoriam' made extensive use of material on the theme of contributions from the Empire.

⁸⁴¹ AG referred to the subliminal influence of the New Zealand War Memorial at Hyde Park (Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14). The use of 'votive candles' style lighting around the 'little shrines' of the display cases to communicate an 'air of elegiac reverence' was also commented on by an online reviewer (See Simmers, 2008).



Figure 68 - Angela Godwin escorts Prime Minister Gordon Brown around 'In Memoriam', with out-going Director-General Sir Robert Crawford on the far left
(©IWM/08/050/052)

6.8.3 – A Point of Culmination?

Not all staff recalled the exhibition's making as being clear cut or smooth flowing. TC was involved in the exhibition by researching information for the statistics. He suggested that AG's approach to incorporating specialist knowledge from internal staff had remained somewhat strained, and that input from some departments was under duress. The issue was that the inherent challenge for any historical museum was to obtain a point of harmony between the personal story approach with a comprehensive factual narrative that accounts for the variety of experiences needed to steer a First World War exhibition. Even though it was accepted that the numbers involved in the conflict were too incomprehensible to grasp, statistics were used to shock visitors, to add a layer of meaning to the 'personal stories of loss and suffering and fear as well as love, hope and adventure'. It was a point of culmination of the continuum of cultural memory-informed exhibitions, as NS recognised:

'...it's a bit like one of these ones where, it's a bit like the Director's Cut, Angela got to do 'First World War Remembered' again, because it was like a massive version of 'First World War Remembered', with a little bit of 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' rolled in...if we accept that the '1918 – Year of Decision' is

Pete Simkins' swansong, which he wraps up all of the historical research, the story-telling, handling of objects that he's built up over a lifetime's career at the Imperial War Museum, 'In Memoriam' is the same for Angela, she brings together all of this intuitive response, to do with colour manipulation, individual words, how you fold the jacket, all of this stuff, which is exactly what you've said, didn't exist in '1918 – Year of Decision', all of this to do with the feel and the look and the colour and the pacing, all of these things which made the exhibition such a phenomenally successful visit, small pieces of film, poignancy, intuition, remembrance, that's what it was about, it's the ultimate small story exhibition'.⁸⁴²

NS distinguished the desired viewers for this exhibition as being a 'fairly sophisticated, cultural audience' and that it was unequivocally not one for military historians:

'...the people who followed Pete Simkins, Gary Sheffield, in what they were developing and learning and discussing coming out of Birmingham [Centre for First World War Studies], would not have been engaged by 'In Memoriam', but the Museum was no longer bothered about that, [because] that wasn't seen as their job'.⁸⁴³

'In Memoriam' thus represented a pinnacle in how the Museum had interpreted the First World War within its temporary exhibitions. Historical integrity was not a primary driver, as evidenced by the inclusion of a quote by the 1960s poet, Vernon Scamell, whose melancholic words such as 'Over by Christmas' gave visitors an ironic interpretation for some of the section titles.⁸⁴⁴ Its mantra had been to focus on 'those

⁸⁴² Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. The concept and purpose of poignancy within a First World War context is analysed by Harvey (Forthcoming).

⁸⁴³ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. NS took issue with this belief that the Museum had moved away from being a site of military history, stating that '...it irritates me intensely to hear people say...that IWM is not a museum of military history, it is a museum of military history, but it's a museum of military and social history, and there's no reason why that one should be cast aside of the other' (emphasis original). He criticized the fact that the Museum was still expected to retain 'a bedrock knowledge of the operational, strategic and tactical reasons why the [World] Wars evolved as they did', but that no emphasis was placed upon this from within the Museum, and 'certainly not factored into the exhibitions'. This idea can be extended onto the 2014 galleries, and the argument about the place of military history within the IWM's future galleries is explored further in Chapter 7.

⁸⁴⁴ George Simmers, 12/10/08, 'In Memoriam' at the IWM', <https://greatwarfiction.wordpress.com/2008/10/12/in-memoriam-at-the-iwm/> (Accessed 27/03/15). The article concludes that the exhibition interpretation was too strong in depicting those within it in a 'tragic

individual experiences...set against the background of great events way beyond their control'.⁸⁴⁵ AG had realised that personal links to the conflict were to become increasingly important in how individuals, and thus visitors, would relate to this subject matter. Books by Richard Van Emden and Max Arthur combined selected documentary material with oral history and a highly readable narrative, which by this time had proved to be a successful and popular formula within the public arena.⁸⁴⁶ Moreover the emphasis being placed on the conflict's commemorative nature not only fed into its wider national commemoration, it served to reaffirm the Museum's purpose and relevance to a new generation of visitors, as formulated through cultural performances (See Figure 70). The historian Jay Winter contrasted its approach with that of the permanent galleries on A Floor, surveying 'Its design is much more international than the story told in the older galleries, and much more focused on suffering and loss'.⁸⁴⁷ 'In Memoriam' was a physical iteration of Malcolm Brown's statement within the exhibition's book that 'this is a war we have not forgotten, and will not forget...it must be remembered'.⁸⁴⁸ Visitor reaction was popular, again with a renewed emphasis on the emotional experience of witnessing and physically coming into contact with First World War objects.

irony that insists that they were merely victims'. This buys into a broader trend of identifying 'with historical tragedy...to gain a sense of moral entitlement from fashionable victimological identities' (Hoffman, 2010; 407). See also Novick (1999); Wilson (2013; 70, 85).

⁸⁴⁵ Brown, M 'Introduction – A War of Lasting Memory' in Cross (2008; 8). The book very much encompassed this new style of accentuating the importance of individual experience within a historical narrative.

⁸⁴⁶ PJS singles out the works of Martin Middlebrook and Malcolm Brown as successfully avoiding what he terms the 'copytypist' approach to history – whereby they engage with the source material 'whilst *still* mining the rich seams of private papers and personal experience accounts housed at the IWM and in other archives' (Simkins, 2014; 4, emphasis original).

⁸⁴⁷ Winter (2012; 158).

⁸⁴⁸ Brown (2008; 14-15).

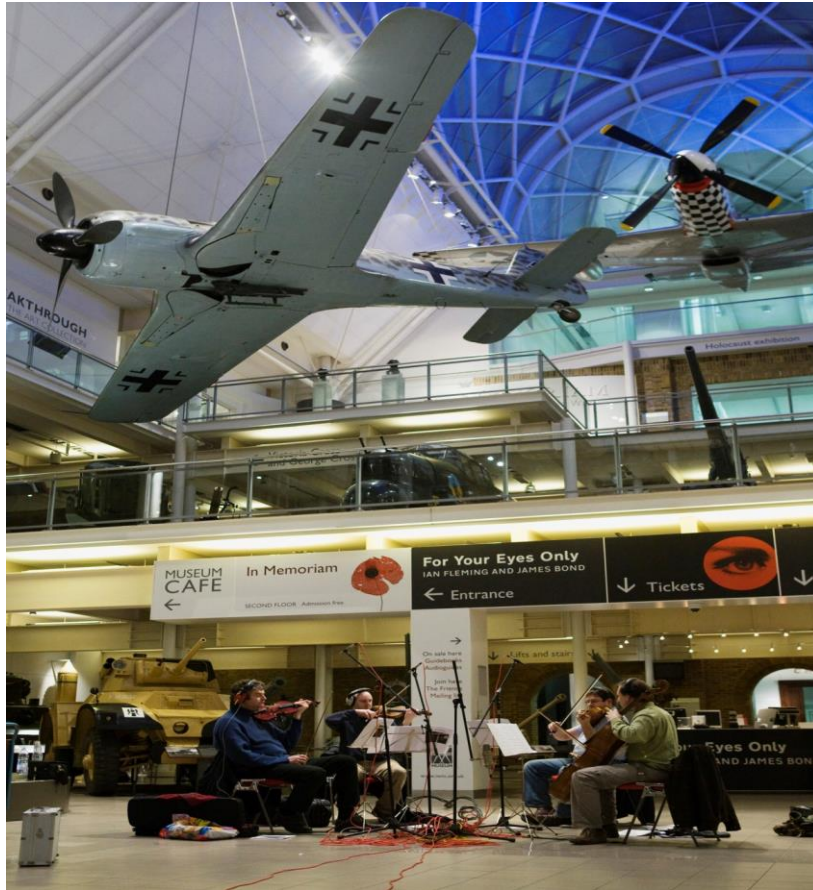


Figure 69 – A Musical Performance taking place in the Museum’s Atrium’
(©IWM/09/02/041)

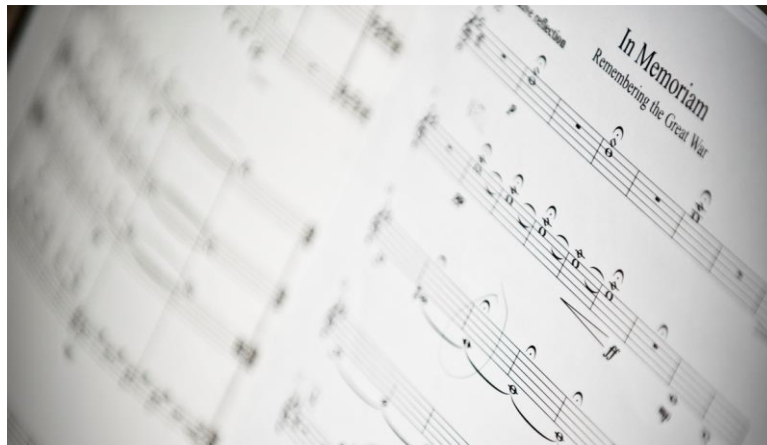


Figure 70 – A Piece of Music that accompanied the ‘In Memoriam’ Exhibition
(©IWM/09/044/004)

6.9 – Reflecting on the Dual Approaches to Displaying the First World War

6.9.1 – The Decline of Military History

In looking back retrospectively over this period, the dual-running exhibitions of 1997-1998 could be pinpointed as the root of the split in approaches to displaying the First World War within temporary exhibitions. What NS defined as ‘the hardcore history...the operational based, tactical reasons for certain things occurring on the battlefield’ had been set against an alternative interpretation of the ‘much wider, cultural, emotional response’ to the conflict, which proved very difficult to reconcile.⁸⁴⁹ By the time of ‘In Memoriam’, this interpretational strategy had reached a peak in terms of how the Museum displayed the First World War, which exaggerated the increasingly out-dated nature of the permanent galleries on A-Floor.⁸⁵⁰ The period had further witnessed a big shift in the Museum’s attempted engagement platform.⁸⁵¹ AG promoted this view, as she recognised the fact that the Museum had needed to adapt in order to retain its appeal to new audiences, and oversaw the development and delivery of the ‘personal experience of war’ mantra, under the watch of Director-General Robert Crawford. The primary objective enclosed within this had been to ‘increase the visibility of the Museum’, which it did through generating media interest, attracting new audiences and interacting with veterans.⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁸⁵⁰ The theme of establishing personal links to the conflict was subsequently given more emphasis within the First World War permanent galleries; on the suggestion of PRC, the touch-screen databases containing information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that had been part of ‘TFWWR’ were latterly installed into the ‘Poets and Painters’ section of these displays (Internal Memorandum from PRC to RC, ‘Commonwealth War Graves Commission First World War database’, 16/12/98, IWM/EN4/15/D/42).

⁸⁵¹ NS related this to an IWM audience evaluation report in 2011, which ‘confirmed that the trend had moved’ away from military history towards AG’s more empathetic understanding of the conflict. He observed that most ordinary visitors to the Museum today ‘would be lost in ‘1918 – Year of Decision’’ (Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14).

⁸⁵² Email Interview between AG and JW, conducted on 25/06/14.



Figure 71 – *First World War veterans assemble in the IWM Atrium, 2 May 1998. With ages ranging from 94 to 106, the former soldiers of various regiments came to view the new exhibition ‘1918 – Year of Decision’ (©IWM/98/29/15)*

Veterans were a vital factor in determining the Museum’s new approach to its temporary exhibitions, because of the weight given to their individual experiences (See Figures 71 and 72). Figure 71 shows a group of veterans, with the photograph’s caption specifically emphasizing that the veterans were coming to examine the contents of the exhibition. Four years later, in November 2002, Max Arthur’s *Forgotten Voices of the Great War* book was launched at the Museum in the presence of four First World War veterans.⁸⁵³ The transition from a small group of elderly men interested in seeing the depiction of events in which they were involved to being feted figures as a part of a celebrity culture was slowly taking place – helping to create the notion that vivid individual testimony would help to shed new light on great historical events.⁸⁵⁴ This status grew and grew as their numbers

⁸⁵³ Arthur (2002). See IWM/EVE/2002/040 for Poster for Book Launch for what was labelled ‘A remarkable, landmark history’. It was based on 1970s interviews held within the IWM’s Sound Archive. IWM/02/58 contains photographs of actress Alison Steadman with the veterans. The four veterans were;

‘Arthur ‘Smiler’ Marshall (105 years old) was in the Essex Yeomanry & Machine Gun Corp. He was the last cavalryman to draw a sword in battle.

Doug Roberts (102) served in the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) on the Somme and rejoined the army after the war. He saw fierce action in the ‘Big Push’ in March 1918.

Fred Bunday (101) served in the Royal Navy in destroyers supplying ammunition for Gallipoli.

Bert Williams (104) was a signaller with the Royal West Surreys (The Battersea Battalion) and served in the terrible actions of Passchendaele’.

⁸⁵⁴ Indeed, the actor Stephen Fry added his own endorsement to the collection, suggesting in a message to Max Arthur that the Museum should consider a multimedia exhibition involving this

declined, and by the time of 'In Memoriam', NS expressed his uneasiness about how the Museum risked exploiting them:

'...by 1998, they'd become a kind of celebrity add-on...the cult of the veteran...[people] were just saying isn't it amazing, he was in the First World War, which is a very shallow response really...it's just a funny, strange late twentieth century, twenty first century way of treating people...I think it reflects this enormous hold on society as a whole that celebrity culture has, and they've just become another element of [that], rather than a source of enlightenment and understanding'.⁸⁵⁵



Figure 72 – Veteran Henry Allingham at the 'My Boy Jack' Exhibition Launch,

5 November 2007 (©IWM/07/072/014)

material and if that did not work, then 'surely Radio Four would leap at it' (Email from Stephen Fry to Max Arthur, 'WWI testaments', 17/10/02, IWM/EVE/2002/040).

⁸⁵⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. NS's focus was on the shallowness of the public response and the making of them into celebrities rather than recipients of respect. This was based on his understanding gained from ringing up veterans who had been at Colditz and asking them to corroborate details about the equipment used during their escape attempt, for the 'Great Escapes' temporary exhibition (Oct 2004 – Sept 2006). Thus he saw their value as being able to provide detail and give authenticity to more top level understandings.

6.10 – Conclusion: Negotiating the Tensions between History and Memory in Producing Temporary Exhibitions

Over the course of the chapter, I have argued that this ten year period witnessed an evolution of the Museum in how it adopted a new style and approach to its temporary exhibitions dealing with the First World War. This recorded a turn away from the reliance of academic-style military history to telling the story of the conflict through the use of emotive objects to convey personal experience. In 1997-1998, the Museum had worked these two approaches in tandem; ‘The First World War Remembered’ portrayed the conflict as a ‘poignant, sad, reflective type of episode in the nation’s history’, whilst adjacent to this, ‘1918 – Year of Decision’ exhibition ‘was actually saying ‘Got it sorted’, we figured it out, we won the day’.⁸⁵⁶ Presenting these two strands together was an unprecedented idea, with good intentions, but the question was whether they could sit side by side long-term. Over the course of this period between 1998 and 2008, it became clear that the Museum was bearing witness to ‘the fairly significant decline, in significance and importance, of operational military history’, and the loss of the skill to deliver an exhibition primarily through the distillation of such specialist knowledge.⁸⁵⁷ NS reflected upon experiencing this firsthand, particularly in light of the fact that he had taken on PJS’ former role as Head of R&I:

‘...[military history] is, it’s felt to be too hard, too boring, too dry for the public, and therefore it’s not encouraged, it’s not sponsored in almost any capacity other than a private capacity, and almost all of the operational research that I’ve done in thirty years has been outside of the Museum, the Museum [has] required me to do very little direct operational research, to understand the mechanics of the battle, how different divisions commanded, operated, what the reasons for that might actually be, what the command and control

⁸⁵⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. Television companies have also had to deal with the same split in approaches requiring different styles to meet the needs of two different audience groups; ‘...you see a lot in the media, History Channel, you might some documentaries with computer graphics and maps moving and arrows going in different directions, and on other sides, you’ll get people talking poetry and various different things’ (Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14).

⁸⁵⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

decisions were, why these things went along, because the Museum doesn't tend to feature that anymore'.⁸⁵⁸

Even those exhibitions such as 'The Trench' and 'The Somme' were combined approaches, meaning that '1918 – Year of Decision' was 'pretty much the last time it was done that way'.⁸⁵⁹ Once NS had taken over the role as Head of Research and Information, he recognised that 'it was certainly not required from me to repeat' what had been done under PJS.⁸⁶⁰ He found himself in a position whereby he could contribute to either approach – having been a member of the 'Friday Club' but also exercising his interest in personal stories through 'The First World War Remembered' – but his time in R&I would see few purely military history exhibitions being completed. Referring to the 'Voices from Korea' exhibition in 2000, he was conscious that military history was being viewed differently from within the Museum:

'...[it] was seen by Angela and Penny, to a certain extent, as a military history exhibition for the lads, and it was left to R&I, and we just got on with it, and Laurie Milner did a fabulous job, it was really good, but it was one that wasn't about intuitive emotional responses, it was based upon exhibit explanations'.

⁸⁶¹

The Museum was taking up a position whereby its staff were not expected to be able to provide a high degree of specialist knowledge, because there was not a wider desire for it outside of the Museum, with NS remarking '...almost nobody will come and ask you for it'.⁸⁶² Yet he knew from his own experience that the Museum could not afford to rid itself of it:

⁸⁵⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. In contrast, PJS had been brought up within an environment that had dealt primarily with this form of currency, and had to gradually accept that it was losing its public appeal (in comparison to the Exhibition Guides for the Special Photographic Exhibitions as documented in Chapter 4). Equally it could be said that the revisionist school of thought, as led by military historians, has never been stronger. In particular, it has strengthened significantly within the academic sector, with recent outputs doing their utmost to straddle the divide between the academy and a more accepting and interested public (See Jones, 2013; 862-5).

⁸⁵⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁸⁶⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁸⁶¹ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14. TC described NS as being 'very much in the front line with Angela...I sensed when he used to come back, there was a great deal of frustration' (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14).

⁸⁶² Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

‘...every now and then, you will get asked a question, where it’s very handy that you know it, and so it’s a funny thing...certainly within the Exhibitions programme, it’s not featured and not required, and yet at the same time, it’s a regular fact that people will suddenly turn around and say ‘ooh, why did they do this? What happened there?’...it’s not quite the same as curatorial knowledge, why a widget worked, why they wore that, it’s actually to do with historical understanding of the mechanics of the battle, and the way it went’.

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Instead, that expertise, knowledge and new research would find itself relocating with PJS to be pursued by himself and others at the burgeoning Birmingham Centre of First World War Studies. This had come about from an over-arching issue regarding how specific IWM staff expertise was exercised within an exhibition format. As time went on, it was somewhat ironic that these members of staff were being recognised more for their knowledge outside of the Museum, than they were within its structure.⁸⁶⁴ By the time of its Annual Report in 2008-2009, the Museum had consciously distanced itself from being a military museum when it defined itself as concentrating on ‘...people’s experience of war and its impact on society...to enable people to understand human behaviour through the lens of war and conflict’.⁸⁶⁵ Such efforts were partly in an attempt to reinvent itself, as well as to help continue refuting the common perception laid at its door that it was guilty of glorifying conflict. Instead the Museum was witnessing a higher number of visitors being more contented with its new mantra, meaning there was a favourable visitor reaction to encountering emotion, and being moved by engrossing, highly personal accounts that often underlined a notion of loss. On occasion the Museum actively capitalised upon the strength of its collections, and the fact that these were imbued with the weight of actual experience, to re-determine the First World War as a newly accessible story for its audiences. As it began to turn its attention to redesigning the permanent galleries, it was a time to reassess which of these influences would hold sway over the philosophies and approaches to be adopted for the newly planned and high-profile First World War galleries which would be representing the conflict at its

⁸⁶³ Recorded Interview between JW and NS, conducted on 15/05/14.

⁸⁶⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14.

⁸⁶⁵ Page 9 of IWM Annual Report 2008-2009, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/247825/0039.pdf (Accessed 27/03/15).

Centenary. Where would the technique of using eloquent quotes to lead text panels, and the strong emphasis on personal stories, feature within all of this, now that AG had departed? Reinforcing what has already been outlined, the Museum had established a newfound approach in delivering its remit through temporary exhibitions - the question was now how this would affect its exhibition approach in future. The Museum knew that it would be taking on this role of heightened responsibility – going beyond its existing requirements of acting as a repository of objects and a centre for military and socio-cultural history. It would now be taking on the opportunity to lead the nation’s commemorative efforts over the course of the four year Centenary period.

Chapter 7 –
‘Curators – Your Exhibition Needs You!’
The Creation of the 2014 First World War Galleries
at IWM London

7.1 – IWM London Plans for the First World War Centenary

7.1.1 – Delving into the Cleaning Cupboard

Issues of inclusion and exclusion ‘...can be expressive of museums’ political power as mediators’.⁸⁶⁶ Whilst the Imperial War Museum’s (IWM) value lies in its role as a displayer of artefacts, my intention throughout this thesis so far has been to examine the institutional frames that govern its displays of the First World War – what goes in, what gets left out and the reasons for why this is. This chapter now builds upon the issues raised in the preceding chapters to investigate the reasons for the choices taken and decisions made by the group of museum professionals and designers that, in 2014, created new galleries of the First World War at IWM London. In considering this micro-culture, I draw upon Roppola’s interwoven system of ‘Framing’, ‘Resonating’, ‘Channelling’ and ‘Broadening’, to illuminate some of the procedures and factors that guided the creation of these galleries.⁸⁶⁷ This prioritises two interrelated issues; that visitors seek contemplative engagement with museum displays, and that ‘...meaning arises through the interplay between the material and the discursive’, which should form ‘...an essential understanding for those charged with making exhibitions’.⁸⁶⁸ In so doing, I seek to uncover the ‘...underlying value systems’ encoded within its institutional narratives and ‘...to look at what museums don’t say – what is implicit – as well as what they do say – what is explicit’.⁸⁶⁹ This chapter accordingly acts as an examination of a contemporary institution through

⁸⁶⁶ Roppola (2012; 261).

⁸⁶⁷ See Roppola (2012; 266) for a diagram of the interaction between these within the transactional space between visitors and the exhibition environment. Describing their relationship within the contemporary context, she records that ‘...visitors perceive museums and exhibits through particular frames, a sense of resonance draws them to specific elements in exhibition environments, they channel physically and conceptually through the museum and the derivation of substantive meanings act to broaden visitors’ (2012; 265).

⁸⁶⁸ Roppola (2012; 262).

⁸⁶⁹ Marstine (2006; 5).

having studied the experiences of those museum practitioners who were quite literally makers of meaning. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have already shown that those who bring exhibitions to fruition often remain behind the scenes, out of view of the visiting public. Macdonald has summarised that ‘...the assumptions, rationales, compromises and accidents that lead to a finished exhibition are generally hidden from public view: they are tidied away along with the cleaning equipment’.⁸⁷⁰ This chapter extends this metaphor through its intent to shed light into the cupboard containing this cleaning equipment - or, as Figure 73 shows, to unlock the normally inaccessible showcases.



Figure 73 – Opening Up the Showcase

(Sourced by Author)

⁸⁷⁰ Macdonald (1998; 2).

7.1.2 – Changes to the Museum’s Philosophy

As was outlined more broadly in Section 2.4, Roppola has advocated that ‘Design is, by definition, intentional’ and that museums are ‘...fabricated stages, performance spaces for pedagogical and political purposes’.⁸⁷¹ Producing galleries is, therefore, an act of negotiating and empowering a constrained, finite space that has to be managed and made readable for public consumption. Such acts can never be definitive, and in 2010, the IWM sought to begin the process of re-negotiating its remit once again.⁸⁷² That the Museum would be dealing with very different audiences had been brought sharply into focus by the passing of the last British First World War veterans in 2009 – a group who had formed a constituent part of the institution’s existence. By this time, the new Director-General, Diane Lees, was placing a second major revamp of the Museum at the top of her agenda.⁸⁷³ A restructuring programme titled ‘Fit for the Future’ was set in motion; re-assessing the organisation’s purpose, what it wanted to achieve through its interpretation and how this would be delivered.⁸⁷⁴ Situated within a desire to be more up-front, the IWM was articulating ‘...its agendas, strategies, and decision-making processes’ and re-evaluating them in future.⁸⁷⁵ The institution’s purpose was redefined as being ‘To enrich people’s

⁸⁷¹ Roppola (2012; 11-12).

⁸⁷² See Section 2.1.

⁸⁷³ A master-planning exercise to rationalise and improve the building was launched in 2010. Its primary intention was to deliver an improved visitor experience for the Museum’s core audience groups. See Fleming (2012) and Janes (2007) on implementing organisational change within museums, in addition to Janes’ case study of Glenbow in Canada (2013), See also Sandell & Janes (2007) more broadly for further comment on institutional management and marketing.

⁸⁷⁴ Since IWM wanted to continue building up its public profile, as well as increase its audiences and market share, much emphasis was placed upon reasserting its interpretational and learning strategies. The institution collectively re-assessed its purpose through exercises such as their ‘Big Framework’ workshop, conducted in August 2009, and ‘Big Think’ workshops gathering together ideas and contributions from IWM staff within February-March 2010 (See ‘Interpretation Handbook v.2’, 10/05/10; ‘Foundation Document, April 2009’; ‘Human Impact – Why and How We Should Use Personal Experience in our Interpretation’, July 2010 and ‘Towards a Big Narrative’, April 2011, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). Extensive research into the profile and motivations of the Museum’s visitors had already been conducted by an external firm (MHM) in 2008 and 2009. This had defined audiences into different segments, such as ‘Self-Developers’, ‘Sightseers’, ‘Learning Families’, ‘Experts’ and ‘Empathisers’ (See ‘Interpretation Handbook v1 May 2010’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). The ‘Fit for the Future’ programme took place against a backdrop of the global economic crisis of the late 2000s, meaning that departments were re-organised, and staff numbers reduced (LC cited that the IWM Photo Archive was reduced from eight members of staff to three full-time members, which put significant strain on resources; recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12).

⁸⁷⁵ Marstine (2006; 19).

understanding of the causes, conduct and consequences of modern war and conflict'.⁸⁷⁶

Out of these ideological shifts, IWM now positioned itself as 'the world's leading museum on conflict and its impact, with a focus on Britain, its former Empire and the Commonwealth, from 1900 to the present', as the 'only national, modern social history museum in the UK' with a duty to use its subject matter 'to explain why British society is like it is today'.⁸⁷⁷ On the more practical side, the external structure of the building – with its 'neoclassical pomposity' - could not be modified as a Grade II listed building. Nevertheless the intention was to create an internal architectural space as inspiringly striking as the Daniel Libeskind's shard-like postmodern building at IWM North in Salford.⁸⁷⁸ As had been the case with the 'Redevelopment' programme (See Section 5.2 and 5.3), this large-scale overhaul would incorporate several phases - the first of which would incorporate a re-designed Atrium space and new 'permanent' First World War galleries that would be 'ground-breaking' in their creativity and depth of engagement, and rich in both objects and multimedia.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷⁶ 'Interpretation Handbook v.2', 10/05/10, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. The new Key Messages for the institution were:

- 'War reveals people at their best and their worst
- War amplifies human dilemmas
- War is the most destructive force of human history – but can be immensely creative
- War is the most extreme human experience
- War can drive people to bear witness to their experiences'.

⁸⁷⁷ Sourced from IWM AV Brief 'From Near Defeat to Victory', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. The new emphasis on social history was also reflected in the broader intention to see the collections as offering '...a commentary on change and transformation in society, environment and individual lives', rather than just as a record of war.

⁸⁷⁸ Bagnall & Rowland (2011; 55). See also Section 2.6. Though largely well received by visitors, the evocative space and design of IWMN has received opposition, with opposing arguments that it is neither radical enough for cultural critics, nor traditional enough to appeal to the core audiences of military historians and local researchers. (See Bagnall & Rowland, 2011; 51, 57; Emig, 2007; Hanks, 2012; 26-32; Giebelhausen, 2006; Macleod et al, 2015; 317; Loxham, 2015).

⁸⁷⁹ Information about this Masterplan for phased development of the IWM London site was announced publicly on 09/12/10 ('IWM London Regeneration Announcement Release - FINAL', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). See Appendix XII for an overview of the First World War Galleries from its subsequent press release in July 2014. The Regeneration project began in May 2010, with the appointment of architects Foster + Partners. They were required to work within the footprint of the existing building, and the building was temporarily closed to the public between January and July 2013. Overall the first stage of transformation cost £40 million (IWM London Press Release, http://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/press-release/First%20World%20War%20Galleries%20at%20IWM%20London_0.pdf, accessed 04/08/15). Fundraising was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£6.5m), the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (£5m), the Pears Foundation, the Wolfson Foundation and donations received by the IWM Foundation (chaired by Lord Rothermere, with HRH The Duke of Cambridge as its Patron). The *Daily Mail* newspaper also ran a sponsorship campaign for the 'Life at the Front' section of the galleries ('Daily Mail – LATF Fundraising Campaign', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). The reconfigured Atrium reinterpreted its performative role through its use of dramatic lighting, striking

Equally it was the case that, in respecting the institution's past practice for the reasons outlined in Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6, 'only certain approaches were to be possible...[which] defined the horizons of the thinkable from the very beginning'.⁸⁸⁰ Ferguson has commented that 'Exhibitions are publicly sanctioned representations of identity...principally of the institutions which present them. They are narratives which use objects as elements in institutionalized stories that they promote to an audience'.⁸⁸¹ Thus priming itself in advance as a peopled institution, the Museum's decision makers had a strong desire for the institution to be centrally positioned for the national Centenary commemorations. By necessity, this set a natural (and high-profile) deadline for the completion of these new long-term galleries, by virtue of the anticipated media interest generated by the anniversaries.

7.2 – The Regeneration Team

7.2.1 – 'Redevelopment' to 'Regeneration'

Following on from Chapter 5 and the Museum's previous 'Redevelopment' of 1989, this second coming would be led by a group known as the 'Regeneration Team' (or colloquially as the 'Regen Team'). They would be delivering a regeneration of IWM London; the use of this term, and its strong emphasis on renewal and revival, denotes a desire to 'regenerate' public interest in the Museum. It was therefore as much about presenting a new ideological approach in how the Museum would present history; I suggest that there was more of a recognised effort to do this than had been the case with the 1989 Redevelopment (in which structural considerations drove the change as much as the requirement to provide change to the style of its exhibitions). This second major redevelopment in the institution's history would encompass a significantly larger number of stakeholders than it had

viewpoints and cathedral-like concrete fins, but significantly reduced the amount of exhibits on display than in 1989 (See Figures 2 and 3). New visitor facilities were established, whilst several existing exhibitions were either retained or revamped, including the Lord Ashcroft Gallery (<http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/lord-ashcroft-gallery>; Accessed 09/09/15), 'The Holocaust' Exhibition (<http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/the-holocaust-exhibition>; Accessed 09/09/15) and 'Secret War' (<http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/secret-war>; Accessed 09/09/15). The second stage of the IWM London Regeneration project, due to be completed in 2021, will see the creation of new Second World War Galleries and the renewal of 'The Holocaust' Galleries, following a £5 million donation from the Pears Foundation (<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/16092015-iwm-to-renew-its-holocaust-exhibition>; accessed 09/09/15).

⁸⁸⁰ Macdonald (2002; 214).

⁸⁸¹ Ferguson (1996; 175).

previously done – now including ‘...[the] public (visitors), funders, donors, curators, directors, builders, architects, conservators and educators, to name but a few’.⁸⁸² But success for its new First World War Galleries would remain contingent on a few individuals ‘deeply immersed in the process from conception to fruition...the core exhibition team’.⁸⁸³ An entirely new team consisting of existing IWM staff would be amassed to create them. The Head of the Research and Information Department (R&I), James Taylor (JT) whose role was to direct historical interpretation at IWM, became Head of the First World War Gallery Content Team.

7.2.2 – Recruitment of the Regeneration Team

This course of recruiting members to this small group to work intensively on developing the exhibitions was initiated in April 2010, via the internal distribution of an expression of interest amongst the Museum’s staff. Three curators were duly seconded from May 2010; Paul Cornish (PC) from the Department of Exhibits and Firearms, Laura Clouting (LC) from the Photographic Archive and Sophie Pigott (SP), who had been the Personal Assistant to Mark Whitmore, the Director of Collections.⁸⁸⁴ LC and PC both had specialist and detailed object knowledge through their respective roles as collection curators, whilst SP also had frequent interaction with object documentation as part of her prior responsibilities. In interview, all three cited the primary reason for their decision to apply for the roles as revolving around the notion of contributing to the public-facing side of the Museum in a tangible way (derived from a sense that this was not something they had been able to achieve in their existing roles).⁸⁸⁵ They considered that interacting with visitors should be the primary function of the Museum:

‘...every record that you create for Collections Online, for a photograph...you are connecting with the public through that, but to me, it just doesn’t feel...you don’t know where the outcome is, because you only see it up until a certain point. For me, I found that a little bit frustrating, whereas the idea that visitors

⁸⁸² Paddon (2014; 59).

⁸⁸³ Paddon (2014; 59). See also Macdonald (2002; 108).

⁸⁸⁴ Matt Brosnan from R&I was initially involved as a member of the Regeneration Team, but he subsequently moved on within the Museum (Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12).

⁸⁸⁵ PC considered being part of the Regeneration Team as a chance ‘to do something far more engaging’ than he was able to achieve within his existing role (Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12).

come here to see stuff, you can see the interaction, and I always found that really exciting, and something I wanted to be part of'.⁸⁸⁶

On top of this perception of tangible visitor interaction, a secondary reason for involvement was the fact that the galleries were 'a corporate priority project, a big deal for the Museum, so it was exciting to be involved'.⁸⁸⁷ What emerges from this recruitment process is two-fold; the work of the Regeneration Team would act as a positive recognition of the Museum's in-house expertise, because it represented an opportunity for those selected individuals to progress their personal development and work collaboratively with other departments. Furthermore, it was a sign that the Museum wanted to invest into these members of staff the know-how of exhibition-making; the decision had been taken not to recruit external candidates with more experience; all three curators latterly considered that this lack of experience would have otherwise counted against their featuring.⁸⁸⁸ As the recruiter for the Regen Team, JT stressed that each individual had been chosen on several counts; the basis of their intellectual flexibility, their keenness to push themselves out of their comfort zone, and to allow them to learn about the exhibition-making process and the adjoining art of audience communication.⁸⁸⁹ Beyond curatorial knowledge providing a rough base, this latter factor was particularly important in his eyes, because it meant that the chosen candidates had been selected on these skills, rather than any dependency on a detailed knowledge of the subject matter. This was

⁸⁸⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. Another curator who was to join the team expressed similar feelings in his awareness that such specialist curatorial work only had 'an extraordinary amount of value...for a relatively small audience' (Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13). He felt that documenting material for the archive formed 'half of what I think a museum should be doing', with an equal onus on being a site of public engagement. LC gave further support to this idea of tangibility by commenting that seeing visitors in the Main Building every day, by virtue of being based there rather than the All Saints Annexe, 'kept you on your toes...to know that the public are here, and you are accountable to them' (Acquired in 1986 as additional accommodation, All Saints is situated about a ten minute walk from the Main Building, and houses the Museum's Photographic and Film Archive).

⁸⁸⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁸⁸⁸ Previous practice had been to assemble a project team through advertising positions internally and externally, in the Museums Journal and The Guardian. The procedure was changed at a time when there was a freeze on external recruitment, but it was hoped that this would avoid the temporary nature of short-term contracts, when staff members left immediately after having completed a project (Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12). PC saw this as the first opportunity for anybody in his position to have been involved in exhibitions directly, as it would not have been countenanced under the previous regime of the former Director-General and Head of Public Services. The departure of these senior staff, and subsequent new leadership, thus gave rise to this opportunity (Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12).

⁸⁸⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12. By the time of the interview, JT believed that they were already picking up these skills, and there had 'already been a terrific change in the way they think, and the way that they communicate'.

also the position in which JT found himself; in contrast to his detailed knowledge and experience of dealing with the Second World War – having previously worked on the Holocaust exhibition at IWM London, the displays at IWM North and the Churchill War Rooms in Whitehall – he saw himself as an outsider, in terms of his First World War knowledge:

‘I’ll be quite frank about it, my in-depth knowledge of the First World War is not what is was on Holocaust, or Churchill, because again, it’s the abundance of the story, I mean it’s a huge, huge story, but I’m pretty confident that...having the Team that I’ve got, they’re all getting up to speed with their individual areas, in terms of the historiography and the history, it’s up to me to make sure that the story-telling is absolutely right, that’s my job’.⁸⁹⁰

For the two younger, less-experienced curators (SP and LC), they immediately recognised the dynamics of the Team’s make-up. Both stated admiration for what they saw as JT’s ‘exhibition know-how’ and ability to knit things together, balanced by PC’s raw knowledge of First World War material culture (and IWM firearms collections), based on his experience of publishing academic work in this field.⁸⁹¹

Thus other than PC, none of the Team’s members had a comprehensive or detailed knowledge of the subject that they were to be depicting.⁸⁹² Instead they would become experts, acquiring and honing an all-inclusive knowledge, by virtue of their intense involvement and research efforts over the prolonged design period –

⁸⁹⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12. JT had completed the in-gallery interpretation work for these alongside Terry Charman (Senior Historian from the Department of Research and Information), which was now the type of work being undertaken by the Regen Team curators.

⁸⁹¹ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12; Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12. See PC’s ‘Material Culture and its Application in Exhibitions’ Document, August 2010 (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive); Cornish (2004); Saunders (2004). As his ‘major personal academic preoccupation and interest over the last fifteen years’, it had been intended to utilise material culture as a general interpretative approach by embedding it within the galleries’ narrative (See ‘First World War Galleries Narrative Approach’, April 2011, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). However, as the design process proceeded at a greater pace, PC expressed concern that the concept ‘was beginning to slip between the cracks’ (Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12). This forms part of a wider push by some schools of thought within museum studies, such as Dudley who has recently called for museologists to re-apply Pearce’s (1989) post-structuralist work of object agency theory; ‘pushing studies of objects back toward a central place in material culture studies is part of a wider effort to re-engage the museum at the centre of object-theory’ (2011; 2). PC duly recorded that the galleries ‘embraced elements of material culture studies in the sense of addressing the interplay between people and artefacts’, citing the example of using individual objects to illustrate widespread phenomena (Cornish, 2015).

⁸⁹² This was similarly the case in Macdonald’s ethnographic research at the Science Museum in which a ‘lack of expertise was equated with a greater capacity for being able to identify and communicate with lay people’ (2002; 113-114).

effectively learning the subject matter as they went along.⁸⁹³ It was around five months later - with things already well in motion - before I joined proceedings to begin my embedded research with the Team. By this time, the workload had increased sufficiently to bring in additional resources, in the form of two additional staff members. Louise Macfarlane (LM) and Ian Kikuchi (IK), joined proceedings from October 2011 to work alongside the three existing curators in running research errands.⁸⁹⁴

7.2.3 – The Team Dynamics in Working Collaboratively

At interview, each individual member agreed that the dynamics of the Regeneration Team worked well, and that their personalities meshed together.⁸⁹⁵ They worked together effectively, with PC surveying that they were ‘all quite radically different characters’, and that complementing each other in this way was ‘possibly a good thing’.⁸⁹⁶ They defined themselves as a blend of individuals with a range of experiences – in consequence, the combined collective brought varied skill sets and knowledge to their dealings, alongside the particular idiosyncrasies of their respective working styles. Equally emphasis was placed upon the high sense of mission that each member felt amongst their colleagues; this was evident through the channels of communication, and the fact that they were ‘easily able to have frequent, and open, honest dialogues’ to help them comprehend the process that lay

⁸⁹³ This theme has already been discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, though it is worth revisiting TC’s belief that ‘experts are not necessarily the best people to put in charge of exhibitions’ (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 12/05/14). He recalled the 1990s First World War Galleries, and Peter Simkins’ desire to include General Maxcy in the exhibition, observing ‘...in Pete’s mind, Maxcy was one of the best training generals of the B.E.F. and it meant something to Pete’. This lack of detailed knowledge would therefore not be as influential in this instance.

⁸⁹⁴ IK was seconded from his position as a Documentation Assistant in the Film Archive. Having worked in the Photograph Archive, and the Department of Exhibits and Firearms, LM was recruited from the Department of Collections Access. Her new position required her to continue fulfilling her responsibilities for her previous role for one and a half days a week. This issue quickly proved problematic amongst Team members, who had all been seconded from their original positions. Because these were not backfilled, this left gaps across their respective departments – it was only SP, who had to be interviewed for a substantive ‘Cross Collections’ curatorial role, that eventually allowed her to work on the galleries on a fulltime basis. Likewise LC had been working on the galleries full-time for about three months, before she had to return to the Photo Archive for two days a week, for a period of around six months’, at a time when ‘we’d just got into the flow of working’ (Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12).

⁸⁹⁵ LM considered the Team to be one that developed as the process went on. After the galleries’ completion, she cited her personal gratitude and appreciation of ‘[PC] as the anchor of historical knowledge; [JT] as the anchor of exhibition experience; [IK] and [LC] as excellent sounding-boards and ‘comrades-in-arms’ and [Hannah Daley, Project Co-ordinator] as an all-round oracle’ (Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14).

⁸⁹⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

before them.⁸⁹⁷ LC commented upon the importance of the internal office environment:

‘...in terms of atmosphere in the office, it’s very open, and you feel that you can say anything, a critical thing, or be it a positive thing, we can all just say what’s on our minds, or what our concerns are’.⁸⁹⁸

Overseeing proceedings, JT sensed that the Team ‘gelled together well’, and observed ‘...it’s a really nice office...it gets a bit loud sometimes, but I don’t mind that at all, I think that’s a very healthy sign’.⁸⁹⁹ But there was an underlying sense that, as time went on, the Team became more aware of the growing sense of expectation being placed upon their office doorstep. There would have to be a balancing act required between remaining aware of their own input towards proceedings, and meeting the external influences that were going to dictate how they went about the exhibition-making process. This was a new, challenging environment which had greater numbers outside of the museum profession starting to ‘interpret, suggest or comment on institutional purposes in a manner that appears to take authority and professional judgement away from museum workers’.⁹⁰⁰ Particularly in the case of large-scale redevelopment projects, there are often increasing numbers of stakeholders whom have strong and ranging views of ‘what a museum could be for’.⁹⁰¹ Conversely this had led to museological institutions forging a stronger sense of identity and purpose, as Diane Lees had brought in. What is more, these changes would have to demonstrate how things were different to what had gone before.

⁸⁹⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13.

⁸⁹⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁸⁹⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12.

⁹⁰⁰ McManus (2011; 27, 29).

⁹⁰¹ McManus (2011; 29). Museums are now predominantly reliant upon external funding because they do not have the resources available to undertake endeavours of such scale independently. Museums teams therefore have to be ‘...prepared for the agendas that some funders will have...in driving their own messages across in galleries of the design of interpretation’ (Paddon; 2014; 151). Museums ‘...should not ‘bend the rules’ for economic gain or include overt political stances within galleries...but the outcomes must fit with the museum’s mission and ideology’ (Paddon; 2014; 90). See also Paddon (2014; 88) for ‘Museum Redevelopment Stakeholders’ Diagram.

7.2.4 - The Shifting Definition of Curatorial Practice

‘The shift away from the curator as dictator of collection redisplay has been forced...as redevelopment projects with vast investment from external stakeholders demand high-quality goods delivered on time and in budget. Displays and exhibitions, in the past, have been within the remit of curatorial positions’⁹⁰²

The process of exhibition-making had moved on since the concerted efforts of those behind the 1990 First World War galleries at the IWM. It was now a changed culture in terms of who was involved, and the power they held within the process. Primarily exhibition-making had become even more of a team process, involving ‘curators, designers and educators working together’.⁹⁰³ Conversely curators had become more defensive in gradually coming to terms with their changed and reduced role in overall proceedings. Traditionally they had retained the ultimate say over any exhibition, but research into visitor studies had limited their say; concerned with bringing about ‘innovation in the museum institution and in museum practices’, new exhibitions needed ‘staff members other than curators, such as educators and marketing staff, to share authority for choosing, focusing, and interpreting collections’.⁹⁰⁴ Even though the curators remained in charge of the content, their role was now much more in the vein of a consultancy or advisory position, in a process shared out amongst a wider cohort of stakeholders. The Regen Team would accordingly be required to embrace this relatively new philosophy.⁹⁰⁵

Broader academic critique of museums, detailing them as ‘dry, dusty, old-fashioned, sexist and elitist places’, had hardened the notion that it should be public demands that curated, or at least informed, any new exhibitions.⁹⁰⁶ These conditions had seen museums begin to operate with a consultancy-based mindset – to ensure that their ‘product’ would meet with external expectation.⁹⁰⁷ The IWM found itself in

⁹⁰² Paddon (2014; 65).

⁹⁰³ Lee (2007; 191).

⁹⁰⁴ Lee (2007; 193). For an account of the impact of this within the museum sector, see Sandell & Janes (2007).

⁹⁰⁵ For more detailed discussion of these changes, refer to Section 2.3.

⁹⁰⁶ McManus (2011; 29). McCall & Gray (2014; 20-21) talk of ‘new museology’ evolving from the perceived failings of the original museology, and the move away from museums being collections-focused and building-based.

⁹⁰⁷ Amongst a host of changes, one of the most noticeable that had come in under the ‘Fit for the Future’ programme was to cultivate a strong sense of institutional identity ‘grounded in staff behaviour

the same position of many national and local museums over recent years, in that these big shifts would affect the decision-making process in its new displays. In previous decades, it was the curator who had ruled over the content and look of exhibitions; ‘...the curator was the chief, and often sole, decision-maker’, preparing exhibitions in a closed process of production.⁹⁰⁸ In effect the curator was ‘...alleged to have assumed too much about his/her public, was too authoritarian, and unaccountable’.⁹⁰⁹ Their choice of objects enabled them to have ‘sole responsibility for information within the gallery...labels, text panels and interactives’, with their predominant concern being how their work might be judged by other specialists.⁹¹⁰ As outlined in Section 2.3 and then documented more fully over Chapter 5, this had been the case with the 1990 First World War galleries but there had since been a ‘move away from object-based displays towards a thematic, information-based format’ leading to a ‘...loosening of curatorial control’.⁹¹¹ Now the ‘...once all-encompassing, dictatorial curator role has been diluted and diffused in order to balance curatorial power with that of other project team members’, and their position as ‘dispenser of knowledge’ reconfigured as a reflexive museum practice ‘to render the role more accountable and facilitative’.⁹¹² Beyond control being redistributed amongst other newly empowered stakeholders, meeting tight deadlines were now a fundamental requirement for curators, as was their ability to co-ordinate and contribute as part of a team.⁹¹³ In forming a collective whole, each individual curator would need to:

‘...to be able to work in a team, communicate well with their peers and accept decisions made by other team members, even if the decision goes against

and leadership’ (McManus, 2011; 27), with efforts focusing on a new philosophical recognition of what the Museum should be about. McManus (2011; 30) places these changes within a broader context of museums having to produce business models as well as managing and marketing strategies to operate within a commercial environment.

⁹⁰⁸ Paddon (2014; 38). See also Barrett (2012; 13)

⁹⁰⁹ Barrett (2012; 143). For Greenberg, ‘Curators have traditionally been object-based – they have coveted objects but not stories or audiences’ (2005; 227). For continued discussion on this theme, see Barrett (2012; 149-155)

⁹¹⁰ Paddon (2012; 60). She cites Miles’ (1994; 256) description of early museum curators as ‘power brokers...able to decree what objects are selected, how they are shown and what is said about them’.

⁹¹¹ Paddon (2014; 60); Lee (2007; 184). Lee (2007; 193) records that ‘The call for curators to relinquish some of their control is a common refrain in recent museum studies literature’

⁹¹² Paddon (2014; 39); Barrett (2012; 170)

⁹¹³ Paddon (2014; 39, 61) summarises that traditionally curators spent a lifetime pursuing one specific interest within their chosen field of scholarship, without the pressure of imminent deadlines.

their beliefs. The curator has needed to evolve, or adapt, to the change in approach'.⁹¹⁴

As a result, this redistribution of power affected the decision-making processes of the new displays in the way in which this more democratic culture of exhibition-making was reliant upon an intra-group dynamic and ethos between team members, and progress contingent on maintaining a clear network of communication. The nature of the workload would mean that evolution was contingent on individuals meeting their respective deadlines in sync. For LC, this formed a professional challenge, as she observed '...this is the kind of work that requires...absorbed, completely embroiled in it...I like team-working, I think that was something that really appealed to me, the idea of working in a team, for a project, something with deadlines!'⁹¹⁵

7.2.5 – Defining Team Roles

What Paddon defines as the factors of the seemingly all-encompassing new museology – 'change, relevance, curatorial reorientation and redistribution of power' – have all contributed towards 'the shift in power towards the audience'.⁹¹⁶

Expectation from a diversified audience would form a key driver in determining what was to be displayed and how this would be done, because exhibition environments were now dictated more by expectations of pleasure and curiosity, beyond enabling encounters with materiality. These understandings were in evidence for the Regen Team members, who defined themselves as 'curator-historians':

'I don't really conceive of this as a curatorial process so much as one about telling a story, exhibition-making is a matter of telling a story in a space with objects...

⁹¹⁴ Paddon (2014; 60-61).

⁹¹⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁹¹⁶ Paddon (2014; 67). Paddon cites this shift as borne out of the commissioning of intense and rigorous programmes of front-end and formative evaluation (2014; 57). As has already been sketched out, these were the outcome of 'pressures from social, economic and political environments', when museums were 'obliged to justify their value and worth' - tuning their relevance directly to their audiences was to 'markedly change' what displays set out to achieve (2014; 67). See also McCall & Gray (2014).

I consider myself as being charged with telling a story to the public, with the utmost historical accuracy and in the most exciting possible way, given what [resource] we have to accomplish it with'.⁹¹⁷

Upon being asked to consider their identity between curator and historian at interview, each Team member pondered how they defined themselves;

'I see myself as that [a historian] but also really a story-teller stroke editor, so it's very much of a case...you are weaving together something which is fundamentally your own creation, and that's why that responsibility has to underlie that process, because if you were being irresponsible with it, and just decided to go cavalier, and just tell your own version, without any reference or deference to what's happened, then I think you're treading on very dangerous ground'.⁹¹⁸

For LM, her inclusion within the Regen Team meant that she felt able to redefine herself professionally within the wider Museum:

'...all of the roles that I have had [in the Museum] have required me to be a generalist, really...I have always wanted to specialise but I've never had the opportunity or cause to and I didn't arrive with a specialism, so that's really something that I've been able to develop once in Regen'.⁹¹⁹

However she stopped short of calling her new trade as that of a historian, reasoning that '...I personally feel that to earn that title, you need to be published, I'm not published, I'm therefore not going to call myself a historian'.⁹²⁰ Likewise SP identified the need to be 'true to the history' but that 'if you start to think of yourself as too much of a historian, you get too tied down on the details and you might forget why you are doing it'.⁹²¹ From this, ideas about the concepts of 'truth', 'responsibility' and 'credibility' were starting to emerge as issues that the curators would be engaging

⁹¹⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13. My assessment was that the curators were aware of the broader changes to the process of exhibition-making, and therefore that their ability to hold sway over the procedure held less influence than it may have done in the past.

⁹¹⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁹¹⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13. See also Section 7.2.2. McCall & Grey have commented on the 'widening role' of museum workers, equating to their roles now reflecting the various different functions that make up both new and traditional museology (2014; 30-1). The introduction of more managerial and administrative-based activities for curators has, in some instances, contributed towards a sense of role ambiguity (See Woollard, 2006).

⁹²⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13.

⁹²¹ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12.

with. Furthermore the positioning of a definition somewhere in-between the practice of curatorship and historian lacked official verification, because individual Team members' roles were not ever really confirmed by the upper echelons of the Museum.⁹²² LM described how she had not been given an official job description or title by the Museum.⁹²³ This would prove a vexed question throughout the design process, even causing future anxiety beyond the 'Regeneration' project:

'...we are all faced with very uncertain futures, and we are getting very little clarity from the Museum...we've all been taken away from our mother departments and, by the time the exhibition is complete, that will be three, four years' time, and those departments will have proven that they can cope without us in a financially difficult time, so I don't really hold much hope about our positions, when we've finished the exhibition'.⁹²⁴

7.2.6 - A Sense of Responsibility

The life-blood of the complex, resource-intensive process of exhibition making was starting to take form in the daily discussions held with the office of the Regeneration Team; this group charged with creating new displays from concept through to realisation. The process of constructing exhibitions on such a scale involves a multitude of people in a variety of roles, completing multiple processes that act as a lengthy process of simplification. As outlined at the start of this chapter, the planning process did not begin free from agenda. However before honing in on some of these influences in play, it is worth observing that much academic analysis

⁹²² Overall the term 'curator' was used much more fluidly throughout the design process; SP believed her role to be 'less academic than historians', alluding to the presence of the Academic Advisory Board (Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12). In Macdonald's research, those team members working on a Science Museum exhibition were given job titles of 'interpreters' rather than 'curators', meaning that their 'primary affiliation was to be to 'the public'', rather than to the objects (2001; 85).

⁹²³ She felt that 'curator' was often used as a 'catch-all' term, based on the fact that '...if you say to somebody who doesn't work in the sector that you work in museums, they assume that you put exhibitions together'. Up until January 2013 when she acquired additional responsibilities, she felt uncomfortable using the term to describe her role - reasoning that, in a semantic sense, few IWM curators actually curate exhibitions (Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13).

⁹²⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13. IK also spoke of a 'looming sense of unemployment affecting much of the museum sector' (Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13). TC, the Senior Historian based in the Department of Research and Information, offered his perspective that the fact that staff members did not see the Museum as a long-term career choice, by virtue of programmes being governed by short-term contracts and appointments, led to a relatively high staff turnover. This subsequently risked affecting the Regen Team's 'esprit de corps' (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 19/05/14). I address this in more detail in Section 7.6.2.

critiquing past IWM displays have often been more concerned with what could have happened, rather than acknowledging the constraints of time, money and interpretational restraints that curators would find themselves working with.⁹²⁵ This was something that my ethnography of the Team's work would be well placed to rectify, because it would be revealing what Grewcock has discerned;

'Museums are *doing* institutions; they do not wait for the academy for permission to think and act differently...the museum profession is perhaps too busy with the complex business of managing and operating their museums'.

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The temptation for the academic community is to pick apart exhibitions by thinking 'deeply and sensitively about whose interests are being served...for the purposes of display'.⁹²⁷ That withstanding, Bagnall and Rowland provide a timely reminder to those academics based in museum studies who '...sometimes forget that, in the twenty-first century, the main audience for museums is not (thankfully) academics'.⁹²⁸ Instead academics would form a small minority of a large collection of potential critics, burdening inherent expectations upon the Regen Team to get things right.⁹²⁹ The curators remained consistently aware of this degree of responsibility, reasoning that:

⁹²⁵ I base this assessment having read academic writing on the immersive experiences that featured within the previous permanent galleries, including Noakes (1990), Walsh (1992; 109) and Espley (2008; 325, 330-331). My access to the inner workings of the IWM allowed this view to carry more weight, as it exposed me to curatorial interaction with academics, and to witness these frustrations firsthand. This by no means invalidates the arguments raised by these authors, but the important matter is to acknowledge the restrictions that museum practitioners have to operate with (Walsh, for example, accepted the Museum's 'need to survive in the market place' [1992; 109]).

⁹²⁶ Grewcock (2014; 167). Curators and designers are never free to do just as they please, as PC raised this in an internal document. He reminded would-be critics that '...the contents of museums are at the mercy of such constraints as funding, space, floor-loading and conservation difficulties. These factors have a huge impact on what a museum can achieve' ('What Goes On in War Museums', Internal IWM Document, Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

⁹²⁷ Roppola (2012; 36, 37).

⁹²⁸ Bagnall & Rowland (2011; 61). An academic's perspective of what an exhibition should achieve might not align with the necessity to attract mass audiences, or rely on an overly conceptual approach.

⁹²⁹ This would be hampered by the fact that all of those who work within a war museum will not be doing the job that those in, say a science museum, are able to do in advocating their subject. Against the backdrop of the War's centenary commemorations, its function as a site of memory would be heightened.

‘...the exhibition is of a scale...the sense of making something that might last and might have a considerable role in reshaping the way people remember a certain episode of history is an exciting and occasionally daunting thing’.⁹³⁰

For PC, he sensed that it offered an unprecedented opportunity:

‘...looking at it, in a sort of [PC – *Slight laughter*], megalomaniac way...I will be centrally informing the opinion of the whole generation of British society on what the First World War was like...I thought that was very exciting...in the sense that the current historiography of the War, it’s such a variance with the general public perception of the War, there’s a huge opportunity there, to do something really...come up with something actually quite startling’.⁹³¹

Correspondingly LC recognised this ‘significant moment for the Museum’:

‘...re-presenting the history of something that everybody knows about, I mean, everybody practically has heard, at least heard, of the First World War and that’s just an incredible thing to be part of...I quite like the idea of taking on that responsibility and representing it, it was just too good an opportunity’.⁹³²

Positioning herself as a subject of study within this research, LC recognised that the multiple forms of this sense of responsibility affected how she conducted her work:

‘...I think that’s why, if it comes across, possibly, as being stressed, it’s more just a real sense, every day, of this is for other people, you are creating a version of what has happened before, it’s not just a responsibility to people that come in the door, it’s a responsibility to being true to what actually happened, and of course, you can only know what happened by fragments of what is left, but I find that, really, a motivating factor but also a humbling thing as well... that makes all the day to day hard work and everything and all the little frustrations, kind of, worth of it, really’.⁹³³

⁹³⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13.

⁹³¹ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁹³² Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁹³³ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

7.2.7 – Project Management

Managing and guiding these curators through the process would be project managers, who were brought in to provide a dual degree of coherence and logistical nous in what was still a fairly new practice within the wider museum sector.⁹³⁴ Becky Wakeford (BW) acted as the Exhibitions Manager for the Regen Team, until she took maternity leave in December 2013, upon which Laura Wilkinson (LW) took up the position through to the galleries' completion. Both members of the Exhibitions Department, they accordingly had a good knowledge of IWM collections, and were familiar with internal relationships and the institution's hierarchies and ethos.⁹³⁵ This was also the case for Hannah Daley (HD), who from March 2013, acted as a fulltime Project Coordinator for several aspects of the wider IWM 'Regeneration' Programme. Through my observations within the often intense working environment of the Regen Team Office, I perceived their role as a different challenge to that of the curators. Much of their time was consumed acting as a point of liaison, and in managing issues sufficiently to ensure that they did not build up; they were also the ballast to the curators' own agendas, and any external 'alternative priorities, designs, resources and time frames'.⁹³⁶ BW's effervescent character often helped deflect attention away from what were occasionally fraught discussions, whilst both LW and BW were steely in their determination and desire for the project to be on a continually upward trajectory.⁹³⁷ They were tasked with:

'...motivating the team, managing personalities and styles of work...[they] must also ensure that each team member understands the aim and objectives of the project from the outset...[they] must understand the difficulties involved in people, time and budget management...the role is intense'.⁹³⁸

For this reason, their involvement affected the team dynamic, because they were the new structured channels of communication to be utilised for satisfactory progression.

⁹³⁴ McCall & Gray (2014; 26) have scrutinized that curatorial roles were being pushed down the hierarchy and 'more managerial layers placed between curators and high-level decision makers'.

⁹³⁵ Paddon (2014; 63).

⁹³⁶ Paddon (2014; 63).

⁹³⁷ Paddon (2014; 93) notes that it is 'the job of the project manager to manage personal agendas...and enforce the mission and goals of the project'.

⁹³⁸ Paddon (2014; 144). PC noted that the curators were able to benefit from having project managers 'to lie awake at night worrying on our behalf' and that HD was crucial in 'holding everything together with her spreadsheets and pointer-files' (Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14). BW often made an explicit effort to thank the Regen Team for their efforts, particularly at design meetings.

Managing these expectations, and consistently relating potential progress back to the two overriding priorities of audience and collections, was fundamental for the project managers to account for successful decision-making.⁹³⁹

First World War Exhibition Team List	
Name	Position
Rebecca Wakeford (BW)	Exhibition Manager
James Taylor (JT)	Head of Content
Hannah Daley (HD)	Project Co-ordinator
Paul Cornish (PC)	Senior Curator
Louise Macfarlane (LM)	Content Developer
Laura Clouting (LC)	Curator
Ian Kikuchi (IK)	Curator
Sophie Pigott (SP)	Curator
Jo Saull (JS)	Digital Producer

Figure 74 – *A Table Listing the Members of the First World War Exhibition Team*

⁹³⁹ See Paddon (2014; 94-95). My general impression from observing interactions between managers and curators was that the relationship was maintained successfully through a commonality and unity of purpose overriding any sense of top-down managerial pressure, as well as managerial empathy for the pressure of such an intense workload.

7.3 - Creating the Historical Narrative

7.3.1 – Who Knew What? Evaluating Visitor Knowledge

Focus quickly turned to ‘nailing down’ (a common phrase used throughout the design process) the overall approach to the new galleries, which was to be governed by a rigorous programme of visitor evaluation commissioned in 2011. The main objective of this evaluation was aimed at determining what visitors wanted and expected of IWM. The Museum already had a strong sense of its types of audiences – indeed it expected the family group to dominate the outcome of any future museum redevelopment.⁹⁴⁰ Consulting with anticipated audiences would assist the Regen Team in piecing together the galleries’ historical narrative, and would reveal how the Museum’s definition of the First World War was not necessarily aligned with that of the general public.⁹⁴¹ Findings from this Front End Audience Research informed the Team that, in spite of 2% of the sample being unaware that there even had been a First World War, there was a general desire to know about why and how the War started, how it ended and what its impact was.⁹⁴² Coupled to this was a keenness to encounter a variety of diverse topics relating to the War.⁹⁴³ This document was critical in acting as a template for how the Team would define its visitors; not only would it grant the exhibition a democratic edge by having consulted with members of the public during the planning process, it simultaneously hardened the Team’s conviction that a fresh philosophical take on the conflict was needed for the post living memory generation. As a result of its findings, anticipated visitors to the

⁹⁴⁰ Paddon (2014; 68-69) records that this principal focus on the family group – in terms of how they interact, learn, have fun and interpret collections – can lead to fears in some quarters to ‘dumbing down’, in terms of the quality of the content – now a longstanding discourse within museums.

⁹⁴¹ Macdonald (2002; 6) records that the ‘communication model...in which science was taken from the world of science and translated by the museum into something to be ‘responded to’ by the public – is far too neat in practice’. Exhibition making is therefore acts more as a process in which you take aspects from various components and aspects, and put these together to produce a happy medium, or a compromise solution, depending on which way you view it.

⁹⁴² Slack, S (2011) ‘The First World War at the Imperial War Museum – Front End Audience Research Report’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive; 37. The aim of this largely qualitative project which consulted with 425 people was to ‘build up the IWM knowledge of its audience and the way they engage and learn’ (2011; 3). It also distinguished the personal connections to the subject matter - that ‘some people have their [First World War] lights switched on by family memories’ and that the Museum needed to figure out ‘...how best to switch the lights on for as many people as possible in 2014’ (2011; 38).

⁹⁴³ Slack, S (2011) ‘The First World War at the Imperial War Museum – Front End Audience Research Report’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive; 37.

exhibition were to be considered as interested in, but with very sketchy existing knowledge about the First World War.⁹⁴⁴

7.3.2 – Fleshing Out the Galleries’ Narrative

Aware that they would be serving a new generation of visitors, the Regen Team spent a prolonged period mining current historiography of the First World War, in order to construct a coherent interpretative narrative that would essentially act as a mission statement.⁹⁴⁵ This governed how the 1100m² space was to be chronologically mapped out and orchestrated.⁹⁴⁶ The decision to follow a chronological pattern was as a result of the findings from the Audience Evaluation Report, in order to aid visitor understanding. Reflecting back on the 2010-2011 period spent creating this, LC returned to the definition of the individual curators as historians, and that the intense process granted them a legitimate way forward:

‘...piecing together fragments, both by way of the objects that we’re [going to] show and by way of the story that we’re [going to] tell, we really did spend a lot of time being very robust about creating our narrative, that was months of painstaking work together, collective work, and so I feel, of all things, I think

⁹⁴⁴ Macdonald (2002; 162). This base level of very little public knowledge was beneficial in the fact that it meant the Team were in control over what they had to include in the galleries, whilst also serving as a means by which the Museum could state that visitors had been included in the design process. Correspondingly Macdonald notes how this meant that blame could be apportioned onto those visitors consulted during evaluation for any topics that were not featured – ‘matters of responsibility being shifted from producers to consumers’ (2002; 187).

⁹⁴⁵ See Appendix XI for a copy of this. Munroe describes narrative as ‘...one of the primary tools...used to mediate between the past and present. The impossibility of capturing the ‘real’ experiences of past agents means that a mediatory tool...is necessary to articulate a version of the past in the present’ (2016; 177). Furthermore Fouseki has observed, within the context of research completed on the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery, that ‘...narrative-driven exhibitions adopted a people-oriented approach which was received in a much more positive and constructive way by consultative group members’ (2010; 187). Narrative thus served as a tool to facilitate engagement for community groups – see also Ryall (2014; 187).

⁹⁴⁶ See ‘Narrative Brief v.18 – Historical Narrative Key Points’, 08/06/12 and ‘Concept Design Narrative v.9’, 30/11/11 (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive) In interview, SP spoke of a desire for the narrative to ‘take away the element of choice, in terms of route, because the story’s very complicated...in order to keep that workable, we need to make sure that people follow a prescribed route largely, so that the story hangs together and is more accessible’ (Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12). One early conceptual idea for the galleries had been to follow a New Army Infantry Division, beginning from recruitment and ending in the post-war period, having been involved with the Battle of the Somme and Passchendaele (‘Permanent Galleries Narrative Structure’, Aug 2010, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

we got that right, and I still think now all of those sections, they have been put together in a very carefully controlled way'.⁹⁴⁷

This editorial aspect of piecing things together, and then culling them, adding and refining bits it, and general manipulation was done 'with a sound understanding, as far as the evidence allows, of what really happened...I think we're being true to it, I feel happy to make those decisions as a result'.⁹⁴⁸ The labelling of this work as 'grounded and sound' was an initial phase to lay the foundations for subsequent stages.⁹⁴⁹ It was considered a distinct practice by JT, who suggested that 'Our job is not the same as what an academic historian does...our job is to tell history through objects'.⁹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the whole exhibition process was 'about learning the history yourself...we are historians in that we are presenting a version of history, I absolutely agree'.⁹⁵¹ This dedicated methodical constructing of a version of the past for presentation, with amendments and alterations, was a dedicated lengthy process. The outcome granted them a position of confidence in its robustness in order to potentially defend it, as it was a literal evidencing of the Team's newly acquired collective specialist knowledge.

7.3.3 – Bringing in Academic Expertise

From this, it became clear that the overall priority for the completed historical narrative was its intention to help visitors to think about the First World War, and be able to understand it from an informed standpoint. Assistance with the process came in the form of an Academic Advisory Board made up of distinguished First World War historians, which met with the Regeneration Team to help steer this narrative. Their

⁹⁴⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. There was also a newfound acknowledgement that the Museum's voice would be more transparent in the way that it dealt with its subject matter. Reflecting on this, LC remarked 'Sometimes there are no fixed answers, and it's ok that things are open and unanswered, I really believe that strongly, that we don't have to have an answer to every single thing....we have to be the voice of authority, but sometimes the most authoritative thing that you can say is that there is no consensus...things cannot be exactly explained...that's quite refreshing, that is quite courageous to take a stand on that'. This bought into one of IWM's new values, which was to be 'courageous'.

⁹⁴⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁹⁴⁹ LC suggested that, had things not been done in this way, 'then we'd be a lot more uncertain...we wouldn't be so clear about where [objects] fit in' (Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12). Essentially she was reinforcing the reasoning behind the adopted approach of developing the narrative principally before objects were selected.

⁹⁵⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12. He distinguished that an academic historian relied predominantly on documents as prime sources of evidence, whereas the IWM would be using much more than just documents to be much more accessible.

⁹⁵¹ Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12.

dual role (which I return to later in the chapter) was to balance academic rigour with their ability to mitigate areas of debate, and distil these down so that they could feature succinctly within the fourteen sequential 'Story' areas.⁹⁵² The reasoning behind this was that those visitors surveyed in 2011 wanted their experience to be structured, to allow them to comprehend the complex causes, courses and consequences of this globally unprecedented event. With these three directives in place, the refined narrative was to retain a strong sense of conciseness and clarity, whilst remaining thorough enough to withstand any potential scrutiny. Its overarching structure would allow for 'complexity – in the form of sub-themes, minor plotlines...to occur within or beneath it'.⁹⁵³ The challenge for the Team was to '...create a comprehensible and integrated narrative, which connected and contextualized each event and series of events within the whole'.⁹⁵⁴ Thus the historical narrative would be crucial in driving the story being told within the gallery space:

'...narrative is so pervasive and promising as a mediating strategy... However, we must not forget that all narrative is constructed, and therefore contested. It is useful yet problematic, universal yet divisive, and fashionable yet timeless. It means different things to different people, and it is in these very contradictions that its significance lies. If narrative is a construct, it is open to creativity. It is almost deliberately provocative and engaging'.⁹⁵⁵

The accumulated narrative thus resembled '...a scholarly paper about the exhibition subject'; it did not delineate definitive sections, but was everything that the Team felt '...should be known about the exhibition theme'.⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵² Each story panel had between two and three sub-story panels per section. This was broken down further into one summary caption per case, one group caption per group and one object caption per object. This technique follows '...Gestalt theories of perception, where the whole effect (vista) is greater than the sum of its individual parts (single objects). A successful outcome relies on an integration of design and interpretation procedures which need to work together to ensure that the whole effect does not overshadow the individual objects' (Monti & Keene, 2013; 248).

⁹⁵³ Hanks (2012; 26).

⁹⁵⁴ Hanks (2012; 26).

⁹⁵⁵ Macleod, Hanks & Hale (2012; xxiii).

⁹⁵⁶ Dean (1994b; 106).

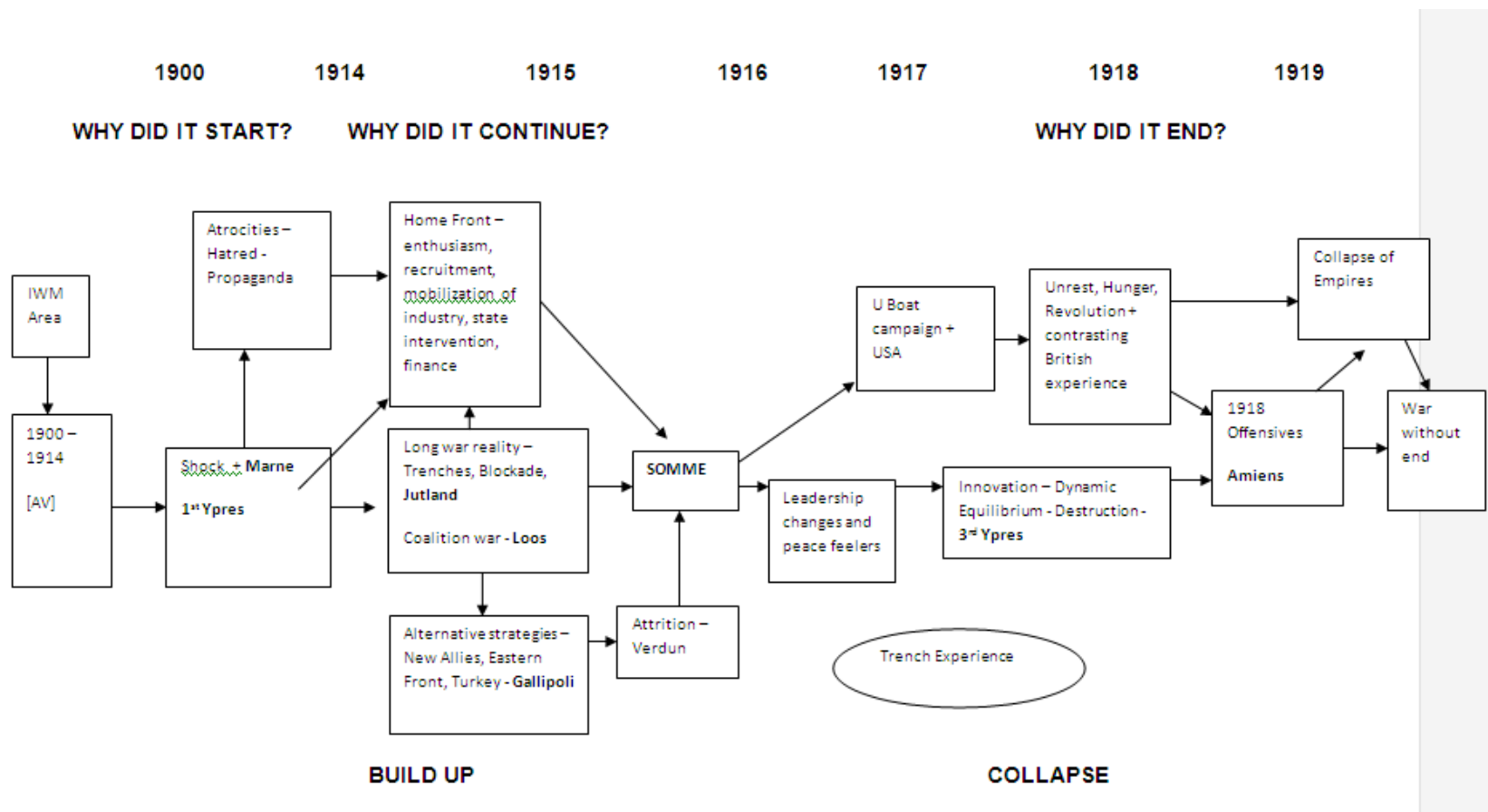


Figure 75 – Diagram of Early Exhibition Themes produced in June 2011

(Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)

7.4 – Object Selection

7.4.1 – Combining the Narrative with the Collections

Partly overlapping the creation of the narrative brief to act as the galleries' groundwork, objects from the Museum's comprehensive and unrivalled holdings were trawled and whittled down to tell the story of the conflict. Many would not be immediately familiar to visitors, and therefore needed to be accompanied by captions to explain their function and stimulate visitor discussion. PC described the process as looking down a telescope the other way, in trying to shrink masses of exhibits into a coherent exhibition.⁹⁵⁷ The curators were conscious that many items had been mass-produced, were functional, and aside from the extensive art collection, not designed to be aesthetically pleasing (nor consequently not display-friendly);

'...we do have a lot of stuff...which is good...a lot of the items are everyday objects, largely, or they would be if you were in the Army, or they are people's letters...a lot of them in themselves aren't historically significant'.⁹⁵⁸

This strength and relative depth saw a proportion of the most prized objects already out on display within the earlier iteration of the permanent galleries (See Section 5.4).⁹⁵⁹ The Regeneration Team were able to use these former galleries as a useful template and yardstick for comparison when it came to initiating plans for their

⁹⁵⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁹⁵⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12. On the other hand, SP saw the need to consider those 'really great, historically significant items that, even though they are possibly difficult to display, they are worth it, because of what they are telling the visitor'. Objects within the galleries also had a heightened role in demonstrating '...elusive intangible abstract ideas' relating to the conflict, such as 'sacrifice' and 'home' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; 108). Monti & Keene remark that '...capturing the visitor's attention is easier if the objects are arresting or attractive, unusual or paradoxical' (2013; 44); in an age where gallery design is more important, the Museum's curators needed to ensure that they made object meaning clear, because it was no longer sufficient to just allow contemplation.

⁹⁵⁹ These included some of its iconic objects, such as those belonging to well-known personalities of the conflict. TC scrutinized the two approaches adopted for the 1990 and 2014 galleries; 'when they were doing the [1990] Redevelopment, it was the wrong way round, that they looked for objects and then you write the story around them, that's how it was seen, what have we got, nobody said let's write a script, what have we got to illustrate it' (Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 19/05/14). It therefore encompassed the understanding that objects were the utmost priority in the former galleries. One might argue that taking the same components of something deemed predominantly successful and reworking it to a new formula might involve risk, but the approach adopted could only be judged upon completion. Furthermore it is easy to judge and critique the former galleries with different operating criteria and aims in place, which makes it easier to highlight the perceived benefit of anything subsequent (meaning it is easier to justify change).

replacement.⁹⁶⁰ Whilst there were to be expected similarities, there were also marked differences - particularly in the philosophical approach - to their predecessors:

“Mr [Laurie] Milner is falling into the trap, from which I hoped we had escaped, of deciding what story we want to tell and making the exhibits fit into it. We must always do the reverse – i.e. show as much as possible, especially interesting exhibits, but explain their role if they do not fit neatly into the scheme’.⁹⁶¹

The mantra for the 2014 galleries was in stark contrast to this; having decided what story was going to be told, the object selection process ran until the autumn of 2012; around 1300 were selected to make the final cut for the 2014 galleries, ranging from large pieces of weaponry to intensely personal items such as letters and diaries.⁹⁶²

⁹⁶⁰ Perhaps most tellingly of all, there ended up being exactly the same number of exhibition sections as there had been within the 1990 galleries. The Regen Team cited praise for the factual detail of the (now no longer required) typological captions, but that the galleries’ narrative left historical myths unchallenged and controversial episodes were not acknowledged as such (though arguably some of these had gained momentum since the displays were created, and the Centenary would be bringing members of the public into contact with these topics). PC described them as being ‘stuck in a time warp, in terms of both their construction and their historiological basis’, though all exhibitions can only reflect the thinking and design fads at the time of their creation (‘What Goes On in War Museums’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). He also produced a document detailing the display of weaponry in the 1990 galleries, arguing that their lack of explicitness did not ‘give any true picture of what combat was like, or how it changed during the war... [nor did they] illustrate wartime problems of production and procurement’. This subsequently became a matter which could be addressed within the new galleries through integration into the exhibition narrative and to ‘make better use of one of our most comprehensive collections’ (‘Integrating Small Arms and Small Arms Ammunition into the New First World War Gallery’, Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

⁹⁶¹ Internal Memorandum from (Director General) Alan Borg to (Exhibitions Officer) Penny Ritchie Calder, ‘Additional Gallipoli/New East exhibitions’, 02/03/90, IWM ExPA0254, emphasis original. Laurie Milner was based in the Department of Research and Information, in charge of various sections of the previous First World War galleries.

⁹⁶² Initially it had been intended to conduct a survey of the collections, in the same spirit of Section 5.4. However the vastness of the archival collections defeated attempts to complete this within the time available, and this was before the story of the galleries had been agreed upon (Cornish, 2015). In time, a framework was created to make collection-based research ‘much more focused’ (there would eventually be ten non-IWM owned objects displayed within the galleries). In contrast to the cluttered nature of the previous galleries, there was accordingly reference within the Regen Team office to ‘let objects breathe’, with fewer being spread out over a larger space. However LM remarked that it was of ‘little surprise that many of the objects used last time around have been used again. The 1990s galleries had outgrown their environment because of interpretation, our audiences’ needs, not because it didn’t have inherent value’ (Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14). This demonstrated that redisplay could present the same material but convey completely different messages. Such overhauls emphasize a sense of distance, and therefore a relative break with past practice, which was expressed as their relatively static display techniques were no longer relevant, because of wider changes in the Museum’s audience requirements. In April 2010, an assessment of the former galleries steered the formulation of questions which the new galleries would endeavour to answer (See ‘A Floor Gallery Content, April 2010’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

All of these objects, having witnessed and survived the conflict, act as tokens of war - permeated with a heightened authenticity that can elicit an emotional reaction amongst visitors who encounter them.⁹⁶³ Situated within an 'enriched learning environment' featuring a constructed narrative driven by displayed evidence, each individual item therefore had to earn its keep by playing a justifiable role within the narrative – either making a broader point within the brief or telling a potential story of loss, endurance, courage or destruction:

'...each object itself carries part of the story, that the broader historical narrative informs our understanding of these objects and gives them context, and that there is an interesting dialogue between the source and the narrative which helps us to discover meaning in the past, as we order the evidence and begin to construct our own interpretations'.⁹⁶⁴

Thus the selection of objects, and their subsequent presentation, would be '...guided by the underlying chain of arguments' contained within the narrative, rather than the power of the object.⁹⁶⁵ The Team used post-it notes and images of exhibitions to

⁹⁶³ Otto has commented that such 'fragments from the past' emphasise 'an inherent metonymic relationship', acting as both the medium and the message (2009; 339). In assisting with visualising the past, Pearce (1994; 196) writes that an object can 'reduce a large and complex experience, like the Somme, to a smaller and simpler scale of which people can make some sense. They make public events private, and move history into the personal sphere'. However object agency remains ultimately controlled by curators. For Kjeldbaek, the historical museum works with objects that are 'mute', meaning that 'what such objects end up saying is very dependent upon what other knowledge we have and the way we put the objects to use' (2009; 26).

⁹⁶⁴ Salmons, 'Touching the Past: Reading Artefacts and the Search for Meaning' (Imperial War Museum Holocaust Project), accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. Objects 'become immensely powerful, meaningful and evocative once narrative and context have been established' and could be used to broach new understanding amongst visitors. Having acquired them, museums take on a duty to provide them with a new display meaning if appropriate. An example of this was the Regen Team's reference to the idea that the display strategy of the former First World War galleries had relied upon 'Grandpa Guides'. This argued that the Museum had delved the responsibility of interpreting objects on display to individuals within visitor groups, so that the IWM could avoid active engagement with the difficult subjects within its remit. The archival evidence I uncovered for Chapter 5 did not support the concept that these galleries were targeted at families who knew about their relatives' experiences of the First World War. Whilst that belief may have been applicable for the Second World War galleries, it seems more likely to have been a value applied retrospectively by the Regen Team, in order to justify the comparatively braver interpretive approach they would be pursuing. Furthermore strong emphasis was placed upon the former galleries' 'labyrinthine' nature, which not only reflected thought processes at the time of their creation, this provided a point of justification to emphasize the comparative 'clarity' of the new galleries' layout.

⁹⁶⁵ Appel (2009; 104). Each presentation of an object is 'a selective narrative', because the curator engages in a rhetorical act of persuasion (Pearce, 1994; 27). Curators must be aware of this bias of selection in risking favouring visual impact '...because of [an object's] potential attracting power and ability easily to convey elements of the narrative', which can be either an advantage or disadvantage (Monti & Keene, 2013; 7). It is also worth noting that the new galleries would capitalise upon the latest

map out the narrative, enabling them ‘to move these elements – of both narrative and exhibits – around in order to achieve a coherent story’.⁹⁶⁶



Figure 76 – LC’s Visual Mapping out of the Section ‘Feeding the Front’ on the IWM Office Stationery Cupboard (Sourced by Author)

7.4.2 – Working with Other Departments and the Selection Rationale

By this time the Regeneration Team curators were drawing upon their own collections expertise.⁹⁶⁷ They had a responsibility to ensure proper liaison with the Collections Departments to ensure they could put the best content into the gallery:

‘They can say to us ‘this is really brilliant, I love this item, maybe you can do something with it’, then we consider whether or not it fits in with the narrative, or fits in with a particular area, so it’s all just a process of consideration’.⁹⁶⁸

advances in showcase technology (mounting, lighting and environmental control methods), which had developed significantly since 1990, to provide better care for its collections.

⁹⁶⁶ Cornish (2015). See Figure 79.

⁹⁶⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. As a member of the Exhibits Department, PC was ‘able to directly access their stores and chase the right person for the right info’ (Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14).

⁹⁶⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. Equally for Macdonald’s research, the ‘love’ or fetishization of particular objects was to have ‘no place in the ‘rigorous’ ‘message-based’ model’ that they worked with (2001; 88). These exhibitions were ‘defined by the ‘messages’ to be conveyed to the public, with ‘objects’ only being included where necessary to illustrate these messages’ (2001; 85). These messages were ‘tightly linked together’, with specific messages ‘subsumed under more general ones’ and all fitting within the exhibition’s central message (2001; 85). Offered up material from IWM Collections staff did not have any guarantees of inclusion because the two criteria that guided object selection were the narrative and the visitor. Moreover though, the curators found that few of the curatorial departments ‘were aware of the importance and urgency of our project...we had to take our place among other priorities facing them, such as [the] ‘Collections Review’” (Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14). Equally LM stated a ‘mixed’ reaction

So this second core phase of the process meant that any objects had to fit into the first phase – the historical narrative that drove the displays:

‘...the object, be it whatever it is, be it a 2-D leaflet through to a great big gun, whatever it is, it has to tell part of the story, which is why we were at such pains to get the story right...telling the story correctly, as what we see as correct and the best way...if you just pick all the nice objects that look visually stimulating, but they actually are telling a completely niche or off-tangent, off-message story, then it’s pointless, so I think story first, objects second’.⁹⁶⁹

Thus the selection process involved an ambition to use the collection, ‘to get the really great stuff, give people a chance to see it, and to interact with it’, but the primary obligation remained with the narrative that would tell the story of the First World War ‘properly’.⁹⁷⁰ The process of selection was challenging because of the fact that certain areas were hugely over-represented within IWM collections. This had been a problem two decades before, but there was a newfound intent to revisit the items already out on display through ‘re-presenting them, giving them new meaning’, by virtue of their being positioned within the gallery narrative structure:⁹⁷¹

to dealings with other departments, basing this opinion on a ‘historic (and somewhat inexplicable) divide between Public Programmes [Division] and Collections’. From her perspective, it was ‘disappointing that the demands placed on the curatorial teams means that they can’t be as involved as they might like but equally disappointing that many seem steadfast in their segregation’ (Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14).

⁹⁶⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. Conversely, and possibly based on his interest in material culture, PC felt the fact that ‘for good or for ill...we can’t afford to have a barrage of interactivity...and you can’t have masses of words’ gave rise to a belief that ‘objects need to take the lead’ (Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12). Macdonald traced the equivalent process within the Science Museum galleries; ‘Despite the fact that this exhibition was to be ‘message-led rather than object-led’, [the curators] often felt themselves compelled to incorporate objects on aesthetic, affective, historical or other grounds. This passion for objects, the desire to counter within-museum criticism and awareness of the political consequences of a dearth of objects contributed to their proliferation’ (2002; 138). This understanding allies with the thinking of the IWM Redevelopment Team in Chapter 5.

⁹⁷⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. LC stated outright that putting objects in for the sake of their being within the Museum’s collections is ‘where we would go wrong’. There was contrasting testimony from JT, who having recognised the authorial process that the curators were involved in, labelled the whole approach of the exhibitions as being led by the collections and the voices in them (Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12) - thus the narrative, which had come first and foremost, was subsequently strengthened by the careful selection of objects to support its messages.

⁹⁷¹ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. SP was similarly aware of skewing the story by prioritising the selection of newly acquired objects, commenting ‘...it’s nice if we can say this has never been seen before’, that’s obviously good, but I don’t think you can let that lead you’ (Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12). Dean notes that providing a framework for objects that extends along the storyline ‘will assist the visitor...[and] lend continuity to the whole exhibition’ (1994b; 31).

'...when we are choosing items, it's thinking about, what's that going to say...to let people know that we're not just a military hardware museum, we have to, throughout the exhibition, show that range, because that range is important because we're such a democratic collections, these are objects of everyday people...to show that it's a lot more personal than perhaps people first think when they think of the museum, they think mainly of places and tanks, but actually it is more than that'.⁹⁷²

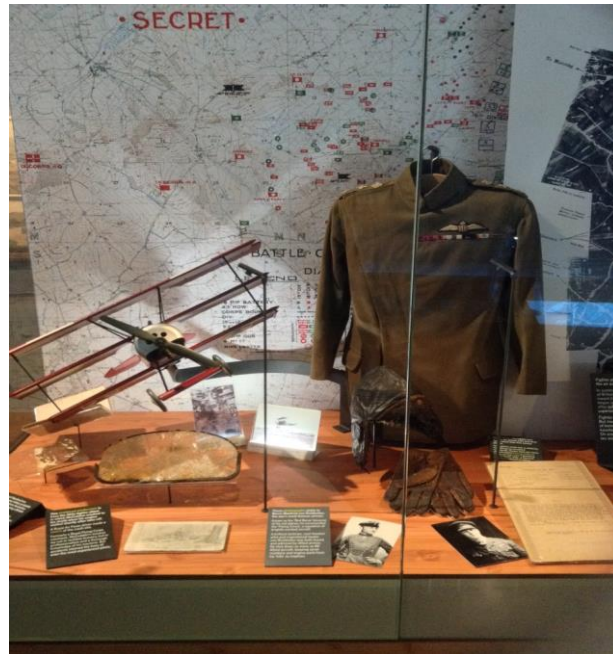


Figure 77 – *'Machines Against Men' Gallery Section (Sourced by Author)*

Objects would support the narrative as a story-telling device - even if they were not recognisable or even obscure to look at, they had 'to not be impenetrable', and the balance was therefore between 'being accessible but also telling people something more than they already know'.⁹⁷³ This again fed into the broader changes within the museum sector; that the concept of interactivity had reframed the visitor-curator relationship through its prioritisation of allowing more of a sense 'of connectedness between visitors and exhibits'.⁹⁷⁴ Both large objects and potentially

⁹⁷² Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12. This links back to the point raised in 7.1.2 about the IWM wanting to redefine a new identity for itself, and that this would be based on a rebranded image about what the Museum's purpose and objectives were.

⁹⁷³ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12. There were more practical considerations to be factored in, such as where a particular item would fit and could be displayed safely. For SP, this linked back to the Museum's dual purpose; '...as well as being a museum letting people see the objects, we are also looking after these objects on behalf of the nation, so it's important that we don't screw that up!'

⁹⁷⁴ Roppola (2012; 104).

contentious subjects were to be intentionally illustrated within a contextualised manner.⁹⁷⁵ Select art works and photographs were integrated as objects within their own right. Over the course of 2012-2014, 60 audio-visuals and digital interactives were installed to help amplify the physical objects along with delivering more multi-layered content.⁹⁷⁶



Figure 78 - *Screen shot of Digital Interactive contained within 'Breaking Down' Section (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)*

The sum of all these parts - the utilisation of these different semiotic resources and media - meant that information was being orchestrated spatially to allow meaning to be constructed for visitors.

⁹⁷⁵ This was derived from a perceived shortcoming of the former Atrium space, in which there was a lack of commonality and discernible order between First and Second World War objects, which had to jostle for visitor attention within a 'large object garage'. Equally this new mantra meant that jewels within the collections, such as the Mark V tank 'Devil', could be utilised within the gallery space.

⁹⁷⁶ From 2012, leading the content development for the audio-visual interactives and digital exhibits became the primary responsibility of IK and LM. IK latterly became involved in the sub-team developing content of the redesigned Atrium space.

7.5 – Working with the External Museum Designers



Figure 79 - 'Exhibition Making' –

A Conceptual Walkthrough of the Galleries with IWM Staff and Designers Casson Mann. Showing the galleries at their most refined and abstract, it seems remarkable to consider that something so informal was a vital component of bringing the exhibition to fruition (IWM Regeneration Network Drive)

7.5.1 – Recruitment Process

Casson Mann (CM) was selected in the summer of 2011 as the external design firm to complete the new First World War galleries – coinciding with the Regen Team's object selection process.⁹⁷⁷ From a large number of applications, a shortlist of four designers completed tenders for assessment by IWM. Interviews in April whittled numbers down to two, and CM's ability to best satisfy the IWM brief, and the scope of their exhibition ideas, saw them being selected.⁹⁷⁸ Prior experience was an additional bonus; JT had worked with Roger Mann, one of the company's two Directors, and John Pickford, who was to act as the Project Lead, had previously acted as the Lead Project Designer on the Churchill Museum at the Cabinet War

⁹⁷⁷ The contract for the galleries was completed in 2012 - see 'Consultancy Agreement between the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum and Casson Mann Ltd' (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

⁹⁷⁸ 'Exhibition Designer Tender Report', 06/05/11 (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

Rooms from 2002 to 2005.⁹⁷⁹ This was important groundwork when considering that the outcome of the new galleries would depend upon imbuing the designers with IWM's ethos and vision for the project, from which they could initiate design plans.⁹⁸⁰ The designers were to be tasked with creating an innovative space that would '...enhance the experience for the visitor and facilitate effective absorption of the exhibition message'.⁹⁸¹



Figure 80 - An Early Design Sketch for the 1917 Section 'Breaking Down'
(©Casson Mann)

7.5.2 – Interactions between Casson Mann and the Regeneration Team

The working relationship between the Regen Team members and the Casson Mann (CM) designers was quickly identified as a healthy and amiable, underpinned by a shared empathy of both being 'severely under the cosh'.⁹⁸² IK felt that CM's ability '...to take direction, historically, to take object-driven direction and story-direction, and to translate that into something which functions in an aesthetically

⁹⁷⁹ CM had also worked on the temporary IWM 'Camouflage' and 'For Your Eyes Only' Ian Fleming exhibition in 2007-2008, and on the Lord Ashcroft 'Extraordinary Heroes' Galleries at IWM London, completed in 2010.

⁹⁸⁰ Black (2012; 247). As stakeholders in the creative process, designers 'have power over the style, expression and appearance of displays' (Paddon, 2014; 91, 247). Monti & Keene have termed exhibition design as '...a selling process' in the way in which displays can attract visitors, and hold their attention whilst they transmit information about concepts or ideas (2013; 45). See also Macleod et al (2015); Bedford (2014).

⁹⁸¹ Moser (2010; 25). This shift 'reflects the concern in museum education to communicate key ideas rather than to showcase collections' and to accommodate visitor satisfaction (2010; 29).

⁹⁸² Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13.

pleasing way' was 'remarkable'.⁹⁸³ The key to this success lay in the intermediary figure of the Exhibitions Manager (BW):

'...there's been some really invaluable help from Becky Wakeford, she's absolutely brilliant, so she's been [very] helpful in giving us all the designer's eye...We can always go to her and say look, from the visitors' point of view, what do you think if we displayed it like this, or I've got this difficult object and I can't think of any inspiration of how to display it, and she'll be able to come up with something, so she's been a really good link' ⁹⁸⁴

In brokering engagements between designers and curators, BW's experiences of the practical issues, such as how visitors act within exhibition space, was critical in ensuring that the two sides of the partnership were able to see eye to eye, and achieve a harmonious vision.⁹⁸⁵ As things went on and the Regen Team curators gained more experience, they recognised occasions when there was a need to be more directive, to ensure that the designers understood the intended messages contained within each section.⁹⁸⁶ There was 'a good batting back and forward process' between curators and designers, with the former aware that their workplace was paying the bills, meaning that '...ultimately we have the ability to say to them look, we just can't do that, for whatever reason...we're the client'.⁹⁸⁷ Often the reason for when things became more difficult was a combination of a lack of available space with curators' striving to include more objects to back the galleries' narrative. LC felt that the best way to negate this was through co-operative one-on-one meetings between herself and the designer, to foster a shared trust of judgement:

'...I would like to sit together with you [in front of the designer's computer], I can tell you in the flesh what I'm thinking...awareness of space, that's her job, my job is to say well that has to sit beside that object, this cluster of objects

⁹⁸³ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13. See also Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14.

⁹⁸⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. BW was previously a Senior Designer in the Exhibitions Department, and had worked on several of the temporary First World War exhibitions documented in Chapter 6.

⁹⁸⁵ PC perceived that the Regen Team curators were not as able to 'see the pitfalls inherent in the physical element from a design perspective' (Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12), so interaction with the designers was key in rectifying this.

⁹⁸⁶ See Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

⁹⁸⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. At one design meeting, on being questioned by the designers about whether an object's message was too vague, PC expressed hotly 'I'll decide what goes in this case' (JW IWM Research Diary, 03/02/12).

tells this story, and she has to accept that and appreciate and help me craft it, and it was a brilliant way of working with her...much better than emails or faceless interaction'.⁹⁸⁸

Thus the bringing in of specialist external design companies was impacting upon the process of exhibition development, as McManus observes; 'Having to explain yourself to people... from outside means that, at the same time, you explain what you are doing to yourself'.⁹⁸⁹ Rather than dealing with an in-house designer, as had been common practice within many institutions in previous years, now a layer of ensuring clarity of meaning had been added into the practice of making new exhibitions.⁹⁹⁰ This external design culture has helped to open up the practice of exhibition development more generally, as the new team-orientated approach helped to 'raise creativity, productivity and [would] produce...cohesive, well-thought-out displays which will appeal to identified target audiences'.⁹⁹¹ However, whilst the Regen Team curators did not therefore have sole authorship over the displays, they retained a position of limited authority over the designers through their ability to say 'no' to design ideas.⁹⁹² As outlined in Section 7.2.4, the ability '...to compromise, negotiate and discern among conflicting pressures is now a necessary requirement of the museum professional'.⁹⁹³ However Paddon discerns that there are usually certain stages during a redevelopment process whereby tensions can lead to an 'us and them' mentality'.⁹⁹⁴ Conflicts were rare during this process, as trade-offs balancing the curatorial vision and the designer's vision often brought about reasonable compromises for those occasions where ideas could not be fully realised.⁹⁹⁵ PC commended CM for being willing '...to allow us to have the final word on content from

⁹⁸⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. The IWM curators had direct contact with the designers, to discuss design solutions as sanctioned by the Exhibition Managers. Outcomes were governed by financial implications, with most decisions favouring costs being reduced rather than introduced (such as inserting new interactives or requesting larger showcases); see Paddon (2014; 64).

⁹⁸⁹ McManus (2011; 32).

⁹⁹⁰ Paddon (2014; 62) observes that the curators are now '...expected to hand over this creative process to the designers and renounce their former design ownership'.

⁹⁹¹ Paddon (2014; 65); McManus (2011; 32). Advances in computer design programme technology allowed curators expectation to be realised during the compilation process, because they could comment upon the look of specific aspects of the exhibition before they were physically installed.

⁹⁹² Black suggests that as exhibitions have become '...more complex, more expensive and more focused on the design media, the power of design companies has grown' to the extent that they now sit within a whole commercial industry (2012; 244, 246). See also Macleod et al (2015; 315).

⁹⁹³ Monti & Keene (2013; 8).

⁹⁹⁴ Paddon (2014; 97).

⁹⁹⁵ See Paddon (2014; 96). PC felt that it had initially been difficult 'to assess where our [IWM] input ended and where theirs [CM] began' (Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14).

an historical perspective and frequently offered display ideas which we would never have conceived of ourselves'.⁹⁹⁶ Likewise LM termed the designers as 'committed to making the exhibition the best it could be and it was always rewarding to encounter their enthusiasm, ambition and 'vision'...even disagreements felt as though they were coming from a shared desire for the best possible outcome'.⁹⁹⁷ The dynamics of such a close working relationship with both a unity and clarity of vision was crucial to ensure a successful outcome.



Figure 81 - Dressing the 'Shock' Showcase (Sourced by Author)

⁹⁹⁶ Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14. Examples of this included the 'Shock' projection near the galleries' opening section (See Figures 86 and 87), in addition to the film and photographic resources utilised in the 'Seizing Victory' projections that dealt with 1918.

⁹⁹⁷ Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14. LM further cited the importance of the designers' enthusiasm for the topic, alongside the sociable interaction between curators and designers, which helped to maintain their productive and strong working relationship.

7.6 – The Regeneration Team in Practice through the Process

7.6.1 – Managing the Workload

The scheduling of the design programme saw the workload pressure become increasingly apparent to the small number of the Regeneration Team members. Scheduling was a major bug-bear, but came with an acceptance that little could be done to ease its intensity. Often it was the requirement for tasks to be completed well in advance that caused issues, such as ordering showcases and audio-visual (AV) equipment. PC was able to cope with this through an admirable diligence of literally leaving his work behind within the office at the end of the day:

‘I don’t mind the workload too much, in the sense that I cut off, I go home and I don’t carry on doing it, I don’t mind a deadline in a sense because this is [why] I did the job, one of the reasons...from one extreme to the other!’⁹⁹⁸

Nevertheless his frustrations materialised in concentrating his efforts on time-consuming outputs that never came to fruition, or were never consulted.⁹⁹⁹ It was this that IK also identified as the problem; not the ‘heavy and pressured’ workload, but the ‘tendency for things to crop up’ unexpectedly.¹⁰⁰⁰ LM felt that these so-called

⁹⁹⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12. For PC, the finite nature of the project and the high-profile deadline for the finished tangible output was a ‘big lure’, in stark contrast to the open-ended nature of his previous curatorial role.

⁹⁹⁹ ‘Distractions’ from other departments that detracted from the primary aim of working on the new galleries were consistent in their presence throughout the process for the Regen Team. PC highlighted presentations he put together for the Marketing Department for the sponsorable strands of the exhibition, which he believed were never used (Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14). There were also multiple entries on various topics, such as battlefield tourism, Empire stories and the history of the IWM Building, completed by individual Team members for the online ‘Transforming IWM London’ blog. Only seven contributions from the Team were ever uploaded online, out of an eventual total of 96 (<http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/>; accessed 05/04/15). This blog was designed to give virtual visitors a ‘behind-the-scenes look at this transformation as we document our progress, challenges, innovations and discoveries’ during the building’s transformation (<http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/project/>; accessed 05/04/15). As further evidence of the Museum opening up its inner workings to online visitors, the installation process was captured via time lapse videos. This documented how large objects, such as the Mark V tank, were positioned within the gallery space. There was also one clip showing the conservation of Margaret Gwyer’s camisole from RMS Lusitania, after which PC subsequently narrates the video of its installation within a showcase that forms part of the section ‘World War’ (<http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2014/07/how-to-install-a-tank/>; <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2014/04/the-camel-the-tank-and-the-crane/>; <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2014/07/our-countdown-continues/>; accessed 05/04/15). An entry I compiled for this blog, considering the parallels and differences between the two sets of permanent galleries, was instead uploaded onto the IWM Research Blog (<http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/research/2014/07/iwm-first-world-war-exhibitions-then-and-now/>; accessed 05/04/15).

¹⁰⁰⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13. IK accepted the intensity of the workload as something that came with the territory of creating a permanent exhibition, recording

‘distractions’ were born out of the fact that much of the work being completed by other IWM departments had to ‘involve or stem from us, so when you think about development or marketing, press and so on, they have to have input from us’.¹⁰⁰¹

From JT’s overall perspective, he recognised that the curators would deal with pressure in different ways, so long as they continued to meet their shared goal and targets were still achieved.¹⁰⁰² PC saw JT as ‘very adept at delegating research tasks and not attempting to micro-manage’, which thereafter fostered a level of trust and respect between the other members of the Team.¹⁰⁰³ Equally there was a sense of camaraderie in an equal workload, producing high quality content; from PC’s perspective, the whole process ‘would have been insupportable if one didn’t feel that one’s colleagues were going to produce the right sort of content’.¹⁰⁰⁴ This lay in part with the fact that the fourteen story areas had been split amongst SP, LC and PC in September 2011, which had helped to provide each section with a sense of ownership and direct responsibility.¹⁰⁰⁵ For LC, the benefit of this was in the on-going object selection process:

‘...one is working furiously hard in the short term in order to make sure that what is there in long term is good’.

¹⁰⁰¹ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13. LM felt it was the responsibility of the Regen Team curators’ superiors to ‘say no, occasionally’, when demands became excessive. As one illustration, there were various publishing and external media requests placed upon the Team, often with very short deadlines (JW IWM Research Diary, Regen Team Meeting, 25/10/12). LM observed that such requirements occasionally ‘placed a great strain on an already bursting workload’, but never to the point of negativity. It also provided greater direct contact with other departments within the Museum, which helped to break down some of the insularity between departments (Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14).

¹⁰⁰² Reflecting back on proceedings, PC remarked ‘Obviously, as you may have noticed, we all have our quirks and occasionally exasperating habits – but in my view these only served to create some added amusement around the place (a lot of wee radgies, but few full-on skadge-attacks!)’ [Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14]. ‘Radgies’ and ‘skadge-attacks’ were phrases used by LC, and used as references within the Office as a measure of extreme stress. It was commonly acknowledged within the Team that, as a reactive process, PC was adept at meeting deadlines well in advance, and was always doing reading. On the other hand, LC used to get ‘het up’, as JT put it, and would work extremely long hours, as well as maintaining frequent correspondence to obtain his approval. On occasion, she stood up to work, for fear of falling asleep (JW IWM Research Diary, 25/10/12). Both SP and LM also found that working at weekends, and for much longer hours than they were contracted for, was the only way of dealing with the intensity of the workload (Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13). JT ‘was loathed to impose any uniform way of working’ upon individuals, so long as each approach provided the necessary results (Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12).

¹⁰⁰³ Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14.

¹⁰⁰⁵ It was common for sections to be given possessive pronouns in everyday conversations. Macdonald (2002; 111) suggests that this was about granting Team members ‘a sense of authorship’, and that bringing together these different components to fit together ‘was a joint task’, carried out in Team meetings and Design meetings. Equally there was an onus on Team members as having taken

'...if I'm looking for something, and I'm hunting, trying to track something down for my section, and I come across [something] that's really good for Sophie's section, I have faith that her and Paul, all the time, are always saying to me, find this for you... I know that I can rely on them to give me recommendations for things, vice versa, I would always endeavour if I find something that I think well that would suit their section, to pass it onto them, to let them know about it, because I know that it's really important that because of the vastness of the collection...you need a bit of help, so I think we're quite good at looking out for each other in that sense'.¹⁰⁰⁶

Such a co-operative dynamic was vital for such a small group. Conversely though, it gave way to the establishment of an increasingly detached identity amongst the wider Museum:

'...its temporary nature, the historic role of R&I within the Museum, and it is sort-of straddling these positions between collections and learning...I think Regen fits into that as well...sliding into that strange little abyss that exists between those two spheres... I do kind-of see it as its own little island really'.

¹⁰⁰⁷

on responsibility for representation, having engaged in critical inquiry with their associated subject matter (Marstine, 2006; 19).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13. One episode saw PC discover the irretrievable removal of some Jpeg picture files from the IWM online Network Drive; citing the potential fall-out for the work on the audio-visual interactives, he remarked 'You have to fight through in order to get anything done...It's like sabotage...everyone trying to sabotage our efforts' (JW IWM Research Diary, 01/11/12). IK concurred with this view of Regen Team detachment, reasoning that museums in general 'are quite tribal', and that 'there is a strong sense that one tribe or another have to stick together' (Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13). For McCall & Gray (2014; 27, 32) this fragmentation of polarised groups is due to the fact that departments are in a continuous struggle over typically limited resources, combined with some staff within curatorial departments still hanker after their more traditional roles and not wanting to accept the changes of 'new museology'. They promote the view that the effective implementation and embedding of 'new museology' ideas 'depends on the degree to which workers themselves believe in its related values' (2014; 31).



Figure 82 – *Design Concept for the new First World War Galleries.*

© Casson Mann (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)

7.6.2 – Internal Changes: Sophie Pigott’s Departure

Sophie Pigott had pointed out in interview the challenging economic climate, and that ‘forces beyond our control’ had placed a ‘stress on the amount of resources we’ve got available to do all the tasks’.¹⁰⁰⁸ Having been involved in the process from the outset, and having led on several of the gallery sections, the dynamics of the Regeneration Team were severely altered with her departure to a new job with the National Trust in January 2013.¹⁰⁰⁹ Over the fourteen months in a research support role with the Regen Team, LM had gradually acquired more responsibilities in the form of the content for the Audio-Visuals (AVs). When SP left, LM was asked to take over her exhibition areas:

‘...it’s quite exciting to have the opportunity to step-up, as it were, because it is a step-up from what I was doing before...it means I understand the exhibition far better than I did before, because even though you are working on it, you’re kind of working on it in a slightly peripheral way, whereas now, I actually have to know all of these objects and why they’re there, which is not something I

¹⁰⁰⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12

¹⁰⁰⁹ The whole design process was fairly advanced by this time; LC suggested that SP’s sense of having contributed tangibly to proceedings made it easier for her when leaving, but that losing a member of such a small team was difficult (JW IWM Research Diary, 24/01/13). SP maintained contact with the Regen Team, visiting them in December 2013 to check up on their progress, and returning again for the galleries’ opening.

was involved with before, I wasn't involved with the selection of the objects'.

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Taking over SP's role was 'not without its challenges' for LM. This suggested that the intensity of the process had created a particularly strong bond between the three original curators, and that trying to match their level of expertise was difficult:

'I very often felt I had to pedal at a million miles an hour just to try and catch up...Not being involved in the creation of the narrative and the object selections made it sometimes difficult to then become a spokesperson for those things. So I was always a little aware – perhaps too much so – of the fear of stepping on another's toes'.¹⁰¹¹

She therefore remained aware of a sense of ownership over the sections she inherited, by virtue of the effort that SP had exerted in creating them.¹⁰¹² Coupled back to the extensive changes to the intensity of her role within the project, LM found herself referring back to previously shared concerns; that the parameters of her responsibilities 'were not as clear as I might have hoped which led to a mixture of insecurity and sometimes despondency'.¹⁰¹³

This 'fairly comprehensive re-ordering of who did what' caused disruption for the Regen Team.¹⁰¹⁴ Even though it was felt that the impact from this situation was 'reasonably well absorbed', it left them with a renewed sense of panic over how little slack this gave for the remainder of the process; IK commented 'I don't think there

¹⁰¹⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13. LM looked back upon taking on one of the most challenging sections, 'War Without End', which 'required a fair bit of work'. JT had termed it 'a swine of an area', based on the fact that it still needed captions which would 'require head-scratching and brain-hurting' (JW IWM Research Diary, 15/01/13). This provided LM with a chance to put her mark on this area, 'gain experience in microcosm to what [PC, LC, and SP] had already done' and subsequently boost her confidence. Though she retained a 'sense of insecurity' throughout the remaining process, she enjoyed the 'extra responsibility, greater challenge and the fantastic opportunity for what it was...The last six months were especially rewarding as I felt more sure and therefore more confident and able in my role' (Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14).

¹⁰¹¹ Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14.

¹⁰¹² There was a handover meeting on 15/01/13. Equally both LM and IK retained a sense of ownership over their audio-visuals and interactives, even though these sat within others' exhibition areas.

¹⁰¹³ Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14. At the handover meeting between SP and LM, BW had stated her awareness of LM's existing workload on the audio-visuals, and reassured her by saying directly 'You are not doing it on your own'. JT also clarified that the division of labour needed to be 'reapportioned', rather than just passed straight on to LM (JW IWM Research Diary, 15/01/13).

¹⁰¹⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13.

was much to start with, but there is now more or less none'.¹⁰¹⁵ It was known that there would not be a replacement for SP, because of the strain on available resources, meaning that her workload would be redistributed on top of existing ones:

'...we are short in numbers now, because we have one less person, that just means there is that much more to do, and I think that necessarily leads to some difficulties...in terms of the scheduling, I think two things happened at the same time that didn't help at all, Sophie left and then a lot of things were due at the same time – had they been spread out a bit more, then that might have been easier...that's left us feeling for the rest of the year actually, that we are always slightly behind'.¹⁰¹⁶

This was exacerbated by two further factors; firstly the rigmarole of relocating offices, and then when the design resources were reduced.¹⁰¹⁷ As the pressure ramped up, with the whole design process seeming like an unstoppable juggernaut, the Regen Team found there was now only one Casson Mann designer dealing with their specific requests (others had been sourced to complete design work for the Atrium space and other projects).¹⁰¹⁸ The fact that such a volume of work all had to go via one individual slowed the process down significantly, duly frustrating the IWM Team when they had to chase things up.¹⁰¹⁹ By the same token it meant that BW, as the orchestrator of adhering to the timetable, was forced to take on more of a 'bad cop' role, in order to ensure that the whole process stayed on an even keel.¹⁰²⁰ The

¹⁰¹⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13.

¹⁰¹⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13. LM latterly commented that 'more people would have lessened the strain...there would have been more time to think, read and research both in terms of narrative and objects' (Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14). Though one might consider it as an unnecessary indulgence given what was eventually achieved, a lack of staff resources would, more than anything else, prove to be the most challenging aspect of producing the galleries, as was supported by my long-term observations of the Team.

¹⁰¹⁷ On the project's completion, PC considered that the most frustrating thing for him had been 'being obliged to lead a nomadic existence – having to move offices five times in the course of the project and spending too much of it crammed into an inadequate office' (Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14). Such regular logistical upheaval proved challenging, particularly given the pressure on the number of desk spaces leading to little storage space being made available for reading material.

¹⁰¹⁸ Black (2012; 246).

¹⁰¹⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13. LM stressed that it was no reflection on the capabilities of this sole designer, Ruhel Ahmed-Akash (Senior Designer), and that the Regen Team were aware of the scale of the task that he faced.

¹⁰²⁰ Before this, I had observed in my Research Diary that there were unresolved tensions growing between the curators and BW's requirement to stick to the timetable, with JT caught between the two (JW IWM Research Diary, 03/04/13). I subsequently raised this observation with LM, who was in agreement over it, but reasoned that it was something that BW had been forced to take on 'because things need to be done' (Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13). At Design Meetings, BW adopted a much tougher stance on decision-making, removing content when things

added pressure placed upon the Team put them in a state of mind whereby they were always hoping that their workload might ease off having hit a particular deadline, but they soon realised the reality was always different:

‘we’ve kept thinking...maybe things will die down, but they just won’t, because we’re a person down, so this is, this is the reality for, for the duration now, I don’t have much of a social life, let’s sum it up that way!’¹⁰²¹

External parties commented on the intense personal involvement and strain of the internal workload that the Team were being placed under, particularly the weight placed upon JT who had been expected to maintain his existing responsibilities as Head of R&I.¹⁰²² Conversations often stemmed back to the knotty areas that still required resolution; amongst other ‘troublesome’ sections, the final section, rather than ‘War Without End’, was sometimes known as ‘Exhibition Without End’.¹⁰²³

Looking back, LM felt that there had been periods in which ‘in which communication and (seems a bit grandiose to say it but...) morale has broken down’.¹⁰²⁴ I noted in my Research Diary around the time that SP left a sense that the Regen Team considered the intense strain they found themselves under after over two and a half years, in spite of the strain from this lack of resources, and the knowledge of waiting critics helping to unite them.¹⁰²⁵ By the end of the year, I reflected upon the toll this had taken:

had to give (JW IWM Research Diary, Showcase Layout Meeting for ‘Life at the Front’, 03/04/13). The Volunteer Showcase in ‘Your Country Needs You’ was modified heavily at this meeting, with LC instructed to make points using minimal objects.

¹⁰²¹ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13.

¹⁰²² See Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 19/05/14. When catching up with JW, JT often referred to the whole process as being in a ‘mental period’ (JW IWM Research Diary, Galleries Update to Publishing/Press/Marketing, 12/12/13).

¹⁰²³ JW IWM Research Diary, 15/01/13.

¹⁰²⁴ Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14. The Museum’s appointment of a Change Director in late 2013, which would bring in a comprehensive restructuring scheme, and the threat of redundancy, had a negative impact upon team morale. On the other hand, LM suggested that the programme’s final six months were a particularly productive period because, by that time, ‘we all knew very well what we were doing, what others were doing and how we could rely on one another’. I sensed the prevailing mood within the Team Office was that they would try to enjoy the remaining period for what it was – a very intense working period packed with deadlines - and to do their utmost to worry about what might come next once the galleries had been completed. By this time, the institution knew that it would have to increase its commercial income through visitor spend on site, because its Government grant had been cut. Accordingly the institution acknowledged that it would have to accommodate more corporate business events on site, whilst maintaining its duty of care for its collections (See ‘Project Initiation Document – Regeneration: First World War Centenary Project’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹⁰²⁵ One aspect that helped the Regen Team prepare for an anticipated barrage of hostility was through the numerous and regular formal presentation updates given to other Museum Departments.

‘Office is quiet. Atmosphere feels staggered, running on reserves. Perhaps the pressure of Christmas deadlines has now eased but the New Year will be intense, particularly on the AV Front...‘War Without End’ getting somewhere but still groping about for finality’.¹⁰²⁶

7.6.3 – The Drive to See Things Through

The threat of a breakdown or mutiny never materialised, staved off by a hardened sense of determination amongst a small and enclosed working group who prided themselves on their productivity. The intensified pressure saw angst become more common, though issues rarely flared into conflicts; most problems were channelled through the project manager, and often resolved quickly and without the need to go higher up the managerial structure.¹⁰²⁷ The atmosphere within the Office was one of inter-dependence upon each team member contributing on a consistent basis, and a real sense of common cause. As Macdonald observed in her studies on the Science Museum, I did not get the impression that the Team saw themselves as ‘puppets’ within the process, but had a clear drive and enthusiasm for what they were doing, and recognised their collective importance in achieving the overall outcome of the revamped Museum.¹⁰²⁸ The Team were sociable together, and supportive of each other; when working, conversations were good-natured, and a dry sense of humour with some particularly amusing tales pervaded the whole way through the making of the galleries:

LC – ‘Have they cancelled the exhibitions?’

HD – ‘No such luck’

This provided a good opportunity to prepare for any potential criticisms within a relatively friendly environment, and the responses the Team developed to common questions became suitably polished as things built up to the galleries’ opening. Questions that rankled with the Team was the ‘object-lite’ observation, because of the fact that there were fewer objects on display than previously, and the perceived omissions of particular topics (See Macdonald, 2002; 137 for similar experiences with the Science Museum Exhibition Team, and the suggestion that featuring fewer objects ‘seemed to impugn their identity as curators’). However the exhibition’s overall coherence and clarity of its message was often praised at these occasions.

¹⁰²⁶ JW IWM Research Diary, 18/12/13.

¹⁰²⁷ This was aided by the implementation of clear communication channels. See Paddon (2014; 40-41) for five types of resolution techniques employed to help negate potential conflict within teams (‘Forcing’, ‘Smoothing’, ‘Compromising’, ‘Problem-solving’ and ‘Withdrawal’).

¹⁰²⁸ Macdonald (2002; 92).

IK – ‘Can’t we just have a big bouncy castle instead? A bouncy map of Europe!’¹⁰²⁹

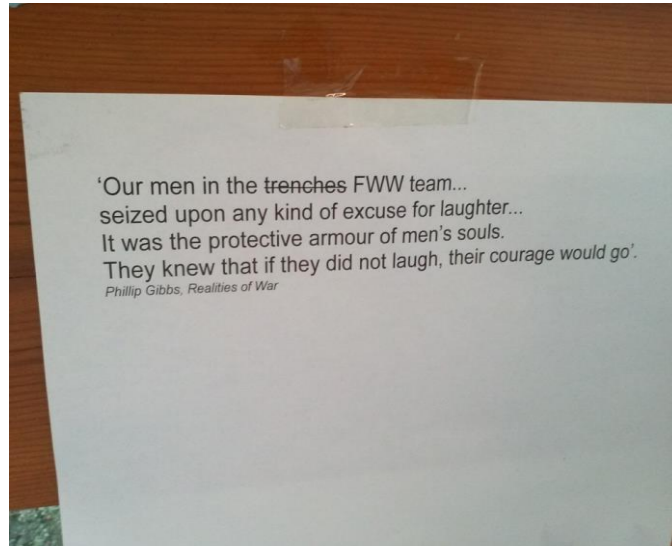


Figure 83 – *An Example of Office Humour*

(Sourced by Author)

This ability to work together effectively happened because there was trust between members to deliver content or to meet deadlines, and team meetings promoted an environment where opinions and thoughts could be expressed freely.¹⁰³⁰ BW/LW would lead these informal occasions.¹⁰³¹ They provided a chance to reassert any looming deadlines that needed to be achieved at each stage of the project, and checked that communication between all parties and the designers was being maintained. As Paddon notes, the ‘cascading of information from the project

¹⁰²⁹ JW Research Diary, 14/03/14. Other examples that caused much laughter amongst the Team’s ranks was BW’s suggestion for an interactive, based on a parrot that had hiccupped itself to death on the news of the Armistice! (JW IWM Research Diary, 11/01/12). A second interactive was proposed as a ‘Tache Off’; comparing how a visitor measured up against the best military moustaches of the War, including Russian General Aleksei Brusilov and a Russian Ambassador (JW IWM Research Diary, CM Stage D Meeting, 03/02/12).

¹⁰³⁰ PC spoke of an ‘atmosphere of trust’ that enabled the Team to ‘maintain a surprising degree of continuity’ over the whole process (Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14).

¹⁰³¹ The office in the Main Building, D11, was a poor working environment due to its lack of air circulation and because there was no natural light (all windows were sealed off because of the building work to the Main Building). It was also a crowded space, which LC termed its atmosphere ‘stupefying’ on one occasion, and that she was going to work from home for the rest of that day (JW IWM Research Diary, 05/09/12). Upon moving back into that same office in late 2013, I observed in my Research Diary; ‘Moved back into Main Building. Office has a sense of familiarity, but the lights seem brighter, the space more constricted, the pressure more intense’ (JW IWM Research Diary 08/10/13).

manager through to the other team members, and vice versa, is the main stay of project effectiveness'.¹⁰³² My impression was that these meetings were facilitated when needed – certainly not on a consistent basis, but this was more down to the fact that it was challenging to get everyone together in the same room at the same time. There was also the factor that updates could be provided on a more informal basis as they developed, because of the fact that everyone was situated in the same office, so the passing on of information or changes was always relatively speedy. In most instances, staff would come over to someone's desk, and request to 'sit down together' to discuss the issue at hand. Furthermore the curators' were granted sufficient trust in being able to meet at Casson Mann (CM) and engage directly with the designers, occasionally without immediate supervision (though any updates or changes would be reported afterwards via the established lines of communication). Regular design meetings would take place at CM's offices at Old Street in London, and were typically lengthy but methodical in the way that they ploughed through vast quantities of information and refined sections.¹⁰³³ It was here that decisions were coordinated and agreed, 'thus maintaining project progressions within time frames and budgets'.¹⁰³⁴ It was very much a process of approval, which required constant assessment and checking in order to progress. Naturally there were instances of friction, exasperation and frustration arising from differences of opinion, which tended to arise from a lack of communication, or the slow progress of feedback between the Regen Team and the designers.¹⁰³⁵ On occasion, things boiled over – typically when the IWM staff perceived that they were completing a job that they felt CM should be doing. As had been the case in Chapter 5 (See Section 5.11.2) the other major bone of contention was when pressure was placed upon the IWM team to complete something for a CM deadline, and this material was then ignored or it subsequently emerged that it was not needed as urgently as had originally been made out.¹⁰³⁶ One instance of frustration recorded in my Research Diary was when

¹⁰³² Paddon (2014; 45).

¹⁰³³ One design meeting at Casson Mann on 09/01/12 ran from 1000 to 2100 (JW IWM Research Diary).

¹⁰³⁴ Paddon (2014; 45). See also Dean (1994a; 197-198).

¹⁰³⁵ Having received something back, often the IWM wanted a 'stage of digestion' (JW IWM Research Diary, 11/01/12) whereas CM operated on faster turnaround times (though they were on occasion guilty of building up backlogs).

¹⁰³⁶ In January 2012, there was an office discussion regarding how CM were not using all the spreadsheets 'lovingly' put together by the Regen Team, and that they wanted to stand over their shoulder to 'watch them work – see what they are actually using' (JW IWM Research Diary, 11/01/12).

LC learned that CM had removed some planned showcases for the Empire Wall, at the beginning of the exhibition, who expressed displeasure at the fact that her work had been ‘thrown away...just like that’.¹⁰³⁷ However there was always empathy expressed for, rather any animosity towards, individuals. Furthermore the IWM managers (JT/BW/LW) remained aware of the pressures but knew that there could be no let up with such an unforgiving timescale.¹⁰³⁸ The whole all-consuming process consisted of stages of filtering and constant re-focusing, particularly through the design phases. There seemed to be a concerted effort to limit the involvement of wider individuals within the process – the skill was to select the right time to obtain the thoughts of those not directly involved in the process, and there was always a necessity for plans to be passed through those higher up the hierarchy, but a sense of collective endeavour and common cause amongst the curators meant that they saw themselves as best placed to judge any developments.

7.7 - The Exhibition Environment

7.7.1 – Roppola and Controlling Space

Here I return to Roppola’s work to sketch out some thinking on the process of designing exhibition spaces. Visitors find satisfaction with multidimensionality within these environments, ‘when exhibits draw on multiple representational resources simultaneously...where three-dimensional model and image and text combine to form a more complex whole’.¹⁰³⁹ An exhibition’s priority is for information to be layered within the limited space available, in order to tell a tangible, sensorial story:

‘Exhibition environments are by nature stylised representations, consisting of select fragments of some extramuseological circumstance’.¹⁰⁴⁰

Through a creative process defined by Roppola as ‘Resonating’, visitors are drawn to objects by the colour and design of their surrounding physical atmosphere.¹⁰⁴¹

¹⁰³⁷ JW Research Diary Notes, 28/11/13. Probably driven by budgetary considerations, the situation eased after LC had had a meeting with Ann Carter, the Head of the IWM Regeneration Project.

¹⁰³⁸ Again the role of the project manager becomes more important as demands increase; ‘Judging budgets, people and time, the project manager must be diligent, able to make decisions, lead their time and communicate effectively’ (Paddon, 2014; 63).

¹⁰³⁹ Roppola, (2012; 121).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Roppola (2012; 171).

¹⁰⁴¹ See Roppola (2012; 124-173). See also Monti & Keene (2013; 244) who discuss colour as being a ‘valuable tool in display design’ because it catches peoples’ imagination and can be ‘employed to create a certain atmosphere or to elicit specific behaviour’ (2013; 47). Reference to colour, and a desire to include something other than the predominantly grey, green and brown that made up much

Inquisitiveness is rewarded within this exhibition space, where the interpretive media of dramatic lighting and sound are employed to catch visitors' attention, and draw it towards the objects on display. It is commonplace now for institutions to want to 'wow' their visitors, inviting them into spaces that simultaneously challenge and engage them.¹⁰⁴² Exhibitions are encountered as 'an unfolding in space and in time...something that one must advance through to experience'.¹⁰⁴³ The Regen Team adhered to the perceived requirements of their visitors by taking into account the amount of effort expended as visitors progressed through the exhibition space. They understood that visitors can get frustrated with illogical or unclear exhibition spaces, or lose interest when undue effort is demanded, thus severing the thread of sustained engagement.¹⁰⁴⁴ The design of the exhibition space was crucial, because 'how the construction of space encourages people to move is a fundamental concern'.¹⁰⁴⁵ As a designated spatial communicatory device, the galleries were to be sequential, fundamentally reliant on what had gone before and what was coming next.¹⁰⁴⁶ Visitors were channelled through the space, encountering key objects along their way. Based on the findings of the 2011 Audience Evaluation Report, the Regen Team were explicitly channelling visitors to follow the exhibition through logically and sequentially, via a prescriptive pathway, in order to aid their understanding (but allowing enough spatial freedom for those visitors who wanted to omit sections to not miss out on key narrative detail). Roppola's analogy of being 'led' is helpful at this point, because it demonstrates the concept of being tightly channelled 'not as

of the object colours, informed the decision to use a hessian canvas backdrop for the section 'Life at the Front' (JW IWM Research Diary, 12/12/13). See also 'Colorisation in FWW Galleries' (accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive), which cites the use of an autochrome image of a French 75mm fieldgun in action. Certain areas such as 'World War', which relied upon digital interactives to tell the story of the War away from the Western Front up to 1916, made use of 'coloured washed' photographs 'to create a sense of place, climate and atmosphere' to thereby attract and sustain visitor attention.

¹⁰⁴² Roppola (2012; 132). See also Soren (2009) on visitors' transformational experiences and heightened reactions to moving exhibit content.

¹⁰⁴³ Roppola (2012; 174). In a similar vein, Watson has commented that the '...experience in the museum cannot imitate the everyday confusion of the time, the anxiety and distress, but it allows individuals to experience something akin to the unfolding of extraordinary events' (2010; 220).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Roppola (2012; 174).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Roppola (2012; 177).

¹⁰⁴⁶ Roppola (2012; 175). Many current museums opt against prescribing linear visitor routes, to align with the view of 'self-directed learning' that involves dipping in and out of learning experiences (See Paddon, 2014; 103-4; Monti & Keene, 2013; 79). The IWM was more adamant in its belief that the logical progression would provide a sequential framework to aid visitor understanding. However, as Monti & Keene have stressed, the viewer must be '...free to receive and interpret [the exhibition] according to their personal choice' (2013; 74). The designers' intentions for visitor flow are also governed by the architectural characteristics and restrictions of the gallery space.

disparaging but as enabling'.¹⁰⁴⁷ It addresses the fact that the construct of 'channelling' is as much about taking appropriate pauses as it is about moving. Consequently, associated design choices 'need to support people who are physically dealing with being in space over time'.¹⁰⁴⁸ Though one might argue that visitors are becoming more used to reading small text on the move through mobile phones, it is certainly the case that reading is done more efficiently when people are comfortable. The need for visitors to pause, rest and be as physically comfortable as possible was recognised by the Regen Team, to allow them to focus on the exhibition content, with museum theorists noting that seating acts as a stalling device, keeping people within the vicinity of the exhibition.¹⁰⁴⁹

7.7.2 - The Team's Philosophy for the Galleries

Over the course of the design programme, the Regen Team were able to build up, and subsequently express, a coherent idea of what the galleries set out to do. It was evident that the Team were keen not just to conform to public expectation and so were happy to challenge the accepted mythologies surrounding the First World War held within the public domain head-on. The way that they did this was by adopting particular mantras that would guide the exhibition framework;

- Telling the story of the First World War from the perspective of the British Empire – India, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada – in accordance with the Museum's remit, whilst also depicting it as an unprecedented event of global impact, featuring forces and fronts in the Middle East and Northern Africa, that created a new world order
- Integrating the stories of the (British) Home and Fighting Fronts; showing the conflict as a war of attrition between nations and their citizens, fought largely by civilians, and whose prosecution depended continued popular support

¹⁰⁴⁷ Roppola (2012; 182).

¹⁰⁴⁸ Roppola (2012; 183).

¹⁰⁴⁹ See Hein (1998; 171-172). One example would be the situating of the second Debate Space in a position whereby those sitting down could view the Somme projection, to the extent where they were likely to watch it fully (and also their eyes would be drawn to the other exhibits situated within this open display section). Another example was the separately enclosed screening booth for the Battle of the Somme film, which allowed visitors to physically rest, and watch a portion of the seventy four minute long production (whilst the separate space employed consecutively communicated to visitors on a sub-conscious level that this was a lengthy film – see Roppola, 2012; 210). Music also retains a holding power, though this was only used as a small soundscape as part of the poster interactive AV in the section 'Your Country Needs You'.

- That it was the first industrial conflict
- Utilising a policy of contemporaneity to give voice to those involved, and to reveal the sheer variety of experience
- Letting objects 'breathe' in acting as pieces of visual evidence, and to drawing upon the familiar to reveal the unfamiliar or unexpected for visitors in order to aid understanding
- Enabling visitors to understand the interconnectedness of the causes, courses and consequences of the War by providing contextual sections dealing with the years that immediately precede and follow the conflict

7.7.3 – The Origins of this Philosophy

Much of this understanding was derived from two influences; the legacies of those displays documented within Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Six accounted for the move away from typological object-heavy displays to a renewed focus on personal stories, which had ultimately led to the development of a 'narrative of loss' styled approach that peaked with the temporary exhibition 'In Memoriam' in 2008 (See Section 6.8). Terry Charman considered that the Museum had learned valuable lessons through the philosophy utilised in this display:

'In Memoriam was a good blend of the very famous, like Churchill and Haig, the semi-famous, like Wilfred Owen, and Sassoon, and then the completely anonymous people, from our collections... when people went round the exhibition, and I was in there taking people [around]...I noticed that people were much more engaged, that they were spending time looking at the objects and reading about them, and of course there were the elements, the history, on the walls as well, so there was a lot of factual stuff'.¹⁰⁵⁰

However, many of the factors that would govern the new galleries were derived from the legacy of their predecessors. Aided by their age, their successors took their perceived shortcomings and compartmentalised make-up as a chance to reposition their own incarnation, and how these would rectify these issues:

¹⁰⁵⁰ See Recorded Interview between JW and TC, conducted on 19/05/14. The intention for the Regen Team was to build upon this new sense of visitor engagement, though there was a lack of desire to repeat the 'personal stories' format within the context of the new permanent galleries.

‘[The former galleries] didn’t tell you a story...you wouldn’t leave it with an understanding of the whole, you’d leave it having seen a lot of stuff, but without a framework into which to understand it’.¹⁰⁵¹

LM differentiated them in more physical terms, through the larger amount of space available, alongside the deliberate move away from the ‘warren and labyrinthine-like’ approach that had been used in the 1990 galleries.¹⁰⁵² The turn from a thematic approach to a chronological one, and setting the galleries within a wider context than just the four years of the conflict, was advocated as one of several methods deployed to provide this much vaunted structural framework for visitors. The Regen Team members all labelled the previous exhibitions as out of date, both in terms of their content and in terms of their display techniques.¹⁰⁵³ The new galleries would accordingly function as a ‘re-contextualisation’ of the subject in question, to be achieved by guiding visitors through a more directive interpretation and by drawing upon more recent historiography.¹⁰⁵⁴ The Team felt that they had a duty to be up to date with this; though IK considered academic history to be a ‘very cutting-edge, very scientific, very rigorous discipline’, he sensed that new works were typically for other academics and therefore did not reach the general public. However the museum could offer an interface for this situation:

‘...museums can provide an outlet for what should be the best, the best academic history in a popular setting, museums of science should provide the cutting edge of science in an accessible way, so I think nationally there is a need for a...digestible rigorous narrative that is widely accessible, because...if you leave this to the BBC, or to dramatists, or to novelists, you wind up with something which is just not recognisable to people who take an academic interest, or a scholarly interest in the First World War’.¹⁰⁵⁵

¹⁰⁵¹ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13.

¹⁰⁵² Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14.

¹⁰⁵³ See Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12. LM suggested that there was a change of emphasis, from the more passive style deployed 1990 galleries compared to a more active approach needed for the 2014 galleries (Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14).

¹⁰⁵⁴ The Team were concerned that this academic historical consensus would be new for many of the visitors to the galleries; ‘...it will be a surprise that we don’t labour on and on about conscientious objection, or about poetry, or about the stupidity of generalship or about futility, or the stupidity of July 1916’ (Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13).

¹⁰⁵⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13.

As a practising historian, PC distanced himself from the revisionist school of thought – in the process accepting that the public should not be considered as historians – nevertheless, he saw the galleries’ as an interpretative opportunity to challenge existing pre-conceptions:

‘We hit things that they [the public] know about, trenches, and then turn them on their head, in the sense that they are for protective purposes...the Somme – look at that in a different light from the first day tragedy perspective which is normally dominant, and the fact that we won the War, the War was won by the Allies in 1918, in such a resounding manner, and why that was, because people don’t know that, they think it just petered out’.¹⁰⁵⁶

One example was to reconsider the practical function of a trench; trenches were viewed as iconic symbols within the nation’s collective memory, but the curatorial team wanted to demonstrate their original function on a practical level. This meant showing them as relative places of safety, from what had originally been open warfare with unprecedented levels of artillery. From this spawned interlinked objectives for subsequent sections, such as establishing the development of the Western Front trench network, and to show what life within the trenches was like.¹⁰⁵⁷

¹⁰⁵⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12. PC suggested that the public would ‘happily take whatever appears on *Birdsong* or *Downton Abbey* as being the truth’ about the First World War. Indeed at an internal staff presentation, Britain prior to 1914 was described by the Regen Team as being ‘Not all *Downton Abbey*’ (JW IWM Research Diary, Staff Breakfast Event, 11/06/14) – showing an awareness that they would be competing against these popular interpretations and encounters of the First World War. The other distinction was that academic history was now in more general alignment with the revisionist school of thought, and certainly with regard to the premise of moving away from an ill-informed public understanding. One IWM planning document discussing the tactical and technological innovations after the Battle of the Somme, in the first sub-story in the 1917 section ‘Machines Against Men’, recorded ‘Can we refer to innovations and then show what effect they had without going all Learning Curve?’ (the core argument of Professor Gary Sheffield, a leading proponent of First World War revisionism) (Untraced document, accessed from IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹⁰⁵⁷ See Figure 84.



Figure 84 - *Author Engages with the ‘Trench Network’ Interactive during the Galleries’ Press Day (©IWM_2014_037_045.tif)*

7.7.4 – Targeting Areas for Audience Outcomes

This sum of this approach formed a perception that pervaded through the whole course of the design process; that of opening up new streams of thought for visitors. For PC, this ‘pressure from our audience’ brought about a degree of novelty. This requirement meant that the whole topic of the First World War had to be treated in a different way to previous exhibitions, because of the state of, and lack of, knowledge of the conflict within the public environs.¹⁰⁵⁸ LM conveyed three of the top-level desired outcomes that the Regen Team sought; that ‘the war was not inevitable, the Somme was not an unmitigated disaster and the account of the war poets does not necessarily tell us the ‘truth’ about the conflict’.¹⁰⁵⁹ One of the other key gallery philosophies that illustrates this was the conscious integration of the Home and Fighting fronts; to show the involvement of the British civilian population through supplying and supporting the War effort, followed by how the role of German unrestricted submarine warfare and the British blockade fuelled and sustained belief for respective national causes.¹⁰⁶⁰ One phrase used by the Team was to refer to the

¹⁰⁵⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Email Interview between JW and LM, 29/08/14. These points were to be ‘conveyed without saying to our visitor: ‘I think you’ll find’.

¹⁰⁶⁰ One area targeted for the reaction of visitor surprise was how much the Home Front during the First World War resembled what was especially familiar from the Second World War, such as

First World War as being 'a war of people with hatred of nations'.¹⁰⁶¹ This revealed consciousness of the fact that one could no longer look at the First World War 'as being all about the battles, all about the fighting fronts':

'I think this idea of total war has gained in credence really, and I think it's what the Museum's all about now, we're all about showing the links between what happens on fighting fronts and what happens to civilian populations, and it's all inter-linked, and unfortunately at the moment, downstairs [in the 1990 galleries], I don't think that you get a sense of that at all, and that in itself is a fundamental reason to shake things up, to really show the relationship between everybody, in that kind of war...the tentacles of it spread so wide...that in itself is reason enough to redo the history, in terms of what visitors expect from a museum, I think that has moved on quite significantly as well, it's no longer about coming in to look at staid showcases of typological kind-of artefacts, I think people come now to really have an experience, to be able to investigate and explore, it's like a doing thing, whereas I think downstairs at the moment is very passive experience'.¹⁰⁶²

Thus there was clear intention to depict the Home Front, and how this was mobilized to support the War effort, as its industrial, agricultural and societal components made up the experiences for much of the British population between 1914 and 1918. LC's section 'Feeding the Front', was targeted to get visitors 'to understand that war affects more than your frontline soldier:

'...the Home Front is something that affects the fighting fronts throughout the course of the war...you just want people to understand that the First World War impacted upon lives who were far removed from a trench...and if we can get people to take that away, to understand that link, this idea of total war,

government control over supplies, rationing, and the impact of air attack. However when it came to showing the 1917 shortages on the German Home Front in the 'Breaking Down' section, it proved harder to showcase the absence of foodstuffs. Instead a combination of posters and a collection of letters by Ethel Cooper was used to convey the severity of the shortages in supplies (See Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12). PC felt that the design concept of juxtaposing the two fronts was 'a really good literal and visual way of showing people that the two were intimately [linked], they will connect it in people's heads'.

¹⁰⁶¹ Arguably this linked into the prioritising of the human agency within the galleries, though nationhood is still conveyed as a strong presence within the galleries.

¹⁰⁶² Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

where war affects people...I think we'll have achieved something really strong'.¹⁰⁶³

LC thus wanted to go beyond the common associations of the First World War as being solely about mud and trenches; stating that, in contrast to the perceived spatial isolation of the Home Front in the previous galleries, 'the Home Front... scheme that we have to run throughout is completely revelatory'.¹⁰⁶⁴ Going beyond the accentuated connection between home and fighting fronts could be used to challenge visitors on well-known themes:

'...if you actually look at the number of [conscientious objectors], they're not really as widespread a phenomenon as people might think, given how much press coverage and everything that there's been about them...this is a new opportunity to put things in a rightful place, both by terms of emphasis and in terms of how you weave everything together'.¹⁰⁶⁵

In contrast to the conscious link between the First and the Second World War galleries employed in 1990, it was felt that more emphasis was needed on the impact of the First World War.¹⁰⁶⁶ A proposed gallery space was to act as a 'Memory Area', to explore cultural responses to the conflict. It would look at 'commonly held perceptions of the war as 'national tragedy', a futile conflict in which 'butchers and bunglers' sent men needlessly to their deaths, so resulting in a 'lost generation', recorded by any surviving soldier-poets.¹⁰⁶⁷ This proposed examination of cultural memory, which was to feature popular representations of the conflict such as 'Blackadder Goes Forth' (1989), was to fall by the wayside on the grounds of a lack of space in which to accommodate it. Thus the final section of the galleries, 'War Without End' would cover the period up until 1929, and in part deal with the

¹⁰⁶³ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. See also Todman (2008; 425) who supports the concept of rendering the conflict as a total war.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. This would be supported by the visual and spatial link between the Home and Fighting Fronts within the gallery space. Combining as a useful guide to source material, the Home Front during the First World War also formed the topic of a published work by the Museum's Senior Historian, Terry Charman (2014).

¹⁰⁶⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹⁰⁶⁶ 1929 was eventually chosen as the date for the exhibition's conclusion, but this was not finalized until fairly late during the design process.

¹⁰⁶⁷ 'Permanent Galleries Narrative Structure', Aug 2010, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. The Museum wanted to use this space to draw upon audience understanding and 'offer them the chance to see different perspectives, embrace uncertainties and debate difficult issues' ('Memory Area Brief', 07/10/10; see also 'Memory Area_ Appendix', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). Thus this space would allow the curators to present alternative viewpoints and to challenge audience assumptions in how the conflict was perceived through cultural responses.

'forgotten' element of war commemoration during this period.¹⁰⁶⁸ The greatest challenge for this space was to leave visitors with a mixture of answers and questions, whilst also not trying to impart great detail at the point when they will be feeling mentally drained.¹⁰⁶⁹ Potent devices, such as the 'Cost of War' table depicting the physical costs of the conflict, were used to underscore its human costs (both killed and injured) and the depth and breadth of the suffering.¹⁰⁷⁰ The period of 1919-1923 was shown as one of extended conflicts and changes in European political systems, followed by the comparatively stable five years that followed. The topic of public and private remembrance was examined through the establishment and work of the Imperial War Graves Commission, and the personal grief contained within the letters of a war widow, Emily Chitticks.¹⁰⁷¹ The theme of Britain's disintegrating Empire was also covered. Not only were objects used to make links, the use of colour became vitally important here; as shown through the integration of the 1926 British Film Institute production, 'The Open Road', and a final interactive presentation titled 'Brutalized World'. This made use of the razzmatazz of American influences on Britain during the 1920s, and ended up as a futuristic backdrop that depicted a short-lived sense of relief during that immediate decade.¹⁰⁷² Thus its positioning prior to 1929 ended up being the key driver to this space.

Though they had designed their approach on a perception to provide for an interested public, the Team recognised the potential for fall-out regarding their new philosophical mind-set. Getting across historical messages for the benefit of the general public was nothing new for the Museum's staff, but there remained a sense of trepidation regarding how visitors might react to this more emboldened mantra. The issue lay in finding a way to involve an audience – to challenge their expectations and encourage a culture of questioning – without actively stating forthrightly and patronisingly that their understanding was flawed and incorrect. The

¹⁰⁶⁸ This was always acknowledged as being a particularly exceptional space, even prior to its various iterations. The Regen Team wanted to adopt the same emphasis of 'history' to examine the concept of memory within this capacity, but it was felt that this might undermine the policy of contemporaneity. It did deal with the establishment of a British language of remembrance during this period.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Seating was provided to encourage visitors to dwell in this space.

¹⁰⁷⁰ An internal IWM document advocated that 'Away from the great battlefields, Europe still looked much the same. Great cities remained, rail lines, ports still functioned. It was not like Second World War where very bricks and mortar were pulverised. The loss was human' (Untraced document, IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹⁰⁷¹ IWM DOCS 2554.

¹⁰⁷² The intention was to hint at various national tensions, but not suggest that the Second World War was inevitable.

public were painted with this broad brush, because they now held more power in dictating the content of the new displays and there was not sufficient room to cater for more specialist interest visitors adequately. Now that there were no longer veterans to support the stories that the Museum was telling, this next phase of national cultural memory would see it staking its claim through a much bolder and more audacious style. The Regen Team knew first-hand that visitors were coming into the Museum with a preconceived idea of what the First World War was like and wanted to have that understanding reaffirmed by the objects that were presented in front of them. In challenging these, the proof of the pudding would be in the eating.

7.7.5 - 'The Composite Visitor'

As the planning process proceeded, the individual Regen Team curators became more aware of their capabilities of tailoring the visitor experience closely to their anticipated audience. Macdonald's research demonstrated that all exhibitions:

'...inevitably construct a 'virtual visitor' not only through explicit statements about 'target audiences' and 'expected audience' but also, often more tellingly, through decisions about text (what knowledge and levels of ability should it presume?), about content (what will already be familiar?), about media (will it engage or distract?) and about aesthetics (will they be entranced or repulsed?)'.¹⁰⁷³

I endeavoured to gauge how each curator individually envisaged this imagined group, and what influence it had upon their decision-making:

IK stated that he always tried to be conscious of the fact that he knew more about the subject matter than visitors, which meant that the challenge was 'to tell a story in the proper tone'. With this in mind, he actively sought mental checkpoints to avoid the tendency of writing for himself, which he considered to be a common impulse.¹⁰⁷⁴ As for PC, he did not consider that he had a composite person in mind when writing text. He drew attention to the view that questions in gallery text 'can be bloody annoying, or they can be patronising', which put an onus on his development of affirmative and confident prose.¹⁰⁷⁵

¹⁰⁷³ Macdonald (2002; 158-9).

¹⁰⁷⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, conducted on 24/04/13.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

SP did not consider there to be a defined target audience for the exhibition, beyond the predicted, and somewhat broad, key groups. This heightened her awareness of starting at the base level and working up, which she based on a position of empathy:

'...for any visitor, the starting point is when you're looking at the object, you have to assume that the knowledge isn't there...how much explaining around that object are you going to have to do, and is it worth that level of text that people are going to have to read, or is it too obscure that it's just going to be ridiculous, even if it might be a historically significant item – will that really come across? I don't really imagine specific different types of visitor, it's more that generic level of, if you were to come into an exhibition, and I take myself out of the zone that I'm comfortable in, so I think well if I went to a Science Museum exhibition and I saw an object and I didn't know anything about it, what would I need to know and that sort of thing...so it's more thinking generically about a visitor and how that might work...'.¹⁰⁷⁶

When asked whether she envisages a visitor whilst she was working on the galleries, LC gave an honest, insightful response:

'Always...the visitor sits on my shoulder like a little devil, it does, always, because every day...it's the responsibility and the other sense it's the visitor, and they're both there, every day, I feel honestly like a presence, this sounds ridiculous, but it's true, like this sense if I were the visitor off the street, and I've got my kid with me, or I've got my granny with me, or whoever I am, and I know a bit about the First World War, or I know nothing about it, if I come into this gallery, in terms of how it looks and the messages that it's trying to give me, will I be able to understand?...I'm just vaguely, maybe I'm not even interested, maybe somebody dragged me to this museum, off their own back, will I be able to get something out of it, and I think that is our job, in terms of...is it historian, is it as an editor or whatever, it's making something understandable to people, something really complex...people shouldn't feel embarrassed by this exhibition to go oh God, shit, I don't know what a battalion is, what does that mean, we should try and explain to people in a

¹⁰⁷⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12.

way where the majority hopefully of visitors can take something away, some new understanding, even if it's just an impressionistic thing, it doesn't have to be I went to the War Museum and I learned that...something very factual...I have an understanding now of what the First World War might have been like'.¹⁰⁷⁷

LC therefore remained conscious, even 'anxious' of thinking about the galleries from the visitor's perspective as much as she could envisage herself in their position:

'I've always got these, it's not Joe Bloggs, it's Joe Bloggs times twenty, of different ilks, like Joe Bloggs, and Janet Bloggs, they're all there in my mind, and it's just allowing the most people possible, [because] not everyone's [going to] be happy, but the majority to take something away, and have an enjoyable experience, both in terms of how it looks and in terms of the clarity of the message, I think that's really important'.¹⁰⁷⁸

The exhibition was for that reason important to LC in terms of providing satisfaction and stimulation to as many visitors as possible, particularly those who did not know a great deal about the conflict.¹⁰⁷⁹ As a result, actual visitor involvement '...was circumscribed by the virtual visitors who were already imagined into the exhibition, whose desires, boredom thresholds and 'reading levels' had already been decided upon'.¹⁰⁸⁰ In this way, the exhibition was made for this collectively imagined audience group as someone whose mind jumped about, whose interest was subjective to an

¹⁰⁷⁷ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. Often in design meetings, LC would become very animated when she came across what she termed exciting content, and that she 'loved' a particular item. Peculiar or quirky items tended to receive an enthused response; on hearing about a Punch cartoon on the topic of moustaches, she responded 'Ooh! Ooh! Find, find!' (JW IWM Research Diary, 19/01/12).

¹⁰⁷⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. Had it been feasible to have dedicated time to assessing the galleries' 'life with visitors' after they had opened, and how these visitors 'imagined by the Team and designers' conformed or matched up in reality would certainly have benefitted the accuracy of my assessment of their production (Macdonald, 2002; 15, 221-243).

¹⁰⁷⁹ There were occasionally disparaging references to visitors in office conversations. Macdonald (2002; 160) found that museum staff often referred to visitors as 'problems', and in the way. Any visitors that 'might not understand certain Museum-imparted information was evidence of visitor ignorance' – suggesting that the curators were aware of the fact that they were now prioritising visitor needs.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Macdonald (2002; 171).

object's visual appeal, and who would get bored as they were gradually overwhelmed with the exhibition's scale.¹⁰⁸¹

7.7.6 – Including and Excluding

The curators often discussed their intentions with their colleagues, when deciding upon which elements of the story were essential and which may be dropped. They were aware of the processes of selection going on at their behest, and the issues of satisfying visitors over adhering to the historical narrative, which did lead to occasional frustrations:

'The whole gallery is an interpretation, as long as you aren't stressing a minor thing and leaving out a major thing, as long as you're not distorting...we've just had an argument about, or a discussion about T.E. Lawrence's robes, and they are a super-duper exhibit which many people drool over, but to display them within the context of the narrative that we have, would give far too much to the A) the role of Lawrence personally and B) the role of the Arab Revolt, which is a very minor part, Lawrence was only part of a thing which was a very minor part of the collapse of Turkey...you have to think really long and hard about whether you use that, despite it being an exhibit which a lot of people relate to, and that looks really good'.¹⁰⁸²

LC also recalled the discussion, and it provides insight into the dynamic of the decision-making process and the top-level issues considered to be at stake:

'...is [Lawrence] [going to] come in, and how big is he [going to] play a part, Paul one star opinions on it, and we didn't all agree with each other, but there's very much that spirit between us all, that you can just disagree and that it's not the end of the world between anybody, and I think that's an important part of what we do...it is testing each other out, and being a sounding board for each other'.¹⁰⁸³

Having discussions in this way revealed the key issues in play, and the need to reconcile differing interests at stake. The opportunity to thrash out opinions within a

¹⁰⁸¹ See Macdonald (2002; 182) for a similar assessment of the imagined visitor to the Science Museum galleries. There was also awareness that visitors would expect to see certain topics, and I dwell upon this in due course.

¹⁰⁸² Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹⁰⁸³ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12.

controlled environment allowed an amicable resolution to be attained. The inference was that the inclusion of a particular object had to enable the curator to draw out a particular aspect of the narrative. This was again witnessed in one of PC's sections, with the inclusion of the iconic Mark V tank; it was decided against including this object in the 1918 'Seizing Victory' section, because the Team did not want to give the impression to visitors that the creation of tanks led to the War being won.¹⁰⁸⁴



Figure 85 - *The 1918 'Seizing Victory' Section (Left-hand Image: Sourced by Author, Right-hand Image: IWM_2014_037_331.tif)*

7.8 - Challenging the Public Perception of the First World War

7.8.1 – Using History in an Audience-Friendly Way

SP saw the process of formulating history into the galleries as a careful balancing act between showing evidence in an accessible manner and staying on the right side of the visitor without patronising them or suggesting ignorance:

'...it's always a case of you don't want to make people feel stupid by saying 'everything you thought you knew, that's totally wrong'...so, we do want to set

¹⁰⁸⁴ IWM 4100.90.1. PC noted in interview that they were 'virtually all broken down by October 1918' (Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12).

the record straight because we want to tell the accurate story of the First World War in the interpretation we're taking'.¹⁰⁸⁵

This meant that there was a consequent necessity to address the War's popular understanding, but again SP reasoned that this was not a driving force:

'...I think it's important that we challenge some misconceptions and we can do that by working with what people might already know and, getting them to question that a bit more and telling them 'well did you also know this?'...it's a gentle re-learning, I suppose, rather than making people feel idiotic...

...hopefully by the fact that we will be telling them new things, and slightly turning on their heads, some possible established views that they have, then that will encourage them, without being too forceful with it, as in knocking them over the head with 'what do you think about this?', 'have you got any opinion on this?' etc... In terms of choice within the gallery, when you're going round, I think, in order to cater to different visitors, you have to have an element of difference, so that people still get the messages you want through various different mediums, so you have to allow for physical interactives or AV work or text, to appeal to the different people, and I think it's not really about forcing them to make a choice, because I think you'll probably just...do what comes naturally to you as you go around, what appeals to you'.¹⁰⁸⁶

One of the major outcomes from the 2011 Visitor Evaluation Survey was to enable visitors to understand why the War broke out; why Britain chose to fight in the defence of its national self-interest (to protect its trade) with the German invasion of Belgium the public justification.¹⁰⁸⁷ As this topic still lacks universal consensus amongst academics, LC made use of a digital interactive called 'Imperial Rivalries' situated on a large table-top. This colourful animation would outline the delicately unstable European alliance systems, paranoia, arms races and national rivalries to convey this information to visitors in a user-friendly manner.¹⁰⁸⁸ An example of going

¹⁰⁸⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹⁰⁸⁷ The importance of Britain's Navy and maritime power had been set up in the Galleries' opening, through the inclusion of several large and striking ship models to illustrate themes around Empire, trade and commerce.

¹⁰⁸⁸ The challenges of this section came to my attention at one of the first CM Design Meetings I attended (22/08/11, JW IWM Research Diary). The proposed map would personalise each nation as

beyond what the public might have expected was found within PC's intention for the 'Shock' section to live up to its name by going beyond the expected topics regarding the British on the Western Front during 1914. Conveying the fact that new artillery was to lead to mass casualties, this would be achieved through the use of a motion-capture animated projection and the juxtaposition of objects relating to ceremonial cavalry versus the technological advances of artillery:

'...the plucky little B.E.F. [British Expeditionary Force] suffering and then redemption on the Marne and so on...I'll be going completely the other way, and starting with the shock of European-wide warfare in which a million people died in four months, because that is why the war carried on, fundamentally, this is what we're [going to] be primarily showing there, the destruction'.¹⁰⁸⁹

an animal character within a map of Europe, as inspired by the illustrated press of the time. Other ideas to geographically demonstrate the creation of two rival power blocs had included an international version of Top Trumps (to denote the size of armies, navies, industrial strength, financial clout) Snakes & Ladders and a 'Horrible Histories' style approach, to help distil down the complexity of the historical information. In setting out 'to deliver a complex series of historical shifts with compelling clarity', what proved difficult to communicate within the confines of the interactive was the formation of key alliances, such as Britain going into alliance with its historic rivals France and Russia (IWM Audiovisual Brief, 'Ambition, Fear and Rivalry', Aug 2012, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). The Team deemed it important that this section made these international tensions clear, but that they did not equate to war, which would be the subject of a short, dramatic film sequence with a museum-voice narrator in the following exhibition section. This had to directly answer the already established question of 'Why did the War start?' which also had to boil down complexity.¹⁰⁸⁹ See Mann (2014) for the design intentions of this projection. In contrast to the sense of guilt at omitting things felt by PJS during the creation of the 1990 galleries, PC cited the fact that the events of 1914 were not really part of popular perceptions of the conflict and that he was confident that he would not get 'any members of the Smith-Dorrien Society, or something, writing in and complaining' (Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12. General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien had been a senior commander of the B.E.F. during 1914). Equally PC felt that the final section of the galleries dealing with 1917-1918 was much more nuanced than it was considered in the public domain, particularly the themes of hunger, rationing, exhaustion and peace movements. He recalled being completely unaware of wartime peace negotiations until he undertook related research, and accordingly ensured that this idea of why the peace initiatives during the conflict failed would feature within the gallery text.



Figure 86 – *Left-hand Image: The Regen Team view the Shock Projection for the first time. Right-hand Image: The projection alongside the French 75mm Field Gun that emphasises the effect of shrapnel upon soldiers' bodies (L/H Image Sourced by Author, R/H Image IWM_2014_038_185)*



Figure 87 - *A Screenshot of the Projection*

(Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)

7.8.2 – Representing the Battle of the Somme

Having outlined that intentions for the opening section that covered the conflict's early phases were to outline the scale of the losses connected with open mobile warfare and the potency of new artillery being key messages for visitors to pick up on, a greater challenge would be in depicting the Battle of the Somme. This

section was described as the ‘fulcrum’ of the exhibition.¹⁰⁹⁰ As one of the most challenging areas within the galleries, PC reasoned how he went about completing it:

‘What I’ve tried to do there is to put the First Day, which will be dealt with, but keep it within the context of being a battle of nearly five months’ duration, fought through varying weather conditions, almost equally murderous for both sides, and a coalition battle fought because it was convenient, [because] that’s where the French and British Armies met...I wanna give the French their full part, [because] they actually were, man for man, more effective than us on the Somme, and I also want to come up with, the fact that the Somme changed things, not only it is a huge ramping up of industrial warfare, which is one point I’m [going to] make, but also that it affected people’s decision making, particularly German decision making, during the following year...it’s putting what we know, the tragedy of the Somme within the context of the wider implications of the battle’.¹⁰⁹¹



Figure 88 - *Installation taking place in the ‘Total War/Somme’ section*
(Sourced by Author)

¹⁰⁹⁰ For Narrative Brief, see Appendix XIII.

¹⁰⁹¹ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

Space in which to represent the Battle was granted a large proportion of the gallery space to reflect its scale and the weight it carried within popular British understanding of the conflict more generally. A large projection was intended to highlight the transition of the site of the battlefield from rural idyll to destruction and desolation through the course of the five month battle. The footage combined ‘the words of eye-witnesses with recently shot colour film of the battlefield’, merged with ‘original photos and footage of the battle’.¹⁰⁹² Given the multiplicity of objects available, and quotes to be choreographed into the large plinth that carried objects and quotations relating to the Battle (See Figure 88 and 92), the challenge for PC here manifested itself in the writing of the text:

‘There’s no way one wants to minimise the sacrifice of life, or claim that things were all hunky dory when they weren’t, but on the other hand, you cannot get away from the fact that British troops came out of it feeling like they had finally got the recipe for giving the Hun a good licking, and the Germans came out of it thinking My God, what’s [going to] happen next when they’re throwing all this crap at us...there is this clear distinction in the effect it had on either side’.

¹⁰⁹³

The conflict’s legacy within British cultural memory formed an important steer in determining what aspects of the conflict visitors might recognise. But rather than conforming to this, emphasis was instead placed upon the ‘immense logistical effort’ and ‘unprecedented amount of munitions, so that visitors saw the Somme as ‘an escalation of the industrialized violence of the war’.¹⁰⁹⁴

7.8.3 – Observations of How the Team Channelled the Exhibition Space

Coupled with the results from the Audience Evaluation Report, issues such as highlighting the social unrest and internal tensions within Britain prior to 1914, and

¹⁰⁹² ‘Colorisation in FWW Galleries’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). This represented an interesting trope of continuity with the ‘Then and Now’ concept that had been used in the Museum’s First World War exhibitions of the 1960s (See Chapter 4). It had been intended to place a clear emphasis on the transition of the seasons on the battlefield, and the visual effect this brought upon the landscape, but the final projection did not stress this in the way originally envisaged.

¹⁰⁹³ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12. Drawing on the fact that many visitors would be aware of the ‘Lions Led by Donkeys’ myth surrounding the First World War British Generals, the desire for PC was to historically portray the problems that they faced in the field, and to explain the decisions that they undertook, rather than excusing their actions.

¹⁰⁹⁴ ‘First World War Exhibition Story Areas’, 04/07/12, Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

considering the extent to which the War was inevitable (particularly in the case of Britain, which was relatively detached from events on the continent) were factored in during the design process, to ensure that they would be tackled successfully within the gallery space.¹⁰⁹⁵ My observations at Regen Team meetings and through interviews, as charted above, were that the curators were consistently anticipating topics that they deemed potentially familiar and necessary to be re-addressed – because they represented prime opportunities for public engagement and furthering visitor understanding.¹⁰⁹⁶ As Macdonald found with her research, this claim of explaining to help people understand, and of potential visitor interest, acts as a dual-serving tactic ‘to highlight the fact that this is a subject which might well attract a wide audience and also part of the placing of people, or visitors, to the forefront’.¹⁰⁹⁷ Recognising the requirement for interaction to be transactional, the Regen Team thereby realised the requirement of a strict and rigorous focus would produce these readily identifiable themes guiding the narrative areas of the exhibition. These are what Roppola defines as ‘channelling processes’, which are important to gain understanding of ‘how visitors may comprehend both the space and the content of museums’.¹⁰⁹⁸

7.9 – Writing the Text for the Galleries

7.9.1. – Processes of Filtration

The drafting of the gallery text encapsulated the challenges of melding together what was essentially scholarship into a manner accessible for a varied audience:

‘Traditional scholarly approaches, that present collections along with texts and are designed to transmit expert information to a lay public, conflict with newer

¹⁰⁹⁵ As two of the sub-stories within the orientating section ‘Hope and Glory’, the aim here was to show Britain as internally divided, but also united by pride in its Empire, and that Britain’s control of the seas lay at the heart of its power. See also Learning Objectives for ‘An Inevitable War?’ in IWM AV Briefs Outline, Sept 2012, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹⁰⁹⁶ This was critical pedagogy that cast visitors as active participant learners within the process.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Macdonald (2002; 118-119). Starting with the familiar is a ‘central dimension’ of exhibition design in privileging everyday knowledge (2002; 120).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Roppola (2012; 209) She adds that ‘...spatial elements contribute to the production and consumption of meaning...Space is an agentic part of the communicational landscape’ (2012; 210-211). Designers can therefore direct it to be overtly or linearly channelled – although there is also a certain degree of serendipity involved, given the existing physical structure of the museum building.

approaches that privilege connecting to visitors on the visitors' own terms and serving visitors' own purposes'.¹⁰⁹⁹

Curators have previously favoured providing for the former, as evidenced in Chapter 5, and thus the curatorial response, is to 'bemoan the 'dumbing down' of exhibitions'.¹¹⁰⁰ These fears had been ironed out through the various procedures of filtration put in place during the phase of producing text for the galleries, and similar protocols were to be applied for their successors. Though the process remained very similar, LC felt that the experience of encountering a subject for the first time, and then having to portray it within a succinct manner, was of benefit to ensuring clarity;

'A bit of ignorance actually can be a blessing, [because] sometime we have to be sure of what we're saying, but sometimes if you are uncertain about something, you think well hang on, how's the visitor [going to] feel, you know, if I'm a bit unclear about this, they're almost certainly [going to] be unclear, so that's actually a good thing'.¹¹⁰¹

On the one hand, it was about capturing the curator's passion for their subject:

'...if you find something really [good], you do get quite excited about it...you try to make other people as enthusiastic about that wonderful quote or wonderful object as you are yourself'.¹¹⁰²

Contrastingly, there had to be measures put in place were designed to 'weed out idiosyncrasies' from JT's perspective. The editorial process in place was firm, with a number of sifting processes designed to stop that scenario; there was no allowance for pet interests, as he remarked 'you should not be able to tell who put each section of the exhibition together...if you can, then we've failed'.¹¹⁰³ This enabled a distinction between authorship and ownership – whilst control over sections remained largely with their respective curators, they were all sufficiently checked

¹⁰⁹⁹ Lee (2007; 184).

¹¹⁰⁰ Lee (2007; 184).

¹¹⁰¹ Recorded Interview between JW and LC, conducted on 23/02/12. In this way, listening to section updates at occasions such as team meetings meant that these had to be understandable to their colleagues, so such acts of explanation provided a useful barometer for the simplicity of their intended message.

¹¹⁰² Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹¹⁰³ Recorded Interview between JW and JT, conducted on 14/02/12. There were seven stages of the process involving with drafting captions. However LM was unsure about this objectivity, positing that 'maybe we have served ourselves more than we have served visitors' (Recorded Interview between JW and LM, conducted on 24/04/13).

over to ensure they had a degree of continuity.¹¹⁰⁴ Using text as an interpretive tool, what was therefore required was a point of compromise between the visitors and the members of the Team:

‘Exhibit creators need to understand what the visitor already knows as well as what the museum wants the visitor to know. The task of the exhibition team is to bridge these two points, to build structures that enable visitors to traverse the path from current knowledge and experience to hoped-for knowledge and experience. This is a difficult task under any circumstances, but an impossible task if the two end points are not well known and appreciated’.¹¹⁰⁵

The process had meant that there was a good sense of what the visitors expected and what the curators thought would satisfy these criteria. Expectedly there were fairly frequent instances when angst over word limits was expressed within the office, given that there was a lack of space available in which to introduce and communicate further ideas.¹¹⁰⁶ On the other side of the coin, there was repeated acknowledgement that prospective visitors were likely to be intimidated by vast quantities of text. For Fritsch, the challenge for the curators in such a position was to ‘have confidence in their visitors’, who should know that there is more to say than is written on the caption.¹¹⁰⁷ Thus the primary function of the text relied upon engaging the visitor imagination; ‘...the narrative form, in particular, exercises the imagination, and often towards the appreciation of complex abstract concepts’.¹¹⁰⁸ This would be assisted by making it attractive and through the use of highlighting certain words in bold colours. The story being told would engage those reading it by ‘encouraging the

¹¹⁰⁴ In spite of a ‘...more explicit expression of the role and contribution of staff members’ and terming the museum as ‘...the official author of an exhibition’, Monti & Keene distinguish that there is still a ‘blurred’ divide ‘...between authorship and authority’ (2013; 261).

¹¹⁰⁵ Falk & Dierking (1992; 137). Gable also promotes the view that public history ‘...is a product of negotiations among the professional historians and the public at large’ (2006; 110).

¹¹⁰⁶ Perhaps noting one thing that has not changed in amongst all the upheaval to curatorship over recent years, Paddon (2014; 74) advocates that there remains a tendency ‘in all museums, for curators to believe their subject is of utmost importance to visitors’.

¹¹⁰⁷ Fritsch (2011; 104). The challenge then becomes ascertaining which aspects can ‘...be communicated, debated and introduced via interpretation’ through the tool of text (2011; 103). This technique also helps to provide for more methodical repeat visitors, as well as first timers. A further challenge was ensuring that each text section would make sense to a visitor ‘unconstrained in the routes they take and decision they make about the information they assimilate’ (Paddon, 2014; 104). Though the Regen Team wanted to have a rigorous structuring to the narrative for visitors to closely adhere to, and compromised in making this approach as user-friendly as possible, they accepted that ‘non-prescriptive routing appears to be a characteristic trait...as museums move from didactic displays ...to constructivist learning’ (2014; 104).

¹¹⁰⁸ Roppola (2012: 25).

perception of reality through the consciousness of others'.¹¹⁰⁹ By the same token, text relied upon synchronization with objects – as Mason points out, an over-reliance on textual interpretation misses the point of using an object, 'because if its meanings could be satisfactorily translated into words, there would have been no need to use visual means'.¹¹¹⁰

7.9.2 – The Academic Advisory Board

As representatives of the latest historiography on the conflict, the Academic Advisory Board (AAB) played an important role in providing the galleries' narrative and text with a strengthened historical backing.¹¹¹¹ The calibre of its five members, and their specialist knowledge in a wide range of First World War topics, were able to query and consequently corroborate the decisions taken by the Regeneration Team's during the exhibition-making process. They were tasked with fact-verifying, identifying material that might offend or be historically inaccurate and supplying alternative words that might be more suitable. Infrequent meetings held at the Museum served to confirm to the Team that there would inevitably be compromises on the history in what they could and moreover could not include within the space of the galleries. The academic group not only provided the clearance of intellectual rigour, because the Team were able to draw upon their publishing expertise to help them find the best form of expression for delivering concise historical information. The Board had a knack of being able to boil down the complexity of historical episodes, and charted the way through the more contentious issues of the First World War. There were instances when the Board members found the Museum's desire to communicate high levels of historical detail, such as in the section outlining how the War broke out within a projection that would last less than a minute, initially difficult to accept.¹¹¹² However they understood the requirements of presenting this

¹¹⁰⁹ Roppola (2012: 26).

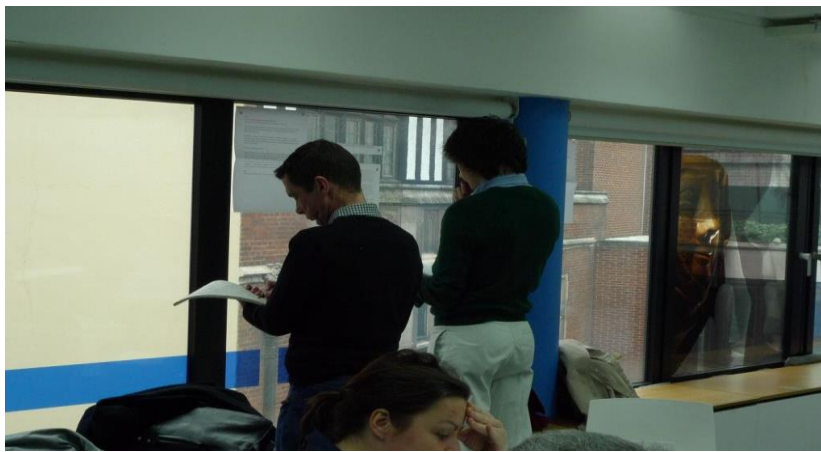
¹¹¹⁰ Mason (2005; 210). To draw a visual distinction for visitors, text within the fighting fronts sections appeared on metal panels embedded within grey Glassfibre Reinforce Concrete plinths, whilst the home front text appears on white panels situated on tables made of wood or finished in green or red lacquer ('Colorisation in FWW Galleries', accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹¹¹¹ The Board was chaired by Professor Sir Hew Strachan (Oxford), Professor David Reynolds (Cambridge), Professor David Stevenson (London School of Economics), Dr Deborah Thom (Cambridge) and Dr Dan Todman (Queen Mary, University of London). They acted as authoritative spokespeople for the Galleries once it had opened (See Figure 91).

¹¹¹² JW IWM Research Diary, AAB Meeting (16/07/13). However there was a predominantly a sound understanding of operating within museological constraints, and the co-operative approach fostered seemed largely in contrast to Prior's experience of academic advisers working on the 1807 Bicentenary commemorations (2007; 206),

information for visitors, and were able to clarify the most top level detail for the Team.

The creation of the text as an interpretative strategy for the Galleries reintroduces issues already outlined, about how the visitor was being prioritized within this space. The level of refinement to ensure that it not only imparted information in an accessible manner, but that it was dramatic, was a challenging part of the whole process; PC described the text writing as ‘the most arduous part of the process’.¹¹¹³ This was largely down to the fact that the mainline text had to complete the aforementioned responsibilities, whilst the captions had ‘to be able to find a way of making a personal link with the objects and the themes of the exhibition’.¹¹¹⁴ Presenting information at the micro and macro level needs to be ‘harmoniously integrated’ to allow ‘immensely complex information [to] be conveyed and easily understood’.¹¹¹⁵ The text became critical in finding a balance between piquing interest and laying down an intellectual challenge, essentially ‘making meanings which inspire and move visitors to respond’.¹¹¹⁶ The text for the galleries was subjected to many guidelines to ensure its clarity and readability.¹¹¹⁷ The total word length, including the Audio-Visuals and Interactives, totalled 70,000 (10,000 more than in the 1990 First World War galleries).



¹¹¹³ Cornish (2015). In many respects, the text is the most tangible legacy, in terms of its visibility to viewers, which the curators have on a gallery space.

¹¹¹⁴ Hooper-Greenhill (1994; 131). See also Lindaeur who specifically asks whether text enables visitors to form their own opinions, and to consider how the writing style invites and/or dissuades from a ‘dialogue of ideas’ (2006; 213-214).

¹¹¹⁵ Monti & Keene (2013; 41). See also Ravelli (2006) and Dean (1994b; 103-131) for a comprehensive guide to writing museum text.

¹¹¹⁶ Ravelli (2006; 4).

¹¹¹⁷ See ‘Text Rules, April 2012’ Document; ‘Text Guidelines’ Document (October 2009), accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. These included regulations such as making very strong statements in the first and last lines of text panels, and weaving in slang words for objects ‘for flavour’.

Figure 89 – *James Taylor and Author Reviewing Captions at Text Workshop, Museum of London, 19th February 2013 (Emailed to Author by Maria Blyzinsky)*



Figure 90 – *James Taylor escorts Professor David Reynolds on a visit to the gallery site during its construction (Sourced by Author)*



Figure 91 – *Professor David Reynolds (Cambridge) from the Academic Advisory Board is interviewed during the Galleries' Press Day (©IWM_2014_037_313.tif)*

7.9.3 The Policy of Contemporaneity



Figure 92 - *Quotes Embedded into the Exhibition Fabric*
(©IWM_SITE_LAM_003507)

Whilst principal focus remained ‘unashamedly’ with the Western Front over the course of this chronological story, there was also a desire to show the conflict as a world war, by means of incorporating other theatres including the Middle East and Italy as well as on the open seas. The wider build-up to the Centenary commemorations had been contributing towards a greater public awareness, receptiveness to and intrigue (if not necessarily in-depth knowledge) of the War’s global nature. Recent studies documenting the previously neglected experiences and sacrifices of those two million soldiers from India, Africa and the West Indies amongst others were now surfacing at the public level. Historian David Olusoga’s series, ‘The World’s War’ which was screened in 2014, portrayed the First World War as a colonial yet multi-racial, multi-national struggle.¹¹¹⁸ So even at the popular level, legitimate questions were now being asked about whose story was being told, and whose story left out. This returns us to the factor of restraints; IWM’s terms of reference demanded that it told the First World War from a British Empire perspective, though it was to adopt a more open-minded and nuanced approach to

¹¹¹⁸ See Olusoga (2014); Kitchen et al (2011). Therefore as the Regen Team got closer to their goal, there was a wider public debate taking shape and increasing in its purchase.

this topic than had been the case in the past.¹¹¹⁹ An imperial thread was implemented throughout the narrative, to help give contemporary audiences a sense of shape and meaning to the intangible, elusive concepts of ‘Empire’, ‘Patriotism’ and ‘Colonialism’. For many visitors, such terms would have been either unfamiliar or viewed as backward, aggressive, foolhardy and overwhelmingly negative.

In order to avoid falling into the trap of applying present day values onto the past, and so utilising the temporal distance of ten decades to their advantage, the Regeneration Team adopted a policy known as ‘Contemporaneity’. This set out to present events through the written and spoken words of those directly involved and affected by the conflict – establishing it as an unfolding, undetermined drama, without any benefit of hindsight. PC recalled how it came into being:

‘We attempted something entirely new in applying the concept of ‘Contemporaneity’. When I first tentatively suggested adopting this standpoint, I felt that I was ‘flying a kite’ somewhat, but it soon became clear that not only would it be possible to achieve, but that it would actually enhance our ability to incorporate the ‘voices’ of those who experienced the events. Later we realised that it would also save us 100 years’ worth of potentially unhelpful and controversial ex post facto engagements with the war’.¹¹²⁰

It was thus serendipity that enabled this approach to come into being, and it proved to be hugely helpful, providing the perfect means with which to sidestep the tricky issues of the War’s popular cultural legacy.¹¹²¹ Drawing on Kavanagh, such a move would grant the exhibition ‘...a directness and an unparalleled impact’, because it was ‘handing back the narration and explanation of the past to the true experts – the

¹¹¹⁹ The Regen Team explicitly disclosed this bias from the outset, with their predominant focus on the Western Front as the focus of British Empire military effort. They defined these as a help rather than a hindrance, because it gave them a framework within which to operate. See Mead (2008) for analysis of multiculturalism explored through a previous IWM temporary display. ‘From War to Windrush’.

¹¹²⁰ Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14. Helping to bypass the tendency to view the First World War through the prism of the Second World War, all testimony used was sourced from that spoken or committed to diaries or letters at the time (rather than benefitting from hindsight). It also allowed for conflicting sentiments to be presented, to corroborate that ‘there was no agreed version of events at the time and that people’s experience of the war was varied’, which might ‘conflict with our post war imaginings’ (Cornish, 2015). See also Powers-Jones (2014; 54-55) for insight into how personal narrative was utilized within the IWM Holocaust exhibition.

¹¹²¹ It would be fair to comment that the Regen Team were not using this approach to shy away from engaging with the War’s difficult issues and to overcome its mythology, but the rigidity of its approach perhaps took away some of the openness which they had originally wanted to engage with within the Memory Area (See Section 7.7.4).

people who lived it'.¹¹²² Using personal voices in this manner was not seen as a new idea within the context of the Museum (See Section 6.8.2). However in this instance, it was being utilised as a guiding technique deployed to help confront the issue of chronological distance to the First World War, which had not been needed at the time of creation of the former permanent galleries in Chapter 5.¹¹²³ Harnessing the immediacy of witnesses' words, quotations were etched in acid into the galleries' fabric, or 'encarved', as it was described on one occasion.¹¹²⁴ The presentation of 'one-on-one' accounts 'enhances the emotional involvement of visitors, through facilitating feelings of *identification*', as visitors can project themselves into the subject depicted.¹¹²⁵ In this way, museums are where '...other people, separated by time and space can meet. Those who work in museums make these meetings possible'.¹¹²⁶ Sites of public history have bore witness to a recent turn in this prompting of emotional engagement – focusing on human experience as a form of empathy, combined with the expected authority of an assertive organisational voice, in order to promote understanding.¹¹²⁷ This has been encouraged by those designing displays, as Roppola encountered with her research at the Australian War Memorial.

¹¹²² Kavanagh (1990;143). The IWM termed it '...embedding the words of historical witnesses whose judgement we respect to lend authenticity and flavour' ('Interpretation Handbook v.2', 10/05/10, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹¹²³ It could be argued that the prioritising of the time in which a source originated led to a lack of critique as to other potential biases within individual quotes, such as to whom the quote might have originally been intended for, which could not easily be incorporated within the gallery space. Quotes were also selected on the basis of their ability to summarise an issue or theme in the most eloquent or engaging fashion.

¹¹²⁴ JW IWM Research Diary, CM Meeting, 24/02/12.

¹¹²⁵ Roppola (2012; 237, emphasis original). Grewcock (2013; 208) describes this type of learning as '...not restricted to an intellectual cognitive engagement but by learning as feeling, of movement and being moved'. For Fraser & Coulson, '...we are moved when we see the world through another's eyes' (2012; 231) Likewise Hooper-Greenhill observes that '...words drawn from the experience of people in real situations has a poignancy and immediacy that could not be achieved in other ways' (1994; 121). She suggests 'Museums are as much concerned with words as they are with objects' (1994; 115).

¹¹²⁶ Fraser & Coulson (2012; 227). An example of this would be using testimony talking about common experiences, such as being hungry. In this way, the selected quote in the 'Life at the Front' section revealed the importance that the stomach played within a soldier's daily routine, which is something that visitors could empathise with.

¹¹²⁷ See Andermann & Arnold-de Simine (2012; 7-8) who talk of a turn towards 'personal narratives, affective engagement and imaginative investment'. Hanks also highlights the importance of a conflation of distance '...between the reader's reality and in the museum's displays, between the visitor's life and experience, and that of the subjects on display', which is emphasized through the exhibition being a 'holistic, immersive experience' (2012; 31). See Arnold-de Simine (2013; 16-17, 44-53) for analysis of the deployment of empathy within international museum displays. She records that 'Even though museums might try to avoid providing a grand or master narrative, the different small narratives of and from the people are often selected so that they add up to an uncontested account of the past' (2013; 8). See also Brandt (2004) and Winter (2006) for observations on how museums situated on the former battlefields have adopted similar approaches in delivering their historical interpretation.

Here visitors were encouraged to draw meanings from sections of an exhibition. In the case of the Memorial's First World War dioramas, visitors did this by projecting themselves into the action depicted:

'The diorama thus also achieved resonance by enabling visitors to experience identification with the humans it depicted. The complete perception of 'knowing' what it 'must've' been like is spawned from knowing what it is to experience the frailty, compassion and camaraderie of humanity. The diorama is a fabricated realism, but the felt responses in visitors are real'.¹¹²⁸

In addition, the use of direct testimony provided an authoritative means by which questions from likely visitor reactions to the content could be answered, such as by 'using the words of those at the time to convey the immediacy and logic of the decisions [made by Europe's leaders] that contributed to the outbreak of war' in the galleries' opening section.¹¹²⁹ As already discussed, hindsight was a key factor in skewing visitors' prior understanding of the conflict; thereby this method allowed the Regen Team to demonstrate quantifiable answers to questions such as 'Why did people commit themselves to such a ruinous enterprise? Why did they persist in gambling their lives and limbs, their national wealth...in such an apparently reckless way?'¹¹³⁰ Furthermore the use of the narrative contained within the section panels retained the '...traditional role of the curator as trustworthy and 'omniscient narrator'', but in combination with contemporaneity, which allowed for the inclusion '...of new voices telling their own stories. Characters traditionally excluded from the museum are now invited in, leading to the exciting and unexpected'.¹¹³¹

¹¹²⁸ Roppola (2012; 140-141). It was noted that these nearly one hundred year old dioramas were seen as 'highly significant to visitors' (2012; 283). See also 'Emotional Realism' in Bagnall, G (2003) 'Performance and Performativity at Heritage Sites', *Museum and Society*, 1 (2); 87-103. Roppola also analyses visitor response at a Bomber Command Display (2012; 147-150). Sections of the IWM galleries feature areas of active physical participation, such as 'Your Country Needs You' within the 2014 First World War Galleries, which allow the visitor to actively participate and interact within the exhibition space.

¹¹²⁹ 'FWW Galleries AV Briefs Overview', Sept 2012, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹¹³⁰ <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2012/12/contemporary-voices/> by PC; Accessed 09/09/15.

¹¹³¹ Hanks (2012; 31). One could interpret this as that the Regen Team were forced to place less of a priority upon producing large quantities of written history themselves, because they were having to incorporate such a high percentage of contemporary material.



Figure 93 - *The Tall and Colour-filled Showcase of ‘War Without End’*

(Sourced by Author)

However the contemporaneity policy could not be applied uniformly across the whole gallery space. In terms of its creation, the concluding section known as ‘War Without End’ proved to be one of the trickiest to define, with one internal document describing it as ‘the greatest challenge for both the historical team and the designers’.¹¹³² Intent on signalling to visitors that they would find themselves in a different world from that of the conflict, early ideas had suggested the creation of a contemplative space reflecting the post-war chaos, suitably distinctive from preceding sections.¹¹³³ Much debate took place regarding the date at which the exhibition would cease, with eventual settlement upon 1929.¹¹³⁴ As a result of this, the Team would integrate the broad consequences of the conflict, as well as examples of its impacts on a more personal level, up until this point in time. Singular

¹¹³² ‘Historical Narrative Overview – First World War Gallery, Imperial War Museum London’, 18/01/12, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. See Appendix XIII.

¹¹³³ Stage C ‘War Without End’ Dec 2011 (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹¹³⁴ This decision was based on the premise that it enabled no direct mentions of the 1929 Great Depression, and the historical events that followed this. Ten years on from the Armistice also provided the point in time at which the British nation started to consider what the War had achieved, with Reynolds terming the late 1920s as ‘a moment ripe for reflection’ (203; 201).

and intriguing objects would represent a range of larger themes around the various costs of the War, to be displayed in a non-chronological fashion so that visitors would not need to move around the section in sequence.¹¹³⁵ To help overcome the challenges inherent in this section, it was agreed that the contemporaneity policy could be relaxed. Intended to stave off the fact that visitor concentration would be at its lowest ebb by this point of the galleries, the section would feature engaging interview snippets from veterans reflecting on their experiences, an asset from the IWM Sound Archive. There would also be a tellingly reflective comment from Harry Patch, the last British Tommy to have fought in the trenches, which read 'I've tried for eighty years to forget it. But I can't'.¹¹³⁶ As Hodgkin and Radstone have commented, to appeal to memory over history '...can imply the displacing of analysis by empathy...memory, because of its powerful pull towards the present, and because of its affective investments, allows more readily for a certain evasion of critical distance'.¹¹³⁷ The fact that (problematic) memory had to be incorporated in such an overt manner within the gallery space speaks more to its prominence within the field of memory studies and more broadly within the contemporary context, as it is '...invoked in schools, museums and mass media [to forward] political agendas which serve particular ideas about the virtues of the nation, the family or the current government'.¹¹³⁸

¹¹³⁵ Stage C 'War Without End' Dec 2011 (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹¹³⁶ Having taken over curatorial control of this final section of the galleries from SP, LM remembered having 'a lengthy conversation' about the inclusion of this Harry Patch quote, but that its inclusion was agreed upon because it represented a point of juncture from the preceding exhibition content. The decision to append sound extracts produced by the Museum during the 1970s within this section 'was always a given', because of their value as a prized collection that could offer unique insight, and an example of institutional acquisition, even if at a cost of their reliability (Email from LM to JW, 'Use of Quoted Material', 10/09/15). For a background into the creation of this collection of material, see Kavanagh (2000; 67). For analysis of the potentially problematic nature of oral records and memory, see Thomson (2013; 327-342); Hodgkin & Radstone (2006; 1-5). On a similar theme, the inclusion of the role played by the War Poets formed an interesting dilemma, with only Siegfried Sassoon's military protest letter featuring within the 1917 'Breaking Down' section, and an image of Wilfred Owen within the 'Brutalized World' interactive.

¹¹³⁷ Hodgkin & Radstone (2006; 8). Evans & Lunn have likewise commented that 'Memory is a process used by both individuals and more institutional forces to connect the past to the present and the future (1997; xvii).

¹¹³⁸ Hodgkin & Radstone (2006; 5).

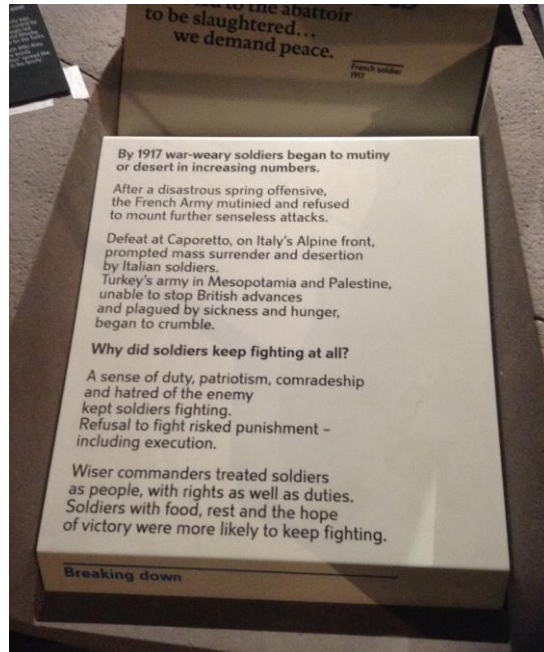


Figure 94 – ‘Breaking Down’ Story Panel (Sourced by Author)

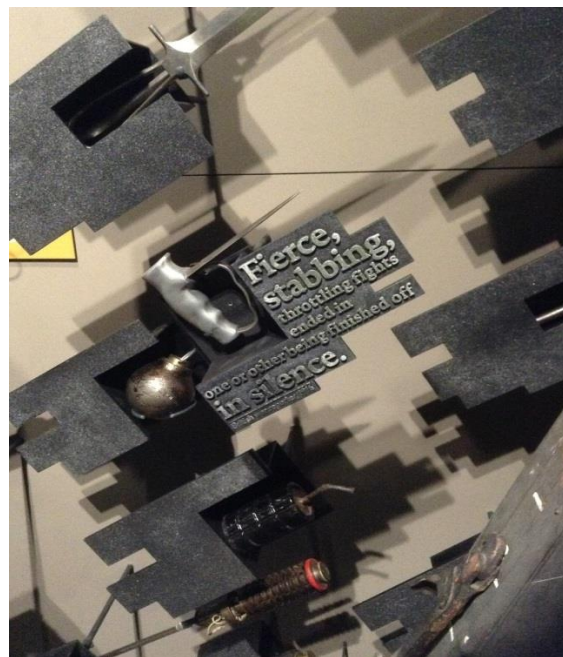


Figure 95 - Contemporaneous Quote Describing the Use of a Bladed Trench Weapon (Sourced by Author)

As the last example shows, the strategic placement of text could selectively channel visitors to direct their focus.¹¹³⁹ Figure 95 shows the contemporaneity policy in action, with the combination of this 1916 quote to illustrate the brutal effectiveness of this bladed weapon. The showcase details the need for soldiers to be equipped with

¹¹³⁹ Roppola (2012; 196).

knives, citing the sale of 200,000 butcher's knives to the French Army before purpose-designed trench knives became available.¹¹⁴⁰ Many visitors are drawn to this showcase by its striking jagged aesthetic appeal, as well as their initial confusion about why there is a selection of medieval-looking clubs and daggers on display within a First World War exhibition. Members of the Regeneration Team consistently reminded themselves that a visitor's attention span is continually draining as they progress through the gallery space, and recognised that symptoms of fatigue and boredom are exacerbated by reading text.¹¹⁴¹ Searching for identifying or contextualising information 'can increase visitors' cognitive load' that comes with a visitor's continually draining attention span.¹¹⁴² The uncomfortable physical conditions of reading text, coupled with the curators' desire to squeeze in rich information and the requirement for straightforward language all had to be incorporated, through various levels of filtration. On a top level, the situating of text within a narrative arc was intended to direct visitor attention and enhance their understanding, as part of an army of different types of interpretive media designed to communicate messages to them within this mediated environment. Such a visitor-centred goal, with its 'graspable focus', can act to motivate visitors, because it serves a dual purpose of providing sufficient clarity mixed with complexity, whilst also leaving visitors desiring to learn more.¹¹⁴³

¹¹⁴⁰ Cornish (2014; 68). With the gallery text forming its backbone, this book of the Galleries provides a comprehensive guide to its narrative and objects. See also 'What Goes On in War Museums' (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive) and Phillips (2009).

¹¹⁴¹ See Roppola (2012; 192, 196). She records that visitors often state a self-awareness that they cannot compute all of the text available within an exhibition environment (2012; 164), though it is not the case that visitors want 'a watered-down experience or for content to be reduced to simplistic messages'. Those in control of the design have to realise the 'limited attentional resources people naturally have' and provide a solution that can 'achieve complexity and richness, without causing confusion and overload' (2012; 273).

¹¹⁴² Roppola (2012; 192).

¹¹⁴³ Roppola (2012; 207).



Figure 96 –The ‘Deadlock’ Section of the Galleries (©IWM_2014_038_189)

7.10 - The Design of the Galleries Takes Shape

7.10.1 –The Design Space

Sight would continue to reign supreme within this burgeoning exhibition space, as evidenced by the galleries’ strap-line that visitors would be able to ‘*discover the story of the war through the eyes of people in Britain and its empire*’.¹¹⁴⁴ Here the visual was imbued with a prime necessity of conveying specific elements of the narrative. Following the design imperative of create a visually stunning space, objects were to be presented in a way to maximise their ‘holding power’ and the delivery of knowledge completed in a visually stimulating way as to help engage audiences. The gallery layout was designed so as to follow a prescriptive pathway, in order to aid logical comprehension. The exhibition space was also controlled to allow visitors to take pause or to refocus their attention – to cater for both the need for surprise as well as consistent in structure. The overall architecture of the displays played upon visitor intrigue and natural curiosity.¹¹⁴⁵ Yet this had to find a balance, as ‘the ability to pay attention is dependent on suppressing distraction’.¹¹⁴⁶ A physical recess containing a projection was employed to deliver the section ‘Why

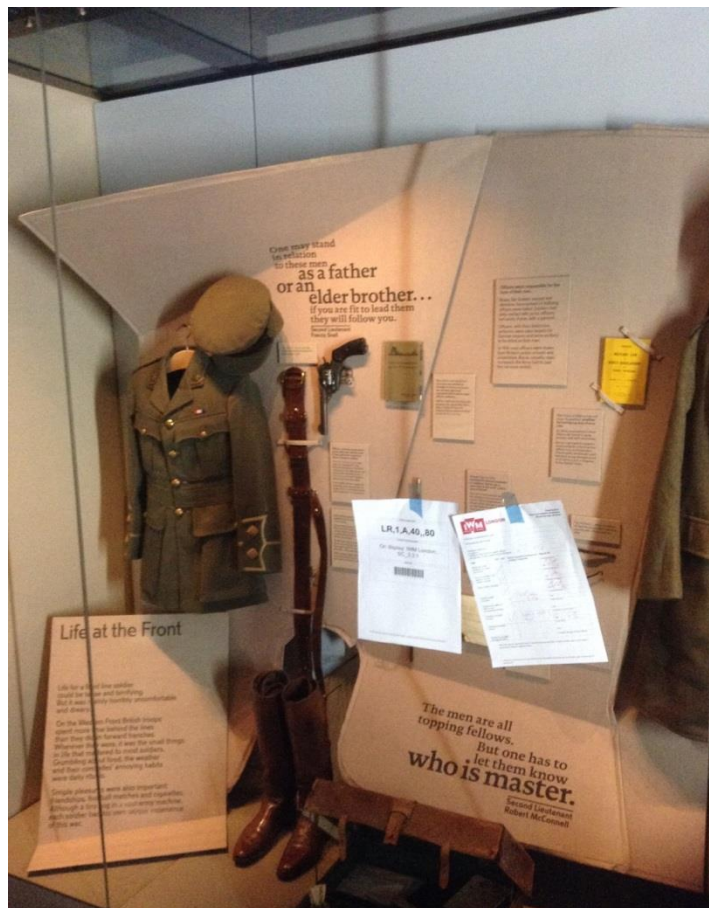
¹¹⁴⁴ http://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/press-release/First%20World%20War%20Galleries%20at%20IWM%20London_0.pdf; Accessed 01/08/14.

¹¹⁴⁵ Roppola (2012; 186).

¹¹⁴⁶ Roppola (2012; 195).

War', but it was a challenging design space, and suffered as a result of visitors walking in front of those viewing it. There were concerns expressed amongst the Regen Team that the Somme projection would distract visitor attention due to its prominent positioning, but it was felt that this was a price that would have to be paid given its significance within the historical narrative. Varying design techniques were installed by Casson Mann to provide variety for visitor sight lines, ranging from the horizontal flats of the 'Somme' section to towering showcases. Furthermore, specific sections were designated as targeted areas for a change in pace, such as the thematic section 'Life at the Front', pictured in Figure 97.

Figure 97 – 'Life at the Front' Section – Detailing every facet of the soldier's



experience, this section 'steps out of time' as it is not arranged around any particular events or chronology (N.B. The sheets of paper relate to the showcase planning, as photograph was taken prior to galleries' opening) (Sourced by Author)

Varying the pace of the exhibition was employed to enable visitors not to feel submerged or overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information, facts and object

groups.¹¹⁴⁷ On a practical level, many visitors would not be able to afford spending longer than the one day in which they visited the museum, perusing through its multiple intense exhibitions. This acted as a possible constraint:

‘Without limiting what is displayed or how visitors interact with displays, it is essential that visitors know that the museum holds dear a few well-selected goals...What can a museum do in a few hours that will have an effect on a visitor?’¹¹⁴⁸

It was often noted in discussions within the Regen Team office that the visitor would only be within the gallery space for a finite amount of time, and that the dynamic of any family groups viewing the exhibition were always dictated by their youngest member. This gives a gauge of some of their driving anxieties, and what methods were used to get around the exhibition’s vast scale. The sheer size of the gallery space formed a daunting, rather than enticing prospect for visitors, even though objects had been included in a relatively sparing manner. Ensuring that visitor sight lines were not overwhelmed from afar (i.e. risking them being distracted by an alluring section ahead) was a mindful design approach, as the visitor progressed through the space, and the spatial placing of objects and text was agonised over. Figure 98 was taken in the final stage of installation, as Project Manager Hannah Daley and James Taylor position the captions for one of the showcases for the ‘Somme’ section. It acts as an illustration of the preciseness of enabling visitors to make logical connections between objects and text, because ‘...the strategic placement of text can work positively to create emphasis within a display case, selectively channelling visitors to focus on certain objects’.¹¹⁴⁹

¹¹⁴⁷ Each exhibition element vies with others for the visitor’s time and attention (Falk & Dierking, 2013; 108). Little could be done to affect how the gallery space was interpreted by individual visitors in the presence of large crowds (See Roppola, 2012; 162-3). The Team compiled lists of what they called ‘pub facts’ to scatter through the galleries to help pique visitor interest (‘100 Things You Did Not Know About 1WW’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive’).

¹¹⁴⁸ Falk & Dierking (1992; 131). At their beginning, the galleries set out their mission statement, which acted as confirmation of what knowledge the Team realistically felt that they could impart to visitors within the time that they were likely to spend within the galleries.

¹¹⁴⁹ Roppola (2012; 196). Dean has observed that ‘Words – language, both heard and read, requires the most effort and mental processing to extract meaning’ (1994b; 26).



Figure 98 – *Hannah Daley Puts the Finishing Touches to the ‘Total War/Somme’ section as James Taylor looks on (Sourced by Author)*

For Roppola, how this ‘organisation of content [is] spatialised, [forms] an essential element of exhibition’.¹¹⁵⁰ The exhibition presented an account of a reality, ‘...a continuum of information and knowledge’ designed to enable conceptual understanding and stimulate further thought through formal orientation and way-finding devices.¹¹⁵¹ The interpretive strategy of the galleries engages its visitors ‘through stories of emotion and experience’, backed up by material evidence.¹¹⁵² Channelling thus forms a delicate process as the ‘organisation of content’ in diverse and engaging ways helps assist visitors in maintaining focus as they progress through the gallery space.¹¹⁵³ The reverse of this is that the provision of too much choice can place an overwhelming burden upon them:

¹¹⁵⁰ Roppola (2012; 211).

¹¹⁵¹ Hooper-Greenhill (1994; 135); Cameron (2005; 230)

¹¹⁵² Roppola (2012; 236).

¹¹⁵³ Roppola (2012; 213).

‘Putting visitors in a position of control needs to be tempered by respecting fundamental attentional limitations, and tendencies towards fatigue and overload’.¹¹⁵⁴

In the context of a historical narrative museum, visitors require ‘conceptual directedness’, with the ‘suitability of narrative in structuring content’ widely advocated to provide a sense of overarching coherence.¹¹⁵⁵ The main precedent for the narrative adopted for this spatially configured environment was in telling visitors information, with secondary intentions of allowing them to form their own views on the matters described, together with stimulating further thought. In this way, even though the text panels were ‘open to the negotiation of polyvalent meanings by visitors’, they incorporated and ‘materially embodied the discursive agendas of [their] producers’.¹¹⁵⁶ Rather than cultivating a raw atmosphere of scepticism, however, visitors were encouraged implicitly to question their inherited knowledge of the First World War, and broaden public perceptions. The galleries’ mantra was to challenge the dominant discourses surrounding the First World War that held currency within contemporary British society, and in so doing, acts to convince and ultimately persuade audiences of a chosen ideological viewpoint.¹¹⁵⁷ Visitor understanding was being tailored to align their views, as is illustrated through the Reflection Spaces.

7.10.2 - Reflecting on the Debate Spaces

Macleod et al have recorded that the postmodern historical museum views discussion and debate ‘...as vital to the development of critical engagement’, and that challenging content demands space ‘for active and contemplative forms of reflection’.¹¹⁵⁸ To this end, the Regen Team made use of what became known as Reflection Spaces. These consisted of two segregated atmospheric areas within the First World War galleries, whereby visitors were given the opportunity to react to

¹¹⁵⁴ Roppola (2012; 213). Locating active agency amongst both visitors and the exhibition designers, she writes of a need for visitors to feel that things are under control, rather than they themselves are actually in control – warning that the constructivist tactic of giving visitors control can add to the burden upon them, rather than liberate them. Conversations about the topic of overloading visitors often took place at design meetings (JW IWM Research Diary, CM Stage D Meeting, 03/02/12). See also Macdonald (2002; 140).

¹¹⁵⁵ Roppola (2012; 214). She notes that a lack of a discernible narrative is a common visitor criticism of museums, and that ‘...a focused institution or exhibit was co-occurrent with a clear narrative structure’.

¹¹⁵⁶ Roppola (2012; 216)

¹¹⁵⁷ For examples of these discourses, see Wilson (2013).

¹¹⁵⁸ Macleod et al (2015; 335).

provocative and juxtaposing perspectives contained within original material, framed through embedded binary discourses of morality and immorality/injustice.¹¹⁵⁹ Content was delivered via a ceiling-mounted digital projector, featuring photographs and quotes from contemporary newspaper accounts and letters selected by the Regen Team. This was then projected downwards onto a flat circular table in front of visitors, who sat around it, as the text was synchronously read aloud through embedded speakers with additional sound effects to create a more emotive atmosphere (See Figure 99). These audio-visual projections were to have ‘due gravitas...[to] be eloquent, serious, hard-hitting...compelling’.¹¹⁶⁰ Thus the overall objective of the concept was to endorse a visitor response via emotive resonance, through transmitting aspects of warfare’s moral dilemmas in a question format, in accordance with the bigger issues of representation which a museum of war has to confront.¹¹⁶¹



Figure 99 – *The ‘Should War Have Rules?’ Debate Space Material is projected onto the circular table with the shell showcase containing a leather glove shrunken by poisonous gas (©IWM_2014_037_052.tif)*

¹¹⁵⁹ Roppola (2012; 240) observes that visitors negotiate meaning within historical museums through these discourses, as the designers seek an affective response. See also Weinberg (1994; 231).

¹¹⁶⁰ ‘Digital Media Brief for ‘Should War Have Rules’ Reflection Space’, AV 2.3.4, 17/02/13, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹¹⁶¹ This would be done by evoking historical understanding by ‘...encouraging the visitors to make historical sense from their emotional engagement with the subject’ (Watson, 2010; 221). She provides the example that speeches by Churchill affect visitors ‘...both as powerful words that can be heard outside of the time in which they were originally spoken and as words that we can imagine hearing at the time of their origin. We can still experience the sound, and through our senses, engage with the emotions of the speaker and imagine the responses of the original listeners’ (2010; 212).

The first Reflection Space, titled 'Should War Have Rules?', posed to visitors the notion of whether, and to what extent, warfare could be controlled by legislation or doctrine. Its situation within the broader gallery narrative meant that it would act as a point of punctuation, in exploring the use of gas as a chemical weapon during the conflict.¹¹⁶² In particular, there was a desire to examine the perceived exceptionality, and associated lingering horror of gas, by demonstrating that its use as a weapon had been specifically outlawed prior to the conflict:

'...gas was considered, seemed exceptional in its time, [because] it was an unknown, it was new, it seemed a violation of existing cultural norm, and that sense of outrage has persisted...[leaving] a continuing hold over our imagination...if a weapon were infinitely awful in its suffering but not lethal, would it be [legitimate] to use it?'¹¹⁶³

The question posed to visitors was therefore, in the case of Britain's outraged judgement of Germany using poison gas in 1915, whether it was 'legitimate to be outraged by something if you're then going to go and use it yourself...is there a moral high ground', using original contemporaneous material to explore that distinction.¹¹⁶⁴ The Museum voice was to be present only in as far as informing visitors of the purpose of the space.¹¹⁶⁵ It was recognised early on that they would form a challenging aspect of the galleries, because not only were they conceptually difficult and not narrative-based, but also because it would be relatively difficult to judge their success:

¹¹⁶² It had been hoped to link this with subsequent conflicts, such as the deployment of area bombing in the Second World War, 'but this was seen to pose a hazard to the contemporaneity of the gallery' (Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13; see also 'Reflection Space Revision', LM, 10/07/12, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). As it turned out, the spaces did step out of contemporaneity through their inclusion of quoted material from memoirs.

¹¹⁶³ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13. IK credited Wilfred Owen's poem *Dulce et Decorum Est* for this enduring legacy for exerting an exceptionally strong hold on popular memory of the war. See also 'Reflection Space – Should War Have Rules?', 20/07/12, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹¹⁶⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13. Emphasis was on the moral issues raised by the individual documents, rather than on the stories of the people involved in them. Because of the desire to limit factual information present, one of the problems that developed was that the lack of detail regarding who was speaking made it hard to distinguish between British and German soldiers' testimonies, having cited historical press material to justify why Britain had resorted to using gas as a weapon (JW IWM Research Diary, 16/07/14).

¹¹⁶⁵ There had been intentions to make use of contextualising statistics, but these were not implemented in the end product.

‘...the effect we want is entirely in the minds of the visitor, and it’s quite an ephemeral and fleeting thing, it will be quite difficult to document whether or not somebody’s had a thought or reflection...there is the possibility of getting people to, just for...I don’t necessarily think that it has to be anymore than that, I mean the act of, it might be a fleeting consideration, but it’s something they wouldn’t have done otherwise, then that’s an achievement’. ¹¹⁶⁶

The second Debate Space would deal with the core psychological dimension of warfare through its consideration of inevitable acts of killing and being killed.¹¹⁶⁷ For LM, who was in charge of the space, it was an opportunity to redress this fact that war involves killing, as something that the Museum had not explicitly dealt with in the past. Furthermore it would allow for a review of the common public perception of soldiers as sacrificial volunteer figures, rather than occasionally gung-ho and blood-thirsty individuals expected to go out and kill other men, sometimes in hand-to-hand combat.¹¹⁶⁸ Again the space made use of the prism of human experience by featuring multiple accounts detailing the varied and wide-ranging motivations and reactions to death and killing, and used this material to give rise to a ‘grey area in-between’.¹¹⁶⁹ Thus this was a conscious effort to feed in the human dimension to a conflict of many millions, beyond the fact that its digital nature meant that it could feature additional stories and material without occupying additional physical space. Aware that nearly all of the quotes used involved an emotional dimension, their curators remained aware of not wanting to manipulate any particular reaction amongst visitors:

¹¹⁶⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13.

¹¹⁶⁷ See ‘IWM Digital Media Brief for AV 3.1.8 Reflection Space: Kill or be Killed?’, Feb 2013, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹¹⁶⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, 24/04/13. It was also intended ‘to convey the lack of choice, the experience of killing or fear of being killed by a number of different weapons and the loss of one’s friends and comrades’, so that the three layers contained within it were ‘the experience of killing; the fear of being killed and the will to carry on/legacy’ (‘Reflection Space Revision’, LM, 10/07/12, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). This area was to be positioned within the ‘Total War’ section of the galleries, meaning that it would have to compete against the visually domineering and loud ‘Somme’ projection, which visitors could see from the seated Debate Space. As it was situated within this part of the galleries, it meant that the experience of soldiers on the Western Front was prioritised through the delivered content – the Debate Space was therefore required to ‘complement this area without detracting or diffusing the significance of the surrounding narrative’ (‘IWM Digital Media Brief for AV 3.1.8 Reflection Space: Kill or be Killed?’, Feb 2013, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

¹¹⁶⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, 24/04/13. IK felt that this approach was the best way of obtaining a degree of psychological depth to a complex, challenging issue (Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13).

‘...you don’t want to be forcing emotions onto the content...there’s a certain amount of it [that] just emerges naturally...channelling it, allowing the material to be itself in its proper context is part of the job’.¹¹⁷⁰

Thus the overall intentions of the spaces were *bona fide* - a credible new direction for the Museum in ‘directly tackling a topic that is fundamental to our remit’ through the prism of human experience.¹¹⁷¹ They were using objects through a different delivery mechanism’, and their ‘design language’ was to make them ‘recognisable to visitors’.¹¹⁷² They would be environments in which visitors could ‘debate, discuss and explore subjects...pausing, interacting, talking together with other visitors’, following stimulation from the surrounding gallery content.¹¹⁷³ However, problems started to mount as attention turned towards finalizing desired visitor outputs. An early meeting had listed a desire to drive visitors ‘to an active contemplation of some of our key questions’.¹¹⁷⁴ From the outset, it was accepted that trying to get visitors to comprehend a chronologically distant mind-set, beyond being a decision which they were unlikely to ever have to contemplate personally, would be challenging to say the least. Originally described as ‘places of impact’ that would raise awareness of

¹¹⁷⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13. LM also wanted to steer away from any exploitation of emotion, but agreed that ‘even for those who admit that they don’t know very much about [the First World War], they still carry with the sense of the futility, and the sacrifice...so it’s laden with emotion’ (Recorded Interview between JW and LM, 24/04/13).

¹¹⁷¹ ‘Digital Media Brief for ‘Kill or Be Killed’ Reflection Space’, 17/02/13, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. In this way, the spaces contributed towards overall learning outcomes for the exhibition, through their ability to show the relevance of the conflict to modern audiences.

¹¹⁷² ‘Debate Spaces Redux Oct 2011’, IWM Discussion Document (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). Before final appointment, the front-running external design firms were asked questions regarding how they might use the concept of Debate Spaces. Through challenging visitors ‘to look at war and conflict through different perspectives’, IWM defined them as places where the historical narrative, the material culture of the war, and modern technology will come together’ – indeed they considered that they were so ‘integral to the whole exhibition’ that they were seen as being in satisfying the requirement for the galleries to be ‘ground-breaking’ (though their overall form was still being decided upon at this stage) (‘Designer Exhibition Interviews’, April 2011, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). One example given to designers was to take the message ‘War forces us to destroy and create’, and using before and after photographs of the Passchendaele landscape in 1917.

¹¹⁷³ ‘Debate Spaces Aug 10’, Discussion Document, (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). It was originally envisaged that groups would use the spaces for discussion purposes for up to fifteen minutes, and that they should act as a pause point, to be achieved through the use of chairs.

¹¹⁷⁴ ‘Debate Spaces Redux Oct 2011’, IWM Discussion Document (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). The over-arching themes for these spaces to address were ‘the humanity/inhumanity of war’ (‘Kill or be Killed’ Reflection Space), ‘what makes a war just/justifiable’ (‘Should War Have Rules’) and that ‘history is unfinished’. This last theme was to be situated within the final section of the galleries, but did not materialise. Other suggestions had been to consider what wars were fought over, how far art and photographs could convey the experience of war, does the end of a conflict mean peace, and the reliability of personal testimony (‘Debate Spaces’ Document, August 2011 (Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive).

and dealing with controversial, shocking topics, the design process saw their interactive element become increasingly passive and watered-down. Less was being expected of visitors, who were eventually tasked with contemplating what they had encountered.¹¹⁷⁵ Interaction became ambivalent and more open-ended; posing a small number of largely rhetorical conceptual questions that were not explicitly shared with visitors acted as an invitation for visitors to look at the single object on display, but there was limited capability for enacting further engagement:

‘...if we are really asking our visitors to think about, and to empathise, and to emotionally have some sort-of reaction...the more you impose a Museum voice on this sort of area, the more I think you run the risk of being either preachy or trite, maybe even a little bit liberal wishy-washy, and actually you don’t want to be any of those things, because you’re then imposing a judgement, and that’s the last thing I think we should be aim to do with these [spaces]’.¹¹⁷⁶

There had been early suggestions of using a gun as the singular object for the ‘Kill or Be Killed’ Reflection Space, but the Team felt that this risked ‘getting into really uncomfortable territory’.¹¹⁷⁷ In a proposal document, LM reflected upon the philosophical issue at stake:

‘As well as being stuck between the rock of tokenism and the hard place of tasteless, gratuitous gaming, killing another was not a choice for the servicemen of the First World War. How, then, could we encourage the visitor to sympathise and reflect upon decisions in war-time when, essentially, shooting the rifle was not a choice?’¹¹⁷⁸

Encapsulating this complex moral dilemma proved too difficult to realise directly, and so was duly replaced with an emotively powerful object of a rusted steel helmet with a bullet hole through it, housed within a shell-shaped showcase (See Figure 100 below).

¹¹⁷⁵ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, 24/04/13. Questions about the spaces would function and what they would achieve were asked at the Academic Advisory Board Meeting (23/07/12, JW IWM Research Diary).

¹¹⁷⁶ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, 24/04/13.

¹¹⁷⁷ ‘Reflection Spaces Revision’, 17/04/12, Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹¹⁷⁸ ‘Reflection Spaces Revision’, 17/04/12, Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

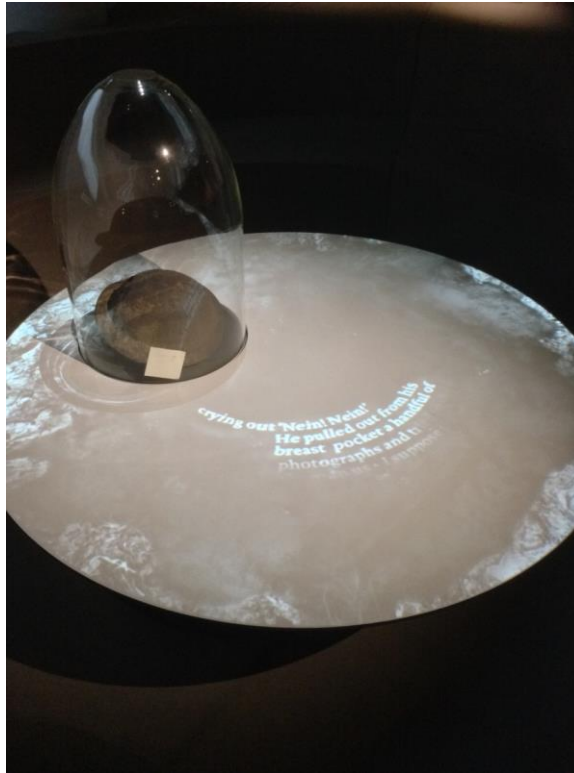


Figure 100 – *The ‘Kill or Be Killed’ Debate Space Projection, with the digital effect of rain drops falling in a shell crater (Sourced by Author)*

The concept of the spaces continued to be developed and subjected to change. LM remained unsure whether it was adopting ‘a bit of an idealistic view’, though she judged that museums ‘are ideally placed to generate debate, and conversation, and thought’.¹¹⁷⁹ Ultimately the expectation of the level of visitor interaction was lowered when their name was changed from ‘Debate Space’ to ‘Reflection Space’:

‘A necessary change...practically in terms of space...as the demand on the surrounding areas grew, so the Reflection Spaces shrank...the idea of having a debate in the middle of an exhibition is, I think this is one of those ideas that appeals to people who work in museums and not necessarily to visitors, I’m not sure that actually visitors, well I certainly wouldn’t want to go to a museum and stand in a space, and go oh I’ve never met you before, let’s have a

¹¹⁷⁹ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, 24/04/13.

debate about something, it's just not going to happen, and I also think it would be disruptive to the flow [of the exhibition]'.¹¹⁸⁰

The notion of a debate required multiple individuals, as debate with one's self forms reflection. Summarising the shift in the naming of the spaces, it was deemed that the challenge of setting up two sides of an argument in a coherent fashion would be difficult to achieve without being liable to visitor confusion:

'...a debate is an active process, an intellectual process, you have to be able to absorb quite deeply an argument, in order to argue against it, and vice versa, or to defend [it]...that is quite a large ask in a gallery interactive which might hold someone for ninety seconds...or maybe two minutes, or maybe five, but in any case, it's an ask...I think providing the two sides of possibly the same material but in the context of 'Have a think about this', not 'take a view on this', I think that's a less intimidating prospect...if we can prompt the reflection...you can consider something more deeply...setting it as a debate space creates a relationship of opposition, and I think if the Museum says we're going to have a debate, we won't tell you what side we're on, or we will deliberately not stand in this debate, there will be an artificiality to it, which I think would...tie yourself in a knot...I think it's difficult to tell two sides of an argument without at least sub-consciously taking one of the sides which you think is more correct...because you're hoping for a certain kind of reaction...there's no way you could ever guarantee...necessarily design these with such certainty'.¹¹⁸¹

Their final ambition was 'encouraging and provoking visitor thought' through quiet contemplation and individual reflection.¹¹⁸² Even the notion of outright 'contemplation' was recognised by the curators as something that would involve 'a level of time and consideredness...probably not practical in a gallery space'.¹¹⁸³

¹¹⁸⁰ Recorded Interview between JW and LM, 24/04/13. It was also suggested that such direct levels of interaction between visitors was unlikely, as few would be comfortable engaging with these issues in conversation with a stranger.

¹¹⁸¹ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13.

¹¹⁸² 'Digital Media Brief for 'Kill or Be Killed' Reflection Space', 17/02/13, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹¹⁸³ Recorded Interview between JW and IK, 24/04/13. At interview, neither IK nor LM was able to recall an occasion whereby they had taken part in deep engagement or reflection within an exhibition environment, suggesting that the transition from philosophical ideal through to actual realisation was challenging. Munroe (2016; 191) similarly found within the context of her research on displays on the

Taken as a whole, delivering the intended outcome of these spaces ended up as being emotive areas that would appeal to those visitors seeking a deep and meaningful thought-provoking experience. But for the majority, it acted more as a site of limited engagement or pondering, quite distant from its original ambitions. Furthermore, the design language would lack the notable distinctiveness from that of the rest of the galleries that had been another original intention. Encouraging reflection, let alone debate, in such a manner was structured in to help shape public knowledge of fundamental issues in question, but it seemed that the desired effect was difficult to achieve in reality.¹¹⁸⁴



Figure 101 – *The ‘Should War Have Rules?’ Debate Space being used as a seating area for filming during the Galleries’ Press Day (©IWM_2014_037_350.tif)*

topic of slavery that ‘...being confronted with traumatic and painful historical events within the museum can prompt visitors to adopt a quiet ‘language’ of mourning. Curators can foster this quiet engagement through innovative use of space and display designed to encourage a silent and reflective atmosphere’ (2016; 191).

¹¹⁸⁴ Another element which had been discussed early on as a potential topic to feature fairly prominently within the galleries was to interweave how the War had been recorded by the IWM during its latter stages, and using the collections to demonstrate how these were assembled (‘Permanent Galleries Narrative Structure’, Aug 2010, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive; Brosnan, 2010). This concept would not be prioritized, ending up as a sole photograph of the Museum during its early acquisition phase in the galleries’ final section ‘War Without End’.

7.10.3 – Capitalising upon new Digital Technologies



Figure 102 – An Early Design of the ‘Supply Line’ Digital Interactive’

(Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)



Figure 103 – The ‘Supply Line’ in its Realised Form:

‘A digital kinetically-interactive table exploring the unprecedented scale of production required to keep troops at the front fed and fighting. Visitors will be required to help make shells, food and clothing to be sent to the front, supported by digitally enhanced animations’ (Sourced by Author) ¹¹⁸⁵

State of the art audio-visuals (AVs) were to play an integral part of both delivering content and ‘to amplify and enrich’ the galleries’ narrative.¹¹⁸⁶ They also helped to aid the pacing of the exhibition’s narrative, and widened participation, though their position within the creative process meant that they risked becoming dumping grounds for large areas of collated research. There were also concerns regarding their reliability, though digital hands-on technology has played an increasingly important role within recent museum displays, particularly the use of new media to portray difficult concepts and ideas to visitors.¹¹⁸⁷ PC believed that the

¹¹⁸⁵ <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2014/03/what-to-expect-in-our-new-first-world-war-galleries/> - Accessed 11/07/15.

¹¹⁸⁶ ‘Colorisation in FWW Galleries’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive.

¹¹⁸⁷ See Paddon (2014; 84-6). As Paddon points out, new media is well-suited to engaging the learning styles of younger audiences, and widens inclusivity (2014; 151). See also Kidd (2014a) and De Groot (2010) for the growing importance of digital media within museum environments. However

requirement to make the exhibitions ‘ground-breaking’ would be most easily achieved through new technological techniques, proclaiming with the pace that things moved at, that there would be technological contraptions available in 2014 that did not exist in 2012.¹¹⁸⁸ The Digital Producer, Jo Saull (JS), joined IWM in March 2013 to oversee the Digital Media Team’s physical displays within the exhibition. Her work involved working ‘closely with the historians, the designers and the [software] developers to ensure that we use the most appropriate digital technology to tell the stories of the First World War in new and thought-provoking ways’.¹¹⁸⁹ Seeing the Museum as a social institution, the intention had originally been to build upon an existing IWM initiative called ‘Social Interpretation’, which featured stations on which people could respond and comment on the object in front of them. This could then be transmitted and dispersed beyond the Museum, as well as capitalising on the opportunity to utilise film and photographic collections within this not-so-reliant-on-physical-space digital format. However ‘Social Interpretation’ morphed into ten ‘Digital Labels’ featuring ‘New Perspectives’ for select objects, expanding their stories on a small screen.¹¹⁹⁰

The role of digital interactives fits within the broader scheme of New Museology, in justifying the ability for visitors to actively learn within the exhibition space. However some critics remain unconvinced as to the educative discourse underlining this technology:

‘...visitors now ‘make knowledge their own’ and participate fully in the communicative function of the museum. But the supposedly emancipatory vocabulary of active learning is saturated with visions of progress: museums are *still* places where mass audiences are instructed about, and inculcated into, the principal values and norms of their communities...it assimilates and

the nature of this particular subject matter made it more challenging to deliver in an enjoyable learning format.

¹¹⁸⁸ Recorded Interview between JW and PC, conducted on 23/02/12.

¹¹⁸⁹ <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2014/03/what-to-expect-in-our-new-first-world-war-galleries/> - Accessed 11/07/15. This online blog entry outlines JS’s aspirations for the digital interactives.

¹¹⁹⁰ This was an initiative led by the Learning Department and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It was recognised that an app could achieve a perfect balance between mission-audience-technology, and there were discussions about using handheld guides and apps coupled in with mobile web technology which would accompany the galleries. Cost considerations, a lack of common operating systems, providing updates, alongside broader practical issues meant that these could not be realised (‘Handheld Technology in our New Galleries’ Document, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive; Bagnall, 2013).

normalises *all* possible interpretations so that it is difficult – if not impossible – for visitors to occupy critical or subversive positions'.¹¹⁹¹



Figure 104 – *A Digital Label Screen in Use within the Galleries*
(©IWM_2014_037_075)

Within this context, visitors were offered the opportunity to engage with ongoing historical debates, and to delve into detail that related to more challenging topics, such as the historical debate surrounding, and public scrutiny of, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig (See Figure 105).¹¹⁹²

¹¹⁹¹ Lisle (2006; 851, emphasis original). She also applies this reasoning to the role of historical narrative in that it is something to be learned, understood and accepted by passive and dutiful visitors. She suggests that this is because the “Lessons of War” are *too essential* to be left up to the minds of visitors, and must therefore be guided by the hands of experts (2006; 852, emphasis original).

¹¹⁹² Acting as extended captions and using extra resources from the collections, these included the French 75mm Field Gun in ‘Shock’, Siegfried Sassoon’s 1917 Protest Letter in ‘Breaking Down’, the Camouflage Tree in ‘Deadlock’, the ‘Hymn of Hate’ in ‘Your Country Needs You’ and the William Orpen painting ‘The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28th June 1919’ in ‘War Without End’. There were also seven Digital Labels used in the redesigned Atrium.



Figure 105 – *Young Perspectives Film Outlining Debate on Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig (Sourced by Author)*

Voiceover was used on occasion within interactives to vary the delivery of historical information relating to the narrative, such as ‘to create the impression of movement, scale and urgency’ in conveying the impactful drama of the 1918 German Advance and the inter-Allied effort to halt this as part of the section ‘Seizing Victory’.¹¹⁹³ All of this relied upon Roppola’s concept of ‘Resonating’, because of the commonality of, and therefore knowledge of how to watch and engage with screens within everyday life.¹¹⁹⁴ JT had urged the Regen Team to participate creatively with

¹¹⁹³ ‘Colorisation in FWW Galleries’, accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive. Architectural challenges within this part of the galleries saw the use of projections to ‘give the titanic events of 1918 sufficient impact’, using audio narration in combination with visual resources, in the form of the abundant film and photographs available within the Museum’s collections. The ‘IWM AV Brief From Near Defeat to Victory’ (accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive) called for these projections to be ‘extraordinarily powerful’ and for them to be paced so as to ‘...make their impact in a limited space’. Though they would to be passive projections, they were subjected to user-testing and had seven specific visitor outcomes and learning objectives relating to the historical information they needed to convey.

¹¹⁹⁴ Roppola (2012; 198, 257).

the graphics and software designers, in undertaking all asset research but with a stipulation not to collate too much (as 90% of this would be discarded).¹¹⁹⁵ He recognised that visitors tend to participate with interactives because of their design, and so they should therefore be an engaging opportunity for interaction.¹¹⁹⁶ However, the process of translating historical content, and geographic information in the form of maps, into the AV interactives proved to be an experience of ‘much frustration’:

‘Some very difficult meetings had to take place [with the AV contractors] before a clear way forward was arrived at. Quite a lot of time was lost in the early part of this process and although the end-results are pretty good, we had to push hard to get them there’.¹¹⁹⁷

7.10.4 – Integrating Formal Learning into the Galleries



Figure 106 – *James Taylor working with the IWM Youth Panel, 22/11/13*¹¹⁹⁸
(Sourced from website accessed 09/09/15)

¹¹⁹⁵ JW IWM Research Diary, Nov 2012. External design firms were sub-contracted through Casson Mann.

¹¹⁹⁶ This ‘explosion of new technologies’ has meant that ‘...there has never been a more challenging and a more exciting time in which to be devising creative spaces. These spaces are inevitably becoming more dynamic and experiential, changing and theatrical’ (Greenberg, 2005; 226). Though acknowledging that it brings action through hands-on elements and active involvement, some critics have suggested that the receiving of information for visitor via digital interactives ‘remains largely passive’ (Black, 2012; 244). For discussion on the potential of social media devices within museum spaces, see Wong (2012).

¹¹⁹⁷ Email Interview from PC to JW, 28/07/14.

¹¹⁹⁸ <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2013/11/iwm-and-museum-takeover-day-22-november-2013/>; accessed 09/09/15.



Figure 107 – *James Taylor and Author assist members of the Youth Panel with drafting the Family Trail captions on ‘Kids in Museums Takeover Day’, 22/11/13 (Sourced from website accessed 09/09/15)*¹¹⁹⁹

The Regen Team was able to make use of formative evaluation to help steer decision-making by testing out their ideas on would-be visitors.¹²⁰⁰ This was typically done in liaison with staff from the Learning Department, who acted as ‘audience

¹¹⁹⁹ <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2013/11/iwm-and-museum-takeover-day-22-november-2013/>; accessed 09/09/15.

¹²⁰⁰ Such evaluation was particularly important in shaping and fine-tuning the desired impacts for the Audio-Visual interactives and multimedia aspects of the galleries. Though Paddon (2014; 63) advocates binary definitions that the focus of the curator is the object and collection, and the focus of the educator is the public, I judged that these two roles within the IWM context were more intertwined.

advocates, not just for school-aged children, but for all visitors'.¹²⁰¹ Within the design process, they are primed to act as 'the voice of those visiting' beyond their requirements to inform on learning styles, in a move away from didactic displays, and their ability to help encourage new audiences into a museum space mixing visual and multi-sensory material.¹²⁰² They also formed an important influence over the various forms and tone of gallery text, such as group captions and story panels, in pitching information at different levels and layering it so as not to alienate particular visitor groups. However, Fritsch has distinguished that curators can often see the concept of education 'as something separate to exhibition development'.¹²⁰³ Though a variety of interpretive modes and strategies were deployed, it gradually came to my attention that there was a sense that input from the Learning Department was not harnessed as much as the Regen Team curators had desired:

'...I think that education is something that we were hoping to start working with earlier but because of staff recruitment or whatever, it couldn't be done...that would have been nicer...because, if we are looking at learning output in the gallery, you want to be factoring those in quite early on...making sure we appeal to different people's learning styles...some people like to interact more with physical interactives, whereas some people will be drawn more to a film or an AV'.¹²⁰⁴

¹²⁰¹ Paddon (2014; 39). Building on their existing knowledge of audiences, early drafts of the gallery text, covering its whole hierarchy, were evaluated by selected family audiences at IWM Duxford in February 2013. Primary concerns raised were to the text's tone, how much was comprehensible, and the use of specific vocabulary ('welfare state', 'compulsory military service', 'Spring Offensive'), as the text was designed for a reading age of fourteen with targeted sections for younger audiences ('IWM First World War Galleries Text Evaluation Brief – Learning Families', Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). A Family Trail was embedded into the galleries, through tailored captions produced by a Youth Panel, designed to attract and encourage discussion within family groups triggered by an object, by a multimedia piece or by an in-gallery activity (See Figures 106 and 107). There were also podcasts completed with the Regen Team members through a 'Young Reporters' scheme, a project involving two local schools and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (see <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/transforming-iwm-london/2013/06/iwm-young-reporters-podcast-making-our-new-museum-active/>; accessed 09/09/15). See also Jackson & Leahy (2005) for an account of a research project at IWM London which used performative theatre in combination with the institution's education programme.

¹²⁰² Paddon (2014; 63-64, 67). For comment on the move away from didacticism, and the perception of the museum visitor as passive learner to be educated, to the changing power play between curator and visitor, see Lindauer (2006; 213); Bal (2006; 201) as cited by Paddon (2014; 67).

¹²⁰³ Fritsch (2011; 239). She subsequently remarks upon an uncertainty 'as to the nature of learning...in a museum context', which she sees as 'very surprising given a general acceptance among museum learning professionals of learning theories' (2011; 241).

¹²⁰⁴ Recorded Interview between JW and SP, conducted on 23/02/12. From my perspective, it seemed that the expertise of the Education Department was brought in at too late a stage to be able

Education was an important part of the Museum's constitution, because of its subject matter being on the school curriculum, and thus making it a suitable site for family audiences. The Learning Team was incorporated into proceedings by reviewing the gallery text, and they had a separate programme of activities which were incorporated within the exhibition space. A tie-in schools publication was also produced and the Learning Programme for the wider 'Transforming IWM London' scheme was awarded an Educational Initiative at the Museums + Heritage Awards in 2015.¹²⁰⁵

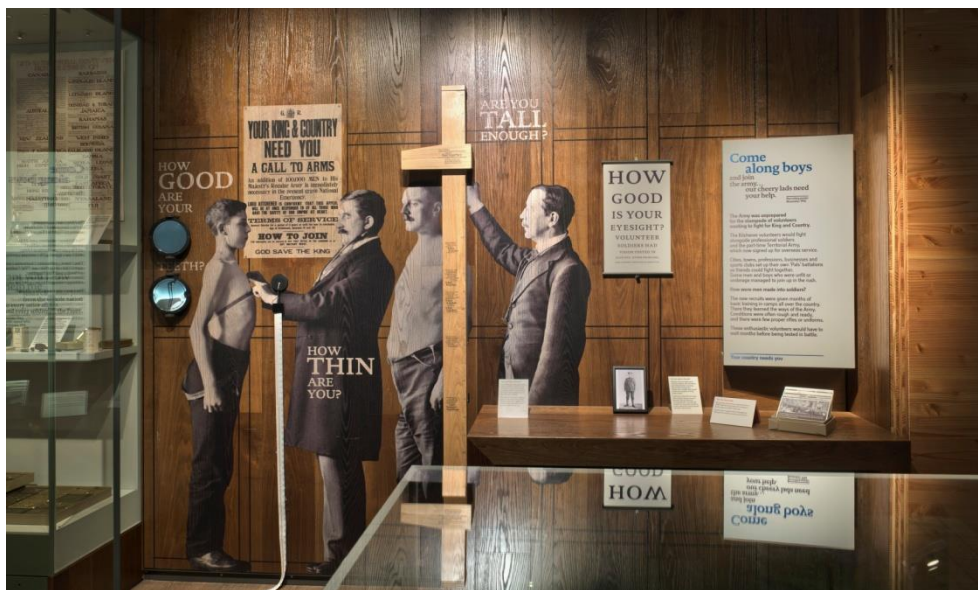


Figure 108 – *'Your Country Needs You' with Physical Interactives for Family Audiences (©IWM_SITE_LAM_003584)*

to have a major influence over the content. This was also a concern of the Regen curators as they went through the process; PC inquired with BW at a Team Meeting about what involvement from the Learning Department there would be at for the desired outcomes from the AVs (JW IWM Research Diary, Regen Team Meeting, 06/06/12). From this, a Learning and Regen Team meeting on 'Key Objects' took place the following day (JW IWM Research Diary, 'Key Objects' Meeting, 06/06/12). Anna Lotinga expressed a desire to be more involved in future Regen Team meetings, and there was a programme of podcasts produced that involved Regen Team members. Retrospectively this seems a missed opportunity in terms of data collection, as the perceptions of processes from members of the Learning Department would have duly corroborated or corrected this view. For a broader overview of the changing role of educational departments within museums, see Hooper-Greenhill (2007). For a case study project of how young people have engaged with challenging history at the Museum of London and the Tower of London, see Jones (2014b). This formed part of the 'Challenging History' Network, set up in 2009 (See Kidd, 2014b).

¹²⁰⁵ Webb (2014). For an overview of a similar co-curation initiative, see Modest (2013).

7.11 – The Impact of the Galleries



Figure 109 - *James Taylor Addresses the National Media on the Galleries' Press Day* (©IWM_2014_037_295.tif)

These Galleries opened in July 2014, just before the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. They received much media acclaim, and saw visitor numbers reach almost unprecedented levels in the institution's history. This account of their construction as a co-authored space has revealed that those curatorial staff behind it recognised their new responsibilities within their changed role, as part of shifting ideas about audience engagement. The overall exhibition philosophy encompassed a balance between delivering a clear message on the one hand and challenging visitors on the other. Communicating knowledge - displaying the First World War through the use of text and objects in harmony - remains a continuous narrative for the Museum, reflecting its original purpose. As Cameron's research has validated, many visitors 'still long for a tangible, factual and validated scholarly narrative they can rely', whilst simultaneously desiring 'more subjective information that expresses a range of differing opinions on a given topic'.¹²⁰⁶ This provides the visitor with sufficient information to be able to assess their own views on a particular matter. The Regen Team had wanted these galleries to be 'ground breaking' in their

¹²⁰⁶ Cameron (2005; 229).

interpretation, by balancing engaging content with asking deep questions.¹²⁰⁷ In their efforts to achieve this, they developed museological thinking about the possibilities and boundaries of design and strategies of representation, so that these become slightly different to what they were before. The culture of exhibition-making in this instance relied upon a more fluid version of curatorial knowledge, though there were more actors influencing proceedings. However visitors were not to be overwhelmed to the point of information saturation, and so these galleries prioritized clarity and coherence over being encyclopaedic.¹²⁰⁸ The chapter also summarised some of the practicalities of exhibition-making, as well as the conceptual changes to the processes of writing text, and how curators have endeavoured to empower visitors. It ends on the thought that this exhibition tells us as much about the Imperial War Museum as an institution in this day and age as it does about the First World War – these are a set of galleries that reflect their time and culture.¹²⁰⁹

¹²⁰⁷ See Macdonald (2002; 258).

¹²⁰⁸ Cornish (2015). The galleries thus ‘...worked on the principle of ensuring that there was enough of the familiar in [the galleries’] content to ensure that our visitors felt comfortable in engaging with them’.

¹²⁰⁹ See Godwin (2014) for an in-depth interview with Paul Cornish about the galleries’ and their construction.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.1 – An Overview of the Exhibition-Making Process

‘...the assumptions, rationales, compromises and accidents that lead to a finished exhibition are generally hidden from public view: they are tidied away along with the cleaning equipment’.¹²¹⁰

This thesis has unlocked the door to the aforementioned metaphorical cupboard containing this cleaning equipment, as referenced in Section 7.1.1. By delving into the innards of the Imperial War Museum (IWM) this thesis has assessed the issues of power, personnel and politics entangled within the tacit processes of curating First World War exhibitions. Examining these geographies of its politicized exhibition space has sought to identify the IWM as a layered palimpsest of knowledge production and negotiation.

This thesis responds to Mason’s call to recognise and critically examine the paradigms and discourses within which museum professionals draw upon when producing displays and interpretation.¹²¹¹ Likewise it offers up an answer to Kjeldbaek’s question that ‘If a museum is primarily a collection of objects on public displays, how are they made to speak?’¹²¹² It also takes up Roppola’s reckoning that it would be ‘instructive to follow an exhibition’s development’, which I pursued in Chapter 7.¹²¹³ Thus its findings build upon recent work in the field of museum studies and historical geography, as its conclusions have designated the IWM as a producer of knowledge and understanding, in the way that it conveys particular ways of seeing the First World War.¹²¹⁴ These conclusions have been reached following an exploration of how the knowledge it makes for public engagement was produced, circulated and consumed within its past and present practices of display. This has been achieved by deconstructing the process of meaning-making in considering how these exhibition spaces were intended to be read and, to a lesser degree, how they were read by visitors. Thus as iterated in the introduction, these results have been

¹²¹⁰ Macdonald (1998; 2).

¹²¹¹ Mason (2005; 205).

¹²¹² Kjeldbaek (2009; 363).

¹²¹³ Roppola (2012; 276). However I was not able to contrast my findings with the visitor experience after installation.

¹²¹⁴ See also Cundy (2015a).

reached through a critique of four core examples within a fifty year parameter, all of which are interlinked in their historical approach.

The empirical chapters (4-7) of this thesis have demonstrated that the institutional vocabulary of self-justifying narratives and the final polished version of an exhibition, as is experienced by a visitor, tend to omit, or at least mask, the multi-layered tensions that feature within their creation. Building upon Macdonald's findings on her research at the Science Museum, the chapters have pertained exhibitions to be far from the sole outcome of curatorial omnificence; instead they are a complex combination of inputs as well as a series of compromises, both practical and political, between a range of stakeholders and multiple agents involved within the overall making process.¹²¹⁵ Furthermore the ways in which visitors to the IWM have been invited to engage with the topic of the First World War has changed significantly within the bookmark period (c.1964-2014). The overall approaches and styles of delivering historical exhibitions has developed over this timeframe, particularly in the extensive transformations to the curator-visitor relationship, and the impacts that these have had upon the Museum's sequence of displays. This has accounted for significant changes in the influence of the curator as directing and informing the content of exhibitions, with displays now having to cater for a multitude of audience needs and levels of knowledge. These issues remain a ceaseless challenge for the institution in how it enacts strategies of representation through its exhibitions. Objects are not just re-used in an unchanging narrative by virtue of a curatorial belief that they should be there, but manifestations of objects and narrative continue to be arranged in novel ways, driven by endlessly changing priorities.¹²¹⁶ At the top level, the empirical chapters have recorded a principal turn towards the presence of human agency within exhibitions, which acts as a common link between objects and narrative. The textual insight gained from individual eyewitnesses simultaneously imbues objects with a heightened symbolic status in redefining them as personal possessions, and in turn, as metonymic symbols that represent a wider

¹²¹⁵ Macdonald (2002).

¹²¹⁶ As an example, the use of particular knowledge pertaining to a particular collection can be reinterpreted successfully. In 2010, IWM London opened its 'Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes', which took the premise of a Medal Room as had traditionally featured within the Museum, but engaged visitors through its modern and more stimulating delivery methods (<http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/lord-ashcroft-gallery>; accessed 02/09/15).

whole.¹²¹⁷ In other words, this period has seen the Museum significantly redefine its whole mantra of how it goes about assembling exhibitions.

When a visitor views an exhibition, their focus is steered so that they concentrate more upon what it is being said rather than on how or why it has been said. But exhibitions remain as authored, constructed and political spaces to be read cumulatively as 'objects, images and voices, museums permit multi-sensory engagement with ideas of the past'.¹²¹⁸ As outlined in Section 2.1, they are spatially configured environments that use 'aesthetic and narrative strategies in the selection and arrangement of components, such as objects, images and text' with a political intention to persuade.¹²¹⁹ Such a desire is affected by time, meaning that either the finite nature of an exhibition or its datedness (and hence relevance) forces subsequent change. Iterations of reconstructing and reconfiguring the malleable space of the Imperial War Museum are never final or finite; it is accepted that future change and consequent reframing is inevitable in enabling the institution to adhere to its remit.¹²²⁰ Principally the factor of temporal distance over this fifty year period made the topic in question more alien, and so the chapters have accounted for the ways in which the Museum has reworked the conflict to ensure its relevancy to its visitors. Although the topic of the First World War remains a top level constant, the exhibition-making process has seen significant modifications in both message and medium over the time period in question, particularly the latter factor has become much more important as time has progressed. Over time, increasing numbers of actors, particularly on the digital front, have become involved within the progressively more complicated process of exhibition-making, as has been documented by the empirical chapters. The making-process may be a known quantity in that the Museum is vastly experienced when it comes to assembling historical exhibitions, but each time it does involves an unknown quantity, because the result is only pre-determined in the sense that it has to be markedly different from what was there before. In summary, the empirical chapters have revealed a cyclical process of exhibition-making; from an initial idea, development, realisation and building, the

¹²¹⁷ See Crane (2000; 4). Matthews (2013) has categorized the presentation of some objects within the Canadian War Museum as war trophies, which in tandem with narrative encounter, are then analysed as an affective realm of experience.

¹²¹⁸ Kavanagh (2000; 173).

¹²¹⁹ Roppola (2012; 217).

¹²²⁰ Cornish (2015).

opening, the visitor experience, the ageing process and subsequent change. This is so that the displays serve an underlying purpose in line with the Museum's institutional narrative (which operates as a broader context to the ways in which its knowledge production is practised). As a national museum and public site, the IWM uses its resources to tell an international story, helping to facilitate a sense of national identity, but the extent to which its audiences identify with this (either actively or passively) bears discussion beyond the scope of this work.

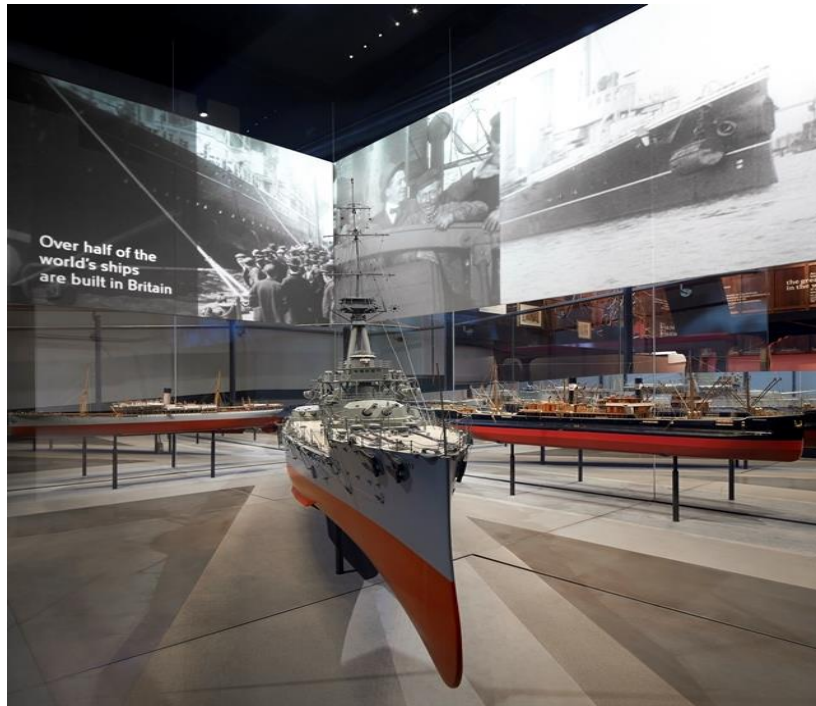


Figure 110 – *'Hope and Glory' Section of 2014 Galleries*

<http://www.museumsandheritage.com/show/awards/2015-winners/permanent-exhibition>; accessed 05/09/15)

8.2 – Bringing Together Chapter Themes

This study was contextualised with a brief account of the earlier history of the Imperial War Museum (See Section 1.2). This established that those behind the new institution 'sought to dedicate it to comprehensively recording the British and Empire experience during the First World War in a way that was both informative and commemorative'.¹²²¹ In Section 2.7, I disentangled some of the threads that related to its original part function as a memorial, and how these have affected its subsequent being. Having emerged out of the period of social remembrance during

¹²²¹ Cundy (2015a; 247).

the 1920s, it was tasked with making the indescribability of war comprehensible. That the Museum's provocative display spaces continue to be affected by discourses of memory practices affects how the meaning within these is read. Its recent exhibition spaces – intentionally, subversively or otherwise – have increasingly brought about a reverential reaction to the subject matter.¹²²² The topic of war remains inherently political, and the wider museum sector has recognised this with the rise of institutions with an explicitly anti-war agenda, such as peace museums, which has affected how the IWM redefines itself.¹²²³ This burden of both steering and educating a larger and broader audience about an increasingly distant subject is not only difficult, but coupled to the context of additional conflicts, can give rise to anti-militarist sentiment, accusations of sanitization or deliberate erasure of particular subjects, which encompass a broader lack of engagement with the more thorny or controversial aspects of its remit. In its ability both to produce and suppress meaning, the Museum risks bordering upon glorifying the subject matter or producing airbrushed history, at least in its critics' eyes. Visitors come with expectations that exhibitions should be encyclopaedic, which is not feasible, and can therefore express disappointment or disapproval when a particular interest is not recognised. However, more recently it has been willing to actively engage with some of areas of dissent which fall within its remit, such as inviting collaborations with artists, covering contemporary conflicts and generating exhibitions on the subject of war protest and peace, including 'Build the Truce' (derived from a project which ran between 2009-2012).¹²²⁴ Engaging with 'divisive topics in an open and honest way' can help to

¹²²² This has the effect of making critique of the subject matter seem disrespectful, as well as invoking a partly cathartic reaction of how visitors think they should feel when viewing a subject that deals with mass death and destruction (See Bonnell & Simon, 2007).

¹²²³ For recent analysis of peace museums, see Apsel (2016); Yoshida (2014). Within a Japanese context, and the influence of peace studies upon presenting history, see Allen & Sakamoto (2013); Takenaka (2014); Karacas (2010); Chen (2012); Utaka (2008). See also work by Friedberg & Alderoqui-Pinus (2012) on peace education within museums in Jerusalem. Within a UK context, see the Peace Museum in Bradford (<http://www.peacemuseum.org.uk/>; accessed 02/09/15) and the Peace and Reconciliation Gallery at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry (<http://www.theherbert.org/whats-on/galleries/peace-and-reconciliation>; accessed 02/09/15).

¹²²⁴ See for example; <http://blogs.iwm.org.uk/truce/> (Accessed 01/09/15); <http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/peter-kennard-unofficial-war-artist>; (Accessed 01/09/15). See also Bonnell & Simon (2007); Simon (2006). The Museum is undoubtedly richer for engaging with such topics; Cameron has suggested that the public see the authoritative depiction of contentious topics within museums signifies one of their key roles, and that visiting them should be a challenging experience (2005; 220, 223, 225). Nevertheless Macleod et al observe this core tension between the Museum's desire to challenge its visitors through these narratives, but also engaging through familiar icons of the subject – such as in employing narratives of nostalgia and romantic

initiate social change.¹²²⁵ Moreover these wider understandings within the popular domain have affected how its visitors want to understand war conceptually; rather than just providing a unitary, coherent narrative of a closed past, the Museum can now represent it as something more plural, contested and as something continuing to affect in the present.¹²²⁶

In overviewing the links between the empirical chapters, Chapters Five and Seven documented the similarities and differences in approach between the permanent galleries in analysing what was amassed as much as how this was done. The challenges of deploying historical narrative in combination with objects, as installed by the curatorial hand, was explored. It focused particularly on how these categories combined to produce a cumulative whole. Chapters Four and Seven then expressed how the IWM dealt with two of the First World War's most significant anniversaries, and how these targeted contributing towards visitor knowledge in different ways. The nature of a war museum means that high profile anniversaries offer the best chance for them to attract publicity and introduce change to existing displays. The milestone of the conflict's centenary in 2014 was an unprecedented event, in acting as the first time that the nation would commemorate an event on this scale without any of its participants. The fact that the Museum would act as a site leading the nation's commemorative efforts meant that it had once again needed to refresh its approach to how it told the story of the First World War to its visitors.¹²²⁷ This sense of presence sat in contrast to the rather understated approach of the Special Photographic Displays during the 1960s, at a time when the scale of these anniversaries lacked real prominence. Furthermore the linkages between Chapters Four and Five to Chapter Seven are encapsulated in Chapter Six, which sketches out the transition in microcosm from an approach led primarily by military history to providing a much broader historical understanding, through the narrative device of personal stories. The primary intention remains the same; selected objects and

visions of life on the Home Front embodied in the music and merchandise of the shop, thus 'offering competing and confusing narratives of war' (2015; 328).

¹²²⁵ Cameron (2005; 230).

¹²²⁶ Cameron (2005; 230). Cameron suggests that completing this exposes the 'epistemological basis on which knowledge in museums is based, by the inclusion of information on methods, perspectives, and authoring, to inform decision making'.

¹²²⁷ Additionally the rhetoric of these galleries – which acted as 'a compelling, vibrant and emotive narrative of the war' - linked it specifically back to 'the ambitions of its founders' (Strachan, 2014; 11)

explanatory texts 'instruct the public on what is to be learned'.¹²²⁸ However the act of negotiation involved in this understanding has changed. The challenge for the Museum in its more recent iterations has been to provide exhibitions that deliver essential components of information and portray a strong message in a stimulating way.¹²²⁹ In so doing, it can support its visitors '...in moving beyond feelings of discomfort or rage or disgust, not to mention the whole array of personal connections and emotions that other people's stories prompt...to the larger questions of the causes, course and consequences of war'.¹²³⁰ In essence this has equated to not lessening the emotional effectiveness of its subject matter, which visitors have come to expect, but making their overall experience 'deeper and more memorable'.¹²³¹

Though these Chapters have described a range of approaches, the more recently self-reflective Museum is constantly reassessing the impacts of its exhibitions in how they position the institution in line with granting its remit longevity. In order to establish some over-arching trends, this work has sought to position its exhibition within its relational context of what went before it, given that many of these exhibitions were defined and influenced by their predecessors. For example, the legacy left by the alternative approaches of these exhibitions in Chapters Five and Six were crucial in forming the influences of content and approach adopted by the permanent galleries explored in Chapter Seven. The position of the relative prioritising of objects, history, design and visitor needs can be combined to produce different exhibitions, dependent on the first two which are internally led, and the latter two being dictated predominantly by external circumstances. What the Special Photographic Displays of Chapter Four communicated about the First World War through the combination of photographs and text was very specific in its meticulous detail. It seems contrastingly narrow in focus when compared to the breadth of interpretation that features within the permanent galleries of Chapter Seven, even

¹²²⁸ Trofanenko (2010; 272).

¹²²⁹ Cundy (2015a; 265) has suggested that the Museum has taken on more aspects of its educational remit in having to change with its audiences. Within the context of Chapter 7, though this did not set out with one message, its principle was to aid visitor understanding through contemporaneity.

¹²³⁰ Macleod et al (2015; 335). Focusing on IWM North, their research highlights how the Museum is effective in making its visitors 'feel through the expressive use of media and through the tight editing of people's stories and voices', but that 'more concrete content' would help visitors 'build more detailed engagements'. They define IWM North as a location 'where new and challenging approaches to interpretation and media would be used as a route towards a different kind of visitor experience' (2015; 336). See also Loxham (2015; 534).

¹²³¹ Macleod et al (2015; 335).

though they both relied upon a combination of text and objects. However, the wider temporal circumstances dictated the context of these contrasting approaches – meaning that one is never more valid than the other, but evaluated within their relative context.

One can draw a broad comparison through the sum of these empirical chapters with an analogy summarized by Kjeldbaek.¹²³² With the importance of the First World War as a topic remaining a priority throughout, this promotes the idea that Chapter Four would represent the ‘first generation museum’, as being most closely linked to its original premise (though Frankland’s directorship did sever ties with these). Chapter Five detailed how a new Director-General wanted distinction from the previous Museum, which took the form of an extensive rebranding and rethink as to what it stood for, which was duly accomplished through new permanent galleries. As the factor of education (in the broadest sense) becoming more influential, Chapter Six witnessed the advent of the museum professional and the completion of exhibitions that were led predominantly by market desire and mass appeal.¹²³³ The third generation of Kjeldbaek’s analogy is encompassed within Chapters Six and Seven, as the Museum again reassessed and moved on from what it had previously been, shifting its exhibition priorities to presenting striking objects where the focus is on the individual. This fed into the concept of personal stories as being a dominating modern discourse of accessing the past within the public arena, as connected to broader debates around remembrance. Though the Museum has consciously tried to separate these issues, the public does not necessarily distinguish (consciously or otherwise) between the First World War as a historical event and a dominant topic within the national remembrance or memorialisation context.

¹²³² Kjeldbaek (2009; 369-392).

¹²³³ This change was accentuated by the practical changes to museum admission charges, which brought about significant modifications to the expectations that visitors had of institutions and saw the overall decline of the specialist interest visitor amongst a larger mass.



Figure 111 – *Lefthand Image: The Regen Team tour the 2014 Galleries during Installation (Sourced by Author). Righthand Image: The completed ‘At All Costs’ Section (<http://www.museumsandheritage.com/show/awards/2015-winners/permanent-exhibition>; accessed 05/09/15)*

8.3 – Revisiting Research Questions

In returning to my Research Questions, I now identify and overview some key themes which cut across my empirical chapters:

The findings relating to the first Research Question have suggested that whilst there have been occasions during which the Museum’s staff have actively tried to distance the institution’s original links to a memorial purpose, they are not able to control audience reactions to displays. Within the recent context, it has been interpreted as a site with implicit remembrance practices and functions. This forms part of a continual tension that the IWM has to constantly negotiate; balancing its role of offering a part-commemorative portrayal of an event with an emphasis on emotional visitor reaction (in which it risks straying into mourning), over pure historical understanding. Reacting to the third Research Question, the effect of this is both advantageous and disadvantageous for the Museum; the wider societal perceptions of the conflict and how it is understood within this public domain can be addressed in such a way that the Museum balances its requirement to be seen as a site of presenting authoritative history. On the other hand, it remains obliged to cater for visitor needs and expectations, in order for it to survive. This is most apparent in the fact that audiences have been repositioned in terms of involvement in the way

that the Museum plans its future exhibitions, because it had reconsidered who its exhibitions were for over this fifty year timeframe. Early displays adopted a more insular approach in prioritising select audience groups. This sits in stark contrast to the build-up to the 2014 Galleries, during which the IWM completed extensive audience evaluation prior to the exhibition being completed. Once this was determined, as the fifth Research Question set out to address, it could actively target the public's perceived desire to learn about the First World War. Given the timeliness of the Centenary commemorations, this was then backed by a conscious acknowledgement of this mantra being grounded in recent historical thinking. In this way, Chapter Seven took aspects of the Museum's previous exhibitions and redeployed them into a comprehensive whole; working in factors such as the clarity of the historical interpretation from 1990 and in using the potency of objects and material from the Museum's collections, as had been witnessed in Chapter Four and Six. However the exhibition-making processes operated under different circumstances; the aestheticization and substantiality (in terms of giving a detailed historical overview, as backed by significant resource and inputs) of these Galleries is more reflective of the time in which they were created, rather than being definitively of more value than those earlier exhibitions documented in Chapters Four and Five. More importantly, the Museum continues to do its utmost to influence public understanding of the First World War, but as was illustrated in Chapter Four, it has never been able to fully control how the conflict has been depicted within other arenas, which duly affects how visitors read its own source material on the matter. Kavanagh has labelled the museum '...an extraordinary site for imaginative leaps and for powerful yet unpredicted discovery', but that precipitating change in outlooks and attitudes is challenging, because '...people will see things they want to see them, irrespective of...efforts to the contrary'.¹²³⁴ The extent to which this statement is true within the context of the 2014 Galleries have succeeded in over-turning some of the public perceptions about the War remains the subject of a separate study beyond the scope of this thesis.¹²³⁵

¹²³⁴ Kavanagh (2000; 158).

¹²³⁵ Such an undertaking would ideally be in the vein of Macdonald (2002) and more recently Macleod et al (2015), who have offered a detailed assessment of how the visitor experience is orientated by their navigation through the museum space at IWM North. Initial visitor evaluation for the galleries was completed by the management consultancy firm Morris Hargreaves McIntyre in August 2014 (Pages 15-31 of Report accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive). This stated that visitors

The thesis has suggested two critical points that affected how the Museum engaged with its visitors; firstly in Chapter Five when the IWM started charging, which altered the dynamic of its curator-visitor relationship. As was explored in Chapter 6, this system was overturned in 2001 with the (nation-wide) introduction of free admission to national museums, which saw an increase towards more market-led temporary exhibitions that endeavoured to integrate mass appeal with historical integrity by using personal testimony. As addressed in my fourth Research Question, this transition therefore turned historical content into something which was more accessible to a greater number of members of the public, positioning clarity with empathy to lead to historical understanding.¹²³⁶ Within Chapter Seven, and in merging my fourth and fifth Research Questions to formulate a response, the success of this approach was worked into a format of 'Contemporaneity'. This meant that it was still utilising the public interest in testimony and ensuing knowledge gain by personal understanding, but structured this within an explicit historical framework and a reprioritization on its ability to provide an educational outcome. Such an approach was justified by the fact that the exhibition was now outside of living memory – again showing that the overall philosophical approach to devising the galleries had to be noticeably different to what had gone before.

The four chapters have paid particular attention to how the Museum had perceived and redefined itself over this period; taking the rhetoric from its historical origins and reworking these so as to benefit it in the presence of (and to assure) wider communities about its continued relevance. The positioning of veterans within the Museum changes significantly within the research timeframe of this thesis, from acting as a safe environment for reminiscing, through veterans almost being objects in themselves by the time period covered in Chapter Six, to a temporal realm beyond living memory in Chapter Seven.

enjoyed its intellectual demands, the 'innovative display and interpretative options', and deemed the exhibition's atmosphere as appropriate for the subject matter. However findings were skewed by the high volume of visitors, as the research was conducted just after the Galleries had opened.

¹²³⁶ See Witcomb (2013a); Bedford (2014); Bagnall (2003); Bonnell & Simon (2007).



Figure 112 – *Victoria Cross veterans visit the Museum, 24th June 1966. The Museum had partly been founded as a physical recognition for those who had experienced the War*

(©IWM MH 9397)

Even by the late 1980s (the subject of Chapter Five), the Museum was evidently aware of the realisation that the passing of veterans meant that it had to ensure its remit was made relevant for new audiences, which was done through a very overt statement about families and history.¹²³⁷ This targeted all subsequent generations; a conscious stating of purpose that placed as much emphasis on family audiences as it did about those who were learning about history. I have also suggested that there was a further point of transition which occurred in 1998, when two temporary exhibitions that adopted contrasting approaches demonstrated very literally to visitors that you could have two completely different interpretations of the same topic (see Section 6.3.1). The Museum was actively acknowledging that the subject could be re-interpreted according to specific agendas, which served as a handing over of responsibility to make up their own minds on the subject matter. By the time of Chapter Seven, audiences had a degree of influence in what topics they might expect to see represented within exhibition space. The popular desire to go beyond the well-trodden ground of the Western Front was starting to flourish, with

¹²³⁷ See Section 5.3.1.

expectations that emphasis would appear covering the Home Front and contributions from the British Empire. Popular engagement with this subject as part of the conflict's centenary had never been witnessed on such a level, and across such a wide spectrum. By this time, the Museum had assessed the successes of its temporary exhibitions, with its staff deciding to veer away from the more cultural-memory dominated mantra that had featured within the 2008 exhibition 'In Memoriam'. It would reposition itself towards the middle ground, through a conscious reprioritisation of how it integrated history to cater for a more historically aware and intrigued audience. It recognised that this new type of history would have to be 'pithy' – it would never be detailed history 'for the masses', but that there was opportunity to convey historical knowledge in an accessible format. This had to provide understanding in the most concise way possible, which remains the primary trade of the Museum's historians.¹²³⁸ Completing these galleries represented a genuine attempt to impart base level knowledge about a subject, as is best achieved within a museum context, because it can assimilate the written word, objects and additional media to lead to further understanding.

Whilst change is forced upon the Museum both internally and externally, its exhibitions have to be markedly different from what has gone before, as institutions cannot afford to stagnate or rest on their laurels. Permanent galleries or temporary displays are constantly in development phases on a rolling programme. More recently the IWM's exhibitions have had to become as reliant upon external partnerships as much as they are internal partnerships.¹²³⁹ This was evidenced in Chapter Six, when the financial benefits and media opportunities offered by collaborating with television production companies in temporary exhibitions were of great benefit to the institution, in terms of attracting audiences.¹²⁴⁰ In so doing, however, they risk handing over control of historical content (as was partly the case

¹²³⁸ Even if these are individuals with extensive military historical understanding within the Museum, they have a remarkable ability to be able to craft that knowledge into a fifty word text panel.

¹²³⁹ Partnerships may well reinforce the Museum's reputation as a credible historical institution, but this factor is considerably less important than it had been during the IWM's involvement with the iconic BBC series 'The Great War' and 'The World at War' during the 1960s and 1970s. The Museum did go into partnership with ITV for a series of programmes titled 'The Great War: The People's Story', produced by Shiver (ITV Studios). This aired in August 2014; see <http://www.itv.com/presscentre/press-releases/itv-marks-first-world-war-centenary-telling-people%E2%80%99s-story-partnership-imperial-war> (Accessed 05/09/15).

¹²⁴⁰ Chapter 4 also documented how Museum resources were spread thinly in collaborating with 'The Great War' series, at the time of the Specific Photographic Exhibitions, which was a decision based on the combined relative gain that they would achieve.

with 'My Boy Jack'), whilst also being answerable to newly invested stakeholders. In a financially-driven sector, the appeal to the mass-market has to make exhibitions' subject matter engaging, but at a potential cost of sensationalising the historical narrative.

8.4 – Positioning this Research and the Potential for Expanded Study

In the same vein as Macleod et al, this research project was based 'on an open and enlightened valuing of academic knowledge, museum knowledge and design knowledge and their respective and established ways of working' to produce cross-sector, multi-disciplinary findings.¹²⁴¹ The methodology I employed gave me the opportunity to address my research questions over the course of the thesis. This mantra gave rise to the inductive approach I took with laying out my analysis over my four sequential empirical chapters. The findings that these produced have been influenced by my distinctive working relationship with the IWM and its staff, and in the knowledge that such access allowed me to tell a particular story. Upon reflection, my intense involvement with the galleries that were documented in Chapter 7 meant it was challenging to view them in a critical light. Moreover, the Regeneration's Team criticism of the former galleries – as was expected in the fact that they were replacing them – again made it testing not to have my own views coloured by their beliefs. This meant making a conscious effort to appreciate the 1990 galleries was equally cutting-edge and as forward-thinking as the 2014 Galleries were at their inception, and to judge each exhibition on its merit, rather than in comparison to the ones that I was most familiar with.

One topic that formed a major discussion topic not documented in detail here relates to the use of recreated trenches within the Museum, as is most commonly known from the Trench Experience of the permanent galleries documented in Chapter 5. Though this subject has been covered elsewhere, my archival research and interviews, as well as my access to the Regeneration Team who refashioned a new immersive experience, granted me insight into their original intentions as to why they replaced the popular 1990 version.¹²⁴² The richness of this material and the relevancy of the debates it encompasses form an area which I would like to address further in the future. Additionally the findings of this thesis would benefit from being

¹²⁴¹ Macleod et al (2015; 338).

¹²⁴² For an overview of the 1990 Trench Experience, see Espley (2008).

positioned within a broader international context; although work on this topic has been partially covered by Jennifer Wellington, there is sufficient scope to warrant further enquiry in taking a transnational comparison of First World War representation within museums beyond the context of the Second World War.¹²⁴³ Likewise there are several broader themes that would enhance the value of this research. The first of these would be in developing a more detailed understanding of the Museum's internal leadership and management structure – especially the role and agency of its Trustees. Connected with this, and in turning attention from the inward-looking perspective outwards, much more could be said by explicitly evaluating external drivers and their context; in the form of national governmental agendas (and the accompanying political ideologies and economic environments that determined funding policies) - all of which impacted, to varying degrees, upon the delivery of these documented exhibitions. Equally commendable of further analysis would be in applying aspects of this research to consider the IWM as a gendered space, and thereby determining the extent to which gender roles affected the processes and eventual outcomes of exhibition-making over this time period.

8.5 – Reflecting Back on Experiences

Crafting history for public consumption, and in so doing disseminating knowledge, provides both a great opportunity and an extreme challenge. The depiction of the First World War invites reflection, as a topic that is 'emotionally charged, value laden and opinion-based'.¹²⁴⁴ The highly innovative and performative spaces of exhibition environments, in which controlled knowledge of this event is exchanged, can serve different, even contradictory purposes. The methods of delivering this are advancing endlessly. Beyond this, how visitors are integrated into exhibitions has fundamentally changed the exhibition-making dynamic, and museums rely increasingly more upon external funding in order to complete exhibition redisplay, to reassert their status as sites of historical authority.¹²⁴⁵ In the

¹²⁴³ Wellington (2016). Synergies and points of difference with the Australian War Memorial in Canberra would serve as an invaluable and timely future study, particularly in determining boundaries and tensions between a museum's educational and commemorative role.

¹²⁴⁴ Cameron (2005; 221).

¹²⁴⁵ See Paddon (2014; 149). Whilst I attempted to situate the evolution of practice, and each exhibition (albeit fairly broadly) within its relevant social, economic, political and cultural context, there is undoubtedly scope to consider these influences in more detail in future.

case of the IWM, it undertakes this to fulfil its mandate of remembering and educating its visitors about the First World War, amongst other conflicts.

This thesis has accounted for the politics of production, in evaluating both present and past methods of representing the past within an exhibitionary format. It has shown the overt agency of the Imperial War Museum in how it has reinvented itself to produce engaging, resonant history for changing audiences. It has done this by drawing together and interpreting a diverse range of sources which reflect and have informed the Museum's own evolution. The timeframe of the research has seen a turn towards providing '...more explicit contextual information to situate important events within an overarching historical narrative to a more distanced audience'.¹²⁴⁶ This has been in combination with changes to the ways in which objects now '...play a vital role in performing the past, so as to bring history to life in the imaginations' of visitors.¹²⁴⁷ Thus, as both Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have documented and increasing numbers of academic studies have testified, there has been a move away from delivering information by purely textual and visual means laid out through an exhibition space, to understanding visitors as '...narrative, meaning-making beings who make sense of the world through their bodies as well as their minds'.¹²⁴⁸ Museum visitors now take 'centre stage in the research and design process' to achieve an idealised visitor experience and to ensure understanding of the past.¹²⁴⁹ Implementing these discourses has brought about major changes to the processes of exhibition-making, dependent upon the Museum's internal priorities and intentions.¹²⁵⁰ The findings of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 show the move towards a more interpretive museum experience, as outlined by Macleod et al:

'...where human stories of the causes, course and consequences of war and conflict are told through a range of media (including architecture, art, authentic objects, photography, film, audio and graphics) and the dynamic use of scale and drama, in a direct attempt to engage visitors' senses and emotions and

¹²⁴⁶ Mercer (2013; 342).

¹²⁴⁷ Mercer (2013; 342).

¹²⁴⁸ Macleod et al (2015; 315); Macleod et al (2012).

¹²⁴⁹ Macleod et al (2015; 325).

¹²⁵⁰ Cundy (2015a; 265).

stimulate dialogue, deep thinking and critical engagement with other peoples' experiences'.¹²⁵¹

The sheer length of time, rigour and complexity of the courses of action required to assemble the permanent galleries documented in Chapter 7 seem a far cry from the notion in Chapter 4 of writing a letter suggesting an exhibition plan to be undertaken by an external party who just happened to be interested in the subject matter. But both, indeed all of the exhibitions that feature here, are united by a shared desire to perpetuate historical memory through communicating this to visitors. It is an aspiration which runs deep within the Imperial War Museum's bloodstream, and enacted by its staff. From this thesis, two key findings have been firstly to show exhibition-making as an increasingly self-reflective process. Secondly, and very much connected with the previous point, it is a process very much reliant upon the people involved. As Barrett has engendered, the work of curators is 'not often publicly acknowledged in the representational spaces of the museum'.¹²⁵² This thesis has sought to rectify that by revealing the peopling of the Imperial War Museum - as actors who mediate public understanding within its exhibition spaces. Exhibitions as formal public presentations may appear as the work of an institution as a whole, but they are only achieved through the dedication of a highly driven workforce, made up of successive generations passionate about communicating their subject.¹²⁵³ So long as it maintains engaging honestly and objectively in the course of delivering its subject matter, it will have a long future yet.

¹²⁵¹ Macleod et al (2015; 317). The authors do note that delivering these ambitions has met with challenges, in terms of how visitors experience the gallery space of IWM North.

¹²⁵² Barrett (2012; 143).

¹²⁵³ Macdonald (2001; 89).



Figure 113 – *Author with Members of the Regeneration Team at the IWM Staff Party, 31st July 2014 (Copy held by Author)*

Chapter 9 – Postscript

This postscript brings about an opportunity to share some personal reflections in looking back over the course of this project. Moreover it serves as an albeit limited opportunity to contemplate the relative distance that has since passed between the period of my embedded research, particularly for Chapter 7, and what this might mean for the institution as it continues progressing with its institutional evolution, through delivering new exhibitions. I therefore seek to contemplate overall proceedings from a more distanced perspective, and to think more critically in terms of what knowledge was gained, and the implications of this for the future. The intention is to enhance how the thesis offers a specific contribution to current understanding of First World War museum practice.

The opportunity to record the ‘in the moment’ practice of the IWM curatorial team that worked on the 2014 First World War Galleries constituted an unprecedented experience. Coupling this largely untested principle (with myself as a relatively unknown quantity to the Museum), the ability to determine concrete research findings stemmed from building a productive and positive working relationship between myself and the Regeneration Team. The challenge of such a project – indeed perhaps something of an endemic problem inherent within the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award scheme – is found in the lack of controversy, and the quite reasonable perception that findings are ultimately cowed by the relationship with the host institution. Certainly my experiences accounted for the fact that I was unable to facilitate a suitable framework that might have enabled my research to be both viable within the project’s practical constraints, and more critical of those I was working so closely with. I consider the core value of the thesis to be in how it might potentially be used by those in the Museum in the future, as it is as much about ‘what happens next’ that will make it useful. I always viewed this study as something commissioned not only to assist in crafting a specific chapter of the institution’s history, but more importantly, to ascertain and capture its exhibition-making practice over a fifty year period. I subsequently revealed this to be a symbiotic relationship, simultaneously influenced by past, present and future agendas.¹²⁵⁴ Thus the overall aim of this work did not set out to consciously change or revolutionise the way that the Museum went about its work, but to make it more

¹²⁵⁴ Lowenthal writes that museums ‘...uniquely mediate past, present and future’ (2009; 28).

self-aware of the processes, procedures and influences it encountered in delivering its remit. Furthermore the thesis sought to provide a frank assessment of the practical factors and inherent limitations imbued upon the institution, which duly affected the ways in which it went about displaying the First World War.¹²⁵⁵

I anticipate much of the interest for this thesis will be in discovering my observations that detail the practices and processes of creating the Museum's 2014 Galleries. Having endeavoured to illuminate the spatial politics of power and the assumptions that informed how choices were made within this space, this epilogue serves as an opportune moment to briefly account for the tangible and intangible areas of resistance. The Galleries have now been in existence for over eighteen months, and in looking back, the relative lack of controversy they have received seems surprising. What understanding can be drawn out from the fact that, despite the weight of anticipated criticism felt by the Regeneration Team, this never materialised on any significant scale? Furthermore the space of the galleries had recognised the importance of facilitating debate, so in what ways did the deployed framework prevent this from happening in a tangible and overt sense? Was it because of the fact that these galleries spoke predominantly to mainstream cultural agendas, and therefore did not actively seek to engage with more complex, contested histories?¹²⁵⁶ My inclination is that it is arguable both ways; the demands placed upon an exhibition of this scale makes it essentially impossible to satisfy expectations, and therefore its core strength was in its ability to provide comprehensive coverage of the subject matter, in the form of a powerful national narrative.¹²⁵⁷ On the other hand, the notion of tasking visitors to engage with emotive and difficult histories was not fully realised in ways potentially possible at the outset.¹²⁵⁸

¹²⁵⁵ As Haymond notes, '...recognising what museums cannot do well may enable us to do better those things which *can* be done well' (2015; 462 emphasis original).

¹²⁵⁶ Wilson terms museums as spaces 'where dominant cultural values are asserted and affirmed' (2010; 176).

¹²⁵⁷ See Prior (2007; 202). Paddon correspondingly asks the related question '...can contemporary redisplay and reinterpretations be all things to all people? In satisfying one group, you may disappoint or frustrate another but isn't this to be expected?' – meaning that success could therefore viably equate to a lack of critical responses (2014; 75).

¹²⁵⁸ This notion has been developed by the 'Challenging History' network, which IWM is affiliated with. See Kidd (2014b); <https://challenginghistorynetwork.wordpress.com/> (Accessed 16/03/16). Set up in 2009, this seeks to understand aims, audiences and outcomes in work with sensitive heritages. Its manifesto calls for significant change in the way that museums and heritage sites engage with contentious histories.

Why is it that historical museums in particular are cautious, or even risk-averse, when it comes to dealing with controversial topics? The majority of museum practitioners remain unwilling to compromise in the risk of courting controversy, when it comes to dealing with highly charged narratives. Challenging remains seemingly bounded, on grounds of causing offence. In many respects, the function of the Debate Spaces documented in Section 7.10.2, encapsulated the IWM's challenge in trying to engage audiences in debating morally charged and contemporary social issues.

Certainly one can fathom that, in seeking to retain visitor trust, provocation sits ill-at-ease with the mantra of confidently offering defining, authoritative narratives. Indeed the toxic fall-out of 'veterans versus curators' from the oft-cited 1995 display of the *Enola Gay* at the Smithsonian in Washington seemed to have consequently hardened the credence that disputes - and accompanying headlines - were not the type of publicity that museums were after.¹²⁵⁹ In essence the exhibition-making process as a whole does not lend itself to operating as a unorthodox venture; as Prior has observed, '...decision-making by committee is seldom radical...[they] have a tendency to compromise to avoid trouble...[and] frequently resort to passive non-committal language'.¹²⁶⁰ However it would be wrong to suggest that changes had not been introduced, in terms of interrogating divisive or controversial topics within historical institutions. Gradually they are becoming more inclined to evolving their thinking and approach for engaging with critical heritage debates. Integrating combined expertise in academic and curatorial form offers the prospect of improving such potential, as advocated by Prior;

'...Both sectors would profit from more regular, lasting contacts. Museum workers would acquire more confidence and experience in sourcing and communicating specialist knowledge, while academics would acquire more confidence and experience in engaging with the public. The mediating role of museums between academe and commercial media outlets would also be strengthened...Ideally, museums provide a controlled environment in which

¹²⁵⁹ For detailed discussion of this episode, see Zolberg (1996); Linenthal & Engelhardt (1996); Harwit (1996); Gieryn (1998).

¹²⁶⁰ Prior (2007; 201). See also Piotrowski (2015).

non-specialists can safely explore controversial or painful events and issues and raise awkward questions they might be frightened to ask elsewhere'.¹²⁶¹

Amid current research agendas that dictate working in direct partnership with cultural organisations, the above argument relies strongly on the principle that academic support remains crucial in facilitating 'creative strategies of museum presentation' to display challenging history within museums.¹²⁶² Formulating these will encourage institutions;

'...to think boldly and freshly about how...to kindle a reflective engagement of audiences with some always potent, but always problematic relationships – between place and community, between the local and the global, between past and present identities, between museums and society'.¹²⁶³

In this way, prospective partnerships between professionals, institutions, academics and community-based organisations offers rich potential towards establishing new participatory spaces. Though the fundamental issue of who owns history – those who experienced it or those who research it – remains a crucial influence within exhibition making, museums remain empowering spaces of civic engagement, because they are tasked with formulating coherent national historiographies.¹²⁶⁴ The legacy of the First World War still carries areas of injustice, thus ensuring the creation of spaces for negotiation and reconciliation amongst distinctive local or national groups who have competing understandings. This is not to say that institutions lose sight of their role as repositories; in describing this responsibility as '...once the sine qua non of museums and the very stuff of heritage', Lowenthal comments upon the fact that objects risk being lost amongst '...fetishes of performance and interaction, to virtual substitutes and to concern with intangible heritage'.¹²⁶⁵ In formulating this attitude of process being privileged over product, he argues that the public wants it 'both ways';

¹²⁶¹ Prior (2007; 207). She describes the more frequent tendency to call in academic specialists for 'a short-lived relationship' as 'a waste of everybody's skills and knowledge'. Thus nurturing relationships over a prolonged period is fundamental in allowing partnerships to work together productively, and allowing for mutual critique.

¹²⁶² Cubitt (2009; 272).

¹²⁶³ Cubitt (2009; 272). See also Janes (2009, 2013).

¹²⁶⁴ See Dean (2009; 1, 6); Hutchinson (2009). Mason additionally defines as the meaning-making process '...not as neutral or objective, but as embedded in the realm of cultural politics and having the power to define, legitimize, enforce, negotiate, claim or oppose certain meanings' (2005; 208).

¹²⁶⁵ Lowenthal (2009; 24).

‘...not to be bored by paragons yet to know they are safely and permanently in place...these abiding aims collide with insistent current demands for public involvement and social amelioration’.¹²⁶⁶

Public concerns and reaction to the Galleries sets itself up as the natural next calling point for this research. In Chapter 8, I recorded a desire to assess their ‘life with visitors’ after they had opened, and to explore how those visitors ‘imagined by the Team and designers’ actually conformed in reality.¹²⁶⁷ Audience reception to the galleries, and the messages that they take away from their experience, now constitutes the subject of a new research project I am presently undertaking.¹²⁶⁸ As was documented in Chapter 7, these Galleries utilised new modes of display and interpretation to deal with a complex subject matter, making the requirement to produce engaging, resonant history a necessary challenge for the Museum’s staff. The aim of this project is therefore to capture visitor reaction to their efforts and thereby determine whether original design intentions were realised. Bringing this together with my thinking on the exhibition’s conception, construction and representational strategies, it is my hope that the combination of these findings will help inform thinking for future, and perhaps braver, exhibitions.

¹²⁶⁶ Lowenthal (2009; 29).

¹²⁶⁷ Macdonald (2002; 15, 221-243).

¹²⁶⁸ In December 2015, I received funding for a short-term research project from the AHRC’s ‘Cultural Engagement’ Fund, working in partnership with IWM.

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**Appendix I (Chapter 5) – Responsibilities expected by Jasper Jacob
Associates and the IWM**

Digitised Transcription of Archival Record 'Proposed Division of Responsibilities

(IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1)

Redevelopment Exhibitions – Division of Responsibilities

A FLOOR

Historical Research

– Scenario and Philosophical Brief for each section of display

- Information re exhibits (suggested selection, sizes, conservation requirements for display etc.)
- Text for graphics panel and object captions
- Information for maps etc.

Photographic and Picture Research

- (Provision of suggested illustrations initially in photocopy form then photo prints for final selection)

Conservation of Exhibits

A/V Presentations

- Historical Research
- Provision of Film Footage, Sound Recordings, Photographs
- Purchase of Hardware

Organisation of Contracts for Installation of Large Exhibits (including special mounts)

Provision of Photographic Prints

JJA

Overall design of displays

- Exhibition Structure and Cases
- Finishes
- Lighting
- Graphics inside and outside cases
- 'Experience' Features

A/V Presentations

- Specification of hardware, specification and provision of software, computer graphics etc.

Provision of Working Drawings and Specifications

All Dressing (excluding that which the IWM wishes to undertake for conservation reasons) – Specification of Aids to Display (e.g. Case Plinths)

- Placement of Objects in Cases

Supervision of all above Aspects of Installation

Appendix II (Chapter 5) – Contractual Obligations of IWM

*Internal Memorandum sent by PRC to RC, 17/12/87, 'Extract from Draft of Contract
between JJA and IWM'*

(IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2)

Schedule 2 (Obligations of the Client)

i) The following list summarises the specific responsibilities of the Client (IWM) in relation to Stages 1 and 2 of the work:

A. Stage 1

A Floor

- a) Provision of an outline historical brief for the overall layout of the Exhibitions, followed by a more detailed historical brief for each of the sections to be included in the Exhibitions (including information about the extent of exhibits and other material to be displayed) to enable the Consultant to draw up fully detailed specifications.
- b) Provision of examples of draft text for graphics panels and exhibit captions.
- c) Provision of suggested photographs, maps and illustrations initially in photocopy form and subsequently as photographic prints for final selection.
- d) The undertaking of basic historical research in connection with audiovisual presentations planned for the Exhibitions.

Appendix III (Chapter 5) – Breakdown of First World War Galleries’ Sections

‘First World War Exhibition (Design, Captions, Scripts)’

(IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/2)

FIRST WORLD WAR

- 1) **ORIGINS AND OUTBREAKS OF WORLD WAR ONE (Neil Young)**
 - a) Sarajevo, mobilization and outbreak
 - b) Political, social and economic background of the belligerents
 - c) Military/naval background of the belligerents
 - d) International diplomacy and growth of the rival alliance systems
 - e) The Schlieffen Plan
 - f) Early battles in the West and East

 - 2) **RECRUITING AND EXPANSION OF THE BRITISH ARMY (Peter Simkins)**
 - a) The voluntary recruiting campaign
 - b) The Pals battalions
 - c) The Empires response
 - d) Training for the Front

 - 3) **WESTERN FRONT (Peter Simkins and Laurie Milner)**
 - 1) Trench warfare on the Western Front**
 - 2) Events and Battles**
 - a) 1914 Christmas Truce
 - b) 1915 Battles

 - i) Neuve Chapelle ii) 2nd Battle of Ypres iii) Battle of Loos

 - c) 1916 Battle of Verdun
 - d) 1917 Battles

 - i) Battle of Arras ii) 3rd Battle of Ypres iii) Battle of Cambrai

 - e) 1918 German Offensive, British advance
- 3) Weapons, clothing and equipment of trench warfare**

- a) Artillery
- b) Mortars
- c) Machine guns and small arms
- d) Grenades
- e) Gas
- f) Tanks
- g) Helmets and Body Armour
- h) Winter Clothing
- i) The soldier's kit around 1917

4) Behind the Lines

- a) Lines of communication
- b) Medical Services
- c) Rest, recreation, religion and welfare
- d) Occupation – behind German lines
- e) Prisoners of War

5) Trench Life

- a) Observation
- b) Wiring, patrols raids in 'no mans land'
- c) Sniping
- d) Mining
- e) Rations and comforts
- f) Trenches and trench equipment
- g) Experiences/reactions to trench life

h) Communications

i) Medical services

4) WAR IN THE AIR 1914-1918 (Peter Simkins)

a) Air support for the armies

b) Air fighting in the Western Front 1914-1918

c) The Air Services

d) Aces and personalities of the Air War on the Western Front

e) Technical and strategic bombing

f) The Air War in other theatres

5) WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST (Laurie Milner)

1) The background – Turkey enters the War

a) German influence

b) Emergence of young Turks & Nationalism in Turkey

c) German compromise of Turkish neutrality draws Turkey into war

2) The Dardanelles and Gallipoli

a) The naval attack

b) The army landing 25 April 1915

c) The trench deadlock

d) The army landings 6/7 August 1915

3) Egypt, Palestine and Arabia

a) Defence of the Suez Canal

b) Senussi uprising

c) Advance in Palestine

d) Arab Revolt

e) Allenby and Jerusalem

f) Destruction of the Turkish Army

4) Mesopotamia

a) The first advance

b) The siege of Kut

- c) The relief attempts
- d) The 2nd advance – capture of Baghdad and Mosul

6) THE BALKAN AND ITALIAN FRONTS (Mark Seaman)

- a. Austria
- b. Serbia
- c. Bulgaria
- d. Rumania
- e. Salonika
- f. Italy

7) THE EASTERN FRONT (Mark Seaman)

- a) Russia at War
- b) Germany and Austria/Eastern Front
- c) Russo-Turkish Conflict
- d) Russian Revolution and Civil War

1) WAR IN THE COLONIES (Laurie Milner)

- a) China and Pacific
- b) German Cameroons and Togoland
- c) German East Africa
- d) German South West Africa

2) THE WAR AT SEA 1914-1918 (Peter Simkins)

- a) War in the distant oceans
- b) North Sea and Home waters
 - i) Naval actions before Jutland
 - ii) Jutland
 - iii) Naval operations after Jutland
- c) Submarines, mines and blockages
 - i) Submarine operations in WWI

ii) Mines and blockages

d) Developments of naval aviation

3) THE HOME FRONT (Peter Simkins)

a) Voluntary Work

b) Mobilizing Britain's resources

i) Increasing Government intervention in national life

ii) Industry

iii) Conscription and Conscientious Objectors

c) Women at War

d) Rationing and Savings

e) Ireland and the Easter Rising of 1916

f) Air raids on Britain

g) Invasion threats and spy scares

4) ARMISTICE AND THE COST OF WAR (Neil Young)

a) Signing of the Armistice and Victory Celebrations

b) Demobilization and Army of Occupation

c) Treaty of Versailles

d) Commemoration of the Dead

Appendix IV (Chapter 5) – Exhibition Graphics Document

'A Floor Historical Exhibitions'

(IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1)

Exhibition Graphics

The graphics for these exhibitions will be divided into the following categories:

1. **Title Heading** for each section
2. **Introductory Panel with Title and Key Sentence**
 - (May be amalgamated with (1) above)
 - One per section
 - Introduces visitor to section, with brief sentence describing theme
- 3) **Mainline Text Panels**
 - Normally one for each topic within a section
 - Contains concise explanatory/descriptive text (incorporating photographs, maps, or other illustrations)
 - Usually mounted outside but adjacent to relevant showcases
- 4) **Sub-text Panels**
 - May occasionally be required to provide more detailed explanation of event, theme or personality (with or without photographs or illustrations)
 - Maximum of 2 or 3 per section
 - Normally mounted inside showcase adjacent to relevant material
- 5) **Miscellaneous Panels outside Showcases**
 - May include large maps and other explanatory material. Quantity not yet known
- 6) **Object Captions inside Showcases**
 - Brief description of each object on show (either as individual captions or in blocks)

- Normally mounted inside showcases adjacent to or in view of the object

7) Object Captions etc outside Showcases

- For large uncased objects, works of art etc

8) Graphics for Audiovisual Presentations

- All graphics captioning etc appearing on film, tape/slide and interactive presentations

- Captions adjacent to a/v presentations (eg operational instructions, content summary etc)

Other elements to be discussed with designers:

1) Brief narrative text around inner walls of each exhibition

2) 'Chronology' panels within exhibition areas

Appendix V (Chapter 5) - Graphics Submission Timetable

(IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/014/2)

FIRST WORLD WAR EXHIBITION

EN4/41/DD/1/11/014/2

PROGRAMME FOR SUBMISSION OF GRAPHICS COPY

CATEGORY	R+1 SUBMIT COPY TO PRC	PRC SUBMITS COPY TO D-G FOR APPROVAL	FINAL COPY TO CR-1	NOTES
Gallery titles	20/11/89	27/11/89	30/11/89	
Key statements	20/11/89	27/11/89	30/11/89	
Maps (+ titles)	29/11/89	-	29/11/89	Placename lists to follow 1/12/89
* Mainline text sections 4-11	16/1/90	23/1/90	31/1/90	Photo captions to follow c.5 days after text once selection made
* Mainline text sections 1-3	31/1/90	7/2/90	14/2/90	
* Subtext 4-11	31/1/90	7/2/90	14/2/90	
* Subtext 1-3	14/2/90	19/2/90	28/2/90	
Chronology/ biography panel	7/3/90	9/3/90	14/3/90	
Object captions (1st batch)	29/3/90			Dates dictated by dressing schedule
Other items: A/v screen captions Audio handsets i/v stations			April	Schedules to be agreed nearer time ↓
Works of art in lung			May	
Showcase nos.			June	
Trench Experience graphics				
* R+1 to submit req. nos for proposed photos <u>two weeks (at least)</u> in advance of copy dates shown so photo orders can be placed.				

Appendix VI (Chapter 5) – Example Object Caption

'British 60-pounder Field Gun Caption'

(IWM ExPA 0096)

British 60-pounder field gun

Successful First World War British heavy field gun

The 60-pounder was first built in 1904 to an Elswick Ordnance Company design and was one of the best guns of its type in service with any major army at the outbreak of war in 1914. It incorporated the latest technical advances and combined power with the ability to be manoeuvred by a team of twelve horses. Over a thousand 60-pounders had been delivered by the end of the war. They served on the Western Front, but proved of greatest value in other theatres. Some were still in service with the British Army as late as 1944.

This gun served with the 2/104th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, in Mesopotamia from 1916 to 1918. Arriving at Basra in March 1916, it was transported up to the Tigris to Orah, going into action against Turkish positions on the left bank of the river. Between August 1916 and February 1918 it took part in operations culminating in the recapture of Kut-el-Amara, and was present at the fall of Baghdad on 11 March 1917. It was also involved in the Battles of Shatt-al-Adhaim and Istabulat in April; the operations at Sharoban in August and Jebel Hamrin in October; and the capture of Kizil Robot in December 1917 and of Kitri in April 1918. The gun was transferred to the Museum by the War Office in 1920.

Technical Specifications:

Calibre

5in (12.7cm)

Elevation

21.5 to -5

Weight

4 Tons 8 cwt (4,470kg)

Traverse

4 right and left

Maximum range

12,300 yards (11,611m)

Photo Caption

A 60-pounder firing in Mesopotamia during the First World War

Q24284

Crew

Eight

Ammunition

60lb (27kg) high explosive, shrapnel and gas

APPENDIX VII (Chapter 5) – PJS 1987 Brief

Internal Memorandum from PJS to AB/RC, 'Philosophy, Interpretation and Structure of the Redevelopment Displays', 11/12/87

(IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007)

[Extracts]

1 Broad Historical Objectives

It is recommended that the new displays should embody three broad, but related, historical objectives, namely: -

- a) To reflect the global scale of conflict in the twentieth century
- b) To reflect the nature of 'total war' in the twentieth century, i.e. the way in which all levels of society in modern industrialised nations have become involved in, and affected by, conflicts since 1914, particularly the two World Wars.
- c) To reflect and illustrate the common experience of war, i.e. to show how ordinary individuals have contributed to, or lived through, twentieth century conflicts.

Our recent survey of the collections confirms that it will be possible to sustain all three historical objectives in the redevelopment exhibitions. However, the survey also reminded us that the collections as a whole have a strong British emphasis and that there are some significant gaps in our holdings relating to the wider international aspects of particular topics and events. To some extent these factors are bound to colour our approach to the historical interpretation and structure of the displays.

Having sound[ed] this cautionary note, we nevertheless feel that the strengths of the collections can be exploited in a positive way without undermining any of our general historical objectives. For example, we suggest that while the overall perspective of the exhibitions should be an international one – so meeting our objectives (a) and (b) – those parts of the displays which seek to illustrate the experience of ordinary individuals could legitimately be given a British focus. Thus the British and/or Commonwealth experience can often be used to illustrate that of other nations and groups. Trench warfare on the Western Front in the First World War provides a case

in point. Of course, where alternative material does exist, we will have the opportunity to draw comparisons and to highlight both the similarities and differences within the common experience (e.g.: the contrast between life in Britain during the Second World War and that in Nazi-occupied Europe). A possible title for the new displays might therefore be 'Britain and the World at War since 1914'.

2 Other General Objectives

It is further proposed that the style, content and structure of the redevelopment exhibitions should also be planned with several other important and complementary objectives firmly in mind: -

- a) The displays should tell the outline story of the two World Wars and post-1945 conflicts in as clear and simple a manner as possible in order to enable an averagely intelligent but non-specialist member of the public to understand what happened, why it happened and what it is was like to be a participant
- b) They should seek to satisfy the needs of schools and take due account of the high priority given to the Museum's educational role
- c) They should serve as a showcase for the richness of the Museum's collections as a whole and, where possible, should provide some guidance as to the location of other relevant material in the Museum's reference and study collections or elsewhere
- d) They should enable those who actually participated in the conflicts to identify or 'home in on' those topics areas which are relevant to their own experience
- e) They should be interesting, stimulating, lively and attractive
- f) They should make the most effective use possible of the latest developments in museum and display technology, not only to create a thoroughly modern museum environment but also to help us achieve all the other general objectives stated above.

3. Considerations affecting the historical structure of the displays

a) So far as the historical structure of the new exhibition is concerned, there appear to be two major options open to us. The first is to deal with the two World Wars and other conflicts in a strictly chronological or narrative fashion; the second is to adopt a more thematic approach within a very broad chronological framework.

B) Having carefully considered the first possibility, we would recommend against its adoption, for a variety of reasons. The results of the collections survey indicate that, in view of the weaknesses of our holdings in certain subject areas, it would be difficult to sustain a purely chronological approach throughout the A Floor displays. The majority of our three-dimensional items are 'of the type used' rather than exhibits which have direct associations with a particular event or campaign. Hence it would be much harder to avoid some degree of repetition in exhibit selection when trying to maintain a narrative flow. Moreover, we feel that the displays could easily become overloaded with repetitive graphics (eg: maps and narrative captions) if the strictly chronological option is followed. Similarly, an unnecessary amount of cross-referencing might well be required to make the story understandable. For example, if we decided to cover the Second World War on a year-by-year basis, the story of the conflict on the Eastern Front may have to be told in four or five separate places within the displays and it would be doubly difficult to escape captions of the 'Meanwhile, in Russia...' sort. In this case in particular, the available material would be severely stretched and its impact would thereby be weakened. In short, such a treatment would increase the risks of cluttered and repetitive displays and would defeat our objective of keeping the outline story simple and the main themes intelligible.

C) When examining the second major option, we considered a number of alternative thematic treatments. These included the possibility of taking an exclusively British perspective in the displays, or even following the experiences of successive generations of one or more typical, if fictional, families (i.e. the 'common experience' writ large). However, after much discussion, we feel that the best solution would be to adopt a thematic approach not entirely dissimilar to that of the present B Floor displays, although the latter would obviously need to be revised and improved in several respects. It will be necessary, for instance, to make the outline story much clearer so that it can provide a more effective framework for the individual themes and topics. We will also need to devote more attention to outstanding events and personalities than hitherto. Given such improvements, we believe that a thematic approach within a broad chronological framework offers several advantages: -

1) It should make it easier to give visitors the choice of either following a broad story-line (by looking at each section in an ordered sequence) or of concentrating upon

those topics which particularly interest them. The layout and design of the exhibitions will, of course, play a crucial part here (see below).

ii) Individual sections can still be linked and juxtaposed with sufficient logic to enable the visitor to relate one theme to another. For example, by placing the sections dealing with the 'War at Sea' next to, or near, those dealing with the Home Front, the link between blockade and submarine warfare on the one hand and rationing and austerity on the other, can be reinforced, so helping to give the displays as a whole a greater sense of continuity. At the same time, each individual section can be viewed as a self-contained 'mini-exhibition' with its own internal historical structure, chronology and balance. In addition, the available material will be less thinly spread and, by being more appropriately concentrated in given areas, should have greater impact.

iii) The contrasts between different conditions, equipment etc, in different theatres of war will be sharper, and the displays should have greater variety.

iv) It will be easier to realise the 'common experience' objective under a thematic approach, although this will certainly not prevent us from presenting a series of personal 'vignettes' within the displays to highlight individual stories, personalities or events. Indeed, we believe that the latter will gain by being set against a 'common experience' background and by being placed within a more precise thematic context rather than being located amidst the welter of dates, place names and events which might result from a purely chronological treatment.

- i) If a thematic approach is adopted, the provisional plan for the new A Floor displays, as already prepared by Jasper Jacob Associates in consultation with the Exhibitions Officer and the R&I Office, will only need to be revised in detail rather than in overall conception.

4 Considerations affecting the choice of topics and exhibition material

- a) It has already been proposed that one of the main objectives of the exhibitions should be to to [sic] act as a showcase for the Museum's collections as a whole. However, as the recent survey has revealed, the collections are not universally strong in all subject areas, while the known physical constraints of the new galleries must also be taken into account. To make the most effective

use of the collections as they stand, and of the actual space available to us, we feel it is vital to establish some general guidelines regarding the selection of topics and material before we plan the individual displays in detail.

- b) For example, we feel that it should be recognised now that we will simply not have the space to cover every aspect of every major topic within our terms of reference, even if we wished to do so. Having once agreed what the most important topics are, our primary aim should be to cover these in the most interesting and lively manner possible. If we try to cover too much, we predict the impact and balance of the exhibitions would be seriously weakened and the end product would be diffuse and unsatisfactory.
- c) We suggest that priority in selection should be given to mainstream or 'common experience' topics, as these are most likely to meet our three principal historical objectives, to fulfil our education functions and to satisfy the needs of the majority of our visitors. While we should do our best to enable those who took part in the conflicts to find displays and material relating to their own experience, it would be unrealistic to try to satisfy everyone in this regard. To illustrate the experience of those on the Western Front or lived through the Blitz is one thing; to cover the experience of someone who spent the Second World War guarding a fuel dump in the Orkneys is quite another.
- d) As noted earlier, this does not mean that we will be prevented from dealing with all specialised sub-topics, from including unusual exhibits or from telling intensely personal stories. What we are suggesting is that these should not be included at the expense of mainstream material, nor should they be given an emphasis which is out of all proportion to their real historical importance. By placing them in their proper context and setting them against a background of common experiences rather than isolating them in separate sections, we believe that their individual significance can still be adequately conveyed without destroying the overall historical balance or thematic flow. The POW material from Colditz can be taken as an example here. There is certainly a very strong case for its inclusion in a display on Allied POWs during the Second World War which may, in turn, form part of a section dealing with life in Nazi-occupied Europe. On the other hand, we believe that it would be wrong to mount a display which gave the impression that all Allied POWs in

Europe were in Colditz or that all were constantly engaged in escape attempts.

- e) We should be aware of current scholarship on subjects within our field and take accounts of this when planning our treatment of individual topics, but the new historical displays are not the place for detailed analysis of, or academic debate about, Germany's war aims in the First World War or Churchill's administrative machinery in the Second World War.
- f) We should also exercise a certain degree of ruthlessness in our selection of exhibits and illustrative material. The richness of the collections in some areas could easily lure us into trying to include too much, but we feel that we should not be tempted to display, say, ten examples of a particular type of exhibit when the point can be equally well made by one or two specimens. The exhibitions can adequately reflect the variety and range of our collections without always having to convey their depth. The latter can perhaps best be achieved by means of study galleries, etc, and with the help of interactive videos. In addition, we can always use special exhibitions to highlight individual collections or expand our treatment of particular topics.

**Appendix VIII (Chapter 5) - IWM Redevelopment Brief for the Design of
Exhibition Areas on A and B Floors**

(IWM C/F EN4/41/DD/1/11/2)

Sept 1986 **Imperial War Museum – Display Guidelines for the New Galleries**

The IWM has a number of roles. It is

- a) An historical museum
- b) A memorial to those who fought, died, or otherwise took part in/experienced the wars of this century
- c) A major archive of books, documents, film, photographs, sound recordings, works of art, and three-dimensional exhibits
- d) An educational institution, whose subject matter is central to modern school and university curricula

All of these roles must be reflected in the public displays. However what distinguishes the IWM from all other museums is the nature of the subject matter. Wars involve violent death and suffering and must be abhorrent to all civilized beings. Paradoxically, they also bring out some of the most admirable human characteristics, notably bravery and self-sacrifice. Aspects of war can also be humorous, and many still look back on the Second World War with nostalgia. Yet these and other aspects must be held within a framework that makes clear the disastrous and horrific nature of any war.

Here it is important to remember that the IWM is not a military museum. The latter deal with the history of particular services or subject units. They are concerned only tangentially with the subject of war itself and then only as an historical and chronological background to the story of the military force concerned. The IWM's task is very much wider and very much more difficult. War is our central concern and all its aspects require our attention. We often say that we deal with the subject on an allied and enemy, military and civilian basis. This means we include, for example, German and Japanese material (and viewpoints) as well as Home Front, anti-war movements, scientific developments and so on.

War is a very complex subject and people's reactions to it are equally complex. This suggests that our displays should reflect that complexity. A single style of presentation would not only be dull, it would be misleading. There must be a place in the displays for theatrical and dramatic effects, for straightforward didactic and informative presentation, for the enjoyment of large and spectacular objects, for nostalgia and for quiet contemplation. However, it must be stressed again that this has to be within an overall concept that demonstrates the essential nature of war.

A particular problem posed by the IWM is the range and nature of its exhibits. The combination of objects which vary in size from postage stamps to aircraft, the fact that many of our powerful images are provided by documents, sound recordings and films all pose formidable problems for the designer. The displays must function on at least two levels: they must provide the first time or casual visitor with an overview of all aspects of our topic and they must give the repeat or specialist visitor the opportunity of delving more deeply into a particular area. In either case we must let our exhibits tell the main story. Few exhibits and very lengthy texts – the book-on-walls approach – must be avoided.

Within a generally difficult topic there are a number of especially difficult areas. These must be identified and the moral issues involved should be faced, but it is not our job to make value judgements. The sort of topics involved would include concentration camps, saturation bombing and nuclear weapons. In these and other areas the Museum must not shrink from the issues but must remain entirely balanced in its approach.

There are also certain areas and collections which must be displayed. One such is the collection of Victoria and George crosses. Some of these will doubtless appear in the course of the general historical displays, but we are under obligation to display all VCs and GCs in our collection. Whether this is achieved through a special VC/GC room or in the context of a general medals study room is open to discussion. We are also committed to a separate display area devoted to Field Marshal Montgomery, although this could well be in one of the existing gallery areas of the old museum.

All of our subject relates to people and most of it requires atmosphere. How is this to be achieved? As a general rule, dummies used should be of the highest quality and the 'realistic' reconstructions of scenes must be very very well done. Thus, for

financial considerations alone, the use of dummies and reconstructions will be very limited, but equally on grounds of impact it would probably be wise to restrict such displays severely. Traditionally, candidates for this sort of treatment in the Museum have included trench warfare and the blitz, but there is no requirement to treat these topics in this way. Elsewhere, when drama is required, light, sound and film, can be used to effect. In other areas, particularly those involving more horrific topics, a neutral approach may have the most dramatic effect. There are a number of miscellaneous points to bear in mind.

Large objects should be accessible whenever possible, to allow visitors to see inside the cockpit or cabin of a vehicle.

Documents must be displayed so they can be read.

A/V Material (including photographs) is not just back-up to three-dimensional displays, as it is in many museums, but an integral part of our exhibitable material.

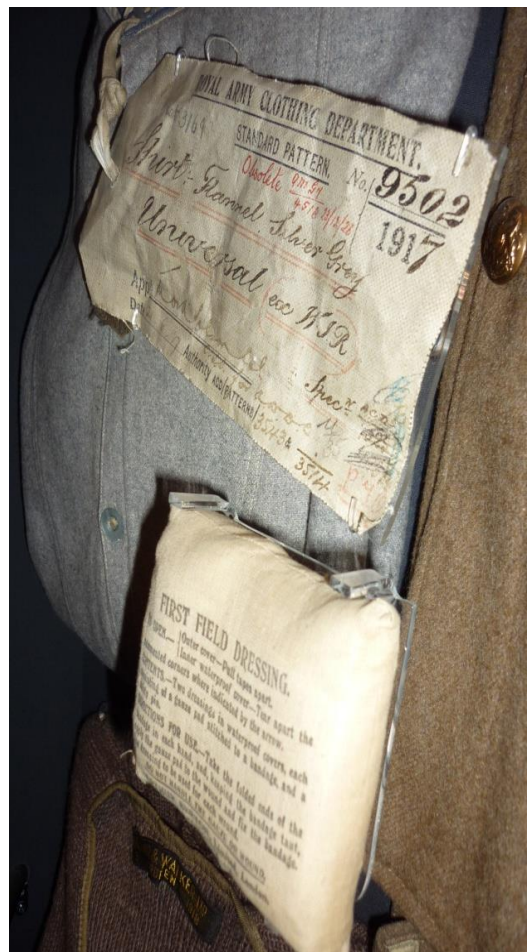
Works of Art will not be confined to art galleries but should also feature in the general displays.

New technology should not be used for its own sake, but because it enhances the visitors' experience by, for example, providing access to more of the collections or giving additional information.

Finally, the new displays must be designed to last for a minimum life of ten years, but be capable of surviving for at least twice that long. At the same time they must be flexible, allowing individual sections to be changed without disrupting the whole. The normal conservation requirements will apply to light-sensitive exhibits, but there will be no need to provide separately controlled environments within cases. Cases or display areas will require a high degree of security and some will need to be individually alarmed.

Appendix IX (Chapter 5) - Exhibition Deconstruction: Dismantling the First World War Galleries

17 October 2012 (Sourced by Author)



Appendix X (Chapter 6) – ‘In Memoriam’ Structuring Document,

Cressida Finch, 16/11/07

(Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)



In Memoriam Draft theme suggestions

This exhibition could look at 90 personal stories to embrace as widely as possible the experiences of people living through the First World War.

By choosing 90 stories we:

- will be able to look at a great many different experiences – from different arenas of the war, considering the known and unknown, those from different cultures and the stories of women and children, and including a few who had a very different war from the visitor’s expectations
- can build on the many personal stories already identified
- give a convenient marketing hook to a ‘difficult’ anniversary (as it is not a round figure like 100), which will make the exhibition stand out from the many other exhibitions next year (I passed it by Rebecca as a possibility and she was enthusiastic).

Suggested section	Sub sections	Current themes:
Lead and outbreak	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assassination• Declaration of war• Over by Christmas - early months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assassination• War Declared• Your Country Needs You
Political reasons for war and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your Country Needs You-recruitment (including	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over By Christmas

personal reasons for those involved	propaganda using the story of a propagandist e.g. Horatio Bottomley including atrocity propaganda	
Experiences of those fighting on the Western Front	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trench warfare Could be divided by weapon/ use/ effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gas ○ Bayonet ○ Artillery ○ Trench mortars ○ Grenades ○ Flamethrowers ○ Snipers ○ Tanks • Daily life in the trenches • Command - personal experiences of Haig etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front Line • Gassed • Killing • Top Brass • Daily Life
Experiences of those engaged in fighting (other fronts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Front • Mesopotamia • Caporetto • East Africa • Gallipoli etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siege of Kut • Empire
Experience of naval warfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U-boats • Jutland • Surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea
Experience of the air warfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconnaissance • Fighters • Bombers • Zeppelins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air

Experiences of injury, sickness and death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries to combatants • Medical Services • Disability • Death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving Lives • Disability • Death • Civilians under fire
Experiences behind the lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilians to fighters - training • Camaraderie • Food and drink • Fashion (introduction of watches, macs etc) • Prisoners • Shot at dawn • Photographers • War Artists • Chaplains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily life • Comforts • Women's Services • Prisoners • Surrender or Capture • Spies • Courts martial • Religion and superstition • Photography • Arts
Experiences of those supplying the war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War production (including industrialists as well as munitions workers) • Women in labour force • Volunteers- e.g. fundraising, parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War Production • Home Front shortages • Women's Services
Home Fronts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families and children • Civilians under fire (costal bombardment, air raids, attack at sea) • Press and propaganda • Home Front shortages • The Politician's war-Coalition Government and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation • Families • Children • Occupation • Press and Propaganda • Cinema • War News

	<p>the story of Lloyd George)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conscientious Objectors • Blockade of Germany/starvation • Occupation • Revolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography • Internment • Revolution • Refugees
<p>Celebrating victory (immediate aftermath)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armistice • Treaty of Versailles • Celebrations- Victory Ball etc • Spanish 'flu • First World War careers of Second World War figures etc (e.g. Hitler, Churchill, Montgomery, Anthony Eden, Roosevelt, Mussolini, Rommel, Goering, Eisenhower, Stalin, Noel Coward) • Organisations started during the war: e.g. British Legion, St Dunstan's) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace • Treaty of Versailles • Post war reconstruction
<p>Afterwards - longer term aftermath</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability and disfigurement • Home for Heroes • Franchise • Appeasement • Throwing off the shackles/jazz age (e.g. The Prince of Wales) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home for Heroes • Franchise • Afterwards • Disability
<p>Remembering 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorialisation

(immediate/1920s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poppy • Dead Man's Penny • Two Minute Silence • Unknown Soldier • Cenotaph • Museums (Imperial War Museum and Australian War Memorial) • War Memorial Hospitals • Battlefield pilgrimage • Upsurge in spiritualism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Souvenirs • Arts
Remembering 2 (1930s –today)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1930s - War memoirs, popularity of Sassoon, Owen etc • 1960s –<i>Oh What a Lovely War</i> • 1990s- fiction- <i>Bird Song</i>, <i>Regeneration</i> • 2000s- family history, battlefield tourism • The last veterans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afterwards

Appendix XI (Chapter 7) - 'First World War Galleries Narrative Approach Document', April 2011

(Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)

REGENERATION IWM LONDON

FIRST WORLD WAR GALLERIES NARRATIVE APPROACH

General interpretative approach

We will:

- enable visitors to understand the interconnectedness of the causes, conduct and consequences of war
- provide a framework for understanding through context and connections
- encourage our visitors them to look at the subject of war and conflict from a multiplicity of perspectives which cut across a range of disciplines.
- cast new light on the familiar, reveal the unexpected, use the familiar to reveal the unfamiliar and unravel mythology
- provide immersive experiences which use our collections
- move from didactic 'telling' to showing, from a passive to an active experience
- embed material culture - the social life of the object - into our narratives
- make links across objects and collections
- draw upon and discuss current historical thinking to guide our approaches

First World War interpretive approach:

We will:

- take a British Empire perspective in terms of the historical narrative but draw in wider experiences where these bear interesting comparison or make an interesting prism through which to look at the British Empire story
- weave in those British Empire stories, not compartmentalise them
- provide a seamless transition from 'Home Front' to fighting fronts
- show that this was not just a war between armies, but one between nations and their citizens whose prosecution depended both upon harnessing of industry and continued popular support.

- explore how and why the Western Front was the focus of British Empire military effort yet show how other fronts affected the pattern and complexion of the fighting in France and Flanders and vice versa
- reveal the sheer variety of experience – not just Tommies in the trenches, nurses and munitions workers
- deal explicitly with collective memory, how we come to understand aspects of the First World War – poppies, poets, mud etc

Themes and Chronicle - Overview

Theme families and a chronicle – as outlined below - will give the framework for understanding the dynamic and texture of the First World War which is so central to our ambition.

For ease of understanding, we propose to divide the war *as an event* into key sequences – 1914-1916 and 1916-1919. The fighting, and activity and conditions on the home front(s), were radically different in 1914-1916 to those in 1916-1919.

We will take the Battle of the Somme as the break between the two. We will make a special feature of the Somme because it looms so large in our national and Empire story and is a key focus of visitor interest and expectation.

The causes and impact of the war will be explored in two themed areas dealing with the periods 1900-1914 and 1919-1929 respectively.

Themes

The First World War was one of unprecedented scale, mass participation, intensity and ferocity. It became the first 'total war' and the following factors made it so:

- **World War** – it was a war of Empires. It spread across the globe precisely because Britain had an Empire. Four Empires were destroyed by the war.
- **War of people** – this was a war which saw entire societies mobilised, a war fought by civilians - both in and out of uniform. This mass participation came about by consent or coercion. Mass support for the war proved durable – the sacrifices made reduced the appeal of peace without victory.

- **War of production** – not only were entire societies mobilised, so too were their material resources directed towards the prosecution of the war. Nations mortgaged their future in the pursuit of victory.
- **War of innovation** – the war stimulated an unprecedented level of concentrated technological advance in armaments and military machinery, ie aircraft, tanks and artillery. as each side tried to seek ways to gain a decisive advantage over the other. It also saw advances in tactics, technology, medicine and many other fields. The war also brought forth new ways of documenting and commenting on war – through art, literature, film and photography. Its violence was ironically very creative.
- **War of destruction** – the war was distinguished by the mass killing of soldiers on a scale never seen before. It also scarred bodies, minds and landscapes, in a way that no war had ever before. (Shows the effects of war of mass production and machines)
- **War against people** – the war was distinguished by the deliberate targeting of civilians, their habitats and the cultures through which they expressed themselves.
- We propose to use the above categories to create ‘families’ of themes. This approach would create clear narrative threads and rhythm and a sense of progression in the intensity of the conflict. (It must be stressed that some of these features were not present when the war began, but emerged over time.) These themes will be subjective, led by contemporary voices, with the Museum providing context where necessary,

Crucially, these theme families would give the framework for understanding the dynamic and texture of the war which is so central to our ambition.

Chronicle

Chronology, with the Museum’s authorial voice, is still critical to our thinking and our Chronicle will be an important spine. But it will largely act as a support, rather than driver. The subjective themes will take centre stage. The chronicle will contain qualitative statements and interpretation which link across and echo those given in the themes.

Appendix XII (Chapter 7) – ‘Galleries Overview – IWM Press Release, 17/07/14’

(Extracts from http://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/press-release/First%20World%20War%20Galleries%20at%20IWM%20London_0.pdf;

Accessed 09/09/15)

Stepping into the Galleries, presented with three large ship models, visitors will be introduced to Britain at the turn of the 20th century, a maritime power dependent upon its empire, seaborne trade and the mighty Royal Navy to protect that trade. They will then see how tensions and rivalries were developing in Europe, and crucially, as the crisis of summer 1914 led to war, why Britain felt it had to fight.

In *Shock*, as visitors hear the scream of shrapnel shells they will come face to face with a **French 75mm field gun**, which contributed to the deaths of a million men in just four months of fighting in 1914. They will see objects on display for the first time from the **Christmas Truce**, including a button from a German tunic that was given to a British soldier as a souvenir.

On the Western Front, trench warfare takes the fighting below ground, as armies try to escape the murderous hails of shrapnel and bullets. In *Deadlock trench signs*, such as ‘Hellfire Corner’ and ‘Piccadilly Circus’ helping soldiers navigate the complex network of trenches, are shown alongside objects telling the stories of innovations in trench warfare; from the geophones used to detect the enemy in mineshafts beneath the trenches, through to a hollowed out fake tree which became a camouflaged look out post in no man’s land.

Drawing on IWM’s rich poster collection, ***Your Country Needs You*** focuses on the campaign to recruit a ‘New Army’. Visitors will see a doll of Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, figurehead of the recruitment campaign, letters from an adoring fan asking him to marry her, and a letter from 9-year-old Alfie Knight pleading to allow him to enlist as he “*can ride jolley [sic] quick on my bicycle and...am a good shot with a revolver.*”

World War, where visitors can explore the war at sea and campaigns in the Middle East, Africa and Gallipoli, is dominated by the naval gun from HMS *Chester* at which young Jack Cornwell VC was mortally wounded in the Battle of Jutland. In **Feeding the Front**, visitors will be required to 'make' food, boots and shells through large, digital animations at an interactive Supply Line table over 4 metres long, which shows the unprecedented scale of production required on the home front to keep the troops fed and fighting.

At the centre of the Galleries with the towering 9.2 inch howitzer gun 'Mother' on display, *Total War* will explore the **Battle of the Somme**, the five month long costly battle that started in July 1916 and marked a pivotal point in the war. The scale of casualties is represented through a chilling map showing the numbers of British and Empire temporary graves in just one sector of the battlefield, and a Union Jack used by a regimental chaplain to conduct burials on the Somme. Visitors will also be able to watch the original 1916 documentary film of the battle - in its entirety and for the first time with the original musical accompaniment.

Life at the Front will look at what life was like for the troops in and behind the trenches; how they coped with hardship, discomfort and loss, what they ate, how they entertained themselves with plays, vegetable shows and sports days, and the souvenirs they collected such as a scrap of wallpaper pulled off the walls of a German trench.

Visitors will then **walk through a 'trench' – one of the highlights of the Galleries** – with a Sopwith Camel fighter plane swooping low overhead and a Mark V tank looming above. Projected silhouettes of soldiers and a soundscape will evoke the drudgery, discomfort, danger and comradeship which characterised the experience of a British 'Tommy' on the Western Front, from a sudden thunderstorm to a gas attack.

At all Costs explores how a total war on the battlefields, meant a total war on the home front as **women** stepped into roles in factories, hospitals, transport and agriculture and even **children** helped the war effort, as shown by a jumper belonging to a Sea Scout coastwatcher who looked out for German spies. Visitors will also

learn how Britain came under enemy **air attack**, how, during the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin, it faced rebellion on its own streets and how Germany's fateful decision to launch a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare ultimately brought the USA into the war on the side of the Allies.

In 1917, as the war raged on, visitors will discover in *Machines against Men* how the armies of Britain and its empire looked to new **technology and tactics** to win the war. The area will feature the stories of two famous air aces, British Major James McCudden VC and the German 'Red Baron', Manfred von Richtofen, and fragments from the planes in which they met their deaths will be on display. It will also look at how, even as communications technology became more advanced, **animals** were still used to send battlefield messages with a collar worn by a messenger dog as well as a pigeon message book. Before focusing on the iconic mud clotted battle of The Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), where visitors will see how the efforts of **photographers and war artists** to record the shattered landscapes of the Western Front, created an indelible impression of what the war looked like.

The terrible strains that people endured will be explored in *Breaking Down* through objects such as **Siegfried Sassoon's** letter protesting at the continuation of war and items of German clothing made out of paper as the British naval blockade contributed to a severe lack of resources, hunger and even starvation.

Finally in *Seizing Victory* the dramatic story of 1918 will be told. Visitors will see how after almost another year of war, from near defeat, allied forces were able to defeat Germany and its allies. The Galleries conclude in *War Without End*, showing how the war changed the world forever, from the enormous human cost, the new world order that emerged, the indelible changes which the war had on British society and the Empire, through to the commemoration and remembrance as people looked back ten years after the war.

Appendix XIII (Chapter 7) – ‘Historical Narrative Overview,

First World War Gallery’

(Accessed on IWM Regeneration Network Drive)

Overview

This document gives a summary of the historical approach for the planned First World War gallery. In it we highlight the main departures from the historical narrative and display techniques evident in the current Great War exhibition space on A Floor. The structure we propose will give the framework for understanding the dynamic of the First World War which is so central to our ambition.

We will draw upon the latest historical analysis of the causes, course and consequences of the fundamental historical event of the twentieth century - and the reason for the museum’s creation. We will cover not just the war as an event, but, in a departure from previous IWM practice, explore its wider causes and consequences and with it the war’s context and relevance for us today.

This is the Imperial War Museum, not the ‘national military museum’. It was established to record the effort and sacrifice not only of the people of Britain but those in the Empire as well. Our narrative will focus unashamedly on the British and Empire story. We cannot be all things to all people. That said, we will bring in elements of the story of say, the French *poilu* where this helps us illuminate the experience of the British ‘Tommy’ on the Western Front. The other key thread is the home front. The Museum was always intended to reflect the experiences of men, women and children without whose support the war could not have continued. Yet the home front is isolated in its own space towards the end of our current exhibition, while the empire story is incidental. An understanding of both of these aspects of the war is critical to any understanding of the First World War. From 2014, these major themes – and more besides – will be stitched into the very fabric of the exhibition.

The Narrative Structure

We will present a strong keenly paced narrative which holds together and involves the visitor rather than a series of didactic historical gobbets as we have now. Our approach will be broadly chronological but visitors will also be able to explore themes

which take them across time. We will blend the display of physical objects and digital media and will engage all the senses. A key device will be to reveal throughout the exhibition the human voices and stories explicit or implicit in all our collections.

These will drive the exhibition. Our visitors will see the war through the eyes of the people who experienced it and through the objects they gave to the Museum so that their stories might be told. They will help us to show the First World War as a far more complex event – often startlingly strange to modern eyes – than the popular image of it would suggest. And they will help us to overcome one limitation of a chronological spine, namely that chronology can suggest inevitability. That said, our visitors expect from the IWM authority and a guiding hand. We will use the Museum voice – the application of our own historical knowledge in the third person – to make complex subjects both stimulating and digestible for our visitors and to provide the necessary background and context for any given human story or object. We will also use the Museum voice to show our visitors that any number of issues surrounding the First World War are still subject to debate and that we do not always ‘know’.

We know from our pre-evaluation exercise that our visitors bring fundamental questions with them. We have opted to take these questions and use them to drive our narrative. Those questions – and Chapter areas - for the exhibition are:

1900-1914 - How Did the War Start?

1914-1916 - Why Did the War Go On?

1916-1918 – How Was the War Won?

1918-1929 – What Happened Next?

Please note that the titles for the story areas are not set in stone - we would like to test the use of extracts from contemporary quotations as our titles. It should also be said that the Substory areas are not necessarily exhibition ‘sections’ as such.

Themes addressed in them will, in many cases, overlap with each other.

Below we give each Chapter and Story with a summary overview of the general approach for each and the challenges they present.

Chapter 1: 1900 – 1914

How did the War Start?

This Chapter will examine themes such as empire, trade, nationalism and patriotism, rivalries in Europe and the decisions - made by only a handful of statesmen - which led to Britain and its Empire entering a war it was not bound to fight.

Story 1.1: On top of the world?

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

'We are on the eve of horrible things'

Herbert Asquith, letter to Venetia Stanley, 4 August 1914

This story area will set up the gallery. It is where our visitors will meet the people of the Britain and come to an understanding the value of its empire and the prestige that brought with it. Audiences will leave this area with an understanding of the prevailing passions of those people which led them – on the whole – to give their patriotic endorsement to war with Germany. And they will understand just what took Britain to war with Germany – when it was not committed by treaty to do so – rather than with its traditional rival France, nor indeed Russia.

Our challenge is to take our audiences back to a Britain which is so very different from the one we live in today, in its power, prestige and the way of life of its people. In our current spaces, we immediately encounter soldiers in uniform. Yet a distinctive feature of the First World War was that it would become a total war, fought not just by professional armies (and navies) as with previous wars, but by civilians both in and out of uniform. Visitors to our new gallery will instead encounter the people of Britain at a time when they were unaware that they were to be swept up by history, before they follow them through the experience(s) of the First World War.

We know that visitors spend more time and delve more deeply in the opening areas of any exhibition. However, there will be a tension here between wanting to explore this first space in the gallery and wanting to get to 'the war' proper. We will ensure that the material presented here is attractive, surprising and intriguing so as to

ensure that visitors get important top line information about the about the wider causes of the war. But we will also provide sufficient breadth and depth for those who want to know more.

We will set up key themes for the visitor which will recur throughout the display and without which we cannot understand the First World War, among them pride in nation, Navy and the British Empire, as well as trade, social division and unity. We will bind Britain and Empire together as one entity in this space – the British Empire with London as its heart. As they progress through the exhibition, visitors will see how the countries of Empire find a sense of nationhood through the experience of war and, ultimately, question the nature of their ties to the ‘mother country’.

The First World War is surrounded by more mythology than any other conflict in British history. And that mythology extends to this prewar period. If they have any knowledge at all, our visitors will most likely think of an ‘Edwardian summer’, when in fact Britain was riven with social strife and the threat of civil war in Ireland. They are also likely to think of the war as both accidental and ‘futile’. We will show that conscious human decisions led to a conflict justified by all the combatants as one of national self-defence. We will also show from this point onwards in the exhibition that neither the leaders nor the citizens of the fighting nations saw the war as futile. As with other myths and legends which have attached themselves to the way we think about the Great War, we will gently challenge our audiences, without patronizing them or making them feel ignorant.

One limitation of the display as it stands is that it gives a very cursory idea of the causes of the First World War. That interpretation begins with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914, thereby taking the Museum’s remit of covering conflict from 1914 to date very literally. We see the Museum’s brief as being from the *First World War* to date, that is the Great War in its wider context. We will show how Germany’s ‘world policy’ challenged the global colonial, naval and economic balance. However, this does not in itself explain how what began as a Balkan War became a world war. We will take a position on the issue of German ‘war guilt’. Given that this is a hugely complex and contested issue, we would like to consult with our academic advisory group before making a final decision on our approach.

Chapter 2: 1914-1916

Why did the war go on?

Here we will explore the shock of the new warfare, support for that war despite the enormous casualties and attempts to break the stalemate which make it truly a world war. It will also look at how the British Empire went from 'Business as Usual' to equipping itself for total war.

Story 2.1

Shock

Empire contributions featured: Indian subcontinent

'If war was once a chivalrous duel, it is now a dastardly slaughter.'

General Arthur von Bolfras, September 1914

In this space, we begin to explore the war as an event. This story area will focus on the terrific shock generated by the land battles fought between August and November 1914, with their huge casualties, and also the shock caused by the war against civilians and their cultures.

Visitors will be now transported to the fighting fronts in 1914. Of these, the Western Front will be the main focus, not only here but for the exhibition as a whole. Our reasoning for this is that France and Flanders saw the greatest density of men and weaponry and, as senior commanders at the time acknowledged, it was where the war would be won or lost. We contend that the September 1914 Battle of the Marne, fought on the Allied side largely by French troops, both consigned the idea of the single set piece battle to history and at the same time showed that this war and future wars involving great industrialized powers could not and would not be short ones. With our British Empire perspective, we must show how the British regular army was effectively destroyed in 1914. But we think it will come as a surprise to our visitors that France, with its far larger army in the field, was at this point the senior partner in the war on land and consequently bore the brunt of Allied casualties – 300,000 dead in the first four months of the war.

Brightly colored uniforms from the Museum's collections which characterise the 'old' ways of warfare contrast starkly with 'modern' weaponry. Visitors will encounter the first large object in the narrative spaces, the French 75mm field gun. Our large objects, their interpretation amplified by other items from the collections, will be allowed to tell much wider stories, and to engage audiences on a far more meaningful level than a shortlived 'wow' factor. The 75 was the weapon which started trench warfare, the sound of its shells 'like a moan, a groan, a shriek and a wail, all rolled into one; that is not unlike a winter gale howling'. Rains of shrapnel from batteries of '75s' caused the Germans to 'dig in' along the Western Front in 1914, and the Allies to entrench opposite them, thereby setting the scene for nearly four years of trench fighting. Film in the collections testifies to the rapid rate of fire of the 75, whose gunners were referred to as 'butchers' by the Germans. Posters and artworks reveal the iconic status it came to assume (in 1915, a cocktail was named in its honour at Harry's Bar in Paris).

We now bring our visitors back to Britain. Atrocity propaganda will be displayed as evidence of the shock caused by the war against civilians. Propaganda will be another thread throughout the exhibition. This evidence shows how crude it was at this stage of the war. By finishing on propaganda at home, we are also able to tee up the next story area, 'Business as Usual', which concerns itself with the beginning of a 'home front'. We are not trying to suggest that this was the first time civilians had been targeted in war. The German murder of Belgian civilians, destruction of cultural sites and December 1914 shelling of British seaport towns caused revulsion and indignation because European civilization was supposed to have progressed so far as to preclude such acts of 'barbarity'.

Story 2.2

Business as usual

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

'England is a Democracy...her people must therefore be led and not driven'.

Eton Chronicle, 14 October 1915

Our notional title is taken from a popular slogan which found currency in 1914 and this is the first area which will concentrate on the war 'at home'. We will show how the patriotism and pride in Britain and the Empire which we saw in the previous Story area prevailed over domestic unrest and tensions. These were now put aside as Britain faced the supreme national test of its power and status. In order not to clutter this area and to give it a strong message, our aim is to show how the citizens of Britain and the Empire actively looked for a role in this war of national defence. This is not yet a home front as we understand it, with all society and the economic and industrial infrastructure mobilized to meet the demands of the new type of warfare. We will save an examination of the move from a peacetime economic and industrial infrastructure to one gearing for total war in the later *Feeding the Front* Story area.

The first Substory area here will look at the rush to join Kitchener's Army. We will meet audience expectations by devoting space to the Pals battalions – raised not by the War Office but by communities, be they towns, workplaces, even football clubs - and the phenomenon of underage volunteers. Our recruitment poster collection will feature heavily. The recruitment campaign – in both Britain and the Empire - offers vivid, colorful representations of the various motivations for enlisting, from appeals to loftier notions such as patriotism which might seem strange to us today, to the more 'familiar', such as the chance to go on an adventure with friends. The overall message is positive – we will save the later wave of guilt-inducing posters as recruitment levels dropped ('What Did You Do in the Great War, Daddy?') until the later *Feeding the Front* Story area. Many of our visitors will expect these citizen soldiers to have been thrown straight into the front line as 'cannon fodder'. We will show that Kitchener's Army battalions were given a lengthy period of training before called upon to fight.

We will show how, at this stage of the war, the wider population clamoured to take part in the national war effort, but, with only a short war in prospect, opportunities for the government to harness popular support were limited. (The front page of *The Times* listed ways in which citizens could help, its 'How to be useful in wartime' pieces suggesting to the willing citizen service in home defence, to volunteer for charity work and to donate 'money, clothing and hospital comforts'.)

We will conclude this Story area by moving from consent to coercion, with the introduction in August 1914 of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), the basis for a raft of wartime measures . We will introduce our visitors to the idea that the war heralded a level of state intervention then unprecedented but one which we accept today. The numerous DORA proclamations in the Museum's collections, with their messages in the imperative, make a stark counterpoint to the colorful allure of the recruitment posters. We might use proclamations *en masse*, to create a sense of 'bombardment'. This is one area where we will look ahead in time, showing DORA measures throughout the war from the significant, such as the introduction of a national identity card, restrictions upon movement and registration of aliens, to the seemingly trivial, among them a warning relating to the 'nuisances' committed in and around the Gretna munitions factory in 1916.

Story 2.3

Stalemate

Empire contributions featured: Canada, Indian subcontinent

'The observer who goes up in an aeroplane and looks down on the vast battlefield ... sees the country below him marked by minute threadlike cracks, running here and there, into and out of one another; an endless and seemingly confused web. These are the trenches.'

Edmund Dane, 1915

Stalemate will be the second of six story areas where we look at war on the Western Front, specifically trench warfare in France and Flanders from late 1914 to the 1916 Battle of the Somme. Many of our visitors will believe that the First World War was characterized by inertia, with little attempt made to break the deadlock other than murderous assaults, and that little was done to protect the fighting men. How true is this? We will show how, on the contrary, the war stimulated an unprecedented level of concentrated technological advance in armaments and military machinery, as each side tried to seek ways to gain an advantage over the other. The story will not be told in the traditional way, through a chronology of battles. We will nonetheless look at the main engagements, not least the September 1915 battle of Loos, as a way of exploring the issues faced by commanders.

We have already shown how the open warfare of the first phase of the war in 1914 saw terrible casualties. Trenches are often regarded as the ultimate horror of the First World War. Our visitors will see that they were designed to and did protect the men in them. They were the only sensible response to the threat which soldiers faced from artillery and automatic weapons. And they were often carefully and cleverly built.

We have a real challenge here in terms of making this area visually distinctive. We must make sure that Story areas dealing with the fighting fronts do not look similar. If so, they will blur into one for the visitor and thereby blur the messages in their minds. Where we had colorful uniforms in the *Shock* area, for *Stalemate* we will deliver the story through the display of the weaponry and equipment which characterized trench warfare. But this will not just be an array of metal, typologically described as we now see in our galleries. We will offer far broader interpretation, bringing in film, photographs and documents to support and illuminate the stories, not just to illustrate them. We will look at the destructive capacity these weapons and equipment had and the stories behind their invention and development, be it poison gas, the Mills bomb or Livens the projector. We know that showing the effect of high explosive and weapons fragments will be a challenge. But we are confident that we can find solutions. We have, for example, a wax board on which the hundreds of fragments from one grenade have been mounted, the mass testifying to the force of the explosion. It would not take much of a leap of imagination for the visitor to imagine what the force which dispersed those pieces of metal might do to a human body.

Story 2.4

World War

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

'Are there not other alternatives than sending our armies to chew barbed wire in Flanders?' *Winston Churchill to Herbert Asquith, 29 December 1914*

Having shown our visitors how attempts were made to break the deadlock on the Western Front, we want them to understand how statesmen sought alternatives to stalemate, other ways to win the war, be that through aiming a knockout blow (at Gallipoli), forcing the enemy to divert resources to other fronts, trying to starve enemy populations, attacking economic lifelines, fomenting revolution and rebellion and finding new allies. The Royal Navy plays a key role in this area. With these alternative strategies, a European War became both a true war of empires and a world war.

We will begin with the Eastern Front in 1915 to emphasise that what happened in one theatre of war impacted upon another. We will show that Germany held the strategic upper hand, thereby prompting Allied and German statesmen and generals to look beyond France and Flanders in order to secure an advantage. We will end by showing that, when these alternative strategies failed to bring an end to the fighting or to tip the balance, the war returned to an intensification of efforts on the Western Front.

The core strategies we are exploring here – which take the war to Africa, the Pacific, the Middle East and Ireland and take in the Allied naval blockade - have the potential to be hugely complicated for our visitors. We have brought them together in this space as a way of simplifying them and reinforcing the message that genuine, if sometimes misguided attempts were made to tip the balance, even to win the war. We will present them thematically. Our thinking is that they should be expressed through a world map in order to give an idea of distance and the spread of the war across the globe. By condensing them here, we have also had to be more elastic with our chronology (the Battle of Verdun does not conclude until December 1916).

Visitors will leave this space knowing that the Western Front has again become the focus for German and Allied strategy that a joint Anglo-French offensive astride the Somme has been planned for 1916.

Story 2.5

Feeding the front

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

'Twelve hours on the machine, then the night shift came on and took over from us. Two twelve hour days for each machine in the 24 hours. Heavy going.'

Stewart Sibbald, Glasgow munitions worker, December 1915

This area is about resources. It will lead directly into the Battle of the Somme, an offensive of unprecedented scale which would require an equally unprecedented level of supply from the home front and from the Empire.

We will take our visitors back in time here, over a year before the Somme offensive, to May 1915 so that we might show the birth – in terms of production - of what we understand as a home front and underscore its critical link with the fighting fronts, not only in supporting the prosecution of the war as we have already seen, but also in producing munitions and other supplies.

Visitors will leave this area with an understanding as to how this intensification of industrial effort enabled huge offensives. A key point we have to make is that there was now an acceptance that full economic and industrial mobilisation was needed to win the war and that the government was forced into taking much greater control over industry and labour than was ever envisaged when war broke out. We will explore here the social impact of employment of women and teenagers in industry, as well as the new bargaining powers which workers had on the home front, leading to strikes. As *Feeding the Front* will take visitors into the Somme Story area, we will show them the huge variety and amount of matériel required by a mass, modern army - not only munitions but also other, sometimes more surprising and mundane supplies, such as hay for horses to pull the guns, even socks for the troops.

We will also explore here the issue of the supply of soldiers for the fighting fronts. Continuing the theme of state intervention into the lives of ordinary citizens, we will also look at the introduction of conscription as a response to dwindling recruitment and the heated debates which preceded it (while recognizing that conscripts would

not reach the front in time for the Somme). We will make comparisons with attitudes towards conscription in the Empire. We know that conscientious objectors represent a theme of great interest to our visitors and they will feature in this Story as a byproduct of conscription. We will be careful to stress however that they represented only 0.32% of those who served in the forces and that of these few were 'absolutists' who refused to aid the war effort in any capacity.

Chapter 3: 1916-1918

How was the war won?

This Chapter will examine the increasing pressure on the home front, leading to the ever wider involvement of civilian populations. Visitors will see how the war on the Western Front in particular became, increasingly, a war of machines. We will show how, from near defeat, British Empire forces and Allied forces swept to victory from late summer 1918, when most generals and statesmen fully expected to be fighting for at least another year.

Story 3.1

Total War: Battle of the Somme

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

'The sky is purple dark and all along the horizon gun-flashes quiver... Every now and then huge explosions send up pillars of smoke, as though the internal fires of the earth had broken through.... It is an inferno. Can anything live in that?'

Second Lieutenant Max Plowman, Somme, August 1916

If any engagement of the First World War will resonate with our visitors, it will be the 1916 Battle of the Somme. The Somme will be the fulcrum of the exhibition. It was the first 'total war' battle, fought by troops from across the British Empire (and France) and supported by an immense logistical effort and an unprecedented amount of munitions. Over 1.5 million shells were fired in the week long opening bombardment alone. The Somme embodied an escalation of the industrialized

violence of the war and had a powerful effect on its subsequent course. *The Battle of the Somme* film will feature heavily in this area, and not just as a record of the battle. The film, seen by 20 million people in Britain in the autumn of 1916, will be used to link the fighting front to the home front by showing how news of the Battle was seen and received at home.

In order to meet visitor expectations, we have made a separate Substory for the 'First Day', 1 July 1916, when British troops suffered 58,000 casualties, a third of them killed, for little gain. Many of them were the citizen soldiers who we encountered enlisting in the *Business As Usual* Story area. The First Day is often taken to be 'The Battle of the Somme'. We will show in the Substory area that follows that the fighting continued until November.

So charged and emotive are the issues surrounding the Somme that we feel that this is the right area for us to break with our overall approach, which is to look at the events of the war through the objects and words of those who experienced it while adding context. We propose to devote one Substory area to an assessment of the Somme, which looks not just at issues of command and control but also at the lasting impact the battle had on both the German army and the forces of Britain and its empire. The Museum voice will be of particular value here both in guiding the visitor through often contested areas of history and in setting up the story of the eventual Allied victory.

Story 3.2

At All Costs

This area largely concentrates upon the attack upon British civilians in their homes and largely precludes distinct Empire stories. We will, of course, emphasise that many of the supplies targeted by the German submarine campaign were coming from the Empire.

'It is quite impossible to keep pace with all the new incarnations of women in war-time – 'bus-conductress, ticket collector, lift-girl, club waitress, post-woman, bank clerk, motor-driver, farm-labourer, guide, munition maker.'

Punch, June 1916

We have already seen an intensification of the war effort in *Feeding the Front*. Here we will show how changes in leadership in late 1916 raised the stakes even higher by the new leaders pushing for outright victory rather than any negotiated peace. *At All Costs* will deliver the message that this was now a *total* war on the British home front, that the citizen at home had become as important to the war effort as the soldier on the fighting fronts. With it, civilians had gained independence, bargaining power – and had become a ‘legitimate’ target for German attack, both directly from the air. And by targeting Britain’s trade and supplies from beneath the sea, German unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 would bring prove not only a military failure but a diplomatic disaster by bringing the United States into the war.

We will show the many roles performed by civilians in support of the war effort – in industry, in transport, in agriculture, the police and civil service and at the establishment of the women’s services. We will not just look at the civilian as worker. We must tell a rounded, human story here and this area will address questions our visitors will have about the way people lived and coped in this, the darkest period of the war. What did they eat? What did they spend their money on? How did they entertain themselves? What about welfare, education, crime and health? Did they voice any protest about the war and its terrible cost? How did those with relatives at the front cope with separation? And how did individuals and communities remember and commemorate their dead while the fighting was going on?

Story 3.3

Life at the front

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

‘I wonder how many people realise what Hell the trenches can be. No shelter from rain or cold. Mud in some places right over one’s knees, nearly always over one’s ankles..... It is really wonderful how the Tommy keeps up and keeps cheery.’

Signaller Nattha Singh, 30th Lancers, 8 December 1915

We know that our audiences are fascinated by the soldier’s experience, in particular that of the trenches. They will likely think of it as a singular experience. We will

demonstrate that, on the contrary, there was no such thing as a single 'trench life' for British and Empire troops, but rather diverse experiences depending on where and when a soldier was fighting, what his role was and any number of other factors, not least the weather. And we will show that, contrary to common understanding, the soldier did not spend all his time in a trench, but was rotated behind the lines and had occasional spells of leave. We will not confine our story here to France and Flanders. We will compare experiences of soldiers on all fronts.

What did the troops eat? What did they drink? Where did they go to the toilet? How did they entertain themselves? How did they communicate with their families? Were they superstitious? How were they disciplined? What were the relationships between officers and men? These are just some of the questions our visitors will bring with them and we will answer them using the objects in our collections. Visitors will also want to know what happened to casualties, not least those who were killed. This will be the main area for them to investigate medical treatment of the wounded and sick, as well as looking at what happened to those who were killed in action or died of wounds.

Story 3.4

Machines against men

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa

'That's what makes this war so ghastly. It is machine-made.'

Second Lieutenant Max Plowman, Somme, November 1916

Machines Against Men delivers a number of key messages. For the Allies, while 1917 was a year of continued setbacks and deadlock, the elements of the all-arms warfare destined to provide more dramatic results in 1918 were falling into place. Generals were developing tactics to make use of innovations in weaponry such as the tank, and to make best use of abundance, not only in weapons and munitions – artillery remained the arbiter of the battlefield - but also in communications, enabling commanders to have better control of the battlefield. (The BEF in 1914 had fifty wireless sets in service, increasing to 30,000 in 1918.)

We will show how the Allied effort on the Western Front increased even further in size and power, supplied by the parallel effort on the home front we have seen in *At All Costs*. The focus here will be on the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), July-November 1917, although we will also deliver the story through the earlier battles that year at Arras and Messines. Visitors will see that, while both sides developed increasingly sophisticated methods of attack, defensive tactics improved in response, ensuring that no side decisively broke through. And the progress of British and Empire troops at Third Ypres was severely hampered by heavy rain..

Where *Shock* lends itself to display of colorful uniforms, *Stalemate* to an array of lighter weaponry such as trench mortars and the *Somme* to film, we might make this Story area distinctive for visitors by using to powerful effect our art and photograph collections in conjunction with the three dimensional objects – we propose to use our Mark V tank and an aircraft in this space. The shattered landscapes created by terrific bombardments inspired some extraordinarily powerful imagery, not least the art of, say, Paul Nash and CRW Nevinson and official war photographs of the dreadful conditions in which men fought during the Third Battle of Ypres. We propose not to use this imagery as mere illustration. Rather, our visitors will come to understand that the British propaganda machine had become a coordinated and highly successful operation with the establishment of a Department of Information.

Story 3.5

Breaking Down

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

‘We are all gaunt and bony now, and have dark shadows round our eyes, and our thoughts are chiefly taken up with wondering what our next meal will be, and dreaming of all the good things that once existed.’

Princess Blücher’s diary, January 1917

Having seen the terrible cost of the war, visitors will be wondering why the combatant nations were not suing for peace. Here will look at peace initiatives and why they failed. Our audiences will see that, ironically, the terrible toll of lives was

one factor in making compromise almost impossible. So we now set the scene for the race between victory and collapse.

Three and a half years of largely indecisive fighting had caused disillusion and weariness amongst populations and suggested the war was no nearer a conclusion. We will emphasise that, in this total war, fighting could not continue without support from the home front.

We will explore the diverse forms that despondency with the war and outright anti-war feeling took, from the intellectual opposition in Britain calling for a negotiated peace (rather than a laying down of arms), popular disapproval of Allied war management in Australia, soldiers' strikes in France and mass desertion by Italian troops, to the largely socialist political opposition in Germany. We will show how hunger was a key factor in public unrest, causing tears to appear in the social fabric. While Britain could rely on supplies from the United States and the Empire – it also introduced rationing of some foods - there was widespread lack of food and other shortages in Germany and even starvation in Austria-Hungary caused by both blockade and maladministration. And hunger and defeats in the field would cause Russia to be the first of the major powers to exit the war.

Story 3.6

From Near Defeat to Victory

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

'We have reached the darkest hours of the War...'

Punch magazine, April 1918, on the German Spring Offensives

This will be the final Story area to look at the war as an event, with a return to mobile, open warfare and, again, terrible casualties. We will show it to be a year of surprises. Our pacing of this story area will need to match the dramatic turn of events. Many believed 1919 would be the year of decision. But the impending arrival of American manpower in Europe, the removal of Russia from the equation and - as visitors have just seen - the increasingly desperate state of many of the combatants ensured that 1918 was to see concerted attempts to bring the war to a decisive end.

A final great paroxysm of violence led, unexpectedly, to an armistice before the end of the year.

Visitors will see both how Germany lost the war and how the Allies won it. We swing from the huge German Spring Offensives which so nearly brought about the final defeat of the Allies, yet were hampered by lack of strategic vision, to the victorious Allied offensives in 1918. In these, British and Empire forces, under sound strategic direction and employing all the tactical lessons which they had learned over the previous three years, were the most effective element.

Running parallel to the story of victory on the Western Front, visitors will see Germany's allies – Bulgaria, Turkey and Austria-Hungary - crumbling away, with hunger a major factor in their downfall.

Chapter 4: 1919-1929

What Happened Next?

The consequences of the First World War, with its terrible human cost, are many, from changed value system in Britain and the establishment of a language of commemoration and remembrance, through the emergence of new nations and national identities, to the brutalisation of European politics after 1918.

Story 4.1

War without end

Empire contributions featured: Australia, Canada, Indian subcontinent, New Zealand, South Africa

'There will soon be men and women, to whom the war is not even a memory – nothing but a great adventure just missed through an unlucky accident of birth. They'd like to know, they say...'

Max Plowman

This area is without doubt the greatest challenge for both the historical team and the designers. Firstly, we need to not only to 'close' the story but also to leave threads

which will set up our narrative for the Second World War and beyond. Our visitors will have been through a long exhibition and the majority will expect it to close with the Armistice in November 1918. For many of them, this is 'the end' of the war. Also, they will have encountered many of the impacts of the war as they go through the exhibition. But we feel that these do need summarizing and underscoring here. Our challenge is to find objects which will inspire sufficient curiosity and intrigue before they exit the exhibition. We have chosen 1929 as our 'closing' date because it is around this time that the perceptions of the war as futile begin to gain currency.

We will set up this space by looking at the human cost of the war, not least nearly 1 million British and Empire dead and the many more scarred in body and mind. We will show how war had changed Britain. We will deal with issues such as the relaxation of social conventions, commemoration and remembrance both private and public, how veterans and war workers adjusted to peace and how the war made Britain a more democratic country, with a system of centralised cabinet government we recognise today.

We will look at the consequences of war for the Empire. We will show that while concessions were made to a new sense of nationhood in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, there was little attempt to extend such rights beyond the 'White Dominions'. The Empire was beset with unrest and more costly and difficult to police, particularly because Britain had been given mandates over regions in the Middle East where they had encouraged nationalism during the war. And in Ireland, attempts to maintain British rule were abandoned in the face of a Nationalist insurgency campaign. Moreover, the economic cost of the war meant that Britain was no longer able to support financially the pre-eminent position to which it aspired among the 'Great Powers'.

We will emphasise that the 'war to end all wars' did not end with universal peace. The settlements concluded in the wake of the Armistice were compromises between the powerful competing interests of the Allies. This lack of common purpose continued in the post-war era. As a result, their ability to enforce the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was undermined. Although the main war fronts were silenced, civil war, border conflicts and nationalist and political insurrections bedevilled Europe during the immediate post-war era as people searched for causes, saviours and

scapegoats. In Europe the seeds of conflict were sown in the creation of new states which contained significant ethnic minorities.

The conflicts which were left unresolved by, or which were created by, the peace settlements were to haunt the remainder of the twentieth century.

James Taylor

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Recorded Interview between Peter Simkins and James Wallis, conducted in Cheltenham on 13/06/13

Recorded Interview between Mike Hibberd and James Wallis, conducted in Guildford on 18/06/13

Recorded Interview between Penny Ritchie Calder and James Wallis, conducted at IWM London on 21/06/13

Recorded Interview between John Dangerfield and James Wallis, conducted in Shrewsbury on 05/07/13

Recorded Interview between Alan Borg, Alys Cundy and James Wallis, conducted at IWM London on 25/07/13

Unrecorded conversation between James Wallis and Kate Clements regarding 'My Boy Jack', conducted on 14/05/14 at Imperial War Museums London

Recorded Interview between James Wallis and Nigel Steel, conducted on 15/05/14 at All Saints Annexe, Imperial War Museum

Recorded Interview between James Wallis and Terry Charman, conducted on 12/05/14 and 19/05/14 at All Saints Annexe, Imperial War Museum

Recorded Interview between James Wallis and Terry Charman, conducted on 12/05/14 and 19/05/14 at All Saints Annexe

Unrecorded phone conversation between James Wallis and Peter Simkins regarding '1918 – Year of Decision' Exhibition, conducted on 21/05/14

Email Interview between James Wallis and Angela Godwin, regarding AG's involvement with temporary First World War exhibitions held at the Imperial War Museum between 1997 and 2009, conducted on 25/06/14

'Evaluation Questionnaire' Email Interview between James Wallis and Paul Cornish, 28/07/14

'Evaluation Questionnaire' Email Interview between James Wallis and Louise Macfarlane, 29/08/14

IWM Central Files

EN3

IWM EN3/2/27/002 – Fiftieth Anniversary of the Outbreak of the First World War

IWM EN3/2/27/002/1 – 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition Guide (24/06/64 – 31/12/64)

IWM EN3/2/27/002/2 – 1964 Exhibition Opening Invitation Responses

IWM EN3/2/27/002/3 – 1964 Exhibition Opening Invitation Rejections

IWM EN3/2/27/002/4 – Documentation relating to 1964 Special Photographic Exhibition

IWM EN3/2/1/1/2-5 – Minutes of the Board Meetings of the IWM Trustees

IWM EN3/2/1/1/6 – Minutes of the Board Meeting of the IWM Trustees held on 16th November 1964

IWM EN3/2/12/001/1 - Press releases on Museum exhibitions and events; letters to newspapers; requests to be put on Museum mailing list, Museum publicity (1964-1966)

IWM EN3/2/12/001/2 – Draft Text for the 1965 'Fifty Years After' exhibition catalogue

IWM EN3/3/01/015 – Sir Peter Masfield Trustee File

IWM EN3/3/27/001 – 'Special Photographic Exhibition 1917: Preview Arrangements'. Arrangements for the preview of the 1917 Special Photographic Exhibition (3 May 1967 – 7 August 1967), part of the 'Fifty Years After' exhibition;

/1 Publicity leaflet, sample invitations and guest lists

/2 Guest lists and responses

IWM EN3/3/29/004 – 'Fifty Years After'. Correspondence with Peter Masfield re: the production of a book to accompany the 'Fifty Years After' series of exhibitions on the First World War

IWM EN3/3/31/002 – Letters to Noble Frankland

EN4

EN4/41/CF/1 – Redevelopment: Stage 1 (Files and plans relating to Stage 1 of the Redevelopment project for the IWM Building at Lambeth Road, 20 Aug 1974 – 13 Jan 1994)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/4 – ‘Ten Year Plan for the Structured Development of Imperial War Museum London’ Discussion Document (March 1980)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/5 – Brief for Meeting about the Redevelopment Plans with Officials from the Office of Arts and Libraries and Property Services Agency (Jun-Oct 1980)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/4/8 – Initial Brief for the Redevelopment of the Main Building (Nov 1980)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/6/4 – ‘The Present Condition and Suitability of the Imperial War Museum’ P.S.A. Report

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/1/007 – Stage 1: Redevelopment Schemes 1982 (‘Imperial War Museum: The War Forward’ P.S.A. Draft Report)

IWM/EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/2 – Correspondence re: Articles, Letters and Other Publicity Efforts (16 March 1984 – 08 Sept 1989)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/3 – Redevelopment Press Packs

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/4/1/4 – Redevelopment Appeal Brochures

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/7/7/2 - Stage 1: Redevelopment Steering Group Meeting Minutes (23 Sept 1985 – 09 June 1987)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/7/7/3 – Stage 1: Redevelopment Steering Group Meeting Minutes (03 Sept 1987 – 28 March 1989)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/1 – Design Brief for Potential Exhibition Designers

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/(00)2 – Competition to choose a designer for the new exhibition

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/003 – Design Proposals: Jasper Jacob

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/004 – Jasper Jacob Associates Museum Display Concept

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/1 – Design Programme: Volume II (1983-1988)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/005/2 – Design Programme: Volume III (1988-1992)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/10/007 – New Gallery Exhibitions

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/14/001 – Snagging Work (Memoranda re: Finishing Touches and Snagging Work)

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/15/002 – Sunday Times Building of the Year Award

IWM EN4/41/CF/1/15/004 – European Museum of the Year Award

EN4 – Temporary First World War Exhibitions

IWM/EN4/15/D/37 – ‘1918: Year of Decision’

IWM/EN4/15/D/42 – ‘First World War Remembered’

IWM/EN4/15/D/51 - ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’

IWM/EN4/15/D/62 – ‘In Memoriam’

IWM Archival Files of Deputy Directors

Dr Christopher Roads

ROADS/DD2/05/006 – ‘Fifty Years After exhibitions’

Files relating to the Museum's series of 'Fifty Years After the First World War' exhibitions, researched and curated by the Museum and Peter Masefield. These files will relate to the 1964 and 1965 exhibitions. 3 subfolders:

/1 Research notes, image lists and correspondence with Peter Masefield and others (26 Jul 1963 - 20 Dec 1965)

/2 Lists of images suggested for inclusion in the exhibition and chronologies of military operations 1914-1918.

/3 Black and white images of memorials and cemeteries, presumably used in one of the exhibitions (1965)

/4 Letter from Masefield, handwritten notes and typed memorandum re: proposed publication (19 Sep 1966)

IWM ROADS/DD2/05/008 – ‘Images of the Somme Area’

17 black and white images of the Somme area, taken by Christopher Roads, for the 1966 'Fifty Years After' exhibition of 1966

IWM ROADS/DD3/03/013 – 'Photographic Section: Fifty Years After Photographic Publications'

2 subfolders:

/1 Letter from Peter Masefield to IWM about tax issues relating to his photographic work; IWM memorandum on the same subject; text for the 'Photographs of the Western Front in 1916 and Fifty Years Afterwards' publication and sketch and mock up of page layout (1967)

/2 Text for 1916 book, letters from Masefield about images to use for 1917 and 1918 exhibitions or publications, together with lists

Sir Robert Crawford

IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/1 – Exhibitions General I

IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/2 – Exhibitions General II

IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/7/1 – Exhibitions: Briefs for Displays (including Survey of Collections Report by R&I)

IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/10/4 – Exhibitions: Experiences and Flight Simulator

IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/1 – Exhibitions First World War

IWM EN4/41/DD/1/11/14/2 – Exhibitions First World War

IWM DP2 – Papers of Sir Peter Masefield

IWM DP2/008 – Correspondence between Frankland and Masefield suggesting idea of comparative photographs and correspondence between Frankland, Masefield and Sir John Elliot (May 1963 – March 1965)

IWM DP2/009 – 'Fifty Years After': Book Introduction Draft (Nov 1967 – Jan 1968)

IWM DP2/010 – Draft of Text for the 1966 Special Photographic Display

IWM DP2/011 – Masefield Research File

IWM DP2/012 – Note containing data about Masefield's sorties/numbers of images

(Aug 1963 – Aug 1968)

IWM DP2/013 – Large Notebook containing a timeline of the War's events, and a list of place names in alphabetical order

IWM DP2/014 – Red Notebook containing a list of photographs taken by PGM for the series of 'Fifty Years After' exhibitions, and how these relate to IWM photographs (April 1964 – May 1966)

IWM DP2/015 – Small Brown Notebook containing a visit itinerary of PGM's 17 'Sorties' to the Battlefields to produce comparative photographs (August 1963 - June 1969). Also contains leaflet of Special Photographic Exhibition – 'Fifty Years After – 1917-1967' (29/07/67 – 21/04/68)

IWM DP2/016 – Large Black Notebook containing information about Masefield's cameras and photographs taken (Sept 1963 – Aug 1967)

IWM DP2/017 – Small Black Notebook containing information about Masefield's cameras and photographs taken (Aug 1967 – 1969)

IWM DP2/018 – Folder of Side By Side Photographic Comparisons, with written notes by Masefield (Sept 1963 – June 1966)

IWM DP2/019 – Purple Scrapbook listing photographs in relation to position in gallery (July 1966 – April 1968). Also contains material relating to 'Relics of War: A Visit to the Imperial War Museum' television programme

IWM DP2/020 – Prompt Sheets for 'Relics of War: A Visit to the Imperial War Museum' television programme

IWM DP2/021 – Western Front 1914-1918 Photopack, sold by the Museum

IWM DP2/027-045 – Various items of wartime origin used by Masefield for research prior to his battlefield sorties for obtaining photographs, including maps

IWM Department of Exhibitions Archival Files

IWM ExPA 0013 (Archive Box 003) – WW2 interim ‘permanent’ exhibition (Graphics and Text)

IWM ExPA 0077 (Archive Box 008) - Redevelopment (Exhibit Research R&I)

IWM ExPA 0096 (Archive Box 011) – Redevelopment Captions (Curators Comments)

IWM ExPA 0099 (Archive Box 011) – Redevelopment Captions (Artillery and Shells)

IWM ExPA 0100 (Archive Box 011) – Redevelopment Captions (Tanks and Vehicles)

IWM ExPA 0105 (Archive Box 012) – Redevelopment (Exhibition Liaison Meetings Phase I)

IWM ExPA 0109 (Archive Box 012) – Redevelopment (A Floor Displays Detail Brief)

IWM ExPA 0110 (Archive Box 012) – Redevelopment (Initial scheme design [1985], brief and photos)

IWM ExPA 0211 (Archive Box 024) – Redevelopment (Showcase correspondence with DG and DDG)

IWM ExPA 0235 (Archive Box 028) – Redevelopment (Design brief action)

IWM ExPA 0236 (Archive Box 028) – Redevelopment (Design brief for designers)

IWM ExPA 0238 (Archive Box 028) – Redevelopment (Early WW1 planning papers)

IWM ExPA 0239 (Archive Box 028) – Redevelopment (WW1: General progress, notes, letters, minutes etc)

IWM ExPA 0240 (Archive Box 028) – Redevelopment (WW1- press & publicity [June 1990])

IWM ExPA 0249 (Archive Box 029) – Redevelopment (WWI – Showcases in lung area/Jagger figure)

IWM ExPA 0254 (Archive Box 030) - Redevelopment - WW1 case content (Exhibit selection and issuing [incl Jul- Sept '89 planning and issuing sessions])

IWM ExPA 0255 (Archive Box 030) - Redevelopment - WW1 case content (Showcase Memos)

IWM ExPA 0257 (Archive Box 030) - Redevelopment - WW1 case content (Lists by Department)

IWM ExPA 0264 (Archive Box 031) - Redevelopment - WW1 case dressing 1 of 2 (Showcase Dressing Subcontract)

IWM ExPA 0266 (Archive Box 031) - Redevelopment - WW1 case dressing 1 of 2 (Dressing minutes, memos etc)

IWM ExPA 0268 (Archive Box 032) - Redevelopment - WW1 case dressing 2 of 2 (WW1 different section layout)

IWM ExPA 0269 (Archive Box 032) - Redevelopment - WW1 case dressing 2 of 2 (Exhibit Mounts Information)

IWM ExPA 0272 (Archive Box 032) – Redevelopment (Photos for Mainline)

IWM ExPA 0273 (Archive Box 032) – Redevelopment (Exhibition Graphics/Photos)

IWM ExPA 0274 (Archive Box 032) – Redevelopment (Misc Photographs and negatives)

IWM ExPA 0275 (Archive Box 033) – Redevelopment – WWI Graphics (Maps)

IWM ExPA 0277 (Archive Box 033) – Redevelopment – WWI Graphics (Copies of approved typesetting)

IWM ExPA 0278 (Archive Box 033) – Redevelopment – WWI Graphics (Biography Board/Chronology Panel)

IWM ExPA 0279 (Archive Box 033) – Redevelopment – WWI Graphics (External Graphics excluding maps)

IWM ExPA 0280 (Archive Box 034) – Redevelopment – WWI Graphics (Planning and Content)

IWM ExPA 0290 (Archive Box 035) – Redevelopment – WWI AV (Audio Handsets and Sound Recordings)

IWM ExPA 0294 (Archive Box 035) – Redevelopment (Caption Corrections)

IWM ExPA 0295 (Archive Box 036) – Redevelopment Content (1B political, social and economic background of the Beligerents)

IWM ExPA 0304 (Archive Box 036) – Redevelopment Content (The War in the Air 1914-18)

IWM ExPA 0306-0334 (Archive Box 037-039) – Redevelopment Content (First World War exhibition sections)

IWM ExPA 0319 (Archive Box 038) – Redevelopment Content (Air Raids on Britain)

IWM ExPA 0333 (Archive Box 039) – Redevelopment Content (Trench Life Religion, warfare, rations, comforts and occupations)

IWM ExPA 0334I (Archive Box 039b) – Redevelopment (Gallery checks and maintenance)

IWM ExPA 0334m (Archive Box 039b) – Redevelopment (Gallery maintenance)

‘My Boy Jack’ exhibition (Departmental Files Held by Exhibitions Department)

‘My Boy Jack’, Exhibitions Department File belonging to Angela Godwin

‘My Boy Jack’, Angela Godwin Black File I

‘My Boy Jack File’, Research, Technician’s Notes

‘My Boy Jack’ – Workshop & Construction File

‘My Boy Jack – Conversion Works/CDM/Threemet Tender’

‘My Boy Jack’, Dressing – Master File; Exhibition Registrar’s Master Dressing File

IWM Events Files

IWM/EVE/2002/011 - Opening of ‘The Trench’ – 12 March 2002

IWM/EVE/2002/12 – Press Launch of the Trench Exhibition – 13 March 2002

IWM/EVE/2002/036 - ‘Opening of Anthem for Doomed Youth’, 29 October 2002

IWM/EVE/2002/037 – ‘Private Viewing (Anthem For Doomed Youth)’, 30 October 2002

IWM/EVE/2002/040 - ‘Forgotten Voices’ Book Launch, 5 November 2002

IWM Published Material Held by Museum

IWM PUB/LON/03/1964 – ‘Special Photographic Exhibition 1964: Fifty Years After’. Guidebook for the following Special Photographic Exhibition, commemorating the First World War (June 1964 – December 1964)

IWM PUB/LON/03/1965 – ‘Special Photographic Exhibition 1965: Fifty Years After’. Guidebook for the following Special Photographic Exhibition, commemorating the First World War (21 September 1965 – 31 May 1966)

IWM PUB/LON/03/1968 – ‘Special Photographic Exhibition 1968: Fifty Years After’. Guidebook for the following Special Photographic Exhibition, commemorating the First World War (9 August 1968 - 30 April 1969)

IWM Publicity Archive

IWM Annual Report 1983-1985

IWM Annual Report, 1986-1988

IWM Annual Report, 1989-1992

IWM Annual Report, 2008-2009;

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/247825/0039.pdf (Accessed 27/03/15)

IWM Photographic Archive (Museum Events Collection)

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1963-1964 - IWM MH 7297 to MH 7354 and MH 9715 to MH 9720: Opening and Images of the 1914-1964 Special Photographic Exhibition

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1965 - IWM MH 7681 – MH 7726: Opening of the 1915-1965 Special Photographic Exhibition

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1966 – IWM MH 15651 to MH 15656: Plans depicting layout of 1916-1966 Special Photographic Exhibition

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1966 – IWM MH 9401: Noble Frankland with Victoria Cross Holders’ Visit, 24/06/66

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1966 – IWM MH 9639 to MH 9693: Opening of the 1916-1966 Special Photographic Exhibition

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1966 – IWM MH 8543 to MH 8602: Opening of the New Wing and Cinema on 2nd November 1966 by HM The Queen, accompanied by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1967 – IWM MH 9617 to MH 9628: Visit to Ypres by Members of the IWM Staff in May 1967

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1967 – IWM MH 9431 to MH 9488: Opening of 1917-1967 Special Photographic Exhibition

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1967 – IWM MH 773 to MH 9776: Plans depicting layout of 1917-1967 Special Photographic Exhibition

Imperial War Museum Diary, 1968 (Part 1) – IWM MH 10179 to MH 10198: Opening of 1918-1968 Special Photographic Exhibition

IWM Photo Archive Catalogue Number: 8905-08

‘Album presented to Sir John Elliot on his retirement from the Board of the British Airports Authority in 1969, relating to his tour of the Western Front battlefields with Sir Peter Masfield and Museum staff in 1963.

IWM Photo Archive Catalogue Number: 7009-10

‘Negatives, numbered PGM 1 - PGM 971, also unnumbered and 4 rolls of 35mm film taken by Sir Peter Masfield of scenes on the Western Front in the 1960s and early 1970s’

IWM Photo Archive Catalogue Number: 6504-09

‘Photographs taken by Dr Christopher Rhodes, the Deputy Director of the Imperial War Museum, on a visit to Gallipoli in April 1965 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings’

History of Imperial War Museum Album 1989

History of Imperial War Museum Album 1990 – Parts I and II

History of Imperial War Museum Album 1991

IWM/97/9/20 - ‘Forties Fashion and the New Look’ (1997)

History of the IWM Album: 9700-01 (1918 Exhibition)
History of the IWM Album: 1998-01 (First World War Remembered)
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History of the IWM Album: 1999-01
History of the IWM Album: 2002-00-01 (The Trench)
History of the IWM Album: 2003-00-01 (Anthem for Doomed Youth)
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History of the IWM Album: 2007-00-02 (My Boy Jack)
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Bostridge, M (27/10/02), 'Psalmists and Prophets', *Independent on Sunday*, IWM/EN4/15/D/42

Cambell, S (17/07/14), 'Imperial War Museum Reopens: Death and Destruction All Around', *The Daily Telegraph Website*,
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/uk/10972942/Imperial-War-Museum-reopens-death-and-destruction-all-around.html> (Accessed 23/09/15)

Insall, M (02/11/12) Email Communication with James Wallis, 'Information about Jack Insall'

Kelly, G, 'Prize Specimens', *The Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 27 June 2015; 52

'Oh! What A Lovely War' (1963) Stratford Theatre Workshop – Joan Littlewood, Gerry Raffles and Charles Cilton – Theatre Royal, Stratford East

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/10993859/WWI-photographs-superimposed-into-modern-times.html?frame=2988010> – Accessed 02/10/14

'Sir Peter Masefield, 1915-2006 (Aviation Notables)', 12/03/10,
<http://tartanterror22.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/sir-peter-masefield-1915-2006.html>
(Accessed 15/08/12)

'Peace and Reconciliation' Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry;
<http://www.theherbert.org/whats-on/galleries/peace-and-reconcilliation> (Accessed 02/09/15)

The Peace Museum, Bradford; <http://www.peacemuseum.org.uk> (Accessed 02/09/15)

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<http://www.centenarynews.com/article?id=1607> (Accessed 17/03/16).

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Branigan, T 'BBC Offers Fortnight in the Trenches', 25th June 2001, *The Guardian*:
<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2001/jun/25/bbc.realitytv> (Accessed 17/03/15)

Egremont, M 'Strange Meeting', Saturday 9th November 2002, *Financial Times Weekend*: http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/42/anthem/anthem_review.pdf
(Accessed 23/03/15)

Evans, E 'Anthem for Doomed Youth at the Imperial War Museum', 13/11/02:
<http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/literature-and-music/art14108>
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Hanna, E 'Reflections on the Centenary So Far', December 2014, *Gateways to the First World War Engagement Centre*: <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/gateways/tag/first-world-war-centenary/> (Accessed 17/03/16)

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<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/42/anthem/2reviewa.pdf> (Accessed 23/03/15)

Moss, R 'Remembering the Great War at Imperial War Museum London', 01/10/08:
<http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/military-history/first-world-war/art61312> (Accessed 27/03/15)

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<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/42/anthem/4reviewa.pdf> (Accessed 23/03/15)

No Author, *Horrible Histories: Frightful First World War*.
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<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/42/anthem/captioninfo.pdf> (Accessed 23/03/15)

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http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/10/98/world_war_i/197586.stm,
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<https://greatwarfiction.wordpress.com/2008/10/12/in-memoriam-at-the-iwm/>
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<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.2165>
<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.2166>;
<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.2167>;
<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/server/show/nav.00o003003002005> (Accessed 22/03/15)

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http://admin.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/81/exported_html/;
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<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/remembrance/museum-remembers.html>;
<http://archive.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/95/remembrance/remembrance-weekend->

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