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Imperial Legacies and Contemporary Museum
Practice: exploring British army museum history and
the challenges and pathways for decolonising
collections

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Introduction

1 A HISTORY OF THE UK'S ARMY MUSEUMS, IMPERIAL LEGACIES AND DECOLONISATION

These regimental museums may sooner or later become a problem.

Their existence is at present officially recognised only to the extent of their being allowed to occupy spare accommodation in barracks and on the basis of no expense to the public.

A. E. Widdows

Assistant Undersecretary of State for War, 14th October 1935¹

The UK's army museums, representing its regiments and corps, have had a difficult past defined by a range of challenges. These have been products of the particular circumstances of their establishment and development. This thesis explores this history by revisiting existing narratives around their origins to offer deeper historical understanding for contemporary museum practice, through archival evidence and network analysis. Since their development a strong inter-personal and organisational network, borne of their specific and unique history amongst museums, has created an environment in which they have grown and thrived in spite of challenges. This includes challenges which have disproportionately affected regimental and corps museums (hereafter RCMs), such as permanent locations, which for many has been seldom assured.² Museums in the UK are also increasingly being asked to critically engage with the imperial and colonial legacies of their collecting, and this has specific resonance for a sector so entangled with the history of colonial expansion and rule.

¹ A. E. Widdows, *Minute from Widdows to PUS 14 October 1935*, 1935 War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

² Abbreviations and relevant explanatory notes on these can be found in Appendix 1.

This thesis contributes by demonstrating the value of historical methods to support museums and heritage in engaging with the legacies of Empire and colonialism.

Military collections in the UK are a subject of study in these wider debates about imperial legacies, and so the importance of this conversation to RCMs therefore cannot be understated. The RCMs which represent the history of the army, comprise a substantial but undervalued component of the UK's social history, in particular imperial and colonial history which is often missing in wider surveys of British museum sectors' links with empire. The British Army played a key role in the expansion and maintenance of the British Empire and the museums which represent the regiments and corps of the British Army often have objects, in varying scope, that were collected through this role. This thesis therefore also focusses on questions around what was collected, how it was collected, and how this material has been treated and interpreted over time and in the present. Whilst the composition of 'military museums' in the UK is overwhelmingly dominated by RCMs, this current research is relevant across military collections. Other major components include the museums of the Armed Services, the national war museums, and a range of other private and public collections related to military ephemera.³ Many local and social history museums also contain objects of a military nature, frequently in connection to the World Wars due to their ubiquity. For example, the Surgeons' Hall Museum in Edinburgh holds military medical equipment and related objects due to the connection with surgery in wartime. A range of research has considered the utility of military collections and museums in general, which will also be explored in the literature review, but is not the focus of the current research. This research instead is confined in its scope to the network of RCMs in the UK, and the National Army Museum (NAM) in Chelsea. NAM is comprised of several regimental collections in

³ Section 1.1 explores this composition in more detail, but for now the museums of the services are defined as including the National Army Museum, the National Museum of the Royal Navy for example; whilst national war museums include the Imperial War Museum and the National War Museum at Edinburgh castle for example.

part (such as from museums which have closed in the past) and also supports the co-ordination of the network of RCMs with its origins in the founding decades of the formal museums in the early 20th century. All such institutions within and linked to this network have a role to play in critically engaging with their collections' connections with imperialism and colonialism.

Calls for decolonisation of various forms have expanded greatly since the 2010s which has been a product of a long-standing emergence of post-colonial studies but also an increasing recognition of the products of institutional racism.⁴ Increasingly over this time, both museum academia and practice has been engaging with the importance of re-evaluating and exploring the ethics of their collections in the context of their links with colonialism and British imperialism.⁵ These efforts have been set in the context of significant anti-racist and decolonial movements, such as the initial Black Lives Matter protests (since 2013) and the Rhodes Must Fall campaign (since 2015).⁶ In the Summer of 2020 protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd by US Police officers, led to the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter campaign.⁷ It was in this context that calls to explore the legacies of Empire and colonialism, including its influence on institutional racism increased dramatically, and many institutions went into overdrive in response to the 2020 protests.⁸

⁴ E. H. Prinsloo, 'The role of the Humanities in decolonising the academy', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 15, 1 (2016), 164-168; N. Begum & R. Saini, 'Decolonising the Curriculum', *Political Studies Review*, 17, 2 (2019), 196-201; J. Crilly, 'Decolonising the library: a theoretical explanation', *Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal*, 4, 1 (2019), 6-15; S. Lidher et al., 'Our migration story: history, the national curriculum, and re-narrating the British nation', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2020), 1-17; B. T. Knusden et al. (eds.), *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices in and beyond Europe* Critical Heritages of Europe; (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

⁵ C. Wintle, 'Decolonising the Museum: The Case of the Imperial and Commonwealth Institutes', *Museum & Society*, 11, 2 (2013), 185-201.

⁶ Knusden et al. (eds.), *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage*.

⁷ J. Lowe-Mbirimi, *Forging Meaningful Change in a Climate of Fragility and Underrepresentation* (Contemporary Arts Society, 2022), 92.

⁸ A. Dalal-Clayton & I. Puri Purini, *Doing the work: Embedding anti-racism and decolonisation into museum practice* (Contemporary Arts Society, 2022), 11; S. Jorek & F. White, 'Doing the work: Exploring black history in Bristol Museums', *Museological Review* (2021), 124-134.

Understanding how to engage with museum collections and objects with complex layered narratives requires a deeper understanding of the collections, but also the organisations themselves. Military Museums in general have been widely researched and explored in the fields of history, heritage studies and museum studies.⁹ Focus has often been on the collections and the presentation and representation of history, heritage and memory. However their structural and developmental history, considering their politics, institutional evolution and development has featured infrequently.¹⁰ Furthermore, RCMs as a specific subset of military museums have not often been a specific focal point and their use has been implied as part of broader explorations of military collections.¹¹ The understanding of how they were established and developed over time has often only been used in these works for the purpose of citing context. These works have placed the period in which RCMs were set up as around the 1920s and 1930s. But this over-simplifies their establishment, as several key institutions pre-date this and many more RCMs were only set up after the Second World War. Furthermore, archival evidence, which has been declassified since earlier histories were produced, supplements new understanding. This thesis fills a gap by exploring the development and historical purpose of RCMs in order to better enable the current challenges in displaying the collections to be contextualised and addressed.

⁹ See G. Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial: Origins of the Imperial War Museum', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23, 1 (1988), 77-97; S. Brandt, 'The Memory Makers: Museums and Exhibitions of the First World War', *History and Memory*, 6, 1 (1994), 95-122; N. J. Saunders (ed.), *Matters of Conflict: Material culture, memory and the First World War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004); J. Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century* [eBook] (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006); J. Winter, 'Museums and the Representation of War', *Museum & Society*, 10, 3 (2012), 150-163. As just a few key examples, further explored in the historiography.

¹⁰ Winter, 'Museums and the Representation of War', provides a good example of accounting for the 'construction' of military museums conceptually.

¹¹ G. Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War: A Social History* [eBook] (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1998); S. Jones, 'Making Histories of Wars', in G. Kavanagh (ed.), *Making Histories in Museums* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996); L. Tythacott, 'Trophies of War: Representing 'Summer Palace' Loot in Military Museums in the UK', *Museum & Society*, 13, 4 (2015), 469-488; J. Scott, 'Objects and the representation of war in military museums', *Museum & Society*, 13, 4 (2015), 489-502; J. Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector* (Salisbury: Army Museums Ogilby Trust, 2016).

Understanding the complexity of their origins and development affects collecting and collections management in the present and this is important in the context of greater calls for the decolonisation of knowledge and material culture. The thesis is strongly informed by historical methods of archival research and material culture analysis. The positionality of the researcher is as a historian applying such methods to heritage. It is also as someone who has worked and volunteered in RCMs, and supported a co-production project with a regimental museum. The insight that a historical investigation of RCMs brings is a foundation to informing and supporting engagement with challenges around decolonial work and co-production in practice. The historical research contributes to active debates around complex object biographies and identifies the implications for decolonisation projects that use co-production approaches. Deeper understanding of the history of the network also highlights the range of different stakeholders, their interests and their influence.

As Chapter 4 will show this debate is advancing at a rapid pace and RCMs are at risk of being left behind where the broader museums sector is progressing. Through several case studies the thesis demonstrates this value by developing a nuanced understanding of objects with complex biographies. It seeks also to demonstrate how this understanding can inform work on collections practice in the present including through projects which may help expand the museums' audiences and outreach, but also some of the limitations that require addressing in such projects. Much conversation, as developed across Chapters 4 and 5, has focussed on the potential for co-production to provide a comprehensive framework for decolonial projects. Whilst co-production provides a wide range of tools for community engagement, this thesis demonstrates the extent of work required in unpicking layered narratives, and positions the work of the historian as central to this. The thesis will analyse a case study project undertaken at the Highlanders' Museum to understand both the potential opportunities afforded and the drawbacks of this approach.

This thesis therefore has several key aims which underpin the research. It will seek to explore the history and development of RCMs using archival research. It will investigate the legacy of collecting objects during the period of British Imperialism and use aspects of material culture analysis to explore object biographies. How can research based on available archives help to better understand the origins of the network including the history of colonial collecting? And importantly how has the historical development of these museums created or influenced the conditions in which they find themselves now? The thesis will also explore how colonial collections have been historically catalogued and interpreted in RCMs. How have objects been transformed physically in the process of their collection by individuals and by museums, and how does this affect their understanding within museum contexts? Reflecting on these questions the thesis will also seek to establish why decolonisation is one of the most pressing issues facing museums in general, and why it is important for RCMs to address their colonial legacies.

It will also assess the current priorities, values and challenges within the military museum sector including attitudes to imperial objects, against wider agendas and research. It will evaluate the opportunities and challenges presented by co-production methods to inform future practice in the network in exploring imperial legacies in collections. Importantly, consultations with those working within the sector in RCMs and at various levels have developed and informed the thesis. Therefore, the research has in part been conducted with stakeholders in the network and in turn, seeks to advise and inform museum practice, and provide novel tools for engaging in productive debates on this basis. This has enabled the research to gradually develop in a direction that is most supportive of the network. This approach recognises the structural limitations faced by the network, in the past and the present, and takes account of limited resources in the context of RCMs' current position and recent changes to funding. Co-production as a rationale and as a method by which colonial legacies in collections can be explored has been evaluated as part of this research. This

includes critical analysis of the researcher's own observations of actively working with RCMs to support co-production projects centred on exploring the connections between collections and Empire.

In conjunction with the National Army Museum, workshops have been delivered by the researcher and partners to take the findings and approaches directly to RCMs to inform current and future practice. Asking these questions and gathering perspectives on the experience of staff in RCMs has been facilitated by the professional and subject specialist network which strongly binds these museums together today. The network analysis and historical research undertaken in this thesis has identified that this is a long-standing network originating in the earliest years of the formal establishment of RCMs. This network meets regularly at subject-specific annual conferences and within formal regional networks. It upholds the overarching resilience of RCMs and creates a framework of support to approach challenging topics. It asks those working in the network what they perceive as core needs, and what the current extent of engagement with decolonisation and exploring colonial legacies looks like. The specific approach is set out in the methodology and the findings are situated in the context of later chapters, in particular Chapter 4.

Finally, looking forwards, this thesis also asks: how can the exploration of complex contemporary museum debate inform museum practice? What can a historian offer in terms of resources for debate and conversation between practitioners and academia? Can public engagement and co-production in the network support the exploration of colonial objects and collections in RCMs? And within this agenda, what is ideal, and what is possible: what are the opportunities, strengths, costs, and risks? Analytical chapters will seek to address these questions with a view to inform current practice in RCMs, building upon previous knowledge and experience from academia and museum practice. All of this is predicated on a solid historical understanding of the museums and the complexities and nuances of their collections. To this end, the research has in part been produced in various ways which consider the specific

challenges the network faces. The research considers how findings can be communicated to the network and why is this important for engaging critically with collections in practice. It looks forward to the future, asking how colonial collections are catalogued and interpreted in RCMs today, and how different and competing meanings related to objects can be reconciled in the museum space.

1.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARMY MUSEUM NETWORK

In order to understand the significance of the findings of the research in this thesis it is important to understand the current context in which RCMs operate. Of fundamental importance is the extension of the idea of ‘network’—used self-referentially today—towards something which this thesis argues has existed and operated since the formal founding of the first RCMs. The differentiation between network and sector helps to frame challenges which affect the museums sector generally, as opposed to those which typically affect RCMs more specifically. This section considers where RCMs sit within the museums sector in the UK and where they differentiate in more detail. It explores questions about the network’s parameters and current operating context including size, scope, funding situation, and importantly their value and significance to UK military history and heritage. The section which follows builds on this context to ask broader questions about their current challenges and needs.

The museums sector in the UK is comprised of a wide range of different institutions covering a spectrum of subjects and material. Figure 1-1 below sets out, for this thesis, where various types of military and army museums sit. A ‘military museum’ is defined in this thesis as covering the history and heritage of war and military matters in general. This includes for example the IWM, but also the major service museums (e.g. the National Museum of the Royal Navy) and other independent collections comprising objects from a range of units or services (e.g. the Combined Military Services Museum in Maldon, Essex). Within this, Army museums cover land forces,

for example the National Army Museum (NAM), which is both a service museum and a leading institution within Army museums generally. The NAM, as a ‘National’ museum, is funded directly by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). It holds collections with regimental and corps origins, the history of which within the network is developed in Chapters 1 and 2. RCMs meanwhile cover the history and heritage of specific units within the British Army. Whilst generic military or army museums include objects associated with particular regiments or corps, the key difference is focus. For regimental museums it is centred on a specific regiment (and its *antecedents*), and likewise for corps museums. Some regimental and corps collections may also be housed in other museum institutions. The thesis title uses ‘army museums,’ as a catch all including the NAM, and much of the body refers to ‘RCMs’ which include such collections which have become alienated and moved into other premises over time.

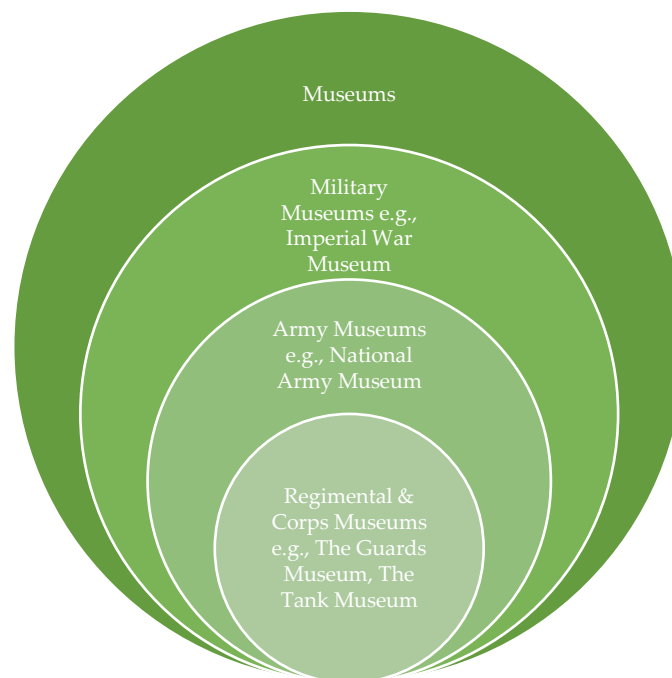


Figure 1-1: Diagram showing the relationship between military, Army, and RCMs within the museums sector

Many regiments and corps had long-standing collections of silverware, armour, weapons and trophies which predated early formalised museums.¹² In the main, the

¹² Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 145.

first major group of RCMs were established in the 1920s and 1930s, with more appearing after the Second World War and beyond. Few of the museums established at that time now exist in their original form or configuration as they moved premises, co-located with other regiments or moved into other local and county museums. RCMs have been seen as a distinct sub-sector or sub-set of museums within the broader sector.¹³ This current research however uses the term ‘network’ for several reasons. Primarily it is a self-applied term currently in use by those referring to RCMs in their work with this group, such as the NAM and the Army Museums Ogilby Trust (AMOT). The role and position of these two institutions will be considered in detail in this thesis. Using the term ‘network’, also helps to distinguish between the RCMs (and issues specific to them) and the wider museums ‘sector’ within the narrative and analysis. Finally, this ‘network’, is long standing, which is a key finding of Chapters 1 and 2 within this thesis, and thus using the term ‘network’ recognises this. There are further typologies within the umbrella of RCMs that are useful to acknowledge. Museums for the Army’s Regular units are the focus of this thesis, but there are also museums and collections for militia, yeomanry and reserve units. In spite of these typologies, nearly all have at some point been affected by closure, amalgamation, moving premises, rebranding, and myriad other changes and alterations.

The structure of the network of RCMs has historically been derived from the structure of the regiments and corps of the British Army. The number of these units has fluctuated since the establishment of the Restoration Army under King Charles II in the 17th century.¹⁴ Importantly though, as French notes, whilst some regiments have

¹³ For example see Museums Association, *FAQs: what different types of museum are there* Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/about/faqs/#what-different-types-of-museum-are-there> [Accessed 18/11/2023].

¹⁴ For general histories of the British Army and its composition see D. G. Chandler & I. Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); D. French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People c.1870-2000* [eBook] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); I. S. Hallows, *Regiments and Corps of the British Army*. (London: New Orchard Editions, 1994); P. Young & J. P. Lawford (eds.), *History of the British Army* (London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1972).

disappeared over time, it is the regimental system itself that has endured.¹⁵ In UK military history the definition of the 'regiment' and the 'corps' has also changed over time. Before reforms to the regimental system in the late nineteenth century the 'regiment' described a fixed unit of soldiers who would be trained and deployed together. After this point, infantry regiments were expanded to have multiple *battalions*, and though still trained together, the different battalions would not frequently fight together. The regiment is a generally 'permanent' administrative fixture, unlike other units in the structure of the Army. This permanence has played an important role in the basis for establishing museums, and when this permanence has been altered, other challenges have cascaded. The number, names and composition of regiments have changed throughout the history of the Army. Changes to this structure have been largely down to shifting domestic and international security and politics, with 'amalgamations' taking place as the army has reduced in size over time. The largest regiment in the British Army today is The Rifles regiment, with 7 battalions, many of which used to be part of their own regiments. Although cavalry regiments have never had multiple battalions they have still been amalgamated variously over time, as have corps. The fundamentals behind the idea of the regimental system form a foundational component to the rationale of the existence of the museums as they arguably contribute greatly to its maintenance. Building on these definitions, a worked example tracing the lineage of a single battalion can show the relations over time between it and other units, and their museums.

¹⁵ French, *Military Identities*, 341.

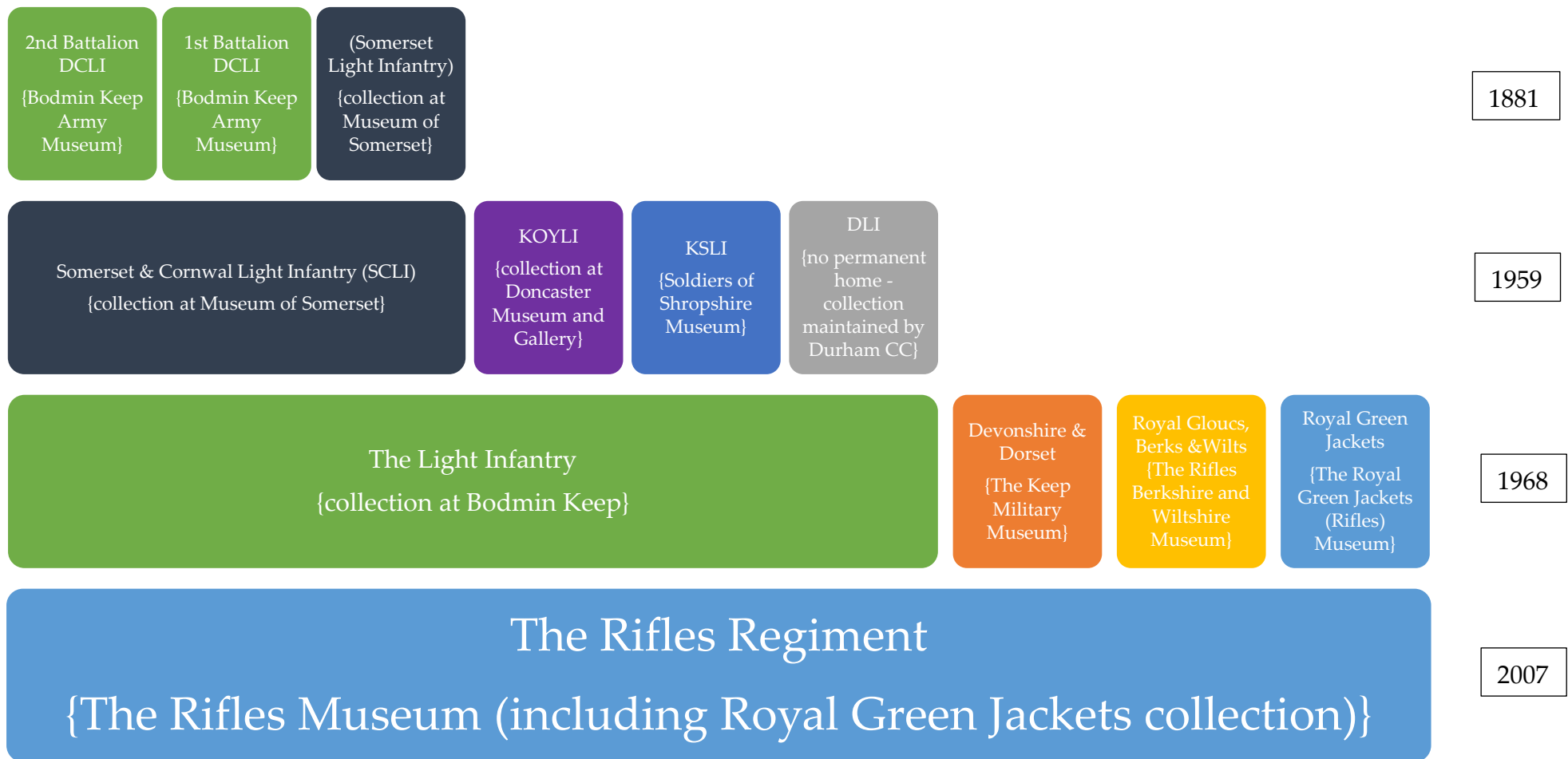


Figure 1-2: The example uses the 46th (South Devonshire) Regiment of Foot which became the 2nd Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry in 1881 (amalgamated with the 32nd (Cornwall) Regiment of Foot). The colours in this diagram represent individual museums—8 in total—covering the heritage and lineage of the modern, current Rifles Regiment.

Figure 1-2 above is not an exhaustive breakdown of the composition and lineage of the Rifles Regiment, but focusses on the degrees of separation between it and just one of its foundational components—the 46th Regiment of Foot—across the span of just under 150 years. The Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry (DCLI) Museum, now known as Bodmin Keep, houses the collection of the 46th regiment and its amalgamation partner the 32nd regiment together as the DCLI. Through waves of amalgamation, several other museums factor into its heritage by association. These include sister collections for regiments who would eventually join it, such as the SCLI and the Light Infantry regiments. The Light Infantry had its own collection at Winchester for a time before it was co-located with the DCLI collection at Bodmin Keep in the 2000s. Furthermore, since 2015 a museum for the Rifles Regiment has also been established at Winchester encompassing the collection of the Royal Green Jackets.

Museums that cover the topic of ‘war and conflict’ form a substantial element within the broader UK museums sector, more than ‘arts,’ and ‘transport,’ according to data up to 2017.¹⁶ RCMs form a large component of this.¹⁷ The number of RCMs now sits somewhere in the region of 130, including museums and collections representing reserve and yeomanry units.¹⁸ Museum Accreditation is the nationally agreed standard for museum best practice, which was developed from an earlier Museum Registration scheme. It is administered by Arts Council England (ACE) for the UK as a whole, and devolved museum authorities support data collection and administration. Accreditation data from March 2020 shows there were 1,742 museums with full or provisional accreditation.¹⁹ Cross-referencing the current network analysis produced through this research shows there were approximately 80

¹⁶ F. Candlin et al., *Mapping Museums 1960-2020: A report on the data* (London: Birkbeck University of London, 2020), 19.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 21

¹⁸ Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*, 3.

¹⁹ Provisional accreditation typically means that further data needs to be produced for full accreditation to be granted. See <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme/accreditation-how-apply#t-in-page-nav-6>

RCMs which had full or provisional accreditation, representing around 4.6% of the total data. Of the approximately 130 RCMs more than 60% had full or provisional accreditation. It is therefore a group of museums that works towards the nationally agreed best practice standards of the UK museums sector, and aligns to these values.

Several RCMs and collections are also directly funded by ACE. One of ACE's significant funding streams is its 'National Portfolio' in which National Portfolio Organisations or NPOs receive funding from ACE over multi-year periods.²⁰ The Tank Museum, representing the collections of the Tank Regiment and Royal Armoured Corps, is itself an NPO. Regimental collections held within Derby Museums, Hull City Council, Leicester City Council, and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums sit under the umbrella of those organisations' NPO funding.²¹ Others are involved through NPO consortia (for example Bodmin Keep has been a partner in the Cornwall Museums Partnership NPO). NPOs form the core of ACE's investment strategy for England, recognising their importance in supporting ACE's broader agenda. They also have collections of local, regional and sometimes national and international significance. Several RCMs and collections are identified as 'Designated' collections in another scheme now operated by ACE. The Designation Scheme began in 1997 under the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council and sought to identify collections of national and international significance.²² The entire collection of the Royal Engineers Museum is an ACE Designated Outstanding Collection, as is the Tank Museum, and the Royal Artillery Collection (though it has no physical museum at present).²³ A similar scheme is operated in Scotland by Museums Galleries

²⁰ Arts Council England, *Let's Create: Strategy 2020-2030* (Manchester: Arts Council England, 2020), 67.

²¹ Arts Council England, *The data: 2018-22*, 2021. Available online: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/npo/data-2018-22> [Accessed 15/11/23].

²² Arts Council England, *Designation Scheme* Available online: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/supporting-collections-and-cultural-property/designation-scheme> [Accessed 05/09/2023].

²³ Arts Council England, *Designated Collections - Collections List* Available online: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/designated-collections> [Accessed 05/09/2023].

Scotland (MGS), called the 'Recognition Scheme'.²⁴ In the scheme, within the category of Nationwide Dispersed Collections the Scottish Regimental Museums' Collection cared for by the Association of Scottish Military Museums (ASMM) has Recognised status.²⁵ The dispersed collection covered within the ASMM comprises all 10 Scottish regimental museums (though not all the museums are based in Scotland).²⁶ Its significance to Scottish social and military history is emphasised by MGS, but it was also particularly 'underpinned,' by the centenary of the First World War.²⁷

The Army has been, and today continues to be, the largest contingent within the British Armed Forces, and thus has been the most pervasive in the fabric of British heritage.²⁸ This would arguably be true even if it were not for the First and Second World Wars which each saw the land forces inflate to over four million in each instance. The likelihood of connection to soldiers who served in those conflicts amongst Britons is high, and even higher when accounting for descendants of peoples of the British Empire with links to imperial forces. Thus in both their number and their perceived significance by museum sector bodies they are a vital source in cataloguing and understanding the military and social history of the UK.

2 CURRENT NETWORK POSITION

Building on this context, this thesis also seeks to address what the current position of the RCMs network is in terms of the challenges they face today and consider the outlook for the next decade based on these challenges. The research in this thesis has

²⁴ Museums Galleries Scotland, *The Recognised Collections of National Significance*, 2023. Available online: <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/recognition/recognised-collections/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ These are: the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum, The Black Watch Castle and Museum, The Cameronians Regimental Collection at Low Parks Museum, the Gordon Highlanders Museum, the Highlanders' Museum, the Museum of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Museum, the Royal Scots Regimental Museum, the Royal Highland Fusiliers Museum, and the Kings Own Scottish Borderers Regimental Museum. The KOSB museum is located in Berwick-upon-Tweed.

²⁷ Museums Galleries Scotland, *The Recognised Collections of National Significance*.

²⁸ E. Kirk-Wade & Z. Mansfield, 'UK defence personnel statistics' (2023).

been developed within an incredibly tumultuous period for the network. RCMs, like many museums, felt long-lasting effects incurred by the 2007-08 economic crisis.²⁹ The Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020, followed by the war in Ukraine, followed by an ongoing cost of living crisis which has impacted both staff and audiences alike. The Museums Association writing at the end of 2019 summarised the 2010s as ‘a decade of turbulence’.³⁰ Unlike other museums, the network has also had to contend with shifts in the role and composition of the UK Armed Forces and the impact that this has had on the units it represents. Analysis of recent context will show how the state of the sector has changed over the past 15 years in particular and how this shifting environment has affected the standing of the network. Beyond a functional and quantitative picture of the network there are also a wide range of policies and strategies from over-arching agenda-setters which variously inform, guide, and constrain RCMs. They have different perspectives, both explicitly and implicitly, on what RCMs’ priorities are and should be. This thesis was initially concerned with understanding and scoping where the museums were positionally at the commencement of the research. What challenges were they faced with and continue to be faced with throughout the course of the research? The approach is set out next and in the Methodology in Section 4.

2.1 CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

A major 2016 review of the network commissioned by AMOT explored a wide range of challenges faced by the network and evaluated some of their key needs. The MOD has funded RCMs variously over time but with a reducing trend since the 1960/70s; by 2008 it funded around 69 out of a total of approximately 130.³¹ In response to the

²⁹ G. K. Adams, *Now that’s what you call a decade of turbulence*, 2019. Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/analysis/2019/12/01122019-review-of-the-decade/> [Accessed 02/12/22].

³⁰ *Ibid*

³¹ Executive Committee of the Army Board, *ECAB Policy for National, Regimental and Corps Museums* (London: Ministry of Defence, 2008), B 1-2.

financial crash around that time further reduction of this funding level was required in line with broader cuts to the MOD budget.³² The review was conducted in the context of these changes and made recommendations to help inform the overall strategy of the network.³³ It drew attention to a range of challenges around collections, location of museums, and the diversity of staff and trustees. For example, the review found that although the museums were swept in with broader funding cuts, actual funding for RCMs accounted for less than 0.01% of the total defence budget.³⁴ It is interesting to consider this finding in the context of the priorities of the MOD and Army set out next in Section 2.2.

Establishing the current position of the network is an important element in identifying what challenges RCMs face. In 2018 as part of an MA dissertation, the researcher undertook a data-led mapping exercise which explored this.³⁵ This present research updated the position as of 2020 and encompasses an expanded remit relevant to the wider research. This exercise was fundamentally interested in comparing the situation then against a baseline provided by a key policy document produced by the Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB).³⁶ It included a list of open RCMs which were funded or not funded by MOD. The exercise therefore established which RCMs were open or closed, and in what capacity (such as open by appointment only) ten years later. The research was confined to looking at museums funded in 2008 to understand how the funding position shifted over time. The full data output is included in Appendix 2, with key data tables set out below.

³² Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*, 4.

³³ *Ibid*, 6-13

³⁴ *Ibid*, 39

³⁵ C. Berriman, *Regimental Museums: Exploring the current position and how to react to current challenges*. MA Cultural Heritage Management dissertation (University of York, 2018).

³⁶ The Executive Committee of the Army Board, "Policy for National, Regimental and Corps Museums," 2008.

Opening/closure	2018	2020
Open	60	56
Open (by appointment)	2	2
Closed	5	10
Not Known	2	1
Grand Total	69	69

Table 2-1: Comparing the number of RCMs open or closed in 2018 and 2020 as compared with the 2008 baseline.

Table 2-1 sets out the comparative open and closure rates of RCMs funded in 2008 and shows that that several museums’ situations had notably changed since that time. The assumption was made that all museums in the ECAB lists were open in some capacity. As such five museums had closed in the 10 years after the ECAB document, with a further five closing between 2018 and 2020. It is worth noting that some of these closures may have been for redevelopment or relocation, though this is arguably a finding in itself. For example, as the analytical notes in Appendix 2 show, the Royal Logistics Corps Museum was closed in the 2020 data, but re-opened following a relocation project.³⁷ The snapshot of museums was last recorded in March 2020, and thus represents a picture of the sector before the full effects of COVID-19 were felt.

	Funded in 2008	Funded in 2022	Funded in 2030
Yes	69	51	36
No	0	18	33
Grand Total	0	69	69

Table 2-2: Comparing the number of museums project to be funded by MOD in 2022 and 2030 as compared with the 2008 baseline

Information from the 2016 AMOT review was used to supplement the understanding of the data captured in the mapping exercise.³⁸ The assessment of the funding outlook showed the extent of current and future changes for the network. Table 2-2 includes the projected position for 2022, as compared with the 2008 baseline of 69 funded museums. Seventeen museums were set to lose their funding from the MOD by that

³⁷ Researcher’s own understanding – I had the pleasure of being invited to visit the new museum in Summer 2023.

³⁸ Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*, 88-90. Appendix D

point, though for some this had happened earlier.³⁹ The changes under the policy will bring the final total of remaining MOD funded museums to 36 by 2030, reflecting the number of currently active regiments and corps in the British Army.⁴⁰ The Highlanders' Museum at Fort George—the focal case in Chapter 5—is one of these museums. The Army is also proposing to vacate the Fort George site potentially leaving a vacuum in army heritage for the local area.⁴¹

The Covid-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, as with all museums, presented significant challenges for RCMs already facing expected funding cuts. However the network of support developed over the past century continued to assist these museums through lockdowns and other measures imposed. On 23rd March 2020 the UK Government announced a national lockdown in response to the crisis. This escalated existing measures which had gradually been put in place throughout February and March. These measures increasingly limited the volume of social interactions taking place between people in public spaces in an effort to reduce the infection rate of the virus. The response required changes in working practices, changes in methods for engaging audiences, and had a significant impact on certain strata of workforces who were furloughed. For the NAM, they reported in their annual accounts the limitation on their ability to grow new audiences and attract non-public (i.e. not from Government Grant-in-aid) income and fundraising.⁴² This was a critical time for NAM, being in the first few years of opening after a significant renovation project.⁴³ There have been numerous ways in which museums have been affected positively and negatively by

³⁹ G. K. Adams, 'Regimental Museums Prepare for Ministry of Defence Cuts', *Museums Journal*, (2017). Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/11012016-regimental-museums-prepare-for-mod-cuts> [Accessed 15/03/2022].

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ A. Picken, 'Anger as British Army set to move out of Fort George - The Sunday Post', 2016-11-06 2016 [Online]. Available online: <https://www.sundaypost.com/news/scottish-news/anger-british-army-set-move-fort-george/>, [Accessed 20/11/2023].

⁴² National Army Museum, *National Army Museum Consolidated Financial Statements 2021* (London, 2022), 4.

⁴³ National Army Museum, *National Army Museum Consolidated Financial Statements 2019* (London, 2020), 18.

the pandemic, as discussed by museum researchers.⁴⁴ But the network also provided key support for RCMs, as in the use of the AMOT Annual Review to disseminate best practice and useful case studies for approaching challenges.⁴⁵ Future research could more fully explore the impact of the Covid pandemic upon RCMs specifically to understand how their position has changed through this crisis and how they responded.

There have been significant moves within the museums sector to work to decolonise collections and practices. The historiography of decolonial literature is set within the socio-political context of recent events, such as the renewed Black Lives Matter protests in the Summer of 2020. Chapter 4, in looking at these debates will consider the general position of museums in detail. However, for RCMs activity has been more restrained. Some regimental and corps museums have undertaken projects to explore the legacies of their colonial collections. As above, the cases will be considered in more detail in several later chapters, as a key facet of this thesis' overarching rationale and research question.

2.2 COMPETING AND INTERSECTING PRIORITIES

Several bodies integrated with and linked to the network of RCMs have their own priorities and agendas which influence its overall position and trajectory. This wide range of agenda-setters have a tendency to pull RCMs in different directions, some of which can be in conflict with one another. The 2016 AMOT review encapsulates the issue well:

[...] as museology and the science of creating museum spaces that appeal to all audiences has developed, and the importance of museums

⁴⁴ A. Hondsmark, 'Let's play in lockdown: Museums, interpretation, and videogames in convergence during the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Museological Review*, 25 (2021), 53-65; E. King et al., 'Digital Responses of UK Museum Exhibitions to the COVID-19 Crisis, March - June 2020', *Curator (N Y)*, 64, 3 (2021), 487-504.

⁴⁵ Army Museums Ogilby Trust, *Annual Review 2019-20* (Salisbury, 2020).

as relevant, social experiences has taken precedence, the allegiance to the MOD and these inward facing directives has become less viable making some army museums appear outdated. The need to align with cultural policy and direction is becoming more appropriate, and perhaps, vital to the future survival of army museums in the UK.⁴⁶

The military authorities form one loose grouping, these primarily being the Army and the MOD. The bodies which operate and govern RCMs can be closely integrated within these overarching authorities through the Regimental Associations. There are other bodies that deal with certain aspects of the sector, such as AMOT, which was established in the 1960s and now operates in part as a Subject Specialist Network (SSN).⁴⁷ It is also responsible for distributing the grant-in-aid received from the MOD. The NAM, also founded in the 1960s, has gradually increased its direct support for RCMs in recent decades, for example providing a regular training programme for curators which takes account of RCM specific issues.⁴⁸ In this sense it both guides and reflects shifting priorities and needs within the network. But RCMs do not exist in isolation from the sector as they participate in many of its programmes and initiatives, and regularly apply for funding from major bodies. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), ACE, and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) are the major governmental and non-governmental “departments”.⁴⁹ There are also other advocacy and sector bodies including the Museums Association (MA), which has operated for over a century, and the Association of Independent Museums (AIM). For the latter, the NAM undertook in 2022 to fund membership for the whole RCMs

⁴⁶ Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*, 19.

⁴⁷ Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs) are part of a scheme funded by Arts Council England.

⁴⁸ National Army Museum, *Museums training programme* Available online: <https://www.nam.ac.uk/museums-training-programme> [Accessed 05/09/2023].

⁴⁹ The NLHF, previously known as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) deals more with built heritage, but has funded museum redevelopments across the UK, including those of RCMs.

network.⁵⁰ All of these bodies have their own agendas, some of which align with museum studies and other academic approaches, but some also reflect government policy which may at times contradict this. Over its history the network has gradually moved closer to the broader UK museums sector, and Chapters 1 and 2 will chart some of these changes. The remainder of this section explores the above bodies and some of their agendas and priorities.

The MOD does not currently have a public policy specifically for RCMs. Its most recent official document, the 2017 Review of the Service Museums (National Museum of the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force Museum, and NAM), only briefly mentions RCMs as supporting its broader objectives.⁵¹ The objectives of the MOD are expectedly mostly related to defence matters and as such the most relevant element of the Single Departmental Plan is section 1.7, which seeks to ‘generate, sustain, and enable the armed forces.’⁵² The 2017 Review calls the service and RCMs, ‘the Army’s network of Regimental museums,’ indicating the extent to which the MOD identifies the museums as part of its oversight, though it acknowledges the independence of both.⁵³ All three service museums, and virtually all RCMs are functionally governed by independent charitable trusts. The 2017 Review interestingly highlights ‘an implicit recruitment objective,’ although it is expressed as something ‘generally understood,’ as an indirect outcome for some visitors, rather than a priority.⁵⁴ In spite of identified benefits of the museums the MOD announced in 2011 that it would be reducing the number of staff it supports directly, whilst considering completely cutting the funding

⁵⁰ Association of Independent Museums, *New partnership with National Army Museum announced*, 2022. Available online: <https://aim-museums.co.uk/new-partnership-national-army-museum-announced/> [Accessed 20/11/2023].

⁵¹ Ministry of Defence, *Review of the Service Museums of the Royal Navy, the National Army Museum and the Royal Air Force Museum* (2017), 2.

⁵² Ministry of Defence, *Ministry of Defence Single Departmental Plan - 2019* (Online, 2019). Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-single-departmental-plan/ministry-of-defence-single-departmental-plan-2019> [Accessed].

⁵³ Ministry of Defence, *Review of the Service Museums*, 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 31

for around half of the 69 RCMs it supported at that time; a policy which it executed in 2016.⁵⁵

The funding cuts to the MOD's museum provision was targeted at those museums representing regiments and corps which are not active in the British Army. In other words regiments whose identities had been subsumed under other current regiments, or amalgamated to form new ones. Referring back to the example in Figure 1-2 earlier, this would mean that only the museum representing the current Rifles regiment would continue to receive funding into the future. Under pressure to reduce budgets this change reflects the contemporary nature and structure of the Army and is therefore arguably a reasonable approach to take. But the MOD is also by definition refining its support of museums representing regiments and corps which visitors 'who are inspired and informed by their visit,' can join.⁵⁶ It ensures value for money but also arguably undermines a broader message of preserving the heritage of the Army.

The Army itself, as with the MOD, has naturally sought a possessive approach to the network of RCMs in the UK. However, the most recent policy document from the Army which deals explicitly with RCMs is the 2008 document used in the earlier analysis.⁵⁷ The objectives cited in the document set out its intentions and expectations for RCMs. It views their key purposes as presenting the Army in a favourable image, creating awareness, underpinning its values and standards, and supporting recruitment.⁵⁸ Presenting a favourable image of the Army to some extent is reminiscent of the 'propaganda role' assigned for proposed local war museums after

⁵⁵ Adams, 'Regimental Museums Prepare for Ministry of Defence Cuts'; P. Steel, 'Army Museums Facing a Shake-up in Financing', *Museums Journal*, (2011). Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/01122011-army-museums-face-funding-shake-up> [Accessed 15.03.22].

⁵⁶ Ministry of Defence, *Review of the Service Museums*, 31.

⁵⁷ In 2018 I filed a Freedom of Information request the MOD to confirm that this was the case, included in Appendix 3. Further work and discussions with network connections confirm that this remains the case.

⁵⁸ Executive Committee of the Army Board, *ECAB Policy*.

the First World War, discussed by Kavanagh.⁵⁹ Although this policy is clearly long-standing, it is important to note that it has not received any material update. Looking more broadly at Army policy however, provides an interesting point to note in regard to its image projection.

In some ways the Army has arguably progressed greatly in its shifts in certain institutional attitudes. Ware catalogued in the 2010s the experiences of descendants of Britain's colonial past serving in the UK Armed Forces. One interviewee in particular highlighted how the racism and discrimination they had encountered during their service had made life difficult.⁶⁰ The Army has gone to great lengths to ensure that it is an 'inclusive employer' and provides support networks for 'servicewomen', 'BAME', 'LGBT+' and 'parents' in support of this objective.⁶¹ Baker conveys scepticism as to the effectiveness of such approaches highlighting persistent concerns over institutional racism post-War on Terror, citing Ware in reinforcement.⁶² Baker also draws on a range of assessments of changes in policy towards the service of LGBTQ+ individuals, and concludes that whilst such changes may '[offer] some queers a home in the military, that is not the same as a queer military home.'⁶³ These may simply be cynical approaches to accessing an expanded recruitment pool. Whether RCMs decide to move in the same direction as the Army in regards to diversification is a separate question.

The NAM, as the *de facto* network leader for RCMs, strays somewhat from the position on recruitment held by the MOD and Army, as seen in its annual reporting for

⁵⁹ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*.

⁶⁰ V. Ware, *Military Migrants: Fighting for YOUR Country*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 158-159.

⁶¹ UK Army, *Diversity and Inclusion* Available online: <https://www.army.mod.uk/people/work-well/diversity-and-inclusion/> [Accessed 19/11/2023].

⁶² C. Baker, "Can I Be Gay in the Army?": British Army recruitment advertising to LGBTQ youth in 2017-18 and belonging in the queer military home', *Critical Military Studies*, 9, 3 (2022), 442-461: 444.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 444 & 457

example.⁶⁴ It is the only national museum in the UK focussing on the British Army and yet recruitment as an objective is entirely absent, and direct support for the MOD's objectives features only briefly.⁶⁵ Instead the NAM is focussed on being a leading authority on the 'history of Our Army,' safeguarding collections, making them widely accessible, and enabling and supporting a network of UK military museums and heritage organisations.⁶⁶ The position of the NAM as a leader in the network is emphasised in its reporting, under which Objective 4 is to 'enable and support networks of Military Museums and Heritage Organisations, in the UK.'⁶⁷ This role was indicated as involving acting 'as expert advocates for RCMs,' in applying for grants.⁶⁸ In the 2018-19 reporting year it indicated that it had already begun supporting the establishment of sub-networks in regional (e.g. London, Wales and West) or subject-specific (e.g. Corps) forms.⁶⁹ In the NAM's 2020-21 reporting the importance of these networks in supporting resilience in the context of Covid was highlighted.⁷⁰ As mentioned, AMOT also operates as an SSN under a scheme managed by ACE, and so in some sense provides a bridge between the network and the broader museums sector in this capacity, as well as providing vital funding support. This support has only grown stronger in recent years, with a recent memorandum of understanding formed by the two institutions.⁷¹ This was based on a recommendation of the 2016 AMOT review to make best use of resources and combine activities where it is effective to do so in meeting shared objectives.⁷²

⁶⁴ National Army Museum, *NAM Consolidated Accounts 2019*; National Army Museum, *NAM Consolidated Accounts 2021*.

⁶⁵ National Army Museum, *NAM Consolidated Accounts 2019*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 3

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 15

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 16

⁶⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁰ National Army Museum, *NAM Consolidated Accounts 2021*, 17.

⁷¹ Army Museums Ogilby Trust, *Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year end 31 March 2019* (Winchester, 2019).

⁷² Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*.

ACE is the body (Executive Non-Departmental Public Body or ENDPB) now directly responsible for museums in England. The role of ACE in relation to museums generally is a recent development however, and introduced both problems and opportunities. There are devolved versions of ACE in the form of: Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS); Museums, Archives, Libraries Division (MALD, Wales); and the Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC). ACE reached the end of its last strategy in 2020 which echoed the departmental objectives of DCMS around inclusion and excellence.⁷³ The new strategy does not depart from this, but updates it to reflect the changing position over the last 10 years (though the funding picture has not markedly improved, as the Mendoza Review showed).⁷⁴

The changing nature of museum studies in the 1980s and 1990s was also tied in with changes in operations in the sector at the time. The Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC, previously the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries) was renamed and received increased responsibilities in 1981.⁷⁵ The MGC in turn became the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA Council) in 1999.⁷⁶ The idea of an 'accreditation,' scheme had been touted by the Museums Association in 1971.⁷⁷ It was not until 1988 that the MGC introduced a Registration scheme (reverted and retitled as the Accreditation scheme in 2004) which set accepted and specific standards for museums to achieve.⁷⁸ However, after the 2007-08 financial crash the UK Government sought to reduce the number and cost of its public bodies—its NDPBs (Non-Departmental Public Bodies) and QuANGOs (Quasi-Autonomous Non-

⁷³ Arts Council England, *Great Arts and Culture for Everyone* (Manchester: Arts Council England, 2013).

⁷⁴ Arts Council England, *Let's Create: Strategy 2020-2030*; N. Mendoza, *The Mendoza Review: An independent review of museums in England* (London: DCMS, 2017).

⁷⁵ P. Longman, 'The Museums & Galleries Commission', in J. M. A. Thompson (ed.), *Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice* (Oxford, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 1992) [eBook]: 62.

⁷⁶ F. Candlin et al., 'The missing museums: accreditation, surveys, and an alternative account of the UK museum sector', *Cultural Trends*, 29, 1 (2020), 50-67: 54.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 52

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 52-53

Government Organisation)—including the MLA Council.⁷⁹ The MLA Council was abolished and its functions transferred to other bodies.⁸⁰ The museum and library responsibilities were subsumed by ACE, or otherwise devolved to bodies for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and archives responsibilities transferred to The National Archives. The nature of these changes in addition to the restructuring of the Army by the MOD means that RCMs find themselves in a strategic context which is ever changing. Constant changes around the overall governance of the sector, and a constantly shifting regimental structure creates an environment of uncertainty in which they must operate.

DCMS, of which ACE is indirectly a component, sets government policy that covers museums more widely. One of the key policy documents in recent years was the Culture White Paper produced in 2016. It set out goals around inclusiveness as one of its primary focuses.⁸¹ It is a clear identification that wide participation and accessibility as a target for culture (and museums included) is the ideal, but also that it has not yet been achieved. As a response, the Mendoza Review effectively set out a roadmap for museums to achieve the objectives of the White Paper.⁸² It is also worth noting that this was a key influence on the development of the AHRC funded Mapping Museums research project which commenced in 2016.⁸³ The project questioned the extent to which such policy was based on an incomplete picture of the UK museums sector.⁸⁴ Using only the list of accredited museums misses out, as determined by the project, potentially half of extant museums in the UK.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ F. Maude & Cabinet Office, *Written Ministerial Statement: Public Bodies Review Programme* (2011); Cabinet Office, *Public Bodies Reform - Proposals for Change* (2011).

⁸⁰ Cabinet Office, *Public Bodies Reform - Proposals for Change*.

⁸¹ Department for Culture Media and Sport, *The Culture White Paper* (London: DCMS, 2016).

⁸² Mendoza, *The Mendoza Review*.

⁸³ Candlin et al., 'The missing museums'; Candlin et al., *Mapping Museums 1960-2020*.

⁸⁴ Candlin et al., 'The missing museums'.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 51

The Museums Association (MA) has historically been the leading sector body for museums in the UK.⁸⁶ Museums do not exist in a vacuum and the MA has historically sought to fit in within broader governmental agendas. For example, following the New Labour government's election in 1997, the MA's policies and strategies sought to emphasise the importance of museums as a 'public service' for communities, their educational role and 'as being central to the national political agenda'.⁸⁷ It is arguably a cynical inducement to ensure that museums are indispensable as a national resource and fit in with government agendas and policies to demonstrate value for money and justify ongoing support and investment. The MA's current overarching advocacy agenda—'Museums Change Lives'—emphasises people, audiences, and communities.⁸⁸ It opens with a call for museums to help understand, debate and challenge broad societal issues including poverty, inequality, intolerance and discrimination. It has three core elements to it: 'Enhancing Health and Wellbeing', 'Creating Better Places to Live and Work', and 'Inspiring Engagement, Debate and Reflection'.⁸⁹ The MA has also recently been party to the production of a wide range of articles and guidance regarding current debates around colonial legacies in collections, and unpicking these is a key element in Chapter 4.

3 HISTORIOGRAPHY

This historiography explores existing conceptual frameworks and approaches which have been directly utilised in the exploration of military museums and heritage. It comprises a review of literature which establishes a framework through which the objectives of the research chapters in this thesis may be better understood. Exploring how military museums have been broadly researched and importantly how RCMs have been explored defines the research gap to be filled by Chapters 1 and 2

⁸⁶ G. Lewis, 'Museums in Britain: a historical survey', in J. M. A. Thompson (ed.), *Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1992) [eBook]: 30.

⁸⁷ Candlin et al., 'The missing museums', 53.

⁸⁸ Museums Association, *Museums Change Lives* (London: Museums Association).

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 3

particularly. Material culture approaches inform aspects of the research undertaken in Chapter 3 to highlight the importance of nuanced understanding of complex object biographies. Theories of decolonisation form the groundwork upon which the exploration of current debates in Chapter 4 is set out, in support of identifying pathways forward for RCMs. Co-production is explored as a potential approach, with the fundamentals set out in this historiography to help inform the findings of the case study in Chapter 5. The current sector position set out the scope of military museums as one of the most numerous museums by type in the UK. But as Tythacott also highlights, they have been relatively unexplored in museum academic literature.⁹⁰ This thesis builds upon works which have considered RCMs in particular and expands upon the existing understanding.

3.1 MILITARY MUSEUMS, HISTORY, HERITAGE, MEMORY AND IDENTITY

The intersections between history, heritage and museums are well explored in academic literature. This first section explores works which have used these frameworks to interpret and understand facets of military museums; RCMs implicitly fall within this scope. The significance of material culture, memory and commemoration add further depth to understanding when exploring military museums. However, the intrinsic interlinking between RCMs and the regiments and corps of the British Army they represent can in many ways set them apart from other military collections. This historiography therefore opens with key questions about existing understanding. How have RCMs been considered and understood in academic literature? How and when were they understood to have been established, and for what purposes? The historiography considers some of the concepts drawn upon through other academic works to explore and assess them in greater detail.

The fundamental basis for the initial investigation contained within this thesis stemmed originally from an underlying assumption. The assumption was pervasive

⁹⁰ Tythacott, 'Trophies of War', 470.

in the relatively few pieces of literature which dealt directly with the topic of RCMs. A major group of RCMs was established formally in the 1920s and 1930s, and the pervasiveness of this generalisation is demonstrated in recent analysis. Tythacott, citing Jones, expressed that the museums ‘were set up from the 1920s onwards’.⁹¹ Elsewhere, the review of Army Museums commissioned by AMOT in 2016 indicated an origin point ‘largely... from the 1930s onwards’, but also indicated that there was no codified history of the network.⁹² Thwaites developed a somewhat comprehensive history of the museums in the 1990s which itself demonstrates the oversimplification of the above assessments. Thwaites’ intended aim was to ‘better understand the reasons for the way in which [the museums] have grown and developed’ for the benefit of museum professionals and others.⁹³ This thesis has similar aims in seeking to support current museum practice, but nearly 30 years later with the benefit of expanded archival evidence. As Thwaites himself highlighted:

[...] evidence for the reasons behind the establishment of military museums is not readily available, mainly because of the paucity of published or unpublished histories of these museums.⁹⁴

Their creation and development has also been the focus in other contemporary and later works, addressing to some extent the ‘paucity’ emphasised by Thwaites. Kavanagh for example wrote extensively on the origins of the Imperial War Museum—and its role in memorialising and commemorating the First World War—and is one of few museum researchers who has engaged significantly with the importance of RCMs and their origins.⁹⁵ Kavanagh emphasised how the establishment of this national war museum project ‘stimulated’ their own

⁹¹ *Ibid*

⁹² Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*, 16.

⁹³ P. Thwaites, 'Presenting Arms: Museum Representation of British Military History, 1660-1900' (1996): 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 38

⁹⁵ Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial'; Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*.

appearance.⁹⁶ But how useful is this linear approach to their history, seeing them as a product of another institution? Where do RCMs sit within broader historical narratives of museum development?

Linear histories of museums have charted and linked the development of the 'museum' as a near continuous evolutionary sequence from the ancient world to the post-modern.⁹⁷ Bazin highlighted a clear shift from earlier forms to the museum as 'public institution' from around the 18th century.⁹⁸ In terms of growth Lewis pointed to the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a period of significance.⁹⁹ Lewis periodised this as between around 1870 and 1910; just before the first major group of regimental museums appeared. He argued that between the First and Second World War, museums were generally going through a period of 'reassessment and consolidation'.¹⁰⁰ It is curious that RCMs formally first appear in this period of relative stagnation for museums more broadly, indicative of their distinctive developmental history. It highlights their insularity from other forms of museums, but also lends weight to Kavanagh's assessment as to the influence of the IWM in their founding.

The role and rationale of IWM is considered within the historical narrative in Chapter 1, but it is worth initially considering how its role has been approached by others. IWM was one of several imperial national war museums, which Wellington described as 'three-dimensional' embodiments of 'wartime propaganda' frozen in time to perpetuate victory.¹⁰¹ It was around this victory, Wellington argues, that the war and the loss of life associated with it could be justified, and a 'clear national identity' on this foundation could be constructed.¹⁰² Kavanagh's encapsulation of the

⁹⁶ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 145.

⁹⁷ G. Bazin, *The Museum Age*. Translated from French by J. van Nuis Cahill (New York: Universe Books Inc., 1967).

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 80

⁹⁹ Lewis, *Museums in Britain*, 31.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 33

¹⁰¹ J. Wellington, 'War Trophies, War Memorabilia, and the Iconography of Victory in the British Empire', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 54, 4 (2019), 737-758: 757.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 740

development of IWM is to demonstrate a museum as memorial in its earliest and simplest form.¹⁰³ The aftermath of the First World War is seen as a watershed moment as new forms of commemoration developed including foreign sites of ‘pilgrimage,’ (such as War Graves) and memorials dispersed geographically at home.¹⁰⁴ West refers to the local memorials in towns, villages and cities, and thinking about heritage also brings in ways to explore and engage with regimental and corps museums. However, in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, attempts at a museum-type approach to commemoration did not find its mark.¹⁰⁵ As such any local commemorative role that RCMs may have had was only part of the picture.

Another rationale for the establishment of RCMs is for the generation of ‘*esprit de corps*’, particularly amongst new recruits which Jones cited as the key purpose for their existence.¹⁰⁶ Jones wrote:

These museums, however, were not formed to present war, but for the specific purpose of instilling and fostering in the regiment the *esprit de corps* which enables it to fight more effectively.¹⁰⁷

The idea is presented as fact, but with the exception of a personal conversation with Colonel M. A. Amlôt—which discusses the sector at the time of Jones’ writing in 1995—is not sourced in Jones’ work.¹⁰⁸ Kavanagh for her part agreed that this was part of the reason for their establishment.¹⁰⁹ Writing on the matter of *esprit de corps* and RCMs in the 1930s, J. M. Bulloch described how the ‘creation’ of a sense of *esprit de corps* was essential to the training of recruits.¹¹⁰ He defined it as ‘knowledge of the

¹⁰³ Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial'.

¹⁰⁴ B. West (ed.), *War Memory and Commemoration* (Routledge, 2016), 2.

¹⁰⁵ Brandt, 'The Memory Makers', 111.

¹⁰⁶ Jones, 'Making Histories of Wars', 152.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁹ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 145.

¹¹⁰ J. M. Bulloch, 'The Necessity for Regimental Museums', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 16, 62 (1937), 114.

traditions' of a given unit, and of its 'past'.¹¹¹ Boulton, writing in the 1950s also included it in his evaluation of the value of RCMs, alongside ideas of 'heroic achievement and sacrifice, discipline,' but does not define it himself.¹¹² Later historical analyses of this fundamental idea behind the regiment defined it as the product of long service within a single regiment.¹¹³ French's work goes into extensive detail as to the way in which this thread of *esprit de corps* has woven through the history of the Army itself, as successive reforms attempted to maintain, generate, construct and replicate this idea.¹¹⁴ The emphasis on its construction is reminiscent of broader ways in which heritage studies and related fields have explored the idea of constructed identities.

The inward-facing and self-serving efforts at generating a sense of *esprit de corps* is not the only idea advanced as to the rationale for establishing RCMs, and their actual historical function raises questions as to why they might open to the public as formal museums. Thwaites' assessment of another early writer on RCMs—L. I. Cowper—was that instead of emphasis on *esprit de corps*, training and public relations were 'clearly' of greater significance.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the idea of *esprit de corps*, as something to bolster fighting ability, pre-dates the museums and regiments were already generating *esprit de corps* by other mechanisms.¹¹⁶ Thwaites expands on Cowper's assessment to discuss their value as a place for recruits to take their families and friends who might be visiting the barracks.¹¹⁷ He also posits that they had a recruitment benefit as part of this public relations role, presenting the regiment in its

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 114

¹¹² H. L. Boulton, 'The Military Museum—Its Special Problems and Difficulties', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 100, 597 (1955), 104-109: 105.

¹¹³ French, *Military Identities*, 10.

¹¹⁴ See *ibid*, particularly Chapter 4.

¹¹⁵ Thwaites, 'Presenting Arms', 38-39.

¹¹⁶ H. Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 15; C. Kirke & N. M. Hartwell, 'The officers' mess: an anthropology and history of the military interior', in H. Lidchi & S. Allan (eds.), *Dividing the Spoils: Perspectives on military collections and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020): 116.

¹¹⁷ Thwaites, 'Presenting Arms', 41.

best light to the public who might be encouraged to join.¹¹⁸ However, whilst this may have become important later in their development, in terms of their initial establishment it is a less likely explanation. As Thwaites acknowledges, their initial establishment was within a broader mood of pacifism in the inter-war years; something which Kavanagh has also highlighted.¹¹⁹ Instead their rapid growth may also be explained simply by an element of competition which was common amongst regiments; seeking not to be outdone by other regiments and corps who were setting up their own museums.¹²⁰

Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis will test these ideas and as it comprises a detailed exploration of the history of RCMs consider their establishment and development. As Thwaites expressed, primary evidence including much that was not available (classified) at the time of Kavanagh, Jones and Thwaites' work has meant that these hypotheses can be more effectively evaluated today.¹²¹ The reliance on this earlier conceptualisation and post-hoc evaluations based in present day understanding perpetuates a historical interpretation of the museums' development based on flawed assumptions. The importance and value of exploring the history and development of museums from a range of perspectives has been increasingly recognised but there is still a dearth of work.¹²² This is particularly clear when compared to the extensive range of literature in only the last few years which still seeks to grapple with what museums are.¹²³ Of recent note in the former area, and particularly relevant for this

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*; Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 142.

¹²⁰ Thwaites, 'Presenting Arms', 40.

¹²¹ *Ibid* 38

¹²² H. Geoghegan, 'Museum Geography: Exploring Museums, Collections and Museum Practice in the UK', *Geography Compass*, 4, 10 (2010), 1462-1476. C. McCarthy, 'From histories of museums to museum history: approaches to historicising colonial museums in Aotearoa New Zealand', *Museum History Journal*, 13, 1 (2020), 95-110. Candlin et al., *Mapping Museums 1960-2020*. N. Morse et al., 'Editorial: Methodologies for Researching the Museum as Organization', *Museum & Society*, 16, 2 (2018), 112-123. S. Lubar et al., 'Lost Museums', *Museum History Journal*, 10, 1 (2016), 1-14.

¹²³ K. van Hoven, 'The Social Prescription of Museums: Creating Wellness in Our Communities', *Museological Review*, 24 (2020), 67-72. D. Etherington, 'From Local to Community Museum: Hastings

thesis, is Candlin et al's project seeking to map an even wider picture of how the museum sector has changed and evolved since the 1960s. This research is embedded within these kinds of projects seeking to understand the institutional history of museums. Their overarching aim was to explore the detail of broad assumptions about the characteristics of growth and development in the museums sector.¹²⁴ Their work forms a clear demonstration of the value in exploring museums as institutions through different methodologies.

The value in the exploration of RCMs has only heightened since Jones' expression of them being the most common place to find the 'depiction of war,' in a museum setting in the UK.¹²⁵ In this regard, the remainder of this historiography seeks to engage with broader ideas as to the various purposes and definitions of museums. In particular it seeks to aid the overall objective of this thesis in exploring colonial legacies within RCM collections. Already we have seen how RCMs in part sit aside from the overarching narrative of museums. But what exactly a museum is, was or should be has been a matter of extensive debate in heritage and museum studies. How do RCMs fit within these definitions and the debates over the applicability? Where do RCMs sit within broader attempts to develop and refine understanding of military museums?

ICOM (the International Council of Museums) for example, has historically provided an internationally agreed definition but this has shifted over time. In the 1990s the definition stated that a museum was:

Museum & Art Gallery's Journey to a Sustainable Future in the Public Sector', *Museological Review*, 24 (2020), 91-96. D. Ünsal, 'Positioning museums politically for social justice', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 34, 6 (2019), 595-607. G. Jennings et al., 'The Empathetic Museum: A New Institutional Identity', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 62, 4 (2019), 505-526; C. Orloff, 'Should Museums Change Our Mission and Become Agencies of Social Justice?', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 60, 1 (2017), 33-36; J. K. Nielsen, 'The relevant museum: defining relevance in museological practices', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 30, 5 (2015), 364-378.

¹²⁴ Candlin et al., *Mapping Museums 1960-2020*, 5.

¹²⁵ Jones, 'Making Histories of Wars', 152.

a non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.¹²⁶

This definition shows the challenges of attempting to adopt a broad model for museums, as for regimental and corps museums permanence as physical institutions in one home has not always been assured, directly as a product of their history and development. Historically the majority of regimental and corps museums have been open to the public since their first establishment in the 1920s, but not all of them. A wide range of factors have affected their ability to open and remain open to the public throughout their history. Chapters 1 and 2 will explore the impact of these and other challenges upon the museums, but for now it again demonstrates the ways in which regimental and corps museums have in some ways been separate from the broader museum world. As in the case of their permanence, they have not always fallen neatly within the clear bounds of ICOMs definition. The next iteration of this definition, accepted in 2007 stated that:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ K. Lennon, 'The Memorial Museum: Diluent or Concentric Agent of the Museum Institution?', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 18, 1 (1999), 73-80.

¹²⁷ International Council of Museums, *Museum Definition* Available online: <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/> [Accessed 24/07/2020].

The definition has been widely referenced and has served as the 'delimiting' factor for other museum history research, such as for Candlin and Larkin's mapping research.¹²⁸ In this sense, alongside factors which differentiate regimental and corps museums, it is also important to consider some of the core facets which situate them within these definitions. There was a shift from a description of museums as holding the 'material evidence of man,' towards an expanded emphasis on 'tangible and intangible heritage of humanity'. Regardless of the phrasing the centrality of 'collections or other evidence of cultural heritage,' has been central to the definition of the museum, which for ICOM is the 'unique, defining and essential unity in museums'.¹²⁹ 'Heritage' is the central crux of the definition around which all other concepts in the definition—openness, permanence, education, enjoyment—revolve.

But what is heritage as a function of history, and what role does it play in museums? How do RCMs exhibit the traditions and lineages as components of the history and heritage of the regiments and corps they represent? More reductionist arguments have described history as 'the occurrences of the past,' which fulfils a wide variety of roles.¹³⁰ But others such as Hobsbawm argued that aspects of the 'present,' that may be deemed 'unsatisfactory,' can be reconstructed through the use of the 'past'.¹³¹ Instead, therefore history is a construct and a tool, and is used to shape identities through traditions. The importance of history to the regiments and corps individually cannot be understated. Many produced their own unit histories and journals to catalogue their experiences and achievements. During the First World War, the government proposed attaching official historians to each regiment in order to

¹²⁸ F. Candlin & J. Larkin, 'What is a Museum? Difference all the way down', *Museum & Society*, 18, 2 (2020), 115-131: 117; A. Desvallées et al., *Key Concepts of Museology* Translated from French [eBook] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 57.

¹²⁹ J. Sandahl, 'The Museum Definition as the Backbone of ICOM', *Museum International*, 71, 1-2 (2019), vi-9: 2.

¹³⁰ G. Ashworth, 'From History to Heritage - From Heritage to Identity: In search of concepts and models', in G. Ashworth & P. Larkham (eds.), *Building a New Heritage: Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe* (Florence, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013) [eBook], 13-30: 13.

¹³¹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *On History* [eBook] (London: Orion Books, 2010), Ch 3.

accurately describe the events of the day.¹³² It is potentially upon this basis that Kavanagh proposed a further rationale for the establishment of RCMs. She saw them as a 'three-dimensional form' of their histories and biographies, developed through and published after the First World War.¹³³ These official histories can be problematic though, as in the concepts described by Hobsbawm and others above, they are designed to serve specific purposes. McCartney makes the case that this phenomenon was particularly prevalent post-Gallipoli in the First World War, after which 'brave exploits' and 'heroic fighting' were important in instructing new recruits within regimental traditions.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the Colonel of the Regiment has typically had overarching control; in charge of ceremonial elements of the regiment's activities including authoring or authorising its official history.¹³⁵ RCMs as extensions of these processes arguably have therefore played an important role in the construction of identities.

The underlying principles of the use of history in constructed identities are reminiscent of broader debates around commemorative practices. Ware has highlighted the significance of Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, and its illustration through the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.¹³⁶ Ware described how in its representation of death and anonymity it could be used to present the 'nation' as something which was 'natural' and 'organic'.¹³⁷ Its positioning within Westminster Abbey also interlinked it closely with ideals around 'sacrifice' and 'duty'; inimitable ideals which others had associated with *esprit de corps*.¹³⁸ For Anderson, 'the nation' is defined by the ways in which it imagines itself, and 'the identity of those who belong

¹³² Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial'.

¹³³ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 145.

¹³⁴ H. McCartney, 'Interpreting Unit Histories: Gallipoli and After', in J. Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: Making History* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), 125-135: 133.

¹³⁵ French, *Military Identities*, 79.

¹³⁶ Ware, *Military Migrants*, 9.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*

¹³⁸ *Ibid*; Boulton, 'The Military Museum', 105.

to it.¹³⁹ Ashplant et al's discussion of this debate generally focussed on the national level, and considered examples such as the Imperial War Museum, the Cenotaph and the multitude of broadly identical local memorials across the UK.¹⁴⁰ But as McLean argues, the 'forging of identities' is not just a national process, but one that can also manifest at regional and local levels.¹⁴¹ Smith had a similar approach, emphasising how different social groups can coalesce around perceived shared memories.¹⁴² Winter argued that history and memory cannot be conflated, but that a 'space,' represented by museums of 'historical remembrance,' can have a significant impact on the way that history is written by academics.¹⁴³ This can be a challenge for historians using regimental and corps museums as source. Winter has also criticised works which over-emphasise the political meanings of war remembrance and cautions against the eradication of the [human] in regard to aspects such as mourning in commemorative practices.¹⁴⁴ Understanding how memory and identity operate within society and institutions, including museums can provide clarity on the role of RCMs, and heritage studies has dealt with extensively.

In the 1980s Hewison had coined the term 'heritage industry' to describe the commercialisation of heritage from above, identifying an obsession with nostalgic impulses and focussing in on heritage as a distraction for people 'from engaging with their present and future.'¹⁴⁵ These shifts occurred at a time when RCMs were facing significant cuts to their funding and extensive review of their role and value by the

¹³⁹ T. G. Ashplant et al. (eds.), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), 8.

¹⁴⁰ T. G. Ashplant, 'War Commemoration in Western Europe: Changing meanings, divisive loyalties, unheard voices', in T. G. Ashplant et al. (eds.), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001) [eBook].

¹⁴¹ F. McLean, 'Museums and the Representation of Identity', in B. Graham & P. Howard (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 283-298: 285.

¹⁴² L. Smith, *Uses of heritage*. (London;New York;: Routledge, 2006), 63.

¹⁴³ Winter, *Remembering War*, 223.

¹⁴⁴ Ashplant et al. (eds.), *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, 8.

¹⁴⁵ R. Harrison, 'What is heritage?', in R. Harrison (ed.), *Understanding the Politics of Heritage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) [eBook], 5-42: 16 & 18.

MOD. Similar changes were underway specifically in the museum world as well. In *Museums are for People* prominent museum professional Kenneth Hudson analysed the position of museums in the 1980s, when the whole system was ‘under consideration by important independent bodies’.¹⁴⁶ There was an emphasis for museums to become ‘more business-like,’ in order ‘to serve their public more effectively.’¹⁴⁷ The list of things that a museum should function as included: educator, leisure facility, creator of wealth and employment, investment generator, attractor of tourists, and supporter of economic and cultural regeneration.¹⁴⁸ Declining public funding during the 1980s stressed the importance of better management, alongside emphasis on a more business-like approach.¹⁴⁹ Speaking on the matter of military museums specifically, Hudson argued that they were, in Thwaites’ words, ‘wholly irrelevant to the modern world’.¹⁵⁰ Thwaites also highlights Wood’s criticism of the same period as to the extent that museum professionals beyond RCMs were ‘embarrassed’ by them.¹⁵¹

A critical turn in heritage theory developed in response to this perceived increase in the ‘sanitisation and commercialisation’ of heritage in the UK in particular.¹⁵² Those interested in public history, such as Samuel, rejected this notion focussing instead on the democratisation of heritage and ‘history from below’.¹⁵³ Samuel’s history from below was predicated on the significance of these local, family and personal histories.¹⁵⁴ Others have also drawn attention to Samuel’s rejection of the idea that

¹⁴⁶ K. Hudson, ‘Museums and their customers’, in Scottish Museums Council (ed.), *Museums are for people* (Edinburgh: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1985), 7-16.

¹⁴⁷ Scottish Museums Council, *Museums are for people*. (Edinburgh: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1985), chap. Foreword.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁹ Hudson, ‘Museums and their customers’; K. Moore (ed.), *Museums Management* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁵⁰ Thwaites, ‘Presenting Arms’, 2.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 1

¹⁵² Harrison, *What is heritage?*, 16.

¹⁵³ S. Hall, ‘Whose heritage? Un-settling ‘the heritage’, re-imagining the post-nation’, in J. Littler & R. Naidoo (eds.), *The politics of heritage: the legacies of ‘race’* (Routledge, 2004) [eBook], 21-31: 25.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*

people might engage ‘mindlessly’ with heritage.¹⁵⁵ Histories and memories produced in heritage institutions can often be highly contested and may change across space and time.¹⁵⁶ McLean developed a conceptual model that encapsulates how a wide range of groups play roles in ‘negotiat[ing]’ meaning in the museum space.¹⁵⁷ Where do RCMs fit in these conceptual arguments, as aspects of their heritage and identity formed within the museums is produced by differing sources? From above the Army, the nation, and Empire play a role in these negotiations, and from below individuals vested in the idea of the regiment, and their communities. There are also those who are represented in some of the colonial material culture held within the museum space. These are of particular relevance when looking at complex histories and the layered narratives represented by object biographies, considered later in this section in more detail.

Before looking at the objects within, understanding the museum’s ‘organisational form’ is vital to understanding the ‘dynamics of power in museums’.¹⁵⁸ In this it is important to advocate for methodologies to explore the museum as an organisation. But what Wintle called a ‘[p]ervasive Foucauldian scholarship’ – overly familiar with ideas of power and hegemony as in the works of Bennett and Hooper-Greenhill – has been increasingly disputed in favour of considering a great variety of ‘human agents’ in ‘meaning-making’.¹⁵⁹ Morse et al, agreed to some degree, that though important these methodologies took place at too great a distance from museum practice.¹⁶⁰ Their idea of ‘zooming in’ to explore what museum professionals actually do underpins key

¹⁵⁵ Smith, *Uses of heritage*, 62.

¹⁵⁶ J. Sather-Wagstaff, 'Making polysense of the world: affect, memory, heritage', in D. P. Tolia-Kelly et al. (eds.), *Heritage, Affect and Emotion : Politics, Practices and Infrastructures* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017) [eBook], 12-30: 18.

¹⁵⁷ McLean, 'Museums and the Representation of Identity', 283.

¹⁵⁸ Morse et al., 'Editorial', 113.

¹⁵⁹ C. Wintle, 'Visiting Empire at the Provincial Museum', in S. Longair & J. McAleer (eds.), *Curating Empire: museums and the British imperial experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 37-55.

¹⁶⁰ Morse et al., 'Editorial', 115.

elements of this thesis.¹⁶¹ But, moving beyond these kinds of Foucauldian conceptualisations of the museum as an institution of power, to instead explore the history of museums through the objects within forms the underlying framework of Chapter 3.¹⁶²

Some have seen the museum as a space in which objects are divorced from their social and cultural meaning.¹⁶³ The 'space' which the museum forms therefore is in part only a platform upon which other heritage processes manifest. For this reason it is important to explore beyond the physical museum building and its challenges, towards the objects themselves. Smith argued that the idea that objects 'can be, and should be, divorced from their original context of ownership and use,' and that museums 'will provide a safe and neutral environment,' which divorces them from their external meaning 'is demonstrably false'.¹⁶⁴ Walsh stated that meaning is conferred by a "writer" in the form of 'the curator, the archaeologist, the historian, or the visitor,' rather than being fixed.¹⁶⁵

Heritage and heritage studies do not feature strongly within the conceptual approaches in Material Culture Studies (MCS) advanced by some anthropologists.¹⁶⁶ Inversely, Keene asks of collections, what purpose they serve for memory and identity as components thereof.¹⁶⁷ Keene argued that the connection between collections and memory, as an intensely personal one, means that encounters with objects outside of this are not often emotive.¹⁶⁸ Instead it is the use of collections in building public

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

¹⁶² S. J. M. M. Alberti, 'Objects and the Museum', *Isis*, 96, 4 (2005), 559-571: 559-560.

¹⁶³ T. Bennett, *The birth of the museum: history, theory, politics*. Routledge, 1995); E. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the interpretation of visual culture*. (London: Routledge, 2000); K. Walsh, *The representation of the past: museums and heritage in the postmodern world*. (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁶⁴ C. S. Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', in P. Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 1997), 6-21: 9.

¹⁶⁵ Walsh, *The representation of the past*, 37.

¹⁶⁶ T. Carroll et al. (eds.), *Lineages and Advancements in Material Culture Studies: Perspectives from UCL Anthropology*, [eBook] (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

¹⁶⁷ S. Keene, *Fragments of the World: Uses of Museum Collections*. (Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005), 99.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*

memories and public histories that Keene emphasises as significant.¹⁶⁹ Carter wrote about the extent to which objects could transform what he saw as the two-dimensional history of ‘connections, relationships, patterns, ties and concepts’, to three-dimensions by using heritage interpretation.¹⁷⁰ In service of understanding these functions MCS as developed by anthropologists has become an integral part of both heritage and museum studies. Alberti for example drew from anthropology, and especially Kopytoff’s conceptualisation of the biographies of objects.¹⁷¹ In this, an object biography functions to ask questions of an object that might be asked of a person, and in turn draw upon a wide range of fields of scholarship to trace the ‘career’ of an object through different contexts and changing values.¹⁷² How can these approaches be of specific value for military history and heritage, and importantly for the objects held in RCMs?

For military history, the value of material culture approaches—based in anthropology—have in the 21st century been a response to a pre-existing saturation of analysis of tactics, strategy, detailed investigations of major events and the nature of conflict.¹⁷³ Mack explores objects from Benin and Omdurman in the same frameworks advanced through anthropology as Alberti, in the consideration of objects in as far as they can be imbued with a sense of ‘personhood’.¹⁷⁴ Mack uses this framework to explore how objects (from military campaigns in Benin and Omdurman) collected in similar circumstances can have radically different object biographies. Mack draws on two areas of research which he sees as most useful in exploring objects collected by military force. The first is memory studies and its conceptualisation of object

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁰ J. Carter, 'Public History and Heritage Interpretation: Bridging the Gap', *Museological Review*, 1, 1 (1994), 46-49: 47.

¹⁷¹ Alberti, 'Objects and the Museum', 560.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 560-561

¹⁷³ Saunders (ed.), *Matters of Conflict*, 2.

¹⁷⁴ J. Mack, 'The agency of objects: a contrasting choreography of flags, military booty and skills from late nineteenth-century Africa', in H. Lidchi & S. Allan (eds.), *Dividing the spoils: perspectives on military collections and the British empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 39-59: 39.

biographies. The second area that Mack explores is the idea of 'exchange', 'where the movement of physical objects has been explored as an instance of human-object entanglement in which gift giving and reciprocity are re-examined as creating and distributing personhood.'¹⁷⁵

Mack sought to understand how 'loot' and 'trophies' fit into the anthropological conceptualisation of the life of things.¹⁷⁶ In order to do this Mack conceptualises the actual objects as refugees or abductees. This area is also considered in the context of human displacement by Parkin (as invoked by Mack) and others. Drawing on Parkin, Mack considers the position of objects carried with displaced persons, the changing meaning from an object of use to an object of sentiment and memory used to re-site the self in the process of relocation ('dislocation'). Appadurai's interlinking of the object biographies with the commodification of things is important. Kopytoff and Appadurai's work also underlines the analysis of Tythacott in the context of the objects from Yuanmingyuan in Western museums.¹⁷⁷ Tythacott and others consider how the meanings applied to objects change over time, and explore how objects are used to tell different stories far beyond the owners' home nations.¹⁷⁸ Conceptualising objects as refugees or abductees has broad applicability in conversations around the treatment and interpretation of material culture. For example, objects in some West African cultures are imbued and embodied with spirits that bring tangible benefits in terms of life and success.¹⁷⁹ Others have problematised this specifically in the

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 40

¹⁷⁷ L. Tythacott, 'The Yuanmingyuan and its objects', in L. Tythacott (ed.), *Collecting and Displaying China's "Summer Palace" in the West: The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018) [eBook]. para 12.7

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid* para 12.7; J. Scott, "'Chinese Gordon' and the Royal Engineers Museum', in L. Tythacott (ed.), *Collecting and Displaying China's "Summer Palace" in the West: The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018) [eBook].

¹⁷⁹ C. Vannier, 'Intending the Spirits: Experiencing Vodou Through the "Fetish" in Togo', *Material Religion*, 16, 3 (2020), 298-316.

understanding of museum documentation, which rather than being seen as implicitly neutral, should be questioned as to its origins and objectivity.¹⁸⁰

Exploring objects as having agency and narratives allows the consideration of the intersections between people and objects. Auslander and Zahra considered this in the context of war and conflict, when it is the person that is displaced and not just the object.¹⁸¹ Their approach in its consideration of ‘trophy of war’, explored how the intricate linking between people and objects can be broken down by the separation of people from their objects by external powers. They saw this as the first step in the ‘dehumanization and ultimate annihilation,’ of Jews in Europe during the Holocaust.¹⁸² This dehumanisation has much in common with extremes of colonial violence and looting. The inter-relationship between people and objects extends our analysis to consider the extent to which the museums in some sense have power over the heritage of the people represented by the objects, as well as the objects themselves. It is on the basis of these approaches that developing nuanced approaches to object biographies in RCMs forms the underpinning rationale for the research focus in Chapter 3. As such, it is not just an important ideal isolated in academic research, but instead the focus is to have an impact on museum practice at a time when the role of the museum in society is the subject of intense debate.

3.2 MUSEUMS: SHIFTING DEFINITIONS AND MOVES TO DECOLONISE

In the 21st century debates around defining museums persisted and agreed definitions have evolved rapidly over time. Only a decade after the acceptance of the 2007 definition by ICOM, the international museum community determined that this earlier definition no longer fitted the trajectory of museums in the context of ‘diverse

¹⁸⁰ H. Turner, *Cataloguing Culture: Legacies of Colonialism in Museum Documentation*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020), 5.

¹⁸¹ L. Auslander & T. Zahra, 'The Things They Carried: War, Mobility, and Material Culture', in L. Auslander & T. Zahra (eds.), *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement* (Cornell University Press, 2018) [eBook].

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 11

and rapidly changing societies'.¹⁸³ In 2019, ICOM's Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials committee proposed a new definition, which was substantially longer and more encompassing than those above:

Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.

The project sparked intense debate and disagreement, culminating in an impasse initially when it came to ratification of the new definition, and discussion and comment from museum studies researchers was widespread.¹⁸⁴ The new ICOM definition reflected discourse in museum studies and museology heavily, with ideas around questioning museum neutrality, increasing social engagement, and better representing the diversity of the views and experiences of communities orbiting the museum becoming increasingly important.¹⁸⁵ In addition to this, other forms of museum typology have also become increasingly dense over time. There are long-standing forms—such as science, art, natural history museums—but also newly developed descriptors—such as 'relevant', 'inclusive', 'community', amongst

¹⁸³ Sandahl, 'The Museum Definition as the Backbone of ICOM', 3.

¹⁸⁴ Candlin & Larkin, 'What is a museum?'; J. Fraser, 'A Discomforting Definition of Museum', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 62, 4 (2019), 501-504; Sandahl, 'The Museum Definition as the Backbone of ICOM'; School of Museum Studies, 'Museological Review: What is a museum today?', *Museological Review*, 24 (2020).

¹⁸⁵ Sandahl, 'The Museum Definition as the Backbone of ICOM', 6-7.

numerous others.¹⁸⁶ Whilst these distinctions are guiding, they can limit analysis by moving focus too far away from general features towards specific ones, giving only a 'partial characterisation,' of museum purpose and function.¹⁸⁷ Nielsen described the concept of the 'relevant museum,' connecting museums with political agendas, creating new projects and exhibitions and drawing in visitors, as well as justifying their position politically, financially and socially.¹⁸⁸ This approach takes museum education's inclusive audience-focussed approach and introduces a relevant experience which has social action and inclusion at its core.¹⁸⁹ Museums as agents for social change can be problematic though, as effectiveness and lasting change requires staff retraining to equip them properly for addressing issues of social justice.¹⁹⁰ This further burdens institutions which are already over-stretched. Furthermore, it raises questions about what expectations may next be placed upon them by ICOM and academic discourse. Some however, continue to have a distinct preference to maintain a 'traditional definition' of museums. 'Museums are NOT Instagram Experiences' expresses a concern with new media that upsets the balance between the museum and its audience.¹⁹¹ There is in this an apparent wariness of technologies which upset traditional communication pathways.¹⁹² The role and use of regimental and corps history in forming specific identities potentially relies on some of these traditional relationships between the museum and its audience. A major area of current debate is in regard to museums as a legacy of empire and particularly European colonialism.

¹⁸⁶ C. Gray & V. McCall, 'Analysing the Adjectival Museum: Exploring the bureaucratic nature of museums and the implications for researchers and the research process', *Museum & Society*, 16, 2 (2018), 124-137: 124.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 124-125

¹⁸⁸ Nielsen, 'The relevant museum'.

¹⁸⁹ R. Coghlan, 'My voice counts because I'm handsome.' Democratising the museum: the power of museum participation', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 24, 7 (2018), 795-809: 805; Ünsal, 'Positioning museums politically for social justice', 601.

¹⁹⁰ Orloff, 'Should Museums Change Our Mission and Become Agencies of Social Justice?', 36.

¹⁹¹ S. L. A. Gossett, 'Museums are NOT Instagram experiences', *Museological Review*, 24 (2020), 64.

¹⁹² K. Budge, 'Objects in Focus museums visitors and instagram', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 60, 1 (2017), 67-85: 82; M. Carrozzino & M. Bergamasco, 'Beyond virtual museums: Experiencing immersive virtual reality in real museums', *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 11, 4 (2010), 452-458: 457.

Understanding decolonisation is predicated on an understanding of what some call coloniality, to describe not necessarily the legacies of colonialism as something that has happened, but as something ongoing in the present.¹⁹³ It is founded upon post-colonial theory which describes and explores colonisation, coloniality and colonialism, and their reflections, decolonisation, decoloniality and neocolonialism. In the context of Africa, Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that clarification on key terms can help to gain ‘a deeper understanding of the empire and the damage colonialism had,’ and certainly this applies to other theatres of empire, and the imperial project as well.¹⁹⁴ Paraphrasing and drawing upon Peter Ekeh, he argues that colonialism ‘is a power structure that subverts, destroys, reinvents, appropriates, and replaces anything it deems an obstacle to the agenda of colonial domination and exploitation.’¹⁹⁵ Mbembe is also cited, and his argument that European imperialism saw the world as their right; ‘as belonging to them.’¹⁹⁶ The ideas which underpinned the processes brought through colonialism were ones of supremacy and conquest, and the elimination of barriers to this progress. Whilst Chapter 4 will deal more with contemporary debates around decolonising museums in the present in detail, it is important to identify what the overarching position of research and literature is, and why it is important for RCMs to engage with this debate. It could be argued that these ideas might only apply to national museums such as the British Museum, but questions should also be asked of museums at other levels of governance. Minott demonstrates this necessity, in looking at how civic or local authority museums, and in our case, regimental and corps museums may have been complicit in colonial violence.¹⁹⁷ RCMs face similar legacy challenges in collections. Understanding how

¹⁹³ V. Whittington, 'Decolonising the Museum? Dilemmas, possibilities, alternatives', *Culture Unbound*, 13, 2 (2021), 250-274: 253.

¹⁹⁴ S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Moral evil, economic good': *Whitewashing the sins of colonialism*, 2021. Available online: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/2/26/colonialism-in-africa-empire-was-not-ethical> [Accessed 09/03/21].

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁷ R. Minott, 'The Past is Now', *Third Text*, 33, 4-5 (2019), 559-574: 561.

to address these 'legacy' collections issues requires thorough historical investigation in the first instance, but also grappling with decolonial approaches to ask critical questions in the present.

Colonisation describes the fundamental 'event,' by which large swathes of land and peoples were conquered and administered by external colonisers.¹⁹⁸ Young describes two different forms of colonisation, both typically products of long-standing trade routes and outposts.¹⁹⁹ In the first form administrative and taxation systems would gradually be taken over by the colonisers, with a small military force being maintained similarly to support occupation and exploitation.²⁰⁰ Examples include India, French Indochina and Dutch Indonesia. Colonial rule was increasingly contested and after the Second World War many strove successfully for independence. Their post-colonial processes therefore involved decolonising institutions, culture, economics, language, education, and so forth, and establishing their own sovereignty.²⁰¹ The second form resembles the first in its early stages, but the distinguishing factor is the presence of permanent European settlement.²⁰² With few exceptions the settlers and their descendants would remain indefinitely and although this is a much older form of colonisation its effects continue to have an impact on indigenous people today.²⁰³ The features of both though are legacies of oppression, slaughter, enslavement and disease transmission.²⁰⁴

Decolonisation has most commonly been understood in the context of the frequently violent upheaval that represented the dismantling of colonial infrastructure and

¹⁹⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Moral evil, economic good': *Whitewashing the sins of colonialism*.

¹⁹⁹ R. J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 32.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 32-33

²⁰² *Ibid*, 33

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 34

²⁰⁴ S. Kiwara-Wilson, 'Restituting Colonial Plunder: The Case for the Benin Bronzes and Ivories', *DePaul Journal of Art, Technology and Intellectual Property Law*, 23, 2 (2013), 375-426; B. T. Knusden et al., 'Introduction', in B. T. Knusden et al. (eds.), *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices in and beyond Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 1-22.

institutions during the period just before and then after the Second World War.²⁰⁵ It is thus, 'conventionally understood,' as related to the end of European Imperial dominance across Asia, Africa and the Pacific, and the emergence of new 'nation-states,' through political upheaval.²⁰⁶ Increasingly it has taken on other meanings and applied to different discourses, erroneously in the view of some such as Tuck and Yang who argued that:

Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourse/ frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks.²⁰⁷

Maldonado-Torres is part of the emerging thought on decoloniality which Young refers to.²⁰⁸ For Maldonado-Torres decolonisation represents an expanded definition beyond the 'end of formal colonial relations,' towards a 'confrontation with the racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies that were put in place or strengthened by European modernity as it colonized and enslaved populations through the planet.'²⁰⁹ Although there has been a great deal of focus on institutions in post-colonial nations, arguably institutions in the UK reproduce many of the same colonial legacies as a product of their historical development.²¹⁰ Schools, universities and academia, libraries and museums in the Commonwealth and in the UK face decolonial challenges as a product of their history.

A key element in this debate is the extent to which museums match expectations of representativeness in audiences. The ways in which objects of empire are exhibited

²⁰⁵ M. Thomas & G. Curless (eds.), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies*, [eBook] (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 1-16.

²⁰⁶ D. Kennedy, *Decolonization: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 8.

²⁰⁷ E. Tuck & K. W. Yang, 'Decolonization is not a metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1, 1 (2012), 1-40: 3.

²⁰⁸ Young, *Postcolonialism*, 35.

²⁰⁹ N. Maldonado-Torres, 'On the Coloniality of Being', *Cultural Studies*, 21, 2-3 (2007), 240-270: 261.

²¹⁰ M. Elliott, 'Decolonial Re-enactments?', *Third Text*, 33, 4-5 (2019), 631-650.

can have the effect of 're-traumatising,' visitors who have cultural experience of the darkest elements of colonialism.²¹¹ Thus, uncritical attempts at interpretation succeed only in further alienating particular groups, though Binter argues that there are ways to exhibit in a way which does not traumatise Black people and People of Colour.²¹² For example, in one of their case studies, they focus on the ways in which power and authorship can be transferred to disrupt historic power imbalances.²¹³ Frost's experience in interpretation at the British Museum contradicts this perspective to some extent, indicating that 'exhibition-like interventions,' in permanent galleries can be enough to change how the museum is perceived to some extent at least.²¹⁴ They can be an opportunity to engender debate and for example discuss colonial history in a way that permanent galleries do not necessarily allow.²¹⁵ However, as Frost's own primary research shows, without a gravitational shift young, non-visitors are unlikely to alter their perceptions, which is reinforced by one of Binter's cases (Itsekiri at the National Maritime Museum) as well.²¹⁶

Pabst argues (drawing on Roger Simon) that strong emotional effects can impede learning, as information which 'contradicts a previously established conception of reality,' is not easily absorbed by people.²¹⁷ Frost cites a YouGov poll from 2014 highlighting high residual support for Empire amongst British people. In the context of his role in the British Museum he also explored responses to some of the museums' exhibitions and other outputs which sought to address imperial and colonial histories, with many seeing the museum as intrinsically linked with Empire and colonialism.²¹⁸ Frost's work highlights barriers to achieving decoloniality in the museum world.

²¹¹ J. T. S. Binter, 'Beyond Exhibiting the Experience of Empire?', *Third Text*, 33, 4-5 (2019), 575-593: 583.

²¹² *Ibid*

²¹³ *Ibid*, 579-582

²¹⁴ S. Frost, "A Bastion of Colonialism", *Third Text*, 33, 4-5 (2019), 487-499: 499.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 493-495

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 496-497; Binter, 'Beyond Exhibiting the Experience of Empire?', 582.

²¹⁷ K. Pabst, 'Considerations to Make, Needs to Balance: Two Moral Challenges Museum Employees Face When Working with Contested, Sensitive Histories', *Museum International*, 70, 3-4 (2018), 84-97: 91.

²¹⁸ Frost, "A Bastion of Colonialism", 487.

Yeaman's experience at the Hunterian bolsters this perspective, indicating that the way in which museums and heritage institutions have been 'complicit in perpetuating the ideologies of the previous centuries,' needs addressing and the narrative needs adjusting.²¹⁹ An audience—the UK-based potential audience—which holds as its 'conception of reality,' the view that the British Empire was a positive thing, will have great challenge in absorbing information which contradicts this perspective, regardless of its factual basis. As Yeaman argues alongside Frost and others, the process will be difficult and 'will generate discomfort,' but is ultimately a positive process for constructive change.²²⁰

There are those who argue that the conceptions of decolonisation that are commonplace in the present, particularly in the context of settler colonialism, are merely 'moves to innocence,' by settlers to remediate themselves.²²¹ In other words, seeking to undertake actions which make them feel like they are being progressive rather than critically engaging with systemic issues. The flashpoint of George Floyd's murder in the Summer of 2020 led to a foregrounding of 'whiteness,' and the 'oversights, [and] biases,' that come with it.²²² But in the institutions highlighted already, simply exploring and critically engaging with colonial legacies does not necessarily equate to decolonisation.²²³ Using decolonisation to describe these processes can arguably conflict with those striving towards decolonisation in Africa, the Americas and Australia. Forms of social justice, improved representation, and anti-racism while important of course, are arguably not decolonisation as in the conception of those such as Tuck and Yang and others. *The Illusion of Inclusion* exemplifies this distinction, which discusses the progress made (and yet to be made)

²¹⁹ Z. Yeaman, *Curating Discomfort*, 2021. Available online: <http://hunterian.academicblogs.co.uk/curating-discomfort/> [Accessed 11/03/21].

²²⁰ *Ibid*

²²¹ Tuck & Yang, 'Decolonization is not a metaphor', 4.

²²² M. McIntosh, 'The Unbearable Lightness of Whiteness', *Wasafiri*, 35, 3 (2020), 1-2.

²²³ Elliott, 'Decolonial Re-enactments?', 633.

on the front of inclusion, without employing the term decolonisation.²²⁴ However, priorities around diversity and inclusion still form part of a road towards making museums more inclusive. Begum and Saini have drawn attention to the pervasiveness of zero-hour contracts in university teaching which disproportionately affect women, people of colour and people from working-class backgrounds 'who may not be able to afford to 'stick it out' until they gain a full-time secure position.'²²⁵ Similar practices are experienced in the museums sector, and for RCMs in particular the 2016 AMOT review highlighted issues around diversity which can have a limiting impact on having a broader range of skills and experience to support the network in the future.²²⁶

Furthermore, consulting with museum practitioners to understand their personal perspectives and how this informs their work removes the need for overarching speculations, which therefore underpins key elements of Chapter 4. This approach has been informed particularly by a recognised division between museum theory and museum practice, and new frameworks developed by researchers periodically seeking to address the problem. Teather for example argued in the 1990s for closer links built on the 'integration of practice and theory'.²²⁷ Hatton highlighted the Hale Report which identified a significant training gap in museum staff in the 1990s.²²⁸ MacLeod considered this approach to be useful, but characterises the theory/practice divide as one that is 'perceived,' and unacknowledging of what actual working practices are going on at any given point.²²⁹ MacLeod too developed a conceptual model in the 2000s for ensuring relational work between museum practice, museum training and education, and museum studies. Finally, Murphy in the late 2010s

²²⁴ 'The Illusion of Inclusion', *Wasafiri*, 25, 4 (2010), 1-6.

²²⁵ Begum & Saini, 'Decolonising the Curriculum', 197.

²²⁶ Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*.

²²⁷ J. L. Teather, 'Museum Studies: Reflecting on Reflective Practice', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 10 (1991), 403-417: 415.

²²⁸ A. Hatton, 'Current issues in museum training in the United Kingdom', in K. Moore (ed.), *Museum Management* (London: Routledge, 1994), 148-155: 148.

²²⁹ S. MacLeod, 'Making Museums Studies: Training, Education, Research and Practice', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 19, 1 (2001), 51-61: 52.

advanced a framework of critical praxis which sought solution in ‘practice-based methodology that museum studies as a discipline needs to strengthen and sustain itself.’²³⁰ Murphy characterised a continuing ‘dysfunctional divide between practitioners and theorists,’ drawing on some of Teather’s insights from the 1990s.²³¹ Contemporary opinion surveys of the sector show the persistence of this challenge as a 2006 survey of museum studies courses found that the academic and theoretical side was seen as out-of-touch with the needs of the wider sector.²³² The desire was for the academic to take on more practical training to equip students for work in the sector.²³³ For approaches important in museum academic circles to be impactful for museums they need to work with institutions and reflect their context and circumstances. For regimental and corps museums this means recognising their specific challenges and identifying methods which can help mitigate these.

The form of decolonisation of museums is the subject of debate and open to interpretation, and while Giblin et al argue that its potential scope is better understood, defining museum praxis is much harder.²³⁴ Goskar agrees, indicating that what the decolonised museum looks like is still unknown and up for debate, but that the complexity of the issue is an opportunity and should not be ‘a simplistic us vs them judgement.’²³⁵ Giblin et al describe a ‘paradox,’ though, between those riding a popular wave of colonial positivism and neo-colonialism, and those who seek to confront colonial pasts.²³⁶ Yeaman argues that decolonisation must be more than just

²³⁰ O. Murphy, 'Museums Studies as Critical Praxis', *Tate Papers*, 29, (2018). Available online: <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/29/museum-studies-critical-praxis> [Accessed 15/05/2020], para. 51.

²³¹ *Ibid*

²³² J. Holt, 'Survey says museum studies course content must change', *Museums Journal*, (2009). Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2009/11/13975-2/> [Accessed 23/09/2020].

²³³ *Ibid*, para. 1

²³⁴ J. Giblin et al., 'Dismantling the Master’s House', *Third Text*, 33, 4-5 (2019), 471-486: 472.

²³⁵ T. Goskar, *Curatorial thoughts on decolonisation*, 2019. Available online: <https://curatorialresearch.com/good-curating/curatorial-thoughts-on-decolonisation/> [Accessed 11/03/21].

²³⁶ Giblin et al., 'Dismantling the Master’s House', 472.

symbolic gestures, and must be about real change.²³⁷ Museums have grappled with the subject variously. In an interview with Tate-based Research Associate, Ananda Rutherford, Goskar asks about the nature of museum documentation in the context of efforts to decolonise.²³⁸ Rutherford draws attention to the problematic nature of object descriptions across collections and draws attention to questions around who or what is missing in research: understanding what is obscured in how objects are catalogued and described.²³⁹ This echoes projects at other institutions including another Pitt Rivers Museum project which seeks to improve labelling in object displays to address racist, and racialised, and derogatory language used in describing objects.²⁴⁰ Rutherford however emphasises the importance of relinquishing control to embrace new methods and approaches to documentation to support decolonisation.²⁴¹ In conversation with Goskar, Rutherford highlights a vital point which is the wider context of economic security of museum institutions in the 21st century.²⁴² Building on these ideas and on the findings of Chapter 4, the final research chapter explores co-production as a potential way to address these issues and challenges in defining praxis, and offers a pathway to engaging with colonial legacies in collections.

4 METHODOLOGY

The research methods employed have sought in every way to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which largely affected the primary research phase in terms of timing. Elements core to earlier iterations of the research focus were replaced with

²³⁷ Yeaman, *Curating Discomfort*.

²³⁸ T. Goskar, *Ananda Rutherford on Provisional Semantics, documentation and decolonising collections management*, 2021. Available online: <https://curatorialresearch.com/interviews-with-curators/ananda-rutherford-on-provisional-semantics-documentation-and-decolonising-collections-management/> [Accessed 11/03/21].

²³⁹ *Ibid*

²⁴⁰ Pitt Rivers Museum, *Labelling Matters*, 2021. Available online: <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/labelling-matters> [Accessed 11/03/21].

²⁴¹ Goskar, *Ananda Rutherford on Provisional Semantics, documentation and decolonising collections management*.

²⁴² *Ibid*

approaches which reflected the changing availability of sources and resources. The original research aims were to better understand the origins and development of a broader range of challenges. Rather than this broader scope the subject of decolonisation was chosen as the focus due to the significant and growing emphasis on decolonising museums and knowledge. The historical investigation remained key but archival exploration was much more refined in its timescale and so took more account of the broader picture. This proved valuable in its findings regarding the existence of the long-standing network. Future research could further explore the network established in this thesis to understand the extent of connections between the overarching network nodes and the breadth of RCMs. Elsewhere, interviews conducted remotely became a much greater focus and the researcher's connections within the network were important in securing these interviews. Furthermore, the importance of case studies and object biographies demonstrate the ways in which conducting this kind of research in depth will support museums in exploring the colonial legacies of their collections.

4.1 CURRENT NETWORK ANALYSIS

As part of this work a Museum Mapping exercise was undertaken to determine the current position of the network across a range of factors, building on work carried out during the researcher's MA dissertation. This earlier exercise was fundamentally interested in looking at whether RCMs were open or closed, and in what capacity (such as open by appointment only). This Museum Mapping exercise was repeated as a data led approach looking at the evolving position of the RCMs network over the course of the last 15 years. The value of this kind of approach has been recognised more broadly as in a simultaneous mapping project conducted by the research team led by Candlin and others discussed earlier.²⁴³ Their research had a far broader scope and availability of resource and is incredibly valuable in an overarching picture of the

²⁴³ Candlin et al., *Mapping Museums 1960-2020*.

museums sector since the 1960s. This thesis involved a much more refined approach to develop a directory of extant RCMs and a few specific metrics. The baseline was a key policy document which was produced by the Executive Committee of the Army Board.²⁴⁴ This includes a list of military museums which were funded (and not funded) and open at the time that the list was produced (2008). This list was and remains the most complete ‘official’ listing of military museums in the UK, although it lacks detail, so for example it does not indicate whether the funded museums were open or closed at that time. The research has assumed that those listed would more than likely be accessible in some way, on the basis that the MOD has historically focussed its funding on museums open to the public. The research findings were explored above in Section 2.1 and showed that a handful of museums’ situations had changed dramatically, in that they were no longer open to the public. The current research was also updated to consider the extent of changing funding priorities in the MOD, as set out in the tables in Section 2 above. The research populated the following fields:

- Current Name (if different to ECAB)
- Location
- Regiments/Corps covered
- Museum/Collection Type
- Operational picture (open, closed, etc.)
- Funding position
- Admissions policy
- ‘About us’ page presence
- Additional notes for further relevant details not captured in other fields

Using various grey literature as reviewed, these fields of enquiry have been populated. It is again worth noting that the snapshot of museums that were MoD funded in 2008 was recorded in March 2020 towards the start of the research, and thus represents a picture of the sector before the full effects of COVID-19 were felt. The complete output is set out in Appendix 2.

²⁴⁴ Executive Committee of the Army Board, *ECAB Policy*.

4.2 HISTORICAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

A key component of Chapter 1 is the exploration of the influence of key institutions in the early development of RCMs, and the network of individuals surrounding these institutions. It also informs the long-term understanding of the network through Chapter 2. The approach shifts the current historiography beyond a narrative history of RCMs to understand how support networks have reinforced the museums through their history. This approach uses aspects of prosopography and network science (social network analysis). This means conceptualising specific bodies, organisations or institutions and individuals as network ‘nodes’. The approach in this thesis conceptualised the person nodes as agenda-setters; those seeking to exert influence upon the shape of military and army history and heritage through various forms, including regimental museums. This includes channels of personal communication to orient the group in specific directions and writing journal articles to guide and push museums to focus on particular ways of preserving regimental heritage. Exploring the relevance and importance of individual agenda-setters on creating an environment in which regimental museums sought to develop a heightened understanding of the way in which the network of RCMs developed.

Prosopography is a long-established method in historical fields with key advantages for understanding different layers in the interconnections through historical research.²⁴⁵ In its form as a methodological approach it allows the use of ‘mostly scarce data’, to develop a detailed picture of ‘connections and patterns influencing historical processes.’²⁴⁶ It resembles biographical research and narrative approaches, such as oral histories, but the method enables one to move beyond the requirements of these approaches where the subjects are no longer living.²⁴⁷ This is accomplished by

²⁴⁵ D. C. Coles et al., 'Using Prosopography to Raise the Voices of Those Erased in Social Work History', *Affilia*, 33, 1 (2017), 85-97; K. Verboven et al., 'A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography', *Prosopography approaches and applications: a handbook* (Linacre College: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007) [eBook], 35-70.

²⁴⁶ Verboven et al., *A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography*, 37.

²⁴⁷ Coles et al., 'Using Prosopography', 86.

substituting these for a wide range of quasi-biographical sources, which can vary greatly depending on the subject matter, but Verboven et al., place a clear emphasis on the importance of using a range of sources to work from.²⁴⁸

This thesis draws on these approaches to explore a network of individuals and institutions through which influence was exerted in the formative years of RCMs. It presents the case that this early network directly contributed to the broader long term survival and at times, success. The approach worked outwards from two key nodes: one was a person, the other was an institution. The person was Lt.-Col. Sir Arthur Leetham, who in the few years prior to the establishment of the first RCMs in the 1920s, was deeply involved with several military historical and heritage institutions. The institution was the Society for Army Historical Research (SAHR). Investigation of archival sources pointed to the SAHR's importance in co-ordinating the early regimental museums before the Second World War. Kavanagh pointed to the importance of Leetham in her work, particularly through his involvement in the War Trophies Committee, the Local War Museum Committee and in advising the committee establishing the Imperial War Museum.²⁴⁹ Leetham was curator of another important institution—Royal United Services Institution (RUSI) Museum—for several years and at the same time set up the SAHR in 1921, acting as its first Chair. Working outwards from here by linking Leetham with other institutions and individuals—in particular, the SAHR founding members—began to illustrate an interconnected network of nodes across which information and influence may have flowed in the first two decades of the regimental and corps museums.²⁵⁰ This is explored in the research by thinking about important journals linked to both the SAHR and RUSI in which many interconnected nodes expressed ideas and opinions within the network.

²⁴⁸ Verboven et al., *A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography*.

²⁴⁹ See Chapter 8 in Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*.

²⁵⁰ The main sources used to build up the picture of the network, comprising primarily Army Lists, are identified separately in the bibliography, but have also, alongside other sources, been cited individually within the narrative of Chapters 1 and 2 where relevant.

The approach is not without its limitations, and amongst criticisms of similar network analysis approaches is the potentially arbitrary nature of the cut-off of the network under investigation.²⁵¹ In this thesis, the network analysis and prosopographical approach is one element in analysing that history to challenge some of the existing assumptions about the museums' development. As such, the biggest limitation to the analytical approach was a combination of time and the available evidence. In the window that was available for conducting the analysis, the evidence thinned out naturally as the network expanded beyond key individuals and institutions. In other words, the analysis had a limited remit to begin with, and thus the boundaries of investigation were dictated by external factors and not by a separate arbitrary decision. There were also limits to material accessible to the researcher during the research phase which constituted a gap in Army Lists between December 1919 and 1937. This means that the roles, ranks and positions within regiments reflect these years as being the closest available. The earliest listing of the governance body in the SAHR journal is Summer 1939.²⁵² It would have been more ideal to use the Army List from 1921, and the Army List and SAHR Governance body list from 1935 or 1936 (when the Museums Committee was set up, and co-ordination in a formal sense began). However, future work could look to take account of this network and expand further in looking more at individual RCMs and their connections with this network to deepen understanding of how influence was exercised and information was shared. The findings are largely set out in Chapter 1 but also inform aspects of Chapter 2. Other approaches in Chapter 2 included looking at the way that the amalgamations of regiments and corps through various War Office and MOD defence reviews influenced the broader shape of RCMs over time. The sources and approach for this

²⁵¹ N. Salkind, 'Encyclopedia of Research Design' (2010).

²⁵² An avenue of future research could seek to access Army Lists closer to the years explored, but the constraints of the present research window in line with factors set out in the introduction have required this proxy. During the research phase personal communication with the SAHR indicated that they did not have access at that time to the internal archives for much of the first 75 years of its existence. Should these archives become available in the future further work could supplement the understanding set out in this chapter.

are set out within the chapter and again utilise archival, contemporary and secondary sources.

4.3 INTERVIEWING AND SURVEYING NETWORK

A fundamental aim of the research was to understand how staff in particular were encountering and engaging with issues around colonial legacies. Interviews therefore focussed on reaching staff in the network across a range of roles including directors, curators and other collections staff. The interviews informed in turn the questions to be asked of those involved in the network more broadly, to include a wider range of staff through a short survey.

There was no fixed number of interviews set at the outset with the number of interviews determined instead by what was learned and how ideas were revised through the process. This reflected expert perspectives from qualitative interviewers collated by Baker and Edwards for the National Centre for Research Methods.²⁵³ Within this work, Becker's contribution concluded that: 'where you decide to stop will be somewhat arbitrary, probably more the result of running out of time or money or some similar mundane consideration than of some logical analytical procedure.'²⁵⁴ One participant per organisation represented was the aim and a wide catchment was important, but not essential, as the rationale was about experiences of individuals working within the network. The initial callout was made during a presentation of the project by the researcher at the NAM network conference in April 2021 which resulted in direct contact from a few interested participants initially. After this, a combination of direct invites to contacts within the network and a "snow-balling" approach (asking interviewees to suggest others to get in contact) gradually elevated the number of interviews completed up to the final total of 10. The timing of the data gathering stage during a critical summer re-opening of museums (following a series

²⁵³ S. E. Baker & R. Edwards, *How many qualitative interviews is enough?* (National Centre for Research Methods).

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 15

of pandemic lockdowns) meant already stretched staff time further impacted availability. A combination of a dwindling response rate, knowledge saturation, and deadlines and capacity demarcated the end point of the interview research phase.

McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl estimate that 1 hour of recorded data takes a novice 4-8 hours to transcribe.²⁵⁵ With the use of modern transcribing technology, this time can be brought down substantially. Interview time was estimated at around one hour, allowing enough time for a balance of structured and unstructured elements within each. However, a 90 minute commitment was agreed with interviewees to allow for preamble, rapport building, and any overrun. Qualitative interviewing methodology did not necessarily require a fully accurate transcription, as there was less emphasis on non-verbal communication, or other verbal forms (pauses etc.). Due to a combination of Covid and other constraints interviews were conducted through VoIP software, utilising the access to Microsoft Teams provided by the University of Hull. Recordings were made through Microsoft Teams, which has the capability to record though not in a lossless audio format, so recording was made in mp4 format. A piece of software called Descript was used to transcribe the audio, which was then edited manually to ensure accuracy. Audio was stripped from these recordings and the video element was disregarded as both unnecessary and to support preservation of anonymity. Whilst there were wider project constraints, which potentially impacted upon the number of interviews, ultimately these met the requirements of the research questions and methodology, and gave sufficient data to analyse and draw findings. It was also decided at an early stage that the questions tested through the interviews could be applied to a survey for wider distribution across the sector.

The interviews and survey gathered more data than was ultimately required in ensuring a refined analytical approach within the thesis. The most important data was in looking at colonial legacies in the museums and collections, and interweaves

²⁵⁵ C. McGrath et al., 'Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews', *Medical Teacher*, 41, 9 (2019), 1002-1006.

in Chapter 4 with an assessment of current debates. Furthermore in the process of developing this methodology it has routinely re-evaluated different approaches to determine what would best suit the research questions. The research and understanding, especially in the context of network, is at the leading edge. Understanding progressed and changed, and new understanding developed frequently through the research phase. As such it was important for primary research approaches to have flexibility, including that different interviewees were asked different questions, prompted on different lines of enquiry as the research progressed. The question prompts are set out in Appendix 5.

The interviews followed a semi-structured approach which combined entering the interview with a set of open-ended questions around experiences but allowing space to follow trajectories in other directions based on the responses given to the questions. The questions used are set out in the appendices, and the responses are analysed in relevant chapters in the thesis. Survey questions for the wider RCMs network were seen as important to help make the results more generalisable in terms of determining the extent to which the experiences of those interviewed reflected the wider sector. Questions were written on the basis of what lines of enquiry worked well in the interviews. In addition to some open questions, closed questions were asked about specific matters such as roles/responsibilities and exploring current activities. As with the interview data, the survey responses are utilised as relevant within the thesis.

4.4 EVALUATION OF CO-PRODUCTION

The historiography and Chapter 5 have looked at the various approaches which sit under the umbrella of co-production. The case study in Chapter 5 summarises such a project within an RCM setting, and evaluates it against other academic and museums sector approaches to co-production. Another dimension to this case study though draws upon these approaches and embeds the importance highlighted earlier of ensuring that this research informs practice in the network. In 2022 the researcher was

invited by the Highlanders' Museum to support a co-production project they were undertaking in relation to colonial legacies in their collections. This provided an excellent opportunity to feed learning from the research into an active co-production project within RCMs. But it also provided an excellent case study to explore all of these elements in practice, to demonstrate how they can support museum working in the future. An additional interview, with more focussed and specific questions, was conducted with the project lead in similar fashion to those discussed above. The findings from this interview informed aspects of the lessons learned in particular set out in Chapter 5.

5 STRUCTURE

In summary therefore, the roadmap for the thesis is predicated on exploring each component in turn to build up a picture of both the history of the network of RCMs and evaluate one of the key debates engaging museums more broadly today. Chapters 1 and 2 begin by exploring the narrative of the history of the network. Chapter 1's novel network analysis breaks open the existing narrative to offer a new perspective on the interconnection of key individuals and institutions connected to Army history and heritage. Chapter 2 continues the timeline to assess how amalgamations affected the museums, but both ultimately demonstrate that the network which was established has unbroken continuity with vital supporting institutions today, such as NAM and AMOT. Chapter 3 builds upon the expanded periodisation of Chapter 1 and its emphasis on considering the influence of colonial legacies on the museums and collections. It is informed by material culture approaches to develop a history of the museums through their collections, beyond the physical institutions. It uses case studies to look at key objects and events with complex and layered history to emphasise the importance of nuanced approaches to museum work, all of which is embedded in a history of looting to provide important context. Chapter 4 brings these issues forward to the present, to explore current debates around decolonisation in museums, to understand key terms, and

importantly, engage with staff in the network today to catalogue their perspectives on this topic. On the basis of this Chapter 5 emphasises the utility of co-production approaches and brings all these components together through a case study of a recent co-production project in a regimental museum. The case study seeks to highlight the benefits and challenges of these approaches and sets pathways for engaging with important debates in the museum world around colonial and imperial legacies in museums.

Chapter 1: RCMs Network History – Part 1

Establishment of museums and network

1 INTRODUCTION

The scope and effectiveness of these museums, the majority of which have been organized since the Great War, varies considerably [...]. They are the private concern of the Regiments who run them and while the Council have adopted a sympathetic attitude towards them, no expense in this connection has been allowed to fall against public funds.

A. E. Widdows C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary,
Department of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War, February 1936²⁵⁶

... a purely Regimental Museum is largely a personal matter. You may find an officer who is enthusiastic and may get the place shipshape, but you have no guarantee that his successor will be the same [...] the general public, which to my mind should be specially wooed, is often chary of entering the precincts of a barracks, the aloofness of which from the general life of the town has been symbolized by the formidable wall or spiked railings surrounding it.

Genius Loci, 'The idea behind a Regimental Museum'
Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research (SAHR), Autumn 1937²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ A. E. Widdows, *Letter to The Secretary, Treasury*, 1936 [Letter]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

²⁵⁷ *Genius Loci*, 'The idea behind a Regimental Museum', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 16, 63 (1937), 183-185. *Genius Loci* is a Latin term meaning 'the genius of the place', referring to the presiding deity or spirit, see <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095847893>

This first research chapter seeks to re-position understanding of the early years of RCMs. The introduction identified challenges that RCMs face today and this chapter seeks to better understand these challenges by setting them within their historical context. The challenges identified included the security of tenure of museums (as to their physical location), inconsistent support and funding from the MOD, and the late professionalisation of staff. The quotes above demonstrate how some individuals were reflecting on these challenges for regimental museums early on in their establishment. Widdows highlighted the innate variability in their 'scope and effectiveness' and in this context, the importance of using 'no expense[...] against public funds' in their support. Meanwhile, an anonymous writer in the SAHR Journal emphasised the precariousness of relying on enthusiastic officers to care for collections, and the intimidating nature of Army barracks—within which most regimental museums were initially housed—from an external public perspective. Expanding the historiography in this chapter will identify how challenges developed from the beginning, as did the network's resilience. This chapter also lays the groundwork for identifying the colonial legacies of the museums and their collections.

RCMs have always had a close association with the Army and were started invariably by the regiments and corps themselves. Their siting on Army land had its benefits, in particular, enabling significant geographic coverage of a key aspect of the UK's history. But as this chapter will show, it has also directly and indirectly contributed to challenges faced; products of the changing administrative and strategic functions of the Army. Thus, this chapter will demonstrate the extent to which the museums were affected by decisions largely beyond their control or influence. Exploring the impact of this close relationship lays important groundwork for the exploration of their colonial legacies in later chapters, understanding how the museums can inform a nuanced history of the British Empire and colonial expansion.

This chapter also contends that the RCMs Network—with its supporting bodies like the NAM and AMOT today—has actually existed as a 'network' since at least the

1920s with the earliest formal establishment of the museums. It also explores the way they became connected with a wider network over time. This network included individuals interested in military heritage, particularly officers with a service background, and bodies which interconnected the War Office with historical and heritage institutions. Establishment of RCMs almost immediately invited comment from those interested in setting agendas for how they should operate, how they should be developed, and importantly, who and what they were for. The network also fostered channels through which relevant expertise, experience, information, and support flowed freely, enabling the whole network's long-term resilience. Crucially, as this chapter and Chapter 2 will track, these connections continue operating with strength to the present day. This thesis contends that this network has overarching significance in ensuring the museums can support one another and share knowledge and experience in exploring imperial and colonial legacies in collections.

The history and development of RCMs have been frequently misunderstood and mischaracterised and this chapter seeks to address gaps, shortcomings and misperceptions identified in this thesis' historiography. The evidence employed in this chapter's analysis utilises a range of primary and secondary sources—including correspondence, policies, reviews, and briefing notes—from the War Office and successor department archives at the National Archives, ranging from the 1930s up to the 1990s. Some of this evidence has been recently declassified.²⁵⁸ Further evidence used includes articles from local newspapers to demonstrate the importance of local and county links between units, museums and communities. Journal articles from around the 1930s to the 1950s—contemporary to key events discussed in the chapter—are an important component of the network analysis as one key channel through which knowledge, expertise and influence flowed in the network. For example, early issues of the SAHR Journal from the 1930s included lists of the society's founding and

²⁵⁸ For example, WO 32/17449 at the National Archives (Kew), contains correspondence between Bayne, Edmonds, Widdows etc., on the subject of co-ordinating the museums (explored in depth in the next section). This file was opened (declassified) only in 2003.

governing members, the influence of whom is important in the network analysis. It also includes written contributions from many of these relevant individuals, allowing us to understand how they sought to set the agenda for RCMs. The historical analysis in this chapter is focussed upon identifying the origins of the network which supported the long-term success of RCMs. But it is also concerned with outlining how their early development set the groundwork for many of the challenges faced over time identified above.

Chapters 1 and 2 break up the narrative into distinct periods on the basis of the research undertaken. This chapter frames its understanding around the policy responses enacted by Government and Army establishments, often in response to conflicts and changing security climates. The impact of such events upon the structure of the Armed Forces has been more significant to the development of RCMs, rather than the events themselves. This chapter encapsulates the context and origins of the narrative, through to 1948 when a distinct shift in the opinion of the War Office about the museums occurred. Chapter 2 then addresses how the network continued to support the long-term survival of the museums in the face of increasing challenges. It ultimately emphasises the value and importance of detailed research using historical methods as essential for the exploration of colonial collections in Chapter 3 and informing approaches in museums and heritage in the remainder of the thesis.

2 PERIODISATION & METHOD

The core components to the analysis advanced across the first three research chapters involves a combination of the network analysis and expanding the period of examination. This approach is used to expand our understanding of the people, institutions and objects which formed the network of RCMs over time, setting the trajectory for the position of those museums today. The historiography outlined previous research approaches to the history of RCMs, which largely focussed on commencing analysis in the 1920s and 1930s. The AMOT network review from 2016

again demonstrated this understanding of an origin point 'largely... from the 1930s onwards.'²⁵⁹ The influence of the First World War and the establishment of the Imperial War Museum have been identified as contributing factors in the founding of RCMs.²⁶⁰ But other factors were also considered as important. Kavanagh and Jones for example focus on the development of *esprit de corps* in new recruits which Jones particularly emphasised.²⁶¹ Earlier works missed key pieces of evidence which were not available at the time of their research and writing, and so the availability of which has allowed a reassessment of aspects of the history of the network. The analysis of this chapter examines and questions some of these underlying assumptions with further archival evidence to test the assessments made. Expanding the existing periodisation to consider more of the historical context prior to the First World War allows us to explore the foundation of the regimental museums through the lens of the people, institutions (chapters 1 and 2) and objects (chapter 3) embedded in the expansion and preservation of the British Empire.

In conjunction with expanding the periodisation, this chapter also views the development of the museums as being at least in part embedded within the legacies of the British Empire, as well as a product of the reforms to the British Army in the 1870s and 1880s. These reforms made a sequence of fundamental changes to the form, structure and culture of the British Army, which are explored in detail in the next section. But the significance of these changes for the current analysis is in two key regards. The first is viewing the development of the museums through the lens of officers whose careers were shaped by these reforms. Officers who developed personally through these reforms invested their time in societies and committees that formed the foundation of the RCMs network. Members of this class of officer were embedded in supporting the expansion and preservation of the British Empire, and

²⁵⁹ Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*, 16.

²⁶⁰ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 145; Jones, 'Making Histories of Wars', 152.

fought in many of its key conflicts. But the structural changes also deepened geographic connections between regiments and their recruiting counties.

Further value in reapproaching the existing periodisation will become clear in Chapter 3. Seeing the museums as manifestations of ideas which developed prior to the First World War is important regarding their collections, particularly those elements collected through colonial and imperial conflicts. Limiting analysis only to the period after the development of the physical museums potentially implies that the objects within are associated directly with the physical museums, rather than anything which predates RCMs. The objects in reality have complex and layered narratives, with often competing interpretations, and their emplacement within RCMs is just one element of this biography. Expanding the analytical period allows the remainder of this thesis to explore the nuance of these objects in support of identifying pathways to approaching and engaging with their colonial legacies.

The approach of this chapter—utilising aspects of prosopography and network science (social network analysis)—is set out fully in the methodology. But broadly this chapter conceptualises specific bodies, organisations, institutions, and individuals as network nodes. Exploring the influence of institutions and the network of individuals surrounding them allows us to go beyond a narrative history to understand how support networks have reinforced the museums in the early development of the RCMs. The person nodes are conceptualised as agenda-setters and defined here as those who exerted influence directly or indirectly upon the shape of military history, and upon Army history and heritage. This network also directly contributed to the long-term success and survival of the museums. The full network map is set out below in **Error! Reference source not found.** which visually represents the network analysis conducted in researching this chapter.²⁶² Within the map, the

²⁶² The major sources used in the network analysis are identified separately in the bibliography, these are: H. G. Hart, *The New Annual Army List, Militia List, Yeomanry Cavalry List, and Indian Civil Service List, for 1881*. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1881); H. G. Hart, *The New Annual Army List,*

sizes of the circles correspond to the number of connections each node has. The method of the approach used means that this should not be seen as a statistical analysis because of the limitations discussed in the methodology. For example, the War Office node does not include all who worked at the War Office, but rather, includes those who were relevant in the context of other nodes of the analysis such as the SAHR and its connected nodes.

Militia List, Yeomanry Cavalry List, and Indian Civil Service List, for 1891. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1891); H. G. Hart, *The New Annual Army List, Militia List, Yeomanry Cavalry List, and Indian Civil Service List, for 1901.* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1901); H. G. Hart, *Hart's Annual Army List, Special Reserve List and Territorial Force List, for 1911.* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1911); *The Monthly Army List for December 1919.* (London: HMSO, 1919); *The Monthly Army List January 1937.* (London: HMSO, 1937); 'Front Matter', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 18, 70 (1939), i-ii; 'The Society of Army Historical Research', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 1, 1 (1921), 3-5; A. Leetham, 'Preface', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 1, 1 (1921), 1-2; A. Leetham, 'Provincial Museums and War Trophies', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 63, 453 (1919), 105-109; War Office Trophies Committee, *War Office Trophies Committee Interim Report, 1919* [Interim Report]. War Office: Reports, Memoranda and Papers (O and A Series), The National Archives, London; Lieut.-Colonel GS, *Minute Sheet: F.4(W) 30 July 1953, 1953* War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London; *Society for Army Historical Research 29th Annual General Meeting minutes, 1956* [Meeting minutes]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London; 'Captain Edward Altham, C.B., R.N', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 95, 580 (1950), 553-554; B. Bond, 'Creedy, Sir Herbert James (1878–1973), civil servant', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); B. Bond, 'Bridgeman, Robert Clive, second Viscount Bridgeman (1896–1982), army officer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); J. P. Harris, 'Massingberd, Sir Archibald Armar Montgomery- (1871–1947), army officer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); M. Carver, 'Templer, Sir Gerald Walter Robert (1898–1979), army officer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2011); Sabhal Mor Ostaig, *Iain Hamilton MacKay Scobie* Available online: <https://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/mackay-scobie/?lang=en> [Accessed 06/11/22].

Trophies Committee, the Local War Museum Committee and in advising the committee establishing the Imperial War Museum. Leetham was curator of the RUSI Museum for several years and concurrently established the SAHR in 1921, acting as its first Chair. Working outwards from here by linking Leetham with other institutions and individuals, and particularly the other SAHR founding members in the same way, demonstrated an interconnected network of nodes across which information and influence may have flowed in the first two decades of the RCMs. The nature of these links and what it meant for the network of RCMs and their future growth is a key focus of these first two research chapters. As such, the sections throughout this chapter will concentrate on aspects of the map in the analysis as relevant.

3 19TH CENTURY REFORMS & 20TH CENTURY IMPACT

The overarching understanding of the history of RCMs relies in part on a delayed product of Army reforms of the late 19th century. Cardwell's reforms of 1872-3 divided the UK into 66 sub-districts, and later under Childers in 1881 the numbering system that had prevailed in the British and English Army's organisational structure was eradicated entirely.²⁶³ The reforms paired up most regiments and removed their numbers to be replaced with typically new county or regional titles.²⁶⁴ Each regiment or pair of regiments would be assigned to a district, along with two Militia battalions, and any existing local Volunteer units. This formed a Brigade, and each sub-district would have a permanent depot for recruitment and training; a permanent home for each regiment for the first time.²⁶⁵ These depots later became the homes for the earliest regimental museums. A few still remain at these locations today, demonstrating the start of the close relationship between reforms of the Army and the emergence of what

²⁶³ E. Spiers, 'The Late Victorian Army 1868-1914', in D. G. Chandler & I. Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 187-210: 188-189.

²⁶⁴ H. Strachan, 'The British Way in Warfare', in D. G. Chandler & I. Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 399-415: 412.

²⁶⁵ French, *Military Identities*, 14.

became a network of museums. The discarding of the archaic numbering system demonstrated a level of importance applied to developing concrete links between the regiments and the local community towards fostering a sense of pride in the regiment. Although, as Strachan argues its importance was questionable.²⁶⁶ French similarly indicates that the geographic reforms were not well received at the time, but argues that 'within thirty years most regiments had settled down.'²⁶⁷ The close relationship between the museums and the Army, as we will see later in the timeline, had significant consequences for the museums and led to several of its key challenges.

Several aspects of Army reforms in the late 19th century had key impacts on the people and places associated with the Army and later RCMs. The context of the reforms by Edward Cardwell was predicated upon pressures from various angles in the 1860s to reform the regimental system.²⁶⁸ The practice of purchasing commission was abolished in the 1870s, which meant that officers had to remain with their regiment, and could not purchase commissions in others and transfer.²⁶⁹ French argued that '*Esprit de corps* was the product of long service in a single regiment.'²⁷⁰ French applied this to the rank and file (who could also not be cross-posted to other regiments under Cardwell's reforms) but we could certainly see that the same would have applied to officers. The background of officers changed in terms of their military careers, and within a few decades of the reforms 'officers and men had in many cases developed a fierce loyalty to what had become their military family.'²⁷¹ The network analysis demonstrates the role of these officers in forming the network, and it is likely that the 19th century reforms play a large part in this by fostering greater attachment and *esprit de corps*.

²⁶⁶ Strachan, 'The British Way in Warfare'.

²⁶⁷ French, *Military Identities*, 93.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 12

²⁶⁹ S. Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880–1918* [eBook] (n/k: Taylor & Francis, 2016); French, *Military Identities*, 16.

²⁷⁰ French, *Military Identities*, 10.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, 93

However, in the context of the museums, the extent to which *esprit de corps* has been important for anyone other than a small cadre of elite officer-gentlemen of the landed class is arguable. Kavanagh, Jones and others contended that a key originating purpose of the museums was for *esprit de corps*. However, in French's encapsulation of the concept and in what he calls the 'construction of the idea of the Regiment', the museums play no part.²⁷² French points to the role of Colonels in managing traditions, the regimental associations, regimental journals and histories and regimental colour standards (and other ephemera and symbology) in fostering *esprit de corps*.²⁷³ Notably absent from French's assessment in this context is the regimental museum and the evidence and assessment presented in this chapter reinforces their role for the public, rather than for the regiments and the generation of *esprit de corps*. This chapter contends that a broader picture of ideas of Empire combined with an identity-based community of like-minded officers with similar experience supported the establishment of a framework in which RCMs found their greatest institutional support.

This becomes particularly apparent in the case of individuals—conceptualised as key nodes in the network analysis—whose careers were affected by the significant reforms to the Army in the latter half of the 19th century. They were also participants in the Army's role in Imperial expansion, often embedded in colonial conflicts, and ingrained in the culture of Empire. Table 3-1 sets out some of the key individuals—founding members of the SAHR in 1921—whose careers were rooted in both the reforms and the engagement of such officers in colonial conflicts of the late 19th century.

²⁷² See *ibid* Chapter 4

²⁷³ *Ibid*, 79-89

Name	Rank(s)	Unit(s)	Notable conflicts/theatres
Gerald E. Boyle	Ensign (1858) Commanding Officer (RBde, 1891)	4 th Battalion Rifle Brigade	India ²⁷⁴
John Henry Leslie	Lieutenant (October 1877) Major (1895)	Royal Artillery Reserve of Officers	n/a ²⁷⁵
Harold Carmichael Wyllly	Lieutenant (1878) Lieutenant-Colonel (1900)	95 th (Derbyshire) Regiment Sherwood Foresters (45 th and 95 th)	Egypt (1882) India (Sikkim Expedition, 1888; North-West Frontier, 1897-8) ²⁷⁶
Arthur Leetham	2 nd Lieutenant (1880)	13 th Hussars 'Soudan Frontier Field Force'	Sudan (1880s) ²⁷⁷

Table 3-1: Networked individuals from analysis with key service history

These were a cohort of officers embedded in the reforms to the Army, who grew and developed through their lives as serving officers and gentlemen at a time when the nature of the relationship between officers and their regiments was changing.²⁷⁸ They were also participating during the height of Empire and Imperial expansion of the late Victorian era. Investment in the idea of Empire was essential, as the British Army formed a key element in an era defined not by defence of the British Isles (as it had in the 17th and 18th centuries), but by offensive expansion of territory and resources overseas (and defence thereof). French described this as an 'indoctrination' sustained after 1870 which would divorce recruits from their families to be embedded in the 'customs and practices of the army'.²⁷⁹ Spiers also described how:

Campaigning in Africa fulfilled desires for adventure and foreign travel that were among the more positive attractions of military service. These young soldiers saw sights in an exotic continent that

²⁷⁴ Hart, *Army List 1891*, 356.

²⁷⁵ Hart, *Army List 1901*, 557.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 305-306

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 576j

²⁷⁸ E. Spiers, *The Victorian soldier in Africa*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 148-149.

²⁷⁹ French, *Military Identities*, 62-63.

many of their families and friends would never do; they visited places in Egypt that they had only learned about from sermons and Biblical readings.²⁸⁰

Henry Newbolt's 1872 poem *Vitai Lampada* encapsulates the significance of this investment for soldiers and officers engaged in Imperial expansion:

The sand of the desert is sodden red, --
Red with the wreck of a square that broke; --
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'²⁸¹

Lister summarised that its power lies in 'a heady idealism mixed with a fatalistic idea of duty, the combination of which is one which is heart-breaking when exercised far from home and away from those one loves.'²⁸² Dighton highlights the role of race in these experiences as well, focussing on British officers in Egypt.²⁸³ He also draws attention to how 'hyper-masculinity' potentially fed into notions of superiority.²⁸⁴ RCMs would inevitably be products of this culture, set up as they were by the Army's regiments and corps. They would therefore be part of telling (or even obfuscating) these stories, emphasising the sacrifice of individuals in service of Imperial expansion. Conceptualisation of the foundational elements of the museums in this way creates space for slotting in the major players, the officer-gentlemen, who were also operators

²⁸⁰ Spiers, *The Victorian soldier in Africa*, 14.

²⁸¹ S. Lister, *The Haunting Beauty and Relevance of Vitai Lampada* Available online: <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Vitai-Lampada-Henry-Newbolt/> [Accessed 25/10/22].

²⁸² *Ibid*

²⁸³ A. Dighton, 'Race, Masculinity and Imperialism: The British Officer and the Egyptian Army (1882–1899)', *War & Society*, 35, 1 (2016), 1-18: 3.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 7

of a self-imagined superiority vested within them. We might interpret Mack's work as exploring the agency of objects as an extension of this perceived superiority in instances where the supremacy of the British Empire is brought into question in any way.²⁸⁵ Hartwell also covers important ground in this area, and describes how the objects taken or acquired fed into these senses of idealism combined with moral and cultural superiority. She wrote:

...objects and artefacts... were looted by soldiers in the aftermath of conflict – actions which are candidly described in campaign narratives – and thus can be designated as 'war trophies', and concurrently, symbols of military dominance. Other objects were acquired due to intellectual interests and a curiosity about other cultures – what Neil MacGregor has termed, 'the allure of the distant' – instead of an express desire for pillage, although it is important to acknowledge that such activities were still undertaken within the broader context of British cultural imperialism which was suffused with ideas of British cultural superiority.²⁸⁶

Hartwell softens the elements of dominance and cultural superiority somewhat, but exploring some of these sentiments of the cultural superiority of the officer-gentleman—perhaps Newbolt's player in the Imperial game—in detail provides important context in looking at the people behind the museums and the network. Peter Ekeh defined the fundamentals of colonialism as unsatisfied with only conquest, instead necessitating the stealing of the history of colonised peoples.²⁸⁷ Thus battlefield, and other forms of, collecting was not just about conquest, but also fitting the subjugated other and the vanquished ethno-cultural groups into the perceived

²⁸⁵ Mack, 'The agency of objects'.

²⁸⁶ N. M. Hartwell, 'A repository of virtue? The United Service Museum, collecting, and the professionalization of the British Armed Forces, 1829–1864', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 31, 1 (2019), 77-91: 83-84.

²⁸⁷ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Moral evil, economic good': *Whitewashing the sins of colonialism*.

racial hierarchy upon which expansion of the British Empire was predicated. In this context we consider the influence of agenda-setters on the form of the RCMs as they developed.

Regimental museums thus bridged local identities and recruitment patterns with the global reach of Empire and exploitation it wrought. But their form was also informed by other, older, military museums, shaped by Empire but also by ideas of what military museums should be. Collections originally of a more technical and instructive nature, such as the Royal Artillery Collection (Woolwich Arsenal) and the Royal Engineers Museum (Chatham), have been pointed at as a potential influence on early regimental museums.²⁸⁸ One of the oldest military museums, the Royal Artillery Museum opened to the public in 1820, in Woolwich, London. The collection however is far older, dating back to the 1770s and the development of a “Repository of Military Machines” by Captain William Congreve at the behest of George III.²⁸⁹ The history of the museum highlights its origins as an educational institution focusing on the science and practice of artillery for the men and officers of the Royal Artillery Regiment. The opening of the museum to the public followed not long after the museum had moved to The Rotunda at Woolwich. This was followed in 1838 by the opening of the Royal Artillery Institution, which was more specifically a library and museum for the regiment (as opposed to a technological museum). Another slightly later development was the Museum of the Corp of Royal Engineers which evolved gradually from a model room established at the RE school in 1812 as ‘trophies and curios,’ were added to it over time.²⁹⁰ Whilst these would have had clear relevance for other more technical collections they were possibly less relevant for regimental collections vested more in identity and themes centred on front-line fighting. Jones

²⁸⁸ Jones, 'Making Histories of Wars', 153.

²⁸⁹ The Royal Armouries, *The Royal Armouries in the Tower of London: History of the Royal Armouries* Available online: <https://royalarmouries.org/about-us/history-of-the-royal-armouries/history-of-the-royal-armouries-in-the-tower-of-london/> [Accessed 27/04/22].

²⁹⁰ Jones, 'Making Histories of Wars', 153.

points to the influence of the additional objects associated with General Gordon, presented with saint-like reverence, for museums displaying the material culture of Victorian Imperial heroes.²⁹¹ Kavanagh also identified institutions such as The Tower of London and Royal Armouries as important influences in this period.²⁹² However, the extent to which these collections influenced the form of regimental museums is largely overshadowed by more relevant institutions focussed more specifically on heritage and identity.

An institution which has been to some extent overlooked in its influence on the early RCMs in previous analysis is the Museum of the Royal United Services Institution (RUSI).²⁹³ The RUSI was founded in around 1834 as the Naval and Military Museum, becoming the United Service Institution in around 1839.²⁹⁴ This chapter contends that it was potentially the most important and influential of the pre-existing institutions due to the presence of key networked individuals, such as Leetham. Its close links with the SAHR—another key body in the network—is discussed in more detail in the next section. The precise history of the RUSI and its museum is not within the remit of this research, but a brief consideration of the nature of its collection is important in the context of its position as an influence on the early regimental museums.²⁹⁵ The RUSI Journal was first published in 1857, and the Institution received its Royal Charter in 1860.²⁹⁶ The collection could easily be described as an eclectic mix of objects, especially until the 1870s when a partial rationalisation was undertaken.²⁹⁷ The RUSI Museum, as a collector of broad regimental ephemera and a general military curatorial interest, positions it amongst others as a collection that most closely resembles what

²⁹¹ *Ibid*

²⁹² Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 24.

²⁹³ Now the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies.

²⁹⁴ S. Bidwell, 'The Royal United Services institute for defence studies 1831–1991', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 136, 2 (1991), 69-72.

²⁹⁵ See J. Grainger in Army Museums Ogilby Trust, *Annual Review 2019-20*, 19-21.

²⁹⁶ Bidwell, 'The Royal United Services institute for defence studies 1831–1991'.

²⁹⁷ D. Erskine, 'The Historical Collections of the R.U.S.I', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 114, 653 (1969), 64-65.

was contained within early regimental museum collections, for example Regimental Colours.²⁹⁸ The RUSI Museum closed in 1962 and the mechanism and relevance of the dispersal of its collection is discussed further in Chapter 2.²⁹⁹ Nonetheless, it was potentially the most likely candidate on which regimental museums might be modelled, and its dispersed collections in part later formed the NAM collection. Its role is accentuated through Leetham who—as we will see in more detail in the next section—created a pivotal foundation upon which co-ordination of the network was established. Through these interrelationships the history of the entire network can be traced.

4 1920-1936

Any new analysis of this period should carefully examine existing hypotheses as to the timing of the appearance of formal regimental museums after the First World War. Kavanagh and Jones both see the development and opening of the Imperial War Museum in London as a key catalyst for regimental museums.³⁰⁰ The IWM first opened to the public in 1920.³⁰¹ This forms a good starting point in dividing the pre- and post-war situation in this analysis, especially as Thwaites argues that the ‘first’ regimental museum—of the East Yorkshire Regiment—opened in the same year.³⁰² But as the previous section has shown in part, research into the connection between officers, museums and the collections may better explain the timing. The network of individuals and institutions were pivotal in co-ordinating and supporting the early regimental museums particularly in the latter part of the period 1920 to 1939.

We see in the network analysis Charles Ffoulkes’ proximity to the network. Ffoulkes had taken over as Keeper of the Tower Armouries from Lord Dillon in 1913 and

²⁹⁸ R. Holden, 'Regimental Colours in the Museum of the Royal United Service Institution', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 39, 212 (1895), 1002-1019.

²⁹⁹ Bidwell, 'The Royal United Services institute for defence studies 1831–1991'.

³⁰⁰ Jones, 'Making Histories of Wars'; Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial'.

³⁰¹ Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial', 92.

³⁰² Thwaites, 'Presenting Arms'.

safeguarded the collection during the First World War and beyond.³⁰³ Ffoulkes also played a key role in the establishment of the Imperial War Museum, and served as its first curator. On the surface someone like Ffoulkes could well have been a key influence, but the extent of interpersonal networking is far more limited as compared with Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Leetham. Ffoulkes had close associative links with Leetham through the National War Museums Committee, but the two had very different opinions on the subject of the IWM.³⁰⁴ While Ffoulkes was a key proponent of the IWM project, Leetham was one of its key detractors, and was much more invested in the idea of a network of local war museums.³⁰⁵ Leetham's importance in this period has been acknowledged by those such as Kavanagh, but focus has been on his involvement with the War Trophies Committee and IWM.³⁰⁶ Leetham's role was pivotal within the network in part due to his extensive connections to bodies and institutions linked to the heritage of the First World War. The War Trophies Committee and the Local War Museums Association had responsibility for aspects of the military heritage of the First World War and Leetham sat on both.³⁰⁷ He also sat on the National War Museum Committee which had oversight of the development of the Imperial War Museum project. Beyond this though, Leetham was also Curator of the RUSI Museum and later Director of the RUSI itself. Crucially, he founded, along with other colleagues, the SAHR and sat as its first Chair in 1921.³⁰⁸ It was the RUSI which played host to the SAHR in its early years, and the connection between the two is important within the network analysis (see Figure 4-1). The significance of Leetham's networking in establishing and developing key bodies in the study of military history and heritage in the 20th century cannot be understated.

³⁰³ The Royal Armouries, *The Royal Armouries in the Tower of London: History of the Royal Armouries*.

³⁰⁴ Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial', 82.

³⁰⁵ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 102-103.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*

³⁰⁷ See Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial'; Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*.

³⁰⁸ 'The Society of Army Historical Research'.

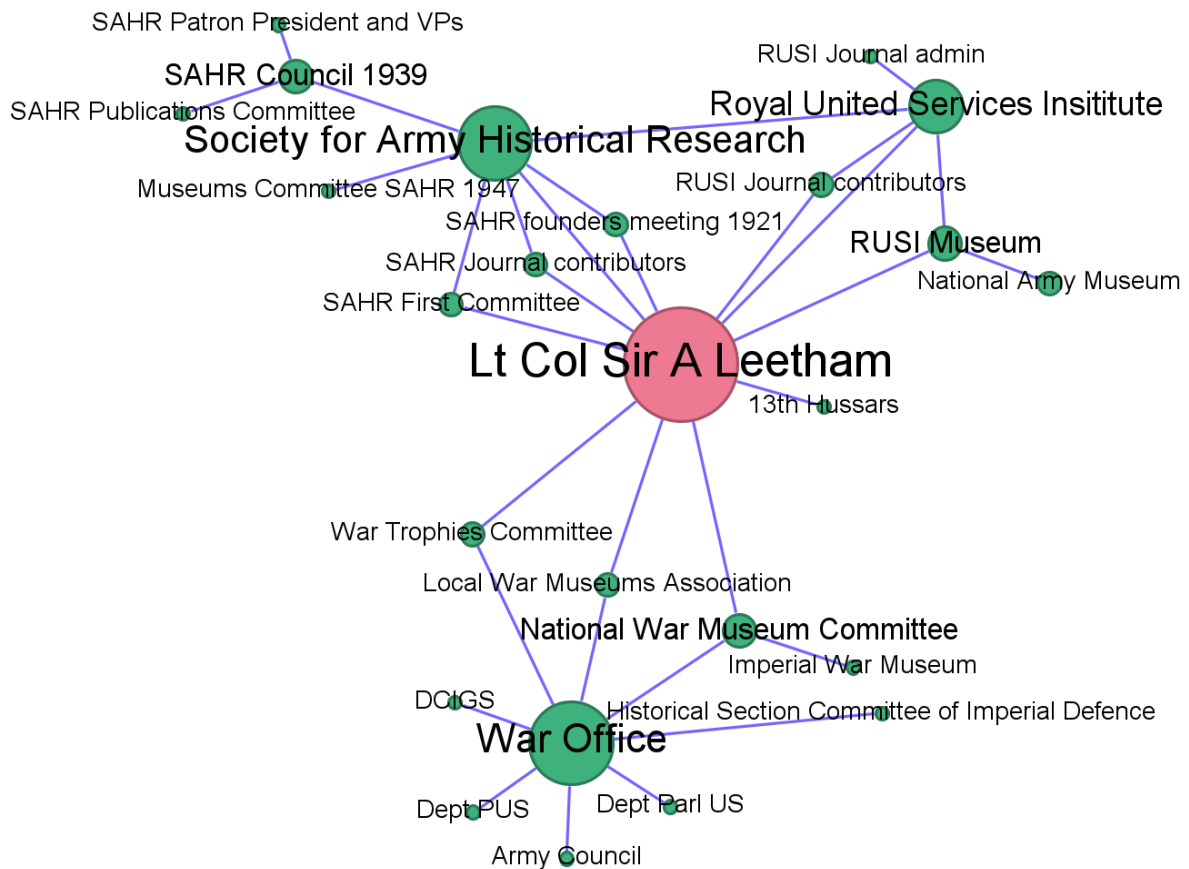


Figure 4-1: Network Map focus on significant connections from Arthur Leetham

Leetham was far more influential within the network surrounding early regimental museums, and as such the RUSI is a far more likely influence on form and structure than the IWM. The RUSI Museum was the most important model after which individual museums might form themselves on the basis of Leetham’s prolific networking and significance thereafter. The importance of the RUSI increased over time with the establishment of the SAHR by Leetham and colleagues. This marked the start of the network into which regimental museums became situated soon, if not immediately, after they were established. This group of founders at the SAHR arguably set the agenda for the network, especially after the 1930s, and supported an environment in which the number of museums grew exponentially.

The extent of networking between individuals across institutions in the 1920s and 1930s points to a co-ordinated group of agenda-setters who worked to develop an environment in which regimental museums were able to flourish. It may have been that this network provided the museums a degree of confidence to regimental collections to operate more formally. Certainly the SAHR early on had been a potential source for this, evidenced by the volume of enquiries that the SAHR received in its first decade or so, which culminated in the establishment of its Museums Committee in 1936.³⁰⁹ It increasingly published articles on RCM matters, until eventually creating a standalone Museums Supplement from 1949, further detailing the collections, features, conditions and issues of many regimental museums in the network.³¹⁰ Some members of this network, as founders of the SAHR, had connections to regiments and corps they had served with, but also to a range of bodies (and other network members) pertinent to the origins of RCMs as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** below. The service history of some of these individuals and their units (see Table 3-1 in the previous section) also demonstrates a wealth of experience in colonial conflicts.

³⁰⁹ J. E. Edmonds, *Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War, 1935* [Letter]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

³¹⁰ See L. E. Buckell, 'Museums in Northern Ireland', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 1 (1949), i-vi. and H. P. E. Pereira, 'The Scottish Regimental Museums', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 1 (1949), vi-viii. for the first articles in this series.

The assessment that the establishment of regimental museums was temporary or spontaneous is only part of the story, and the inclusion of an investigation of broader networks (including Leetham and the SAHR) points at a situation which quickly supported permanence and longevity on the part of the museums. Leetham's interest in the display of military material from the First World War in local museums and the network which evolved from his interest in military heritage formed vital groundwork for regimental museums in their initial growth. The advocacy of Brigadier-General J. E. Edmonds, who later became a Council member of this society, was an important development through the SAHR's co-ordinating role in the 1930s. Later, the establishment of bodies which became significant in the latter years of the network—including the AMOT and the NAM—display significant networking with earlier bodies such as the SAHR. The rapid growth in the number of regimental museums in the 1920s and 1930s, along with the level of interconnection and communication brings earlier assessments into question.

This assessment of transience also falls short when looking at the role that some younger members of the SAHR founding meeting played, who were still serving in its Council in the late 1930s. Table 4-1 sets out an overview of relevant information about some of the individuals within this grouping.

Name	Rank/Position(s)	Unit/Organisation	Relevant notes
Robert J. L. Ogilby	2 nd Lieutenant (1900) Lieutenant (Reserve of Officers, 1914) Temp. Lieutenant-Colonel (1916)	4 th (Royal Irish) Dragoons 2 nd Life Guards London Scottish (14/The London Regiment,	India ³¹² First World War
H. Oakes-Jones	Captain Civil Servant	Royal Fusiliers War Office: Hon. Advisor, Military Displays	First World War ³¹³
H. G. Parkyn	Captain Brevet Major	5/Rifle Brigade (Reserves) War Office Trophies Committee	Later Staff College, Camberley Librarian ³¹⁴
Wilfred Y. Baldry	Civil Servant	War Office: Librarian ³¹⁵	
A. S. White	n/k Civil Servant	6 th London Field Ambulance War Office: Assistant/Deputy Librarian	First World War ³¹⁶

Table 4-1: Younger members of SAHR founders and information about roles and ranks

As the table shows, some of these individuals had military service abroad or at home (largely confined to the First World War) while others focussed on political careers, and then later occupied influential positions within the War Office (see Figure 4-3 below). This highlights lines of inter-generational co-operation and interaction between these groups in the area of military history and heritage. This suggests that an inter-generational shared interest was an important factor in preserving and presenting military heritage over the long-term. Those with practical military experience built up in the reforms of the Army, and its conflicts of the late 19th century, engaged with younger individuals interested in carrying forward the work started in the 1920s. There was clearly some role for this network in maintaining an influx of members as time passed. Thus when the network is considered as part of the founding

³¹² Hart, *Army List 1901*, 138.

³¹³ *The Monthly Army List for December 1919; The Monthly Army List January 1937*, 15.

³¹⁴ *The Monthly Army List January 1937*, 920.

³¹⁵ A. S. W., 'Mr. W. Y. Baldry', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 44, 177 (1966), 18.

³¹⁶ D. W. K., 'Mr. A. S. White', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 50, 202 (1972), 120.

of RCMs, the potential for longevity is demonstrated in the network's involvement in younger interested officers.

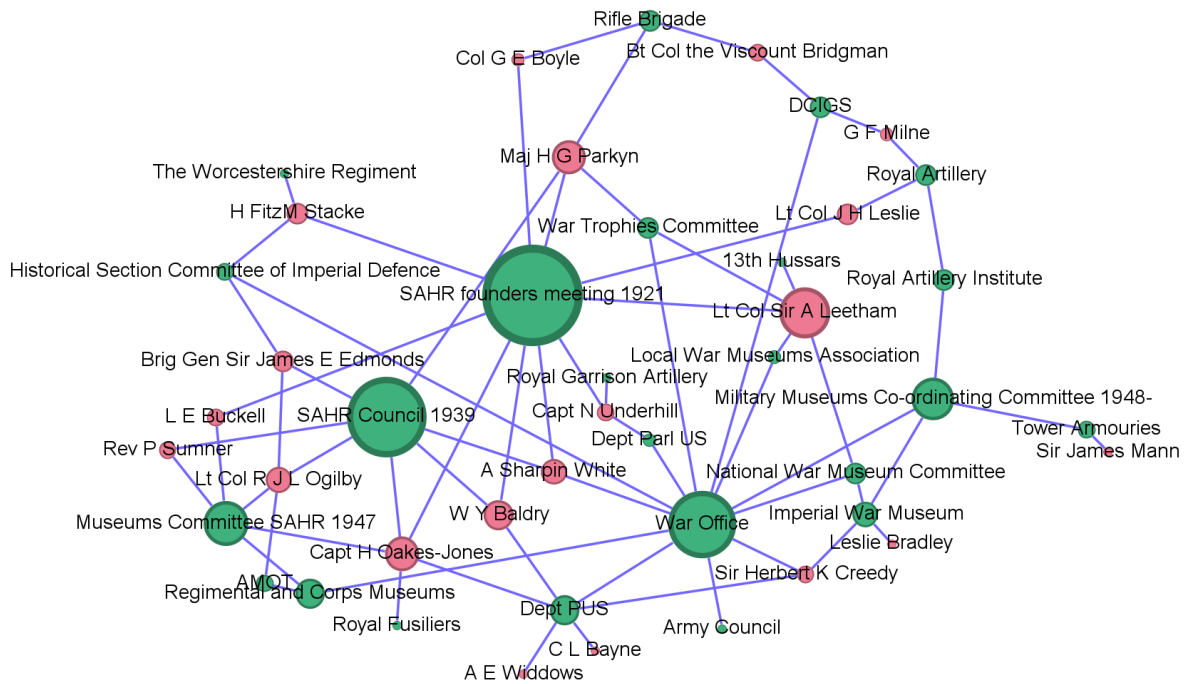


Figure 4-3: Network Map focus on significant connections amongst SAHR Council members 1939

In the first decade of the establishment of the regimental museums their position was not widely considered material to the War Office's perception of military heritage. There was also a recognised lack of clarity regarding other extant military historical and heritage institutions. Lord Cottesloe was commissioned by the War Office to produce a review of Military Museums in the late 1920s. The remit of the review was set out within the committee's Interim Report:

To review the distribution of military weapons and equipment in the Armouries of the Tower of London, the Imperial War Museum and the various establishments under the control of the War Department, and to report what (if any) re-arrangement or re-allocation of the several exhibits is advisable, in order that the collections may be of the greatest

value to the technical and historical student, and that any unnecessary overlapping or duplication may be avoided.³¹⁷

The review set out a series of recommendations and clarifications in regard to collections and practices across the main museums responsible to the War Office directly or indirectly. These were the Tower of London, the Imperial War Museum, and ‘the various War Department establishments’, including the Rotunda at Woolwich.³¹⁸ Thus the frame of reference was particularly narrow in what it considered. In a primary sense, consideration of the War Office related institutions already largely constrained the geographic coverage of Cottesloe’s work to Greater London. Additionally, the extant regimental museums—of which according to Kavanagh, citing Lieutenant Colonel Cowper, there were at least 14—were notably absent from its remit.³¹⁹ The Committee’s focus was confined to exhibits of a predominantly instructional benefit, and specifically at national institutions in ignorance of the emerging group of regimental museums. This was in spite of the Committee’s awareness of them, as the Chief of the Imperial General Staff at the time, Sir George Milne, is indicated in the meeting as raising the topic.³²⁰ He suggested that ‘surplus stores’, particularly from the IWM and the Tower Armouries, which were ‘educational’ or ‘sentimental’ in nature might be ‘acceptable to those regiments which

³¹⁷ Committee on Military Museums, *Interim Report of the Committee on Military Museums*, 1927 [Report]. Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries (d’Abernon Commission): Records, The National Archives.

³¹⁸ Army Council, *Minutes of Proceedings, Report of Lord Cottesloe to Committee on Military Museums*, 1930 Ministry of Defence (Army): Registered Files and Branch Folders, The National Archives. For reference the Cottesloe report defined the roles thus: The Rotunda at Woolwich was indicated as being the ‘home of a technical Military Museum of Ordnance.’ The Imperial War Museum was indicated as being the ‘home of a technical Military Museum of Small Arms’. Meanwhile the Tower Armouries was indicated as being a ‘repository of all weapons, both ordnance and small arms, which possessed solely an antiquarian interest and were of no value from a technical standpoint.’

³¹⁹ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 145.

³²⁰ The Chief of the Imperial General Staff was the First Military Member of the Army Council (the Army’s administrative commanding body, the President of which was the Secretary of State for War), and the head of the British Army. This role became the Chief of the General Staff after 1964.

maintain regimental museums.’³²¹ The RUSI Museum is also absent from consideration, being independent of the War Office, although in 1930 Sir Charles Ffoulkes gave evidence to the Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries in regard to the RUSI’s potential crossover with the Imperial War Museum.³²² By the end of the 1920s the early regimental museums were not considered material to the heritage and history of the Army from the perspective of the War Office. However, they were on the radar of some individuals at the War Office. Furthermore, rapid growth in the number of museums over the next five years, and persuasion from agenda-setters such as Edmonds, led the War Office to begin to take them more seriously.

The number of regimental museums grew rapidly in the first two decades of their collective formal existence, but the causes are unclear. The number of regimental museums increased dramatically from 14 by the end of the 1920s to 56 extant museums by the Summer of 1935.³²³ The reasons for this rapid growth are not clear from the archival evidence available to and explored by this research to date. It is possible that the intricate interconnection at the top-level, shown in the network analysis, was repeated across regiments, such that the idea of establishing museums spread from one to another in a form of copying or competing.³²⁴ Further work is

³²¹ Army Council, Minutes of Proceedings, Report of Lord Cottesloe to Committee on Military Museums

³²² Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries, *Minutes of Evidence*, 1928 [Minutes]. Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries (d’Abernon Commission): Records, The National Archives.

³²³ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 145. Kavanagh citing figures from Cowper, 1935. Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

³²⁴ As mentioned above, it has not been possible to determine the exact reasons for the rapid growth at this stage. An avenue of further research to understand the nature of interconnection at lower and more dispersed levels would be to explore correspondence which might be held in regimental museum administrative-type archival collections. This correspondence may point towards interested Colonels and other Officers, communicating with those who had already set up museums, as a potential point of influence in this rapid growth. Inter-personal meetings, such as visiting Officers’ Messes or other types of visits may also be a channel of influence though harder to measure. Another avenue could potentially be the archives of the SAHR which may hold the initial requests for advice and guidance from the early regimental museums and collections.

needed to explore the connections between the museums themselves, but as a collection 'tribes,' inter-regimental (and even inter-battalion) rivalry was a key element of their culture, demonstrated by the various literal inter-unit competitions held for shooting, running and other sports (many RCMs hold the trophies for such competitions).³²⁵ This thesis advances the idea that the overarching network explored in this chapter was a significant contributing factor, particularly as the framework of support already forming at the SAHR would have fostered an environment of growth.³²⁶

The dedicated publications included within the network map (**Error! Reference source not found.**) were important channels of communication through which internal debates on the collection and care of objects, location and accommodation, and staffing occurred. They enabled the transfer of advice, expertise, and the exertion of influence by those attempting to be agenda-setters. We see in the network the potential for the exertion of influence to support the interests of agenda-setters within the network over matters such as the museums. There are two main publications of interest within the network. The first is the more senior RUSI Journal, which was edited by Colonel Henry Carmichael Wylly (an SAHR founder) during the First World War and into the 1920s. The second is the more junior SAHR Journal itself, established in 1921, with Army history being its focus (whereas the RUSI Journal covered all Service branches).³²⁷ The publications facilitated internal debate across a range of subjects, including museums. The next few paragraphs explore some examples of these debates in more detail.

Journal articles also formed an important way in which influence was exercised throughout the early network on the topic of regimental museums. The SAHR and its

³²⁵ M. Brown, 'Whose Heritage? Archaeology, Heritage and the Military', in P. G. Stone (ed.), *Cultural Heritage, Ethics, and the Military* (Boydell & Brewer; Boydell Press, 2011) [eBook], 129-138: 130; Spiers, *The Victorian soldier in Africa*, 148.

³²⁶ H. G. Parkyn, 'Regimental Museums', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 77 (1932), 855-856.

³²⁷ 'The Society of Army Historical Research'.

journal were developed to enable veteran and serving soldiers to ‘ask for and receive information about matters connected with regiments,’ and it was Leetham’s (the SAHR’s founding Chair) vision for it to be a ‘medium of inter-communication,’ in the subject area.³²⁸ It was a logical step then, that the SAHR became the obvious choice for co-ordinating the museums which developed in the decades after its establishment. The journal announced the SAHR’s co-ordination committee—the Museums Committee—in its 1937 issues.³²⁹ After this point it began featuring articles and discussion on the subject, including on their necessity, purpose, focus, and on maintaining their collections.³³⁰ Though never directly involved with the RUSI Museum or SAHR committee, Charles Ffoulkes (Tower Armouries Keeper) was also a contributor to the SAHR journal, and wrote on the subject of collections care which may likely have been of great benefit to early regimental curators.³³¹ Beginning in around 1932, the Journal of the RUSI also included articles and published correspondence discussing the matter of the museums.³³² The contributors and their articles for both publications feature variously in the network diagram as members crossed several organisations, for example Captain H. Oakes-Jones who wrote for the SAHR, was on its Council in 1939, and worked in the PUS Department at the War Office. Contributions from those such as Ffoulkes demonstrates the ways in which information flowed in the formative years of regimental museums. But the journals also formed important channels for agenda-setters to attempt to influence the early regimental museums.

³²⁸ Leetham, 'Preface'.

³²⁹ 'Museums Committee', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 16, 61 (1937a), 25; 'Museums Committee', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 16, 63 (1937b), 182.

³³⁰ For examples see, Bulloch, 'The Necessity for Regimental Museums'; Genius Loci, 'The idea behind a Regimental Museum'; H. Oakes-Jones, 'Notes on Regimental Museums', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 17, 68 (1938); C. Ffoulkes, 'Notes on the cleaning of arms and armour', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 16, 63 (1937).

³³¹ Ffoulkes, 'Notes on the cleaning of arms and armour'.

³³² L. I. Cowper, 'The Making of a Regimental Museum', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 77, 507 (1932), 578-585; Parkyn, 'Regimental Museums'; R. L. Sherbrooke, 'Regimental Depots', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 77, Feb (1932), 571-577.

As early as 1930 key individuals within the network began to speculate, debate and record how they felt the agenda for regimental museums should be directed. Lieutenant-Colonel L. I. Cowper wrote an article for the RUSI Journal in 1932 on the subject of regimental museums.³³³ Cowper was part of the younger cohort within the network (in relation to the senior founders of the SAHR for example), joining the King's Own Royal Regiment in around 1901 as a 2nd Lieutenant. Cowper combined his interest in military heritage with his attachment to his regiment, authoring an extensive history and donating objects to his regiment's museum collection.³³⁴

In his article, Cowper's key and opening point related to the location of regimental museums and the challenges and opportunities faced in this regard. He wrote:

A regimental museum must be housed in a permanent home since exhibits cannot be moved from place to place. In addition, if such a museum is to grow, as it must if it is to be of any value, every individual connected with the regiment concerned must know the place to which additional material can be sent. For these reasons regimental museums, almost without exception, are situated in regimental depots where they are of great assistance in bringing home to the recruit the history and traditions of his regiment. Also in most depots it is possible to find a room or rooms which can be set aside for the purpose without cost to the regiment. On the other hand, depots are usually situated on the outskirts of towns and are not readily accessible to the general public, so that even if the existence of the museum is known, the number of visitors is not likely to be great.³³⁵

³³³ Cowper, 'The Making of a Regimental Museum'.

³³⁴ King's Own Museum, *Collections: Annual Acquisition Records 1951-1955* Available online: [Accessed 29/11/22]; L. I. Cowper, *The King's Own. The story of a royal regiment, from material supplied by members of the Regimental Historical Sub-Committee. vol. 3.* Oxford : University Press, 1939, 57., 1939).

³³⁵ Cowper, 'The Making of a Regimental Museum', 578.

Cowper's assessment highlights that challenge of their location—an important point in the analysis of the current network position—beset RCMs virtually from their founding. Early on there was clear awareness of the opposing arguments around location, between being located in the centre of conurbation, or being located at the regimental depot (which may be further out of town). Major H. G. Parkyn wrote into the Journal to respond to Cowper's assessment. Parkyn, as outlined earlier, was another younger member of the network, becoming a Captain in the 5th Battalion (Reserve) of the Rifle Brigade in around 1908 (around age 22). He focussed on what he saw as shortcomings in Cowper's article. He argued that there was also a lack of appreciation in this context for contingency planning when located at the depots, should the regiment be moved or mobilised.³³⁶ He also drew attention to the issue of co-location with local museums in making it clear in documentation that regimental objects were the property of the regiment, and therefore on loan.³³⁷ The debate between Cowper and Parkyn also highlights key challenges around purpose, in terms of who the museums were for: the regiment or the public. Cowper drew upon the museum of his own regiment which was situated with the town museum in Lancaster. He argued that proximity to the centre of a conurbation provided significant benefits in encouraging visitation from the general public. Cowper acknowledged though that this was not without its own complications in terms of managing the relationship between the regiment, the museum (and its collection) and the local authority museum service.³³⁸

Parkyn's motivation to engage in keen debate through the network journals may have been a product of his association with the processes of Army heritage over several years. Though Parkyn did not serve abroad in the First World War, in 1919 he was seconded to the War Office to serve as Secretary in the War Trophies Committee (of which Sir Arthur Leatham was a member) under W. R. W. The Viscount Peel

³³⁶ Parkyn, 'Regimental Museums', 855.

³³⁷ *Ibid*

³³⁸ Cowper, 'The Making of a Regimental Museum', 578.

(descendent of Sir Robert Peel, 19th century Prime Minister).³³⁹ Parkyn was well-networked as a founding member of the SAHR who served in its first Committee in 1921, and he was still serving as a Council member well into the 1930s. As with Cowper, Parkyn later also penned an extensive history of his regiment.³⁴⁰ Potentially drawing on this experience, he also highlighted in his response to Cowper the importance of good collections care practice, including awareness of light (UV) damage, the over-cleaning of objects and the necessity of comprehensive insurance. He argued that:

The appointment of a good curator is essential. The employment of some ex-N.C.O. or private soldier to keep the rooms clean is not sufficient.³⁴¹

The challenge of professional qualification—curatorial skills—is again highlighted as one which has affected the museums virtually from their founding. The nature of the staffing provision for the museums has been a challenge which the museums have faced widely until recent decades, and Parkyn clearly saw the shortcomings in this regard from their earliest days.

Several other contributors to the institutional journals were members of the SAHR's founders (1921) and represent important nodes in the network which were linked forward in time to the Council in the 1930s, in the same manner as Parkyn. W. Y. Baldry and Captain H. Oakes-Jones helped to found the SAHR and its Journal, and both became keen contributors on matters which interested them, including commenting on the form and function of regimental museums in some instances.³⁴²

³³⁹ Leetham, 'Provincial Museums and War Trophies', 109.

³⁴⁰ H. G. Parkyn, *The Rifle Brigade Chronicle for 1932*. 1933).

³⁴¹ Parkyn, 'Regimental Museums', 856.

³⁴² W. Y. Baldry, 'Numbering of Regiments', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 5, 16 (1926), 23-24; W. Y. Baldry & A. S. White, 'Disbanded Regiments. The 100th Foot', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 1, 5 (1922), 205-211; Oakes-Jones, 'Notes on Regimental Museums'; H. Oakes-Jones, 'Temporary Cases for the Protection of Exhibits', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 17, 66 (1938), 123-124; H. Oakes-Jones, 'Notes on the Care, Preservation and Cleaning of Exhibits', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 17, 65 (1938), 59-62.

They later served at the War Office as Librarian and as the Honorary Adviser, Military Displays respectively. Another founding member of note was Major H. FitzMaurice Stacke of the Worcestershire Regiment, who made write-in contributions to the RUSI Journal and gave lectures on aspects of military uniform in the 1930s.³⁴³ Around this time Stacke served at the Historical Section under J. E. Edmonds—the significance of whom is explored in detail shortly—working on the War Office’s official history of the First World War. Of note was an exchange of letters published within the SAHR Journal between Stacke and one Major Iain Hamilton Mackay-Scobie following the former’s writing and lectures.³⁴⁴ Mackay-Scobie is notable within the network in his own capacity as the founder of the Scottish National Military & Naval Museum at Edinburgh in 1930, for which he was honorary curator for over 15 years.³⁴⁵ Through the 1930s, the exchange of ideas by agenda-setters on the subject of military history and regimental museums within journals gradually increased. While the journals were facilitating debate by agenda-setters, a key development in the network came in the mid-1930s when some individuals sought to consolidate support for the growing group of museums and further influence their direction of travel.

Journals were not the only avenue through which individuals sought to set the agenda for the early regimental museums. The first major review of regimental museums came in 1935 from J. E. Edmonds. Edmonds was also an SAHR Council member in the 1930s and since 1919 had been working at the Historical Section (Military Branch, Committee of Imperial Defence).³⁴⁶ It was chiefly Edmonds’ responsibility for overseeing the War Office official history of the First World War following the conclusion of the conflict. The process of authoring the history is catalogued

³⁴³ H. F. Stacke, 'The Shako', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 76, 503 (1931), 534-547; H. F. Stacke, 'Uniforms of the British Army', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 78, 512 (1933), 779-795; H. F. Stacke, 'Uniforms of the British Army', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 79, 513 (1934), 110-125.

³⁴⁴ I. H. MacKay-Scobie & R. F. K. Wallace, 'Uniforms of the British Army: Black Watch Uniform', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 13, 50 (1934), 121-123.

³⁴⁵ Sabhal Mor Ostaig, *Iain Hamilton MacKay Scobie*.

³⁴⁶ C. Falls & H. C. G. Matthew, *Edmonds, Sir James Edward (1861–1956), military historian*. 2004).

elsewhere, but it was critiqued by other historians (such as Liddell-Hart, another SAHR Council member in the 1930s) and Edmonds sought to exact a specific agenda in the construction of the official history.³⁴⁷ As Director of the Historical Section, Edmonds was embedded in military history and heritage, which made it a natural step to review the position of the growing establishment of regimental museums across the UK. The network which had developed from the SAHR began to have a clearer impact on the regimental museum agenda at this point. Edmonds' review was supported in its production by Lieutenant-Colonel Robert J. L. Ogilby (later Colonel) who had a close association with Edmonds, and was also on the SAHR Publications Committee. The importance of the link between Ogilby and the SAHR, and the broader network fostered by Leetham and others cannot be overstated, especially considering the role that Ogilby would have in the establishment of AMOT in the 1950s.

During the Summer of 1935 Ogilby visited many extant regimental museums.³⁴⁸ Ogilby's data begins to quantifiably bring into question who the museums were really for. Edmonds reported Ogilby's findings thus:

He found them housed in a variety of buildings, from a locked barrack room, the key of which was kept in the guard room, to public buildings open the greater part of the day. Some, though housed in Government premises, were not open to the public.³⁴⁹

Ogilby also reported on museum attendance, which varied significantly from as low as 50 or 60, up to 40-50,000 visitors per annum, demonstrating public demand for visiting the museums. The latter figures were for the King's Own Royal Regiment

³⁴⁷ D. French, "'Official but not History'? Sir James Edmonds and the official history of the great war', *The RUSI Journal*, 131, 1 (1986), 58-63.

³⁴⁸ It has not at this stage been possible to determine exactly why Ogilby undertook this work at this time, and is potentially an avenue of minor enquiry in the future.

³⁴⁹ Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

located in the castle at Lancaster.³⁵⁰ When this museum was opened in the Old Town Hall in Lancaster in 1929, it was attended by Lord Derby who read a statement from the King.³⁵¹ This opportune location in the centre of Lancaster yielded more than 245,000 visitors in total by June 1935, and the museum remains co-located with the City Museum nearly a century later.³⁵² This data to some extent reinforces the assessment of L. I. Cowper, discussed above, in terms of the benefits of closer proximity to centres of conurbation. The overall picture is of a well-established if largely disparate group, as shown in Figure 4-4. The map demonstrates a diverse geographic distribution of the regimental museums at the time of Ogilby's visits. Although it would seem that there was an English bias, in reality this reflects the nature of the distribution of regiments in the British Army at the time. For example, whilst there were only four regimental museums in Scotland, all four museums were open to the public at the time of Ogilby's visits. Furthermore, as there were only 10 Scottish regiments in 1935, this translates to 40% coverage of regimental history at that time. More broadly, Kavanagh used the evaluation of Cowper to argue that the sector must have been inward facing at this stage because one-third of the museums were closed to the public.³⁵³ However, in line with Ogilby's mapping of the sector, we can make the inverse argument in showing that within the first two decades of the museums opening, two-thirds were open to the public. As again shown by the map below, those which were open (in green) were also well distributed across the UK. This points more towards a public-facing group of museums, than a set that were facing inward. It arguably diminishes the importance of *esprit de corps* in their rationale for existing. This heightens the importance of exercising soft power to

³⁵⁰ As a side note, this slightly contradicts the reporting at the end of the letter which lists the extant museums during Ogilby's investigations, which indicates that the KORR Museum is actually in the Old Town Hall. The Old Town Hall still houses the City Museum, and the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment collection today.

³⁵¹ 'New Regimental Museum: Message from the King', *Dundee Courier and Advertiser*. (Dundee). 11/12/1929, 7.

³⁵² 'Regimental Museum [A]', *Morecambe Guardian*. (Morecambe). 16/08/1935, 5.

³⁵³ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 145.

influence the public image and recruitment capability of the Army, and importantly, strengthen ties to their local communities.

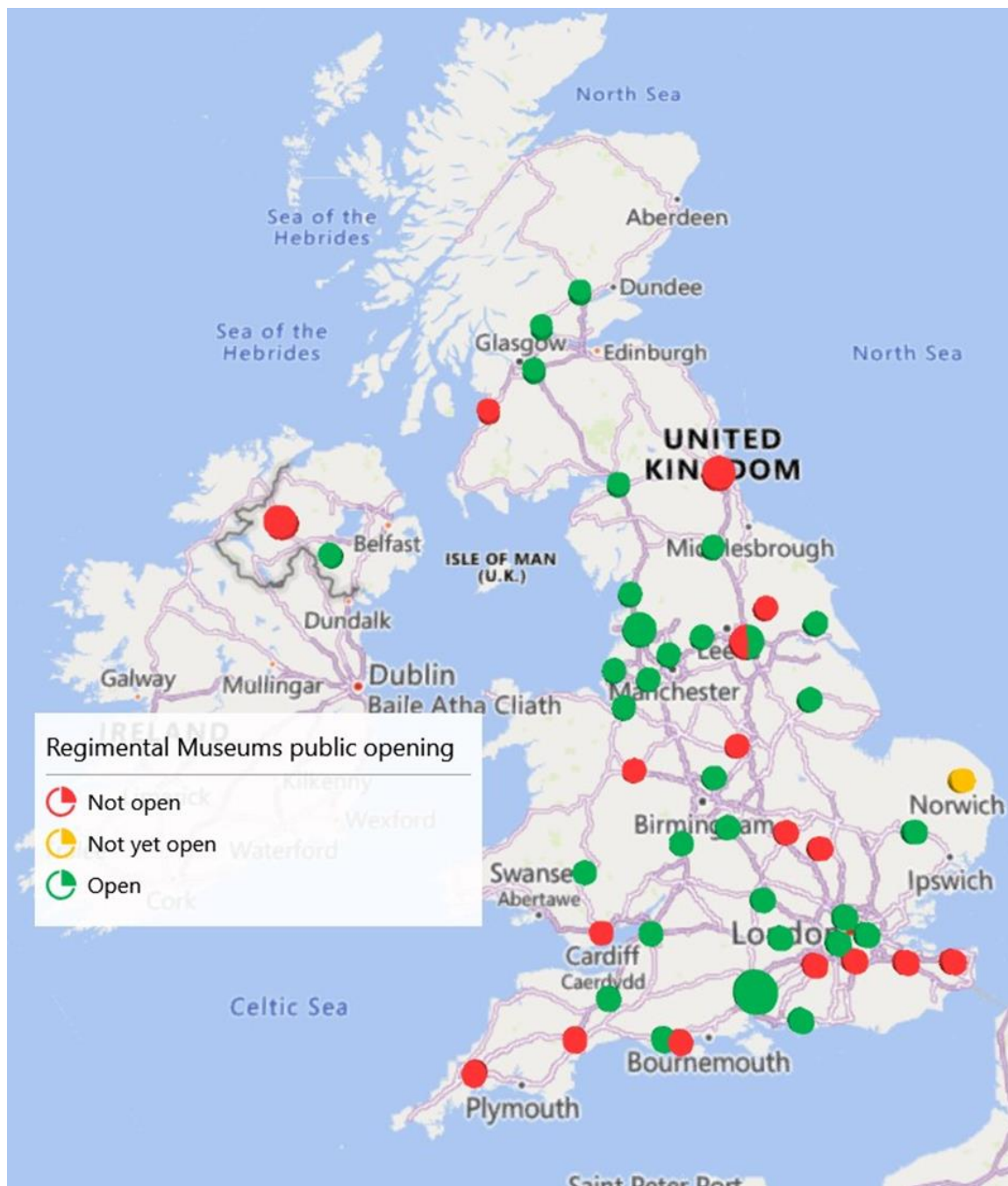


Figure 4-4: Geographic dispersion of regimental museums, c. 1935, based on R. J. L. Ogilby's list - locations corroborated by researcher against Digimap, Army List (January 1937), and relevant regimental museums' websites where available³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited 2022. All rights reserved. 1890, 1900, 1920, 1930, 1940. Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War; *The Monthly Army List January 1937*. Note that larger points on the map indicate locations (barracks/depots) which hosted more than one museum, for example, Newcastle and Pontefract, which both had two museums, and Winchester, which had three.

The opening of new regimental museums around this time (1920s and 1930s) received press attention of varying degrees, demonstrating the close links between the community and their county regiments. Attention was received when notable objects or collections were donated to museums, such as the Warwickshire Regiment at Budbrook Barracks, which received collections of prominent officers in February 1930.³⁵⁵ When the museum of the Royal Scots Fusiliers opened at the Depot in Ayr in Winter 1934/5, a call to donate 'articles of great sentimental value to the regiment,' was made in the local press.³⁵⁶ Even a menu card for a 1904 banquet for the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment, hosted by the Mayor, featured in the press when it was donated to the regiment's museum in November 1938.³⁵⁷ The very same regiment had in 1931 called publicly for the establishment of a regimental museum at the Hampshire Depot, in response to a rapidly increasing collection of regimental ephemera at its barracks.³⁵⁸ Regimental museums and the significance of their collections to the regiments and to the public certainly had some place in the local consciousness, at least in as far as local press coverage, in their first decades. This lends further weight to the extent to which the museums were public-facing as shown by the review conducted by Edmonds and Ogilby.

The review conducted by Edmonds also identified challenges and areas of attention concerning the early group of regimental museums. A series of reviews over the last century have consistently sought to understand, clarify and redefine RCMs, and record and grapple with the challenges they faced. Edmonds was the first to do so, and his review indicated that most of the museums at that time had formed since the end of the First World War and so were still in their infancy.³⁵⁹ He argued that they

³⁵⁵ 'Regimental Museum: Further Additions to Budbrook Barracks Collection', *Warwick & Warwickshire Advertiser and Leamington Gazette*. (Warwick). 08/02/1930.

³⁵⁶ 'Royal Scots Fusiliers: Regimental Museum Established at the Depot, Ayr', *The Scotsman*. 8/12/1934.

³⁵⁷ 'Regimental Museum [B]', *Portsmouth Evening News*. (Portsmouth). 27/07/1938.

³⁵⁸ Hants Regimental Journal, 'Gifts to the Hampshire Depot: Need of a Regimental Museum', *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*. 10/07/1931.

³⁵⁹ Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

contributed value in advertising the Army alongside tattoos and reviews which could be viewed by the public. Edmonds made the case for further and more concentrated advice, support and guidance for the museums. It was also his view that the institutions which were best placed to provide such support—the SAHR and RUSI—were incapable of doing so for specific reasons. The SAHR, Edmonds argued, did not have the offices or funds required, whilst the RUSI had no one on its staff who was an authority in ‘museum matters’. Sir Arthur Leetham had passed away a few years earlier, and so his expertise had perhaps not yet been sufficiently replaced. Chief amongst the early challenges faced by the regimental museums for Edmonds was the necessity to provide advice and guidance to largely non-specialist curators. However, there is an aspect in which Edmonds was largely seeking to address challenges which were defined in his own terms, in his own agenda, as supported by Ogilby’s data. Thus, whilst Edmonds’ review marked a turning point in the narrative of the early history of RCMs, it also demonstrated the kinds of influence which was exerted by agenda-setters like Edmonds.

Nowhere is this potential influence of agenda-setters more apparent than in the circles which surrounded the War Office. Here we see disagreements in perspectives from agenda-setters of different backgrounds. Conversation in this part of the network is a crucial element in understanding how co-ordination was allowed to develop, as it provided the financial resources required for this co-ordination to be formally established at the SAHR. Prominent here was the Department of the Permanent Under-Secretary (PUS) of State for War, which becomes clear when looking at correspondence between individuals in the network in 1935/6. Oakes-Jones and Baldry cut across institutions, as interested parties as SAHR founders—and later still Council members in 1939—and their role as prominent civil servants within the PUS Department in the same period. They both served at a time when Edmonds was making the case for co-ordination at the behest of the War Office, and the cross-over

combined with the success of Edmonds' case, discussed next, points to the power of this network of colleagues which was developing. Edmonds wrote:

Judging from the requests for advice and guidance which have been received by the Society for Army Historical Research and its members from [regimental museum] custodians, there seems to be immediate necessity for some central body to aid them.³⁶⁰

Edmonds was concerned that custodians were struggling to work effectively with their collections, possibly across a range of issues, and that concentrated support was needed on their behalf. Supported by Ogilby's evidential provision, on 1 October 1935 Edmonds wrote to H. J. Creedy, the Permanent Secretary (PUS) at the War Office, to ask for support from the War Office. Edmonds' letter to Creedy closed with the following request:

It is suggested that the work could be done by a committee of the S.A.H.R., with the Journal of the Society as a medium of publicity, ~~could~~ [if] the War Office [could] provide a [parttime] secretary and house the correspondence.³⁶¹

Edmonds was keen to see the museums well-supported by some form of central co-ordination, building upon the groundwork of the network which had developed from the SAHR and RUSI, and Leatham. However, the exchange between Edmonds and the War Office also marks the start of the War Office's explicit awareness of the growing group of regimental museums. This perspective has fluctuated greatly over time, as the course of this chapter will demonstrate in part.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid*

³⁶¹ *Ibid*. Square brackets and strikethrough represent handwritten edits to the archival record.

Name	Role/position	Modern equivalence/Notes
A. Duff Cooper	Secretary of State for War (SoS for War) – President of the Army Council	Secretary of State for Defence
Field-Marshal Sir Archibald Armar Montgomery-Massingberd	Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) – First Military Member, Army Council	Chief of the General Staff – senior military member of the Army Board
Herbert J. Creedy	Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War (PUS/Permanent Secretary) – Secretary of the Army Council	Permanent Secretary/Head of Department
A. E. Widdows	Assistant Under-secretary of State (AUS)	Grade 3
G. W. Lambert	Assistant Secretary	Grade 5
C. L. Bayne	Principal	Grade 6/7

Table 4-2: Key War Office (c. 1935), role/titles, and modern civil service equivalent positions/pay grades³⁶² listed from top to bottom in order of seniority within the War Office.

For clarity, the table above acts as a point of reference for understanding the roles and hierarchy of those individuals in the network diagram (Figure 4-5 below) who were involved in setting the agenda of co-ordination in the early network. The network here demonstrates the extent of crossover in the middle and late 1930s between members of the SAHR and the various relevant departments of the War Office. This is emphasised in the striking similarities and crossover between this version below (Figure 4-5) and the earlier map of SAHR Council members (Figure 4-3).

³⁶² UK Civil Service - Grades and Roles, Available online: https://www.civilservant.org.uk/information-grades_and_roles.html [Accessed 31/10/2022]. Grade 6/7 is the lowest grade, with Grade 3 being senior.

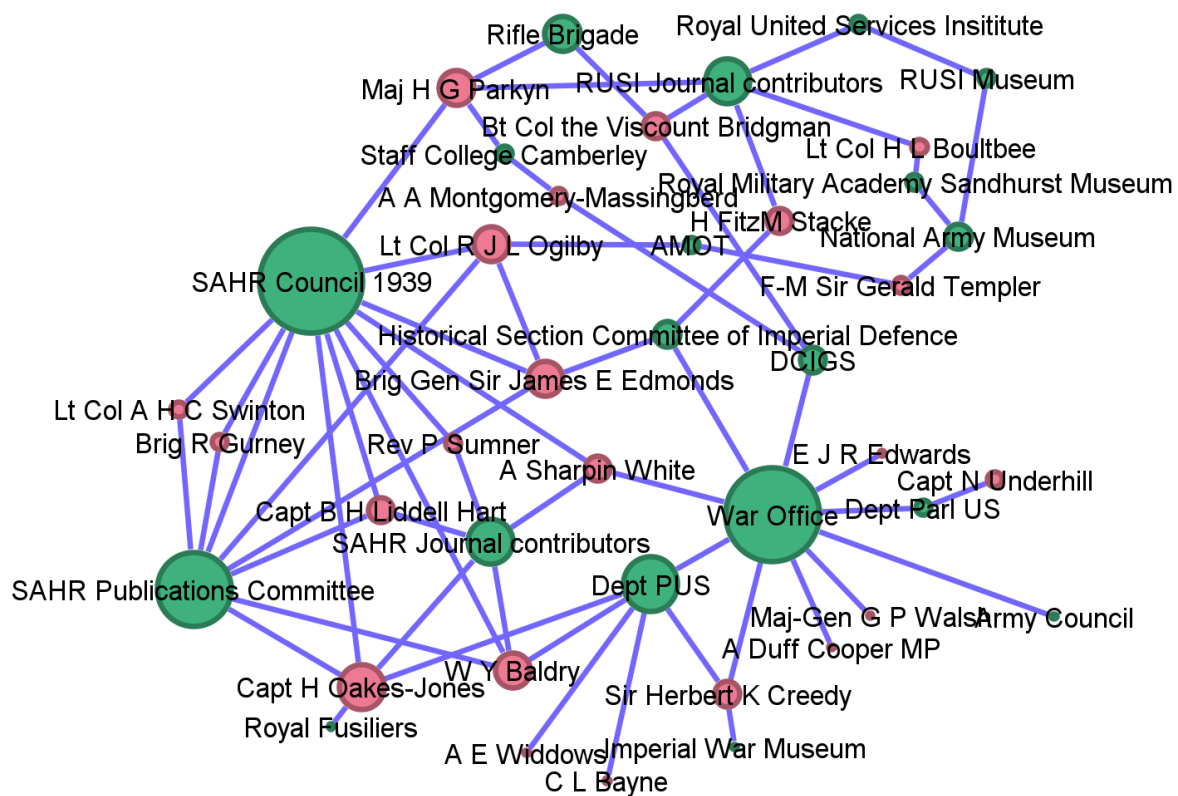


Figure 4-5: Network Map focus on significant connections amongst War Office officials, c. 1935-7

Beginning in 1935, policy briefings and written communications demonstrate scepticism and a notable resistance to the idea of the War Office becoming involved in the matter of regimental museums. Subsequent to Edmonds' contact with civil servants at the Department of the PUS, C. L. Bayne (a Department Principal), wrote a policy briefing note for his superiors to inform their decision on what to do in response to Edmonds' request. Bayne wrote:

We have adopted a sympathetic attitude towards them - for instance we allow units to misappropriate accommodation in barracks, not needed for official purposes for their museums on the strict condition that no expense to public funds is involved - but we exercise no control over them at all and it is recorded ... that the Army Council are not

anxious to be mixed up in the question of regimental museums.

Indeed we know little about them.³⁶³

Bayne had a clear perspective on how the early regimental museums should operate, and had some influence in his role as a Principal. His characterisation of the museums as a 'misappropriation,' of barrack accommodation speaks to a concern about War Office involvement. Bayne's note also stated:

Moreover once we have started giving official assistance we shall certainly be pressed to give more money. Some of these museums, as Sir James Edmonds points out, are inadequately housed and hitherto we have been able to avoid any kind of responsibility for such condition of things; but once we departed from the principle of allowing no expense whatever to fall on public funds we should certainly be pressed to provide accommodation and perhaps maintenance. Whether these museums are of any practical value as recruiting propaganda is a question for D.R.O. but we should be inclined to doubt it.³⁶⁴

Bayne was sceptical about not only the necessity of the War Office providing funding support for the museums, but also about the museums representing any actual value for money in the first place. He was also clearly concerned about a slippery slope in terms of limited support which exposed the War Office to further necessities in the future. The early years of RCMs in the UK were far from easy, and their success far from assured. Bayne's expression of the stance of the War Office in late 1935 above shows the uncertain position that they held in the view of the Army and Government.

The policy brief written by Bayne also included reference to Cottesloe's Committee reporting in 1929, in highlighting that the situation of regimental museums had not

³⁶³ C. L. Bayne, *Material associated with letter from Edmonds to Widdows, War Office, 1935* [Letter]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*

been at all reviewed to the knowledge of the War Office. However, it did indicate the following:

The Army Council in considering their recommendations decided that some surplus exhibits might be offered to regimental museums and other bodies. It may be noted that the committee, and the Army Council in considering the recommendations, had regard rather to the needs of the student and research worker than to the encouragement of the sight-seeing public, though the Committee drew attention to this aspect.³⁶⁵

The emphasis on target audience from the perspective presented by the review focussed on the significance of the collections for students and researchers, over the significance to the public. What does not feature is any mention of a role for the Army or the regiments themselves, and specifically the idea of *esprit de corps*. It could be argued that Bayne, coming from a non-military background and an outsider to concepts like *esprit de corps*, for this reason held a degree of scepticism about the role of the museums for the Army.

There was a concerted perspective that the War Office in the 1930s, a time of economic depression, should remain hands off with what they saw as a tangential concern for regiments at that time. Bayne's assessment of the situation clearly had some impact on the perspective of the War Office, as shown in an archival minute of 14th October, 1935 from Bayne's superior, A. E. Widdows (Assistant Under-Secretary of State). Widdows' notes for the PUS, Sir Herbert J. Creedy (who had received the initial request from Edmonds) stated the following:

These regimental museums may sooner or later become a problem. Their existence is at present officially recognised only to the extent of their being allowed to occupy spare accommodation in barracks and

³⁶⁵ *Ibid*

on the basis of no expense to the public. Sir James Edmonds' proposal would involve us more deeply in the affairs of these museums and we might find ourselves logically committed to doing a good deal more for them than we do now. You know what a regimental museum can amount to in the hands of an enthusiast from the example of Colonel Jourdain and his Connaught Rangers collections – for the disposal of which no solution I think has yet been found.³⁶⁶

There are several elements in the above that give us an insight into the influencing factors in the perspective of the War Office on the subject of regimental museums. Widdows was adamant, clearly drawing upon Bayne's brief, in emphasising that no public finance from the War Office should be directed towards museums that 'may sooner or later become a problem.' Widdows rationalised his perspective about avoiding deeper involvement in the operation of regimental museums, by invoking issues regarding the collection of Colonel Jourdain. The situation of this collection and its problems was clearly recognised within the network, featuring within an anonymous SAHR Journal article, as a warning against relying upon the enthusiasm of individual collectors.³⁶⁷ Jourdain's personal collection related to the Connaught Rangers, a regiment which was disbanded suddenly in 1922 as part of the partition of Ireland.³⁶⁸ Widdows appears to see prolific collecting, as regiments and their Officers tended to do, as a key facet in creating future problems within which those co-ordinating the museums might become embroiled.

The conclusion of Widdows' minute recommended that:

If it is decided to pay for the work of directing regimental museums, I suggest that instead of paying a Secretary and giving him office

³⁶⁶ Widdows, Minute from Widdows to PUS 14 October 1935

³⁶⁷ Genius Loci, 'The idea behind a Regimental Museum'.

³⁶⁸ National Army Museum, *Soldiers' Stories: Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Jourdain* Available online: <https://ww1.nam.ac.uk/stories/lieutenant-colonel-henry-jourdain/> [Accessed 06/11/2022].

accommodation we had better simply make a grant to the S.A.H.R. (as we do to the R.U.S.I.) on the understanding of course that they do this work[,] and that they should arrange for it to be done from the R.U.S.I. as headquarters and not from the War Office. I think a grant of[,] say[,] ~~£25[0]0~~[£150]. to the S.A.H.R. could be justified without difficulty, if we can afford it. But for the reasons given above, I am doubtful about the policy of undertaking any direct responsibility for regimental museums.³⁶⁹

What is interesting is that in the minute above, the initial proposal for £250 was subsequently reduced down to £200, and then to £150 by those involved in the conversation. It begins to bring into question the idea that the museums represented any value. Any initial value was quickly evaluated downwards by the War Office. After receiving Widdows' assessment and advice, the Permanent Secretary (the leading civil servant in the department), Herbert J. Creedy, asked for the Chief of the Imperial General Staff's (CIGS) opinion on the matter, writing in the minutes:

I do not think that the W.O. itself is very qualified to look after these museums. They would be better in the hands of enthusiastic amateurs, & we might consider some subsidy to the S.A.H.R. if they would undertake the work, operating, perhaps, from the R.U.S.I.³⁷⁰

Creedy in turn appeared not to disagree with the assessment of Widdows. He highlighted further that the War Office was not well-placed, or in his words 'qualified,' to look after the museums, turning instead to 'enthusiastic amateurs'. Whilst the War Office had access to those keenly interested in military history and heritage—such as Edmonds, W. Baldry, and Captain H. Oakes-Jones—Creedy clearly

³⁶⁹ Widdows, Minute from Widdows to PUS 14 October 1935 The square brackets and strikethrough represent handwritten edits to the note, particularly around the remuneration for the SAHR for operating a co-ordinating committee.

³⁷⁰ H. J. Creedy, *Minute from Creedy to CIGS 14 October 1935*, 1935 War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

felt that collections specialism would be better provided by external partners. The CIGS, Field-Marshal Sir Archibald Armar Montgomery-Massingberd (A. A. M-M.), being the operational head of the Army and likely embedded in ideas of *esprit de corps*, concurred with the perspective of Creedy and his subordinates, and wrote the following week (21 October 1935) that:

I feel we should not commit ourselves to the extent of assuming direct responsibility for giving advice and guidance to these regimental museums.[, much as I appreciate their value.]

I agree that the best solution would be to give a subsidy, as you suggest, to the Society for Army Historical Research, if they are prepared to carry out the work.³⁷¹

The archival minutes show that around the 14th November, Widdows spoke to Edmonds in person, who indicated that he would take the proposal for a £150 subsidy for the SAHR to its committee meeting on the 5th December. Following which, Edmonds wrote again to Widdows on the 19th to confirm that he had spoken to Captain Edward Altham, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the RUSI at the time.³⁷² Edmonds indicated that Altham and the RUSI were 'prepared to let the Society [SAHR] have a room, so that the operations would be directed from there and the W.O. entirely camouflaged.'³⁷³ A. E. Widdows wrote to the Treasury, and made the case for the proposal:

The [Army] Council do not feel they should assume official responsibility for these duties, which require for their fulfilment the part-time services of a secretary together with suitable office

³⁷¹ A. A. Montgomery-Massingberd, *Minute from CIGS to Creedy 21 October 1935*, 1935 War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London. The square brackets indicate an additional handwritten note from the CIGS.

³⁷² 'Captain Edward Altham, C.B., R.N'.

³⁷³ J. E. Edmonds, *Letter from Historical Section (Military Branch) to Widdows, War Office, 1935* [Letter]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

accommodation, but they have ascertained that the Society for Army Historical Research is prepared to provide these and to carry out the work conditionally on a grant of £150 a year being made to the Society in aid of incidental expenses.³⁷⁴

The underlying reservations of the War Office were still present, as shown in the first sentence above, but Edmonds' strength within the network was significant.

Supported by Ogilby's research, Edmonds' perspective and opinion on the benefit and necessity of co-ordinating regimental museums through the SAHR clearly carried enough weight to turn the War Office in his favour. This is one of the most important moments in their history in laying the groundwork for the future of the sector via the two most important bodies post-Second World War, and particularly after the 1950s and 1960s. These are the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, set up in the 1950s, and through Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer, the NAM, first set up at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the 1960s. As such, Edmonds was networked through his role and through the SAHR with potentially influential voices at the War Office, and this clearly worked in the favour of the early regimental museums. The investigation and review by Edmonds and Ogilby provides a clear contemporary perspective on the group of regimental museums in their first decade of existence. Their information demonstrated significant variation and inconsistency across the different museums. The case for coordination made by Edmonds was therefore sought to help address this inconsistency and improve their prospects. One aspect of this coordination included areas in which museum custodians would have usefully done with receiving specific advice. The areas of advice needed, according to Edmonds, were as follows:

- 'authenticity of reliques [sic], pictures and MSS. and their connection with the unit'

³⁷⁴ Widdows, Letter to The Secretary, Treasury

- 'the furnishing of museums, purchase of cases, and cataloguing and repairs of exhibits'
- 'as to what public bodies assist museums'
- 'as to notices of sales of military reliques [sic] and measures of publicity'
- 'authority who would arrange transfers and loans: distribution of gifts ...; giving of information to Dominion and Foreign bodies in search of information on military museum matters; rescue of military reliques [sic] hidden away in civilian museums; assistance in arranging loan exhibitions.'³⁷⁵

With a committee at SAHR, facilitated by the SAHR's Journal, Edmonds expressed that a secretary, and space for housing correspondence, could be hosted by the War Office. As discussed earlier, though the War Office did not wish to take on responsibility, Edmonds' strong evidential basis and inter-personal connections through the network were enough to gain support for the SAHR taking on this role, financed by public funds, but circumventing the War Office. Nonetheless, indirect support had eventually been provided and the importance of the networking between the SAHR and the War Office was a potential lynchpin in this success. The Second World War caused a shift in the perspective of the War Office and this foundational network was again a contributing factor.

5 1936-1948

Discussion about the museums and their work largely quietened down through the period surrounding the Second World War, before a significant change after 1948. In the interim though, some debate continued in the relevant journals. Expertise was soon shared through an increasingly formalised network which had been newly established after discussions in 1935/6, orbiting the SAHR and RUSI. The journals of both institutions featured prominent network members discussing matters relevant to the early regimental museums. Charles Ffoulkes, Keeper of the Tower Armouries, set

³⁷⁵ Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

out the best practice as he understood it for cleaning arms and armour, and the dangers to be aware of in using the wrong materials and damaging objects.³⁷⁶ Captain H. Oakes-Jones also developed guidance for the preserving and cleaning of exhibits.³⁷⁷ He highlighted his experience of seeing many objects, especially metallic, 'which have been ruined by the use of modern liquid or paste metal-polishes.'³⁷⁸ Their methods, though arguably more invasive than many modern standards, engaged in principles in common with conservation practice today, such as using less harsh chemicals or none at all.³⁷⁹ Oakes-Jones also provided a comprehensive set of instructions for regimental curators in building their own temporary display cases for objects (see Figure 5-1), in instances where they could not secure funds.³⁸⁰ From the early network which had grown out of the 1930s, there was a keenness amongst its members to provide support to the early regimental museums where they could in important areas of collections care. Gradually, support was also extended from major institutions extant at that time, discussed next.

³⁷⁶ Ffoulkes, 'Notes on the cleaning of arms and armour'.

³⁷⁷ Oakes-Jones, 'Notes on the Care, Preservation and Cleaning of Exhibits'.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 59

³⁷⁹ Museums Galleries Scotland, *Caring for metal collections* Available online: <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/advice/collections/metal-collections-care/> [Accessed 19/08/22].

³⁸⁰ Oakes-Jones, 'Temporary Cases for the Protection of Exhibits'.

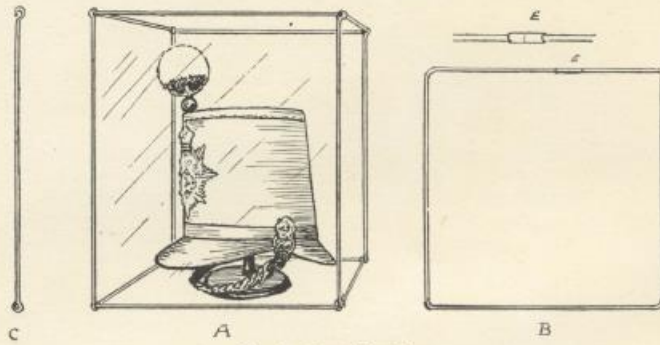


Fig. 1. Portable Case.

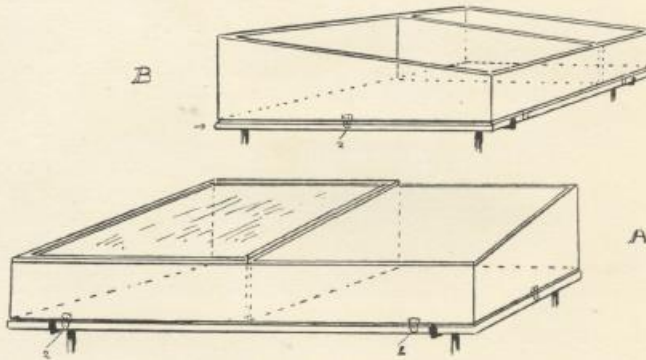


Fig. 2. Showcase.

TEMPORARY CASES FOR REGIMENTAL MUSEUMS.

Figure 5-1: Temporary Cases for Regimental Museums, from SAHR Journal 1938³⁸¹

The network of individuals drew upon some of the institutions to which they were connected, who could provide further support to the fledging museums. Two notices appeared in the 1938 issue of the SAHR journal, addressed to curators in regimental museums. The first from the Master of the Armouries at the Tower of London³⁸² which expressed that a wide range of muskets, bayonets and swords 'can be issued on loan to Regimental Museums on the condition that they are kept in good order.'³⁸³ The

³⁸¹ *Ibid*

³⁸² This title appears to be synonymous with Keeper of the Tower Armouries; Charles ffoulkes between 1935 and 1938.

³⁸³ 'To Curators of Regimental Museums', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 17, 66 (1938), 124.

second note was from the Director and Secretary of the Imperial War Museum³⁸⁴ and indicated that the museum held an extensive collection of photographs from the First World War, which in many instances could be attributed to particular regiments, as well as general photographs of contemporary uniform and equipment.³⁸⁵ Regimental museums were welcomed to purchase copies for useful display in their own museums.³⁸⁶ Even with the formal network in its earliest years, before 1939 there was already a wide range of support and guidance from prominent contemporary figures in military museums. It is difficult to comment explicitly on what the direct benefits of this support were. But what is clear is that these individuals saw great significance and value in the regimental museums in spite of the position of the War Office prior to the Second World War.

Research for this thesis has drawn on a wide range of sources from sector journals written at the time, and a number of archival sources, in particular the War Office material held at the National Archives. Despite an extensive range of sources made available to this study, information as to the position and conduct of the regimental museums during and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War has been remarkably absent. Whilst it could be argued that this points to a lack of operation, the answer is not straightforward, for two key reasons. The first is the volume of work conducted by the broader museums sector in spite of the war, and the second is the noticeably different perspective of the War Office as to the value of the museums following the war. These are each dealt with in turn below.

First, as above, the reality of the operation of museums in general during the Second World War was marked by activity rather than inactivity. At the outbreak of war in September 1939 the UK government ordered the closure of cinemas, theatres, national

³⁸⁴ Leslie Bradley, see Imperial War Museum, *Museum Administrative Records: Secretary (Mr Bradley)* Available online: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1020006310> [Accessed 19/08/22].

³⁸⁵ 'To Curators of Regimental Museums'.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*

museums and so forth; places in which the public gathered.³⁸⁷ A campaign to reverse this policy was launched immediately by the Museums Association and affiliated groups. Such efforts led to a review of the situation in November 1939, and by January 1940 the decision to force closure was reversed.³⁸⁸ Across the wider museums sector, three-quarters of museums thus stayed open for the duration of the war.³⁸⁹ Furthermore, work of provincial museums and galleries even expanded with support and funding from the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, which allowed the museums to develop new audiences.³⁹⁰ As Ogilby's mapping showed, at least a few RCMs in existence at this time were co-located with civic museums, and a great many more were open to the public before the closure policy. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to conclude that at the very least some proportion of regimental museums extant before the Second World War would also have remained open.

Second, as highlighted earlier, there was a notable difference in the approach and actions of the War Office before the war as compared with its aftermath. This is demonstrated most conspicuously in a policy document distributed in July 1948.³⁹¹ The War Office policy update was signed off by the Director of Infantry, Major-General Walsh, and covered several areas including accommodation, furniture (display cases and so forth), lighting and heating, amongst others.³⁹² Crucially, in terms of accommodation it indicated that each museum's space provision would double from 600 sq.ft., to 1,200 sq.ft., with official sanction given in September 1948.³⁹³

³⁸⁷ S. Keene (ed.), C. Pearson, *Museums in the Second World War: Curators, Culture and Change* [eBook] (London: Routledge, 2017), 67.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 72

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*

³⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 97-98

³⁹¹ G. P. Walsh, *Memorandum to [Infantry] Colonels of Regiments, No., 34[3]: Regimental Museums*, 1948 [Memorandum]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

³⁹² *Ibid*

³⁹³ *Ibid*, 1; G. W. Lambert, *Letter from G. W. Lambert on subject of updated museum policy*, 1948 [Letter]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London; *Appendix A: Museums*, 1948 [Appendix]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

Whilst expansion was permitted where available, no new works could take place and it was 'not anticipated that any new construction of Museums can be envisaged for a number of years.' This was due to other pressures related to manpower, available material and money, as well as other priorities on the depots (improving living accommodation, for example).³⁹⁴ Alongside this, the other important announcement in this policy brief was that of the formation of a Military Museums Co-ordinating Committee at the War Office. This will be discussed in further detail at the start of Chapter 2 but for now, the purpose of this committee was broadly to provide advice and assistance to museum operators.³⁹⁵ The attitude of the War Office in 1948 was in stark contrast to the ambivalent acceptance of their existence expressed in the correspondence of 1935/6. Extra provisions were made for specific amenities and, most importantly, there was a clear push for an element of co-ordination from the perspective of the War Office; something which they resisted a decade earlier. This potentially forms a second indication that the museums remained active during the Second World War, in common with a large proportion of the rest of the museums sector. The contribution of the regiments to the war effort could in part explain why they received favourable treatment from the War Office after the Second World War. However, this argument is diminished to some extent by the fact that they did not receive much if any support in the inter-war years, especially following their immediate establishment after the First World War as discussed in the previous section.

6 CONCLUSION

It seems likely that further support for the museums just after the Second World War was engendered by some level of activity in supporting access to arts and culture (in the form of museums) in common with other institutions for the duration of the war.

³⁹⁴ Walsh, Memorandum to [Infantry] Colonels of Regiments, No., 34[3]: Regimental Museums 1

³⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 2

This is evidenced by the fact that the position of the War Office in the aftermath of the Second World War was in stark contrast to its position prior to it. However it would have arguably been difficult, if not impossible, for RCMs to find themselves in this position were it not for the work of a co-ordinating network developed around their founding. The network analysis conducted through this chapter has demonstrated that in the early years of regimental museums several key individuals connected influential institutions, including the SAHR and RUSI, with the War Office and its sub-divisions/departments. The SAHR played a key role in hosting early co-ordination of the first regimental museums, and so members of this group were able to set the agenda for regimental museums over the decades that followed. Between the SAHR founders' meeting (1921) and the Council of 1939, the number of regimental museums formally established grew rapidly from none to around 50. The SAHR as a key operator in fostering a network was built upon the principle of co-ordinating the museums particularly after 1936 when it began to formally co-ordinate and guide RCMs. Co-ordination has been one of the key factors supporting the long-term survival of the museums, by fostering an environment in which the museums could grow, but also in which supporting institutions could be established. The network's longevity beyond the Second World War was a product of its members, such as Sir Robert Ogilby. Ogilby as a member of the SAHR worked elsewhere with Edmonds, who was a key proponent of the co-ordinating role of SAHR in the early years of the network. The significance of Ogilby will be explored more in Chapter 2, as he connected with those latterly involved in major post-war institutions such as the NAM. Section 4 in particular set out key evidence and analysed the significance of these connections by using correspondence and journal articles to explore how influence and expertise transferred through the network.

This chapter has also therefore tested the assumptions of several previous narratives on the basis of recently declassified archival records. It has developed a more nuanced understanding of the development of military museums in the context of a network

of individuals and institutions engaged in military history and heritage-forming in the 1920s. Novel network analysis has shown that reforms in the late 19th century to the structure and culture of the Army influenced and shaped a class of officers who were not only vested in Empire but also in some cases a clearly greater sense of attachment to their regiments and units. Such individuals were in turn important to the development and early success of the museums. Regiments had also become imbued with greater links to local communities, clearly acknowledged in network journals as a key facet with which the museums should connect.

The research has also identified how current challenges around location, staffing and inconsistent support from the War Office/MOD have stemmed in large part from the circumstances of their foundation. The first and clearest instance of the inconsistency of support received from the War Office can be seen in its changing approach to RCMs through the 1930s and 1940s. Chapter 2 will follow to understand their impact upon the network of museums in the period after the Second World War. It will finalise the context in which their post-colonial role becomes more prominent but argue that this was also the context for the development of a strong and resilient network, in the face of these several challenges.

Chapter 2: RCMs Network History – Part 2

Post-Second World War: Change and Challenges

1 INTRODUCTION

The period after 1948 was characterised by a series of regimental amalgamations which reduced the size of the Army significantly. This impacted the network directly with an initial spike in the number of museums as regiments rushed to establish them. As amalgamations continued through the 1990s and beyond, some museums moved to co-locate with other collections whilst others were established as ‘new’ regiments came into existence.

The amalgamations following the Second World War occurred in the context of a renewed British imperial mission in which the values and ideas of development and modernisation were to be exported. The Army’s reduction in size came with a focus on counter-insurgency, as the British Government sought to influence and put down emerging attempts at self-determination across the Empire. While the pressures of restructuring affected the museums on an organisational level, these changes also represented a period of active collecting of objects. The museums until this point were collections that they had largely inherited, bolstered by collections representing the World Wars. After the Second World War they also actively collected material from conflicts in the decline of the Empire. It is important to embed this emerging and growing network of museums within the context of this new era of British imperial history. It is also vital to develop a nuanced understanding of the history of the museums and their collections in order to present the whole historical narrative and avoid presenting imperialism as a one-dimensional force. Engaging in a more reflective history of the realities of Empire provides a foundation for co-producing collections research and display with broader communities affected by Empire. As

Chapter 3 will show, objects collected during British Imperialism have multiple narratives and complex layers of meaning.

The network explored in Chapter 1 was strengthened over time, as the NAM and AMOT assumed greater responsibilities. Individuals within the network emerged as architects of its continued significance, such as Sir Gerald Templer and Sir Robert Ogilby. Ogilby's early personal and professional integration within the network forms a bridge, from the origins of the SAHR (and working in its Museums Committee) and his work with Edmonds, to the establishment of the AMOT; the significance of which is explored in this chapter. Furthermore, through AMOT, Ogilby's personal wealth provided steady grant-in-aid to RCMs, reducing some dependency upon the War Office/Ministry of Defence (MOD). Ogilby's leadership, credibility, personal experience, institutional knowledge and pragmatism in gathering and providing resources was crucial to this process. His interest in levels of standardisation in this era of active collecting was demonstrated in AMOT as a point of contact for acquiring formal accession registers for the museums. All of this further enhanced the operational environment for these museums. Where earlier networking treated the museums as vessels for military heritage, AMOT functioned to begin bringing the museums more closely into the network as equal partners. Where earlier institutions such as the SAHR and RUSI were more greatly focussed on the history and heritage of the Army, AMOT focussed on supporting the museums as thriving and functioning institutions in their own right. The efforts of AMOT, and later NAM, reflected the necessity for the museums to be increasingly public-facing institutions. This reflected the wider context of reforms to the structure and purpose of the Army, in the face of a changing international security environment in the 20th century. This in turn led to a network that was far less insular in relation to the broader museums sector than they might have otherwise been. The benefits of this shift is supported by historical visitor data from the 1990s (Section 4) in which there was a clear disparity

between those on MOD property and those co-located with local authority museums in terms of their visitor numbers.

Chapter 1 sought to disrupt the current 'origin story' of the museums and commenced an overarching challenge to the existing chronological understanding of RCMs. This chapter will identify that the continuities between the history of the network and its current operating context are extensive, particularly where they are informed by their imperial history (both in terms of the challenges it faces, and the nature of its response). It will highlight the key roles of AMOT and NAM in providing a strong connecting network through which resources and expertise have been, and can continue to be, shared. But it also highlights the strength and significance of the network established in the 1920s, and formalised over time, in the long-term survival of RCMs in the face of a multiplicity of challenges. The museums today face challenges, such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and calls to address imperial and colonial legacies in museum collections. The network established provides a vital supporting framework to guide them in these areas.

2 1948-1969

The Second World War and its aftermath redefined the museum collecting environment in which the RCMs existed. The rationale for the expansion of barrack accommodation in Walsh's 1948 policy was due in part to the 'Additional items of interest [which] have been collected during the recent war.'³⁹⁶ Largely static collections of the inter-war years were transformed by the Second World War and then active collecting resulting from the retreat from Empire. Objects taken in from (post-)colonial conflicts in Malaya, Kenya and so forth were added in. Although many of the museums would have had objects from earlier colonial conflicts, these came as a product of their establishment and absorption of collections. Now for the first time the museums were active participants in collecting the material culture of colonial

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*

violence. Aspects of these collections themselves are explored in more detail in the next chapter, but for now it is important to recognise that the museums existed in the wider context of Empire, the Cold War and defining conflicts for the British Army such as Northern Ireland.

The network of institutions and individuals established before the Second World War continued to be of significance for RCMs. The shifting position of the War Office on the matter of the regimental museums was highlighted as part of the July 1948 policy memorandum, as discussed in the previous chapter. The policy memorandum, produced by Major-General Walsh (Director of Infantry), announced the creation of a Military Museums Co-ordinating Committee to the network. The policy memorandum indicated that the Director of Weapons and Development (DWD) was set as the Committee Chairman.³⁹⁷ The explanation of the Committee's role in the 1948 policy memorandum was brief, but an archival minute from 1953 provides us with greater clarity. The minute described the 'terms of reference' of the Committee thus:

To form a consultative body which can take a comprehensive view of the problems of Regimental, Formations and Unit Museums and Collections, and to give advice and assistance to those who are controlling them.³⁹⁸

Additionally, the minute clearly emphasised that the Committee had no crossover in functions with the SAHR's Committee. The SAHR Committee had been revived in 1948 primarily through the impetus of Lionel Buckell, another SAHR founding member.³⁹⁹ It indicated that one of the War Office Committee's main functions was 'to circulate particulars and allocate available material from official sources.'⁴⁰⁰ It was meeting once per year, and was also tasked with addressing and resolving policy

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.* DWD was Major-General W. A. Scott see DDRA, *Proposed RA Museum at Woolwich*, 1953 War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

³⁹⁸ Lieut.-Colonel GS, Minute Sheet: F.4(W) 30 July 1953

³⁹⁹ 'Mr. Lionel E. Buckell', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 42, 172 (1964), 178.

⁴⁰⁰ Lieut.-Colonel GS, Minute Sheet: F.4(W) 30 July 1953

questions.⁴⁰¹ These highlight a more non-specialist and functional approach to co-ordination that the War Office was seeking to take. Finally, the minute set out the composition of the War Office Committee, which is useful for our understanding of how the network was evolving over time. Table 2-1 below includes those who filled the roles in around 1953, when the minute above was written.⁴⁰² It also combines this information with the key aspects of the responsibilities of each institution within the network, as defined by the War Office in 1949 (discussed after table).

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰² The role titles are taken from the Minute (*Ibid*), and included for each is any information available to indicate who exactly filled each role in 1953 when the Minute was produced.

Organisation	Comm. Member	Holder (c. 1953)	Organisation role
Military Museums Co-ordinating Committee (War Office)	Director of Weapons and Development (Committee Chair)	G. P. Walsh	See above
The Tower Armouries	Master of	Sir James Mann ⁴⁰³	Military exhibits up to 1914 – combined with IWM provide a comprehensive Army Museum.
IWM	Director of	Leslie Bradley ⁴⁰⁴	Exhibits and relics covering 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars. No other periods covered.
RUSI	Secretary	Lt.-Col. P. S. M. Wilkinson ⁴⁰⁵	Museum – limited space, but unique objects, including relics of famous commanders. All Armed Services.
SUSM	Curator	Maj. H. P. E. Pereira ⁴⁰⁶	Objects covering comprehensive history of Scottish Regiments. 'Mother Museum' to Scottish Regimental Museums.
Royal Artillery Institute	Secretary	Brig. J. H. Frowen ⁴⁰⁷	Administers The Rotunda, with objects covering the history of the artillery weapons.
RMAS Museum	Curator	Lt.-Col. H. L. Boulton ⁴⁰⁸	New Army Museum, filling gaps not covered by others – Cavalry, Indian Army, old Irish Regiments.
SAHR	Representative	n/k	Not covered in the 1949 letter (did not administer a service museum).
York Museum, Military Wing	Representative	n/k	One of the extant Corps and Regimental Museums – exhibits confined to a particular regiment or of territorial interest.

Table 2-1: Organisations and posts represented within the War Office Military Museums Co-ordinating Committee, post holders in c. 1953 and organisational roles defined by the War Office

The table points to a more geographically dispersed dimension to formal networking, in contrast with earlier years, with major national and regional museums taking on roles in co-ordination. This includes an expansion to involve more recently established institutions such as the Scottish United Services Museum (SUSM) and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) Museum. Whilst the War Office had adjusted its policy, there was still a desire for greater clarity on the various roles and responsibilities of many institutions in the network. As with the institutional nodes,

⁴⁰³ F. J. B. Watson, 'Sir James Mann: Obituary', *The Burlington Magazine*, 105, 721 (1963).

⁴⁰⁴ Imperial War Museum, *Museum Administrative Records: Secretary (Mr Bradley)*.

⁴⁰⁵ 'One Hundred-and-Twenty-Second Anniversary Meeting', *Royal United Services Institution. Journal*, 98, 590 (1953), 337-350.

⁴⁰⁶ 'Services Research: Reopening of Edinburgh Castle Museum', *The Scotsman*. 12/04/1949, 4.

⁴⁰⁷ DDRA, Proposed RA Museum at Woolwich

⁴⁰⁸ 'Notices', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 26, March (1956), iii-iv. Boulton retired in around 1955/6 and was replaced by Lt.-Col. C. B. Appleby.

we can see continued connections in the individual nodes of the network. The importance of these individuals is given in the roles of their institutions as expressed in the 1953 War Office note publicised in the RUSI Journal. These included sharing expertise and answering technical enquiries. Their connection to the network includes journal contributors—such as H. L. Boulton—and individuals (as in earlier network diagrams) could fulfil multiple roles over time, for example Sir James Mann, who was later Governor of the NAM.⁴⁰⁹ Following a meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee, Major-General Walsh (who became DWD by 1953 and therefore chair of the Committee) stated that:

...it was felt that some confusion existed in the minds of service personnel as to the object and functions of the various museums of primarily army interest which at present exist.⁴¹⁰

In this context, Walsh, in a 1949 letter for general distribution, spelt out the specific responsibilities of the extant institutions, including the RUSI Museum, the IWM, the Tower of London, The Rotunda, the RMAS Museum, the SUSM, and RCMs. Of note, was the classification of the RUSI Museum, at the top of the list, as 'in loco parentis', by approval of the War Office to the Regimental Museums, demonstrating its continued relevance to the network.⁴¹¹ Coming last in the list was a note on the remit of the RCMs which existed at the time:

⁴⁰⁹ Watson, 'Sir James Mann: Obituary'.

⁴¹⁰ G. P. Walsh, *Letter from Major-General Walsh, Director of Weapons and Development for general distribution, 1949* [Letter]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

⁴¹¹ *In loco parentis*, is a Latin phrase which in general usage means one who is responsible for a child while the child's parents are absent. See <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/in-loco-parentis>

These normally confine their exhibits to those which have a special connection with the Regiment or Corps concerned, or which may be of particular territorial interest.⁴¹²

The note's distribution list included the General Officers Commanding-in-Chief at the regional Commands (Eastern, Southern, etc.) as well as all Officers commanding at the regimental depots. Furthermore, Walsh called for recipients to publicise the information as broadly as possible, and as such it was published in the RUSI Journal in the same year.⁴¹³ Thus, the 1948 policy memorandum and the composition and membership of the War Office's Co-ordinating Committee demonstrates the continued interconnection between key institutions, fostered by the network formed in earlier decades. The 1949 letter also showed the War Office's interest in carving out a position for its own Co-ordinating Committee, by defining the roles and responsibilities of other bodies and seeking to set the agenda for military museums and heritage.

The changes in the policy approach of the War Office which came into effect in around 1948 had an immediate effect on the confidence of regiments in establishing museums. Walsh himself elsewhere described a 'general awakening of interest,' in the context of the policy change.⁴¹⁴ The impact can be demonstrated through a 1953 Memorandum from the Director of the Royal Artillery, in which the Director specifically referenced the policy change announced in 1948 in engendering their desire to establish a new Royal Artillery Regimental Museum.⁴¹⁵ This effort included the support, cited by the Director of Artillery, of the War Office in amalgamating aspects of the Rotunda collection (reportedly in 'a state of disrepair') with the new museum.⁴¹⁶ The rationale

⁴¹² Walsh, Letter from Major-General Walsh, Director of Weapons and Development for general distribution

⁴¹³ 'Service Museums', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, 94, 575 (1949), 450-451.

⁴¹⁴ G. P. Walsh, 'Foreword', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Summer (1950), xvii.

⁴¹⁵ Director of Artillery, *Memorandum: Proposed Royal Artillery Regimental Museum by Director of Artillery*, 1953 War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid*

echoed many of the aspects of army museums discussed in this and the previous chapter, for example, in encouraging 'an interest and pride amongst officers and men,' affecting morale, and in fostering 'great esteem,' amongst the public, supporting recruitment.⁴¹⁷ The changes in the approach of the War Office was clearly a factor in the efforts to create a new regimental museum for the Royal Artillery. As such, it is not unreasonable to conclude that it may have also supported in developing confidence within other regiments and corps to establish new museums moving into the 1950s and beyond.

It is important to note the significance of the RMAS Museum, included within the 1949 letter. The museum was the direct predecessor to the NAM which became deeply connected with the network of RCMs over time. It also linked key individuals in the network important in their ongoing support such as Boulton, Ogilby and Templer. Lieutenant-Colonel H. L. Boulton (RMAS Curator until 1956) recorded that the museum was founded in 1950, though in line with the 1949 letter above, the idea of it was at least on the radar of the network in that year.⁴¹⁸ The 1949 letter explained in part why it developed stating that it:

...has recently been started in order to preserve objects of interest in connection with the Army which do not readily fall within the scope of existing establishments including Regimental Museums (e.g., Indian Army, Cavalry and Irish Regiments now in abeyance) and to contribute to the bringing up of the cadet in sound military tradition.⁴¹⁹

Collections related to disbanded Irish regiments and the Indian Army had begun to accrue at Sandhurst before 1949.⁴²⁰ The regimental collections of much of the cavalry, as a Cavalry Museum (excluding the Household Cavalry), were then added to the

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid*

⁴¹⁸ Boulton, 'The Military Museum', 105.

⁴¹⁹ Walsh, Letter from Major-General Walsh, Director of Weapons and Development for general distribution

⁴²⁰ Thwaites, 'Presenting Arms', 49.

RMAS Museum in around 1955.⁴²¹ This was due to the fact that the cavalry did not have permanent county or regional depots as the foot regiments did.⁴²² In the same year, it is also worth noting that a key element within the network, Sir Robert Ogilby (who had been serving as the Chairman of the SAHR's Museums Committee) established the Army Museums Ogilby Trust (AMOT) to support 'the encouragement, care and maintenance of existing Regimental and Army Museum and also by the establishment of other Regimental and Army Museums.'⁴²³ This was a critical step in Ogilby's continued support for the sector, building on his historic support for the museums and recent writings in aid of 'young curators of regimental museums,' around collecting policies, research and so forth.⁴²⁴ With the support of the Ogilby Trust and Sir Gerald Templer—one of its trustees—the RMAS Museum was transformed into the NAM, the impact of which is discussed shortly. In these connections the network's long-term impact is clearly demonstrated. Ogilby, who had supported Edmonds in the 1930s, now in the 1950s had created AMOT, which in turn supported Templer in establishing the NAM. These bodies became long-standing instruments of support in the network which would pay dividends in later decades as this chapter will show in due course.

Although greater official recognition in the form of the 1948 policy change was in general a positive step, aspects of it such as the expansion of allocated space at the barracks did little to solve existing problems with the space itself. Lt. Col. Boulton drew attention to these issues in an article published in the RUSI Journal in 1955, several years after the new policy was instituted. The situation of the museums at the regimental depots, in Boulton's view, were 'almost always in old barrack

⁴²¹ Boulton, 'The Military Museum', 105.

⁴²² *Ibid*

⁴²³ L. E. Buckell, 'The Ogilby Trust', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Summer (1955), xxvii-xxviii.

⁴²⁴ R. J. L. Ogilby, 'Advice to Young Curators of Regimental Museums', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Winter (1950), xxxiii-xxxiv.

accommodation entirely unsuited to museum purposes.'⁴²⁵ In a structural sense, Boulton highlighted a range of issues including lack of heating, poor ventilation, damp and drafts, and unstable humidity.⁴²⁶ Boulton, with his expertise as RMA Museum Curator, clearly recognised the impact that this would have on the comfort of any visitors to such a museum. He also highlighted the role that these environmental factors would have had in significantly negatively impacting on the stability of the condition of the objects in collections. Furthermore, Walsh's 1948 policy memorandum had indicated that display cases would be provided at public expense in line with the increased accommodation allocation.⁴²⁷ Boulton however argued that this had not been successful in all instances.⁴²⁸ Finally, and most importantly, Boulton drew attention to the unsuitability of being located at the Depot in general. The inconsistency of opening hours, uninviting appearance of many Depot buildings (from the perspective of the general public), and the physical distance and separation of many Depots from the centre of their nearest towns created an unsustainable situation in Boulton's view.⁴²⁹ Boulton's insightful assessment came ahead of the 1957 Defence White Paper, which would start the process of closing the Depots and throwing many regimental museums into uncertainty about their futures.

In 1957 the UK Government produced a Defence White Paper which had a profound and notable impact on the RCMs, as it fundamentally began to restructure the administration of the Army. For the structure of the Army, the impact of the Defence White Paper was 'far-reaching', as it involved a series of regimental amalgamations conducted in line with the reduction in the size and scope of the British Armed Forces going into the 1960s.⁴³⁰ The impact of the amalgamations between 1958 and 1961 cannot be fully described here, and so Table 4-1 in Appendix **Error! Reference source**

⁴²⁵ Boulton, 'The Military Museum'.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*

⁴²⁷ Walsh, Memorandum to [Infantry] Colonels of Regiments, No., 34[3]: Regimental Museums

⁴²⁸ Boulton, 'The Military Museum'.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*

⁴³⁰ J. Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting*. (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2015), 54.

not found. sets out these changes. But more importantly the eventual impacts upon relevant RCMs because of the extensive process of depot closures are set out in the table notes. As French explains, between 1948 and the 1960s the number of depots decreased from 64 (regimental depots) to 14 (brigade depots).⁴³¹ Many of the museums representing regiments in the Antecedents column of Table 4-1 (App. **Error! Reference source not found.**) were located at their regimental Depots. The closures required the museums to re-evaluate their position at the Depots, and over time, as shown in the right-hand columns, a proportion of the museums made the decision to move, and often co-locate with their amalgamation partners. Vignette 1 looks at the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment as one of those which faced amalgamation in the 1950s. The vignette is a good example of both the somewhat irregular ways in which they formed and some of the early challenges with which they were faced as a product of barrack accommodation. But security of tenure in these situations was also not assured and the case also shows the considerations which RCMs were faced with in having to relocate. Whether or not the decision that museums made led to positive outcomes in the long-term is arguably immaterial to the impact that it had on the museums in a practical sense in the short term. For example, on the stability of museum collections which would be affected by constantly transporting objects.

Vignette 1: Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire (Beds & Herts) Regiment

The Beds & Herts Regiment had a museum listed in 1935 though it was not open to the public.⁴³² A renewed interest in its 'revival', in around 1950 led to a room being set aside for it at Kempston Barracks; the Beds & Herts Regimental Depot.⁴³³ The collection

⁴³¹ French, *Military Identities*, 306.

⁴³² Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

⁴³³ H. P. E. P., 'The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 3 (1950), xiv.

was a largely miscellaneous formation, constructed from the remnants of earlier museums related to the regiment, loans from officers, men and the RUSI Museum, and from scouring the Regimental Depot.⁴³⁴ There were however clear issues immediately, due to confined space and large windows which represented a high risk of UV damage to certain objects.⁴³⁵

Kempton Barracks closed in 1958 requiring the Beds & Herts collection located there to be moved to Wardown House in Luton. Furthermore, the three elements of the East Anglian Regiment created after 1957 (of which Beds & Herts became a part, see App. Table 4-1) represented at least five extant museums at the time of their amalgamation, only one of which remains on the Depot site previously occupied by an antecedent regiment. This is the Suffolk Regiment (amalgamated with the Norfolks in 1959), which is located in The Keep in Bury St. Edmunds; the only remaining building of Gibraltar Barracks.

Closure of the depots/barracks were felt keenly in local communities, demonstrating the connections between regiments and their recruiting areas and depot towns. Local press drew attention to the impact of barrack closures and highlighted the significance of the amalgamations (even into the administrative Brigades, which necessitated many of the depot closures). Though not in the list of amalgamating regiments mentioned above, the Yorkshire Brigade (whose depot was Queen Elizabeth Barracks,

⁴³⁴ E. G. Fanning, 'The Regimental Museum', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 21 (1954), xix-xx.

⁴³⁵ P., 'The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment'.

Strensall after 1960), included the Duke of Wellington's Regiment within it.⁴³⁶ This required it to vacate its regimental depot in Halifax. In response the regiment and its museum in fact entered into negotiations with the Halifax Corporation's Libraries and Museums Sub-committee, to reach an 'amicable settlement,' for the corporation taking on the museum provision of the regiment.⁴³⁷ The collection highlights indicated by the press included examples of different types of uniform and weapons, campaign souvenirs, and medals.⁴³⁸ The arrangement was successful in this case and the Dukes' collection remains at the Bankfield Museum in Halifax today. Local press highlighted an undertone of relief in cases where amalgamation was not yet on the table, as in that of the Royal Hampshire Regiment who were not altered as others in its Wessex Brigade were; the Devonshires and Dorsetshires for example.⁴³⁹ However, as the Wessex Brigade would be located at Topsham Barracks (Exeter) this required that the Hampshires vacate their Depot in Winchester (later known as Peninsula Barracks).⁴⁴⁰ In response in this case, the Hampshire Regiment was fortunate in being allowed to remain in situ along with the Regimental Headquarters; a move strongly supported by the local press.⁴⁴¹ Though positive about this aspect, the Portsmouth Evening News led with the headline 'Royal Hampshires' Connexion Will Be Tiny Thread,' highlighting their concerns at how little a presence of the county regiment would be felt going forward.⁴⁴² Thus, a brief period of official sanction and support gave way to great uncertainty produced by changes which were largely beyond the control of the RCMs, in spite of the significance of their effects. These changes were felt not just

⁴³⁶ YorkMix, *Army barracks in York and Strensall to close*, 2016. Available online: <https://yorkmix.com/army-barracks-york-strensall-close/> [Accessed 02/12/22].

⁴³⁷ 'Corporation May Take Over Dukes' Museum: When depot closes', *Halifax Daily Courier & Guardian*. (Halifax). 25/10/1958, 4.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid*

⁴³⁹ 'Position of the Hampshire', *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*. 26/07/57, 5.

⁴⁴⁰ Soames, *Infantry Brigade Depots (Location)*, 1958. Available online: [https://hansard.parliament.uk//Commons/1958-03-07/debates/45e4cee3-0a52-4ba6-9047-9ba2717dcd63/InfantryBrigadeDepots\(Location\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk//Commons/1958-03-07/debates/45e4cee3-0a52-4ba6-9047-9ba2717dcd63/InfantryBrigadeDepots(Location)) [Accessed 02/12/22].

⁴⁴¹ 'Royal Hampshires' Connexion will be Tiny Thread', *Portsmouth Evening News*. (Portsmouth). 29/08/1958, 13.

⁴⁴² *Ibid*

by the regimental museums, but also by the communities which had already built up around them, as a product of the regimental relationships with their counties.

If the founding purpose of regimental museums was ever for the generation of *esprit de corps* amongst members of regiments (the debate around which has been discussed in Chapter 1), this began to demonstrably shift from the 1960s onwards. Army Council Instructions issued in 1961 began to set hard limits on the appropriation of barrack accommodation of the museums, which were tied to the circumstances of their amalgamation.⁴⁴³ There was also a clear exasperation from the perspective of the regiments, expressed specifically by a Scottish Division Brigadier in 1968:

I have consulted Brigade Colonels in this matter and it is clear that Regiments are growing tired of the many demands made on them for money and donations of silver and property. Such demands seem never ending and there is not, as you know, a bottomless pit of goodwill or money. It is therefore suggested that we should give careful consideration before making further demands on Regiments.⁴⁴⁴

The assessment of the Scottish Division command, if felt more broadly, potentially pointed to an increasingly strained relationship between the regiments and the museums which represented them. Meanwhile, there was certainly a lack of clarity about the position of the museums from the MOD, but with a degree of implicit bias towards making the museums increasingly public-facing.⁴⁴⁵ An MOD policy letter from July 1967 emphasised the possibility of regimental museums closing on certain weekdays to enable the museum orderlies to open the museums at weekends

⁴⁴³ Army Council, *Appendix to Army Council Instructions*, 1961 Loans of historical records to regimental museums, The National Archives.

⁴⁴⁴ F. H. Coutts, *D Inf Conference, May 1968: Comments on certain matters raised at the conference, 1968* [Comments]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

⁴⁴⁵ It is useful here to acknowledge the transition in terminology from War Office to Ministry of Defence (MOD). The War Office existed until 1964, but it had not had a cabinet position since 1947, when the pre-1964 MOD was established formally. In 1964 the MOD merged with the War Office, Admiralty and Air Ministry, and became the modern MOD that exists today.

instead.⁴⁴⁶ This again reinforces the arguments that there was a clear drive to ensure that the museums were more public-facing, and more accessible to the public. A report drafted by the Chairman of the Steering Committee on the Reorganisation of the Infantry (which was reviewing the Regimental HQs and their attached museums) declared that:

It is thought that Councils of **Colonels should decide** if Museums or Regiments which have been absorbed into Large Regiments, or which were amalgamated in 1958 or will be amalgamated or disbanded in the future, should **continue in their existing localities and buildings**. If sufficient **public support** is received, no doubt Colonels of Regiments will wish Museums to continue even though the Regiment concerned no longer has a regular battalion.⁴⁴⁷

The MOD appears to shed some aspects of its responsibilities and oversight by leaving it in the remit of the Colonels of contemporary (and amalgamated) regiments. To some extent this position reversed some of the aspects of co-ordination espoused around two decades earlier, when the Co-ordinating Committee was established. This position was reinforced by the Director of Personal Services (Army) who had authored the July 1967 policy letter which established the following in October 1968 regarding the Large Regiments (e.g., the Light Infantry):

It is of course **entirely up to Colonels** of Large Regiments to **keep old Regimental Museums as going concerns in their old locations** or whether to encourage the formation of a combined Regimental Museum at the Headquarters of the Large Regiment. Regimental

⁴⁴⁶ Wilson, *Regimental Museums: Letter from Wilson (MOD) on behalf of Director of Personal Services (Army) setting out policy clarifications, 1967* [Letter]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

⁴⁴⁷ Steering Committee on the Reorganisation of the Infantry, *Regimental Offices and Museums: Report by the Chairman of the Steering Committee (Draft)*, c. 1968 [Report]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London. **Key points bolded by author for emphasis.**

Committees may wish to consider the advisability of remaining in a barracks where alienation has taken place. On the other hand many Regiments will not wish to lose their close relations and link with their County and **may wish to consider an approach to their County Museum seeking permanent accommodation.** By so doing many of the problems now encountered such as the payment of their Museum Attendants for overtime might be overcome. Duties could be shared to some extent to the mutual benefit of both parties. Security becomes easier.⁴⁴⁸

The approach of the MOD had moved towards openly questioning the sense in remaining at barracks, and emphasised the benefit to the public of remaining in the locality, and even co-locating with local museums. However, Wilson's letter is telling, in the emphasis on the potential cost-saving element, and speaks to an ulterior motive. All of this arguably demonstrates a desire from the perspective of the MOD, and possibly the Army command at large, that the museums should be more public-facing and more explicitly for the public.

Around this time, the structure of the Army shifted again, as the Brigade system was abandoned in favour of a Divisional administrative system, requiring further amalgamations of regiments to bring the total number down. Table 4-2 in Appendix **Error! Reference source not found.** sets out this phase and denotes the impact that these had on related museums. The notes here show that in spite of a rush to establish museums, the impact of continued rounds amalgamations and changes meant that the eventual effects would be felt by most if not all museums. It once again demonstrated how easily the museums were affected by changes to the structure of the Army which were beyond their control. For some museums it took a significant amount of time to

⁴⁴⁸ Wilson, *Letter from Wilson (MOD) on behalf of Director of Personal Services (Army), for general distribution: Corps and Regimental Museums, policy clarifications, 1968* War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London. **Key points bolded by author for emphasis.**

find a level of stability to ensure effective and secure management of their museum collections, for example the Royal Leicestershire Regiment (see Vignette 2).

Vignette 2: Royal Leicestershire Regiment

The Royal Leicestershire Regiment's museum had originally been at Glen Parva Barracks, where the regimental depot had been located (see Figure 2).⁴⁴⁹ Though Glen Parva became the Brigade Depot for the Foresters Brigade in 1960, it was split soon after, and Glen Parva also closed in 1963. With the closures of the depots, as with many others, the Leicesters relocated. The collection was briefly housed at the Newarke Houses Museum. It moved to another of the last buildings of the Newarke religious precinct in the centre of Leicester, the Magazine Gateway, in around Summer 1969.⁴⁵⁰ Parts of the Newarke precinct had been used by TA and Reserve regiments.

However, road re-configurations in the 1970s isolated the museum and eventually caused erosion damage to the building, making the situation untenable. The collection vacated the Magazine between 1996 and 1999. It returned to New Walk Museum briefly as a small display, but was mothballed otherwise. The Newarke Houses Museum had housed Yeomanry and Militia collections in the 1950s. The regimental collection moved back there in 2007, just yards away from the Magazine Gateway it had occupied decades

⁴⁴⁹ H. P. E. P., 'The Royal Leicestershire Regiment', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 3 (1950), xv.

⁴⁵⁰ T. Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*. (Berkshire: Bellona Publications Ltd, 1969), 15.

before.⁴⁵¹ The museum collection remains on permanent display within the Newarke Houses Museum today.



Figure 2-1: the Royal Leicestershire Regimental Museum as it appeared at Glen Parva barracks in around 1956

Vignette 2, as with the Beds & Herts example (Vignette 1) demonstrates that the uneasy trajectory of securing permanent accommodation was relatively commonplace for RCMs. The Royal Leicesters Museum had a particularly challenging existence as shown in the Vignette. But as Figure 2-1 above demonstrates the display conditions in barrack accommodation itself was arguably not best suited for the material they held, though the risk of damage in moving collections repeatedly was also an important consideration. Looking at the photograph of the ‘principal room’ of the Royal Leicesters Museum, we can see regimental silverware, photographs, medals, trophies and equipment. Not seen in the photo are ‘trophy’ acquired by unspecified

⁴⁵¹ The Royal Leicestershire Regiment, *The Museum - Royal Leicestershire Regiment* Available online: <https://royalleicestershireregiment.org.uk/the-regimental-museum> [Accessed 04/06/22].

means during Imperial operations, including a Burmese 'Temple Bell' and 'the private mail-bag of King Theebaw [Thibaw], the last king of that country.'⁴⁵² Thibaw Min was overthrown at the end of the Third Anglo-Burmese War. Objects such as these are the investigative focus of the next Chapter but the above serves as a visual representation of how these objects were displayed in Barrack rooms.

Analysis and understanding of RCMs should also be viewed in the context of what was happening in the wider museums sector at this critical time, particularly in the area of staffing. Looking at the list of military museums first published by Terence Wise in 1969, the staffing composition of the RCMs was starting to shift as well, as compared with the situation 30 years earlier. The impact of the Second World War on changing gender dynamics in the workforce of many sectors was no less true for museums.⁴⁵³ In its immediate aftermath, many women who had stepped up to take on museum roles during hostilities found themselves demoted post-war, but the impact had already been made. The older tradition of 'honorary or 'gentlemanly' curators,' was diminishing, and by the 1960s women staffing had recovered and the lessening impact of marriage bars and availability of part-time work saw further increases in staffing diversity.⁴⁵⁴ For RCMs, Ogilby's assessment in 1935 had been that Custodians were liable to be rotated out to other duties, and often had little interest or knowledge of military collections.⁴⁵⁵ By the 1950s the situation had changed very little, as Lt.-Col. Boulton indicated that curators were 'nearly always a retired or serving officer of the regiment,' lacking in the required knowledge and expertise.⁴⁵⁶ By the late 1960s there was clearly some shift occurring, as of the 79 RCMs listed as open to the public, 13 had staff that were not indicated as serving or retired officers, at least four of whom were women.⁴⁵⁷ Looking at museum organisation more generally the

⁴⁵² P., 'The Royal Leicestershire Regiment'.

⁴⁵³ Keene (ed.), Pearson, *Museums in the Second World War*, 184.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 187-188

⁴⁵⁵ Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

⁴⁵⁶ Boulton, 'The Military Museum'.

⁴⁵⁷ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*.

Standing Commission for Museums and Galleries had, after a trial run, established the first of the Area Museum Councils in 1963 (expanded further thereafter).⁴⁵⁸ This was done in order to develop the provincial support to museums from central government. The July 1967 policy letter from the MOD emphasised the importance of developing closer relationships with the Area Councils, and included a full list of the contact information of these bodies for curators to make themselves known.⁴⁵⁹ Thus, whilst the staffing arrangement was moving slowly, there was a clear direction demonstrated by the approaches set out in the 1967/8 policy letters, and a clear push towards organising around and with the Area Councils.

The significance and importance of the inter-connected network was demonstrated in its ability to continue to provide nodes of key support despite significant changes to the institutions which had previously formed central elements within the network. As discussed earlier, in 1960 the NAM was formally founded, located at RMAS and largely co-opting its collection (particularly the Cavalry and Irish Regiments and aspects of the collections from colonial forces e.g., the Indian Army). It was supported in a large part by funding raised by Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer, who had in turn been supported in this endeavour by AMOT. He served as Chairman of the museum's executive committee.⁴⁶⁰ Templer was a staunch Imperialist and his career has attracted debate and controversy particularly around his involvement in the Malayan Emergency.⁴⁶¹ He later served as Chief of the Imperial General Staff and reportedly clashed with the architect of the 1957 Defence White Paper, Duncan Sandys.⁴⁶² In 1962 the RUSI Museum's lease for the Banqueting House in Whitehall

⁴⁵⁸ Longman, *The Museums & Galleries Commission*, 59-62.

⁴⁵⁹ Wilson, *Regimental Museums: Letter from Wilson (MOD) on behalf of Director of Personal Services (Army) setting out policy clarifications; Annexure B: Area Councils, 1967* [Annex]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

⁴⁶⁰ W. Reid, 'The New National Army Museum', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 50, 201 (1972).

⁴⁶¹ P. Dixon, 'Hearts and Minds'? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32, 3 (2009), 353-381; P. Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997* [eBook] (London: Vintage Books, 2010).

⁴⁶² Carver, 'Templer, Sir Gerald Walter Robert'.

was revoked by the Government. The existence of the NAM represented the final element in separate museums for each armed service, and thus influenced in some part the decision to disperse the collection of the RUSI rather than relocate.⁴⁶³ Its collections were described later as being of largely antiquarian value.⁴⁶⁴ It is first worth briefly evaluating the impact that the RUSI may have had on the overall form in the sector, after nearly 30 years in its *in loco parentis* role. Its relatively sudden closure (and the controversies related to the sale of objects and wrapping up of the museum attracting press attention) lead us to consider the extent to which the RUSI Museum had become a questionable model after which RCMs might be based. It is not beyond reasonable to conclude that, given the way in which the RUSI Museum had ended up, some of the collections-oriented issues faced by RCMs may in part be a product of the RUSI's poorer qualities. Furthermore, the policy letter indicated that NAM was being asked to produce a 'Pamphlet-Guide for Regimental Curators', covering many curatorial skills including cataloguing, object care, publications, and administrative topics.⁴⁶⁵ It also indicated that further direct support from NAM in the form of display material could be sought.⁴⁶⁶ The priorities of the MOD appear to align with priorities in the wider sector, but also begin to point to the expertise and guidance of AMOT and NAM, in the absence of the RUSI's museum component.⁴⁶⁷ It is clear that by the end of the 1960s RCMs had experienced massive upheaval and significant change in the size and form of the network.

The War Office's change in policy and approach—shifting from a position of reticence to one of support between 1935 and 1948—by the 1950s and 1960s came to support the growth in number of RCMs open to the public. In Ogilby's list discussed in the

⁴⁶³ Erskine, 'The Historical Collections of the R.U.S.I', 64.

⁴⁶⁴ Bidwell, 'The Royal United Services institute for defence studies 1831–1991', 72. The closure of the RUSI Museum is discussed further from a collections perspective in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

⁴⁶⁵ Wilson, Regimental Museums: Letter from Wilson (MOD) on behalf of Director of Personal Services (Army) setting out policy clarifications

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁶⁷ Wilson, Letter from Wilson (MOD) on behalf of Director of Personal Services (Army), for general distribution: Corps and Regimental Museums, policy clarifications

previous chapter, there were 56 regimental museums, of which 35 were open to the public in 1935.⁴⁶⁸ By 1967, there were 67 museums officially recognised and supported by the MOD, including several Brigade Museums (but excluding any Corps museums established by this time which were not within the 1967 Review's remit). The list of military museums in the UK published by Terence Wise first in 1969 was broader in scope and more detailed in the public facing element of the RCMs extant at that time.⁴⁶⁹ Wise's list contained 74 regimental museums (including regimental collections in other museums, such as civic museums), of which 64 were open to the public (and a further 7 open by pre-arranged appointment). It also listed 17 corps museums, of which just two were not open to the public (these were either newly developed or being redeveloped at the time). It also lists four Brigade museums and four Army museums, including the NAM at Sandhurst, Camberley (which was soon to move to Chelsea; its current home).⁴⁷⁰ The 1950s and 1960s were characterised by dramatic changes in the form and structure of the Army, defining among which was a series of regimental amalgamations. Museums amalgamated in several instances over this period as discussed in the sections which follow. Whilst the numbers do represent a general increase in the size of the network there is notable endemic turbulence underneath the surface not immediately apparent in the overarching picture.

In the chronology of this chapter, it should be noted that 1969 is not a perfect cut-off date. For example, after the first round of significant army reforms, there was a notable shift in the trajectory of the SAHR. In 1964 Sir Robert Ogilby passed away and the significance of his impact as felt by other members of the SAHR was made clear in his obituary which outlined his role in establishing and chairing the Museums Committee, establishing AMOT and supporting the NAM project.⁴⁷¹ Lionel Buckell,

⁴⁶⁸ Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

⁴⁶⁹ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 9

⁴⁷¹ R. G. T., 'Colonel R. J. L. Ogilby, D.S.O., D. L.', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 42, 169 (1964), 51.

another founding member who had also been keenly involved in the Museums Committee, passed away a few months after Ogilby.⁴⁷² It appears that the deaths of such prominent members of the network had a keen impact. This seems to be the final time that the committee met, which Ogilby had attended, as no further meetings or reference to it are recorded in the Journal.⁴⁷³ Furthermore, the standalone Museums Supplement ceased to be published in the same year in favour of incorporating updates within the main journal, as and when there was a critical mass of material.⁴⁷⁴ In spite of these significant changes, the 1969 cut-off in the analysis here works for several reasons. First, in addition to including the above changes, it also marked the conclusion of a further series of amalgamations instituted between 1964 and 1968 (summarised in Table 4-2, App. 4), which affected further regiments and their locations on depots.⁴⁷⁵ French summarises the impact over the various reforms in the 1950s and 1960s:

Changes in [the Line Infantry's] organization meant that, although the British army never established a single Corps of Infantry, the autonomy and distinctiveness of individual regiments was appreciably eroded after 1945.⁴⁷⁶

And this is demonstrated in the response of the regiments, clearly feeling that their heritage was under threat, as Terence Wise's assessment indicates that:

Because of the drastic reduction of the British Army over the past decade, regiments wishing to preserve their proud histories have

⁴⁷² 'Mr. Lionel E. Buckell'.

⁴⁷³ 'Colonel R. J. L. Ogilby, D.S.O., D.L.', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 58 (1964), xix.

⁴⁷⁴ 'Notice: The Future of the Museum Supplement', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 42, 171 (1964), 166.

⁴⁷⁵ The administrative Brigades of the post-Second World War, gave way later in the 1960s to a Divisional administrative system. This was a continuation of the process of closing the Depots and amalgamating various regiments begun by the 1957 Defence White Paper. The composing regiments of several of the 14 Brigades were amalgamated, and the entire administrative system was converted into six Divisions: the Guards, Queen's, King's, Prince of Wales's, Scottish, and Light.

⁴⁷⁶ French, *Military Identities*, 292.

hastened to form regimental museums in which their uniforms, equipment, trophies and records may be preserved for ever.⁴⁷⁷

Additionally, the first publication of Wise's list of military museums in the UK, referenced above, was published in 1969. It provides us with a historical snapshot of RCMs, as a sub-set of military museums, at the point just after these amalgamations had taken place.

3 1969-1990

Moving into the 1970s, the RCMs' close proximity to army infrastructure continued to act as an environment which produced challenges for the museums. The policy documents of 1967-8 discussed earlier also had a subtle but marked difference in their tone and approach as compared with the policy documents that followed in the 1970s and 1980s. The earlier policies seemed to gently nudge the regimental museums towards the public sphere, and implied cost-saving benefits. However, an April 1970 review had the explicit aim of making substantial cuts in funding to the Regimental Headquarters (RHQs), Offices and Museums related to the legacy of the pre-Divisional structure.⁴⁷⁸ For the museums, there appears to have been at least some recognition of their position and role, and a desire for the effects of any funding cuts to be minimal. An element of the overarching review related to staffing from February 1970 wrote that the museums were 'a most valuable asset whose value could not be measured by visitor numbers alone.'⁴⁷⁹ However, this appears to caveat the real intentions of the review, as demonstrated in its recommendations. These included the expectation that staff should be provided by the accompanying RHQ or Office, that any instances of MOD staff supporting regimental museums in other municipal

⁴⁷⁷ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*.

⁴⁷⁸ DASD, *Reorganization of the Infantry: Review of RHQs, Regimental Offices and Museums*, 1970 [Review Report]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

⁴⁷⁹ L. L. Fleming, *Annex A: Review of RHQs, Offices and Museums, Record of Meeting 19 February 1970*, 1970 [Minutes]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

buildings should be reviewed, and that staff for any separate Divisional Museums were not going to be authorised. In support of the April review a further list of the extant regimental museums, categorised by their new administrative Divisions, was developed.⁴⁸⁰ It includes notes that indicate how the changes to the Army structure was beginning to impact upon the museums. The Tables (Appendix 4) thus far have set out some of the long-term impacts, but by 1970 four museums were already part of the local county/borough museums, a further five were due to move soon, and two were expected that they might move in the future.⁴⁸¹ The outcomes of this review speak to two things. First it sets the course for the next two decades and beyond as characterised by repeated cuts to funding as the size and scope of the Army was reduced. Second and most importantly, it demonstrates the continued impact of close proximity to the Army had on the RCMs. The impact of this only increased over the next two decades.

By the 1980s the severity of the funding reductions and the perspective of the Army and MOD on the utility of the museums had taken a significant downturn. There are really three points that are demonstrated by the recommendations of the 1981 Review, all of which represent consistent challenges running through the course of this chapter: funding, location, and purpose.

The fundamental rationale of the 1981 review was to develop long term policy with the aim of implementing savings in 'manpower, accommodation and running costs'.⁴⁸² At a fundamental level it highlighted the need to reduce staffing across the board in amalgamated regiments' museums.⁴⁸³ Given the level of amalgamations set out in the previous section, this would have had widespread implications. Up to this point

⁴⁸⁰ DASD, *Annex E: Regimental Museums*, 1970 [Annex]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid*

⁴⁸² M. Matthews, *Review of Army Museums*, 1981 [Review Report]. Property Services Agency and predecessors: Directorate of Defence Services (Army): Registered Files and Papers, The National Archives, London.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid*

regimental collections in civic museums were supported by the provision of staff by the MOD, but the review indicated that this would no longer be the case, and remuneration would be provided instead.⁴⁸⁴ It also recommended looking into the possibility of passing on staffing responsibilities to museum trustees in some instances.⁴⁸⁵ These considerations would certainly have made it far easier to further reduce this cost going forward. The MOD also argued that regimental museums that charged for admissions (of which there were 14) that were on MOD property, and as such received other forms of support, should return part of this income to MOD.⁴⁸⁶ This indirectly contradicted the expressions of this and earlier reviews in making the museums more economically independent, and served to discourage the regimental museums from generating their own income through admissions charges. The financial instability was accentuated by changes to the ways in which MOD approached the use of MOD property for museums.

The experience of the museums in facing physical upheaval in the 1950s was repeated in this review as it talked about the need to look at 'hiving off' the museums to enable funding reductions, as in the first point. The 1981 review set clearly the priority of the MOD to see RCMs transferred wherever possible off MOD land and into local museums. This included a drive towards 'rationalization/amalgamation of the present museums,' and exploring avenues for their 'assimilation,' with civic museums.⁴⁸⁷ The review also indicated that explicit permission would now be required when a barracks moved for regiments to re-establish a museum.⁴⁸⁸ Further and more subtle than this though, the review also effectively reversed the explicit consent for all regiments to establish museums as instigated by earlier policies discussed in this chapter. This meant that not only were those museums that were

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 2-3

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 3

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 1

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 2

still on barracks sites constantly at risk of being left on alienable property, but if that happened they had no guarantee of being allowed to continue operating where the regiment moved to. The actions prescribed by the 1981 review did include continuing support for the museums, but there was also a clear emphasis on pushing the museums more towards the public sphere.

The MOD's push to emphasise the public-facing role of the museums appears to demonstrate that their primary fundamental purpose was not (if it ever had been) for the Army and the generation of *esprit de corps*. The review placed greater emphasis on the museums' role in keeping 'a favourable image of the Army in the public mind.'⁴⁸⁹ It is difficult to evaluate with certainty the nature of the public perception of the Army at this time, though a 'civil-military gap,' of some description certainly can be applied here.⁴⁹⁰ By the 1970s, the nature of the Army had changed substantially and the withdrawal from the majority of the historic Empire (and the ways in which this withdrawal had occurred) contributed to an increased isolation between the Army and broader society in the UK.⁴⁹¹ Moving into the 1980s, an intricate array of conflicts with varying degrees of "success" make it difficult to assess how the public felt. The withdrawal of British forces from Northern Ireland had received a high level of public support reflecting its controversial nature.⁴⁹² Northern Ireland had seen extensive use of Special Forces in the form of the SAS, for example, which had remained largely out of the public eye until the Iranian Embassy Siege in 1980. This raised questions about the ethics of special operations more broadly in civil and political spheres. The

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 1

⁴⁹⁰ L. A. Hines et al., 'Are the Armed Forces Understood and Supported by the Public? A View from the United Kingdom', *Armed Forces & Society*, 41, 4 (2014), 688-713.

⁴⁹¹ E. Burke, 'The British Army Before 1971', in E. Burke (ed.), *An Army of Tribes: British Army Cohesion, Deviancy and Murder in Northern Ireland* (Liverpool University Press) [eBook]: 33-34.

⁴⁹² P. Dixon, 'A real stirring in the nation': military families, British public opinion and withdrawal from Northern Ireland', in G. Dawson et al. (eds.), *The Northern Ireland Troubles in Britain: Impacts, engagements, legacies and memories* (Manchester University Press) [eBook], 41-56.

emphasis of the 1981 review on the public-facing role sits firmly in the context of conflicts of this period.

The review also clearly set out the MOD's position at that time with regard to the fundamental purpose of the museums in terms of their potential to contribute to recruitment. As a key rationale for their continuing operation, it stated the following:

In encouraging the interest of children and parents in the Army and in military history, they provide an important, if unquantifiable, aid to recruiting.⁴⁹³

The review acknowledged that the museums '[...]will continue to provide a valuable service in the Defence interest.'⁴⁹⁴ However, necessity to indicate that the recruiting capacity of the museums was 'unquantifiable', is interesting in continuing a trend in assessment of the museums' contribution to recruitment and to overall Army strategy as being somewhat subjective. It lends weight more notably to the perspective explored in this and the previous chapter, that the more general enjoyment of the public was a greater priority.

Finally, in addition to the general funding cuts being sought, as set out above, the 1981 review sought to tie the funding of museums in terms of staffing, to a perception of value in terms of getting visitors through the door. It stated in no uncertain terms that any museums receiving less than 5,000 visitors per annum by March 1984 would have its staffing reduced. The review clearly demonstrates finally that by the 1980s the MOD and Army was settling on the perspective that the museums functioned for the public, and only tangentially for the military. The review seemed fundamentally unconcerned with the extent of any recruiting benefit, so long as the museums were painting the Army in a positive light at minimal possible cost to public finances. The tumult faced by the museums in terms of location security, and a clear lack of faith in

⁴⁹³ Matthews, Review of Army Museums

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid*

their purpose affected the RCMs uniquely, but it is worth looking at the funding picture for museums more broadly.

At the same time that the MOD and Army appear to have been pushing the regimental museums towards the broader museums sector, there were many changes happening in and to museums. In September 1981 the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries was renamed as the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC) and was given expanded responsibilities.⁴⁹⁵ This was the first time the remit of the Commission had been expanded since its creation in 1931.⁴⁹⁶ The MGC was the government's oversight body for museums and its responsibilities included distributing public money to provincial museums and galleries.⁴⁹⁷ In fact, the changes made to the Standing Commission's remit when it became MGC was intended to place emphasis on its role for non-national museums, in addition to nationals.⁴⁹⁸ It coincided with a feeling that in spite of the refinement in the MGC's priorities, more broadly there was a lack of clarity or defined structure and form to the operational space of museums.⁴⁹⁹ There was a greater push for museums in general to operate more as businesses, to be more financially independent, and to see their visitors more as customers.⁵⁰⁰ This emphasis came from central government, and the Museums & Galleries Commission in the 1980s particularly had placed great emphasis on the need for museums to manage resource efficiently and conduct effective forward planning.⁵⁰¹ Thus, the RCMs experienced not only dwindling support from the Army and MOD, but were

⁴⁹⁵ Longman, *The Museums & Galleries Commission*, 62.

⁴⁹⁶ The Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries which preceded it produced its final report in 1932, after which time it became the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries. See *ibid*

⁴⁹⁷ S. Davies, *By Popular Demand: A strategic analysis of the market potential for museums and art galleries in the UK*. Museums & Galleries Commission, 1994), 52.

⁴⁹⁸ Longman, *The Museums & Galleries Commission*, 62.

⁴⁹⁹ G. Lewis, 'Introduction', in J. M. A. Thompson (ed.), *Manual of Curatorship: A Guide to Museum Practice* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1992) [eBook].

⁵⁰⁰ Hudson, 'Museums and their customers', 7; E. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and their Visitors*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 24.

⁵⁰¹ Davies, *By Popular Demand*.

pushed towards the broader museums sector at a time when funding pressures were also being experienced here.

An example product of the radical changes to the structure of the Army, and the various reviews of its RHQ and museum commitments was the coalescing of a group of museums at Peninsula Barracks in Winchester. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Upper Barracks (as it was previously known) in Winchester had been largely vacated by the Royal Hampshire Regiment. Meanwhile, it was confirmed in 1958 that the Green Jackets Brigade would have their Brigade Depot there as part of the 1957 reforms.⁵⁰² After the transition to the divisional system, the Peninsula Barracks was the Depot for the Light Division until 1985. At this time, plans were advanced to expand the heritage repertoire beyond the three extant museums on the site, to ensure its long-term feasibility. A paper produced in January 1985 included several proposals, chief among which was to retain the Royal Hussars, Royal Hampshires and Royal Green Jackets on the site, and bring the Light Infantry Regiment and Brigade of Gurkhas collections to join.⁵⁰³ After deliberation, ECAB accepted the proposal, but it took some time to fully enact. Indeed, by the Henshaw Review of 1992, discussed in detail in the next section, the matter was not fully resolved. Nonetheless, the proposal as set out in 1985 largely held, with some later transitions which will be discussed in the next section. The Winchester site today is a successful project, but had many broader environmental factors which arguably benefitted it. The proximity of the barracks to the major conurbation as well as the support from the local authority were almost certainly crucial to success. The extent to which any of the museums could have survived in isolation at other locations is an interesting counterfactual to consider. Stipulating this presents us then with the question as to the role of the shared heritage and foundational network in ensuring the long-term success where

⁵⁰² Soames, *Infantry Brigade Depots (Location)*.

⁵⁰³ *Army Accommodation for Deployment Committee: Army Museums in Peninsula Barracks, Winchester, 1985* [Draft Paper]. Property Services Agency and predecessors: Directorate of Defence Services (Army): Registered Files and Papers, The National Archives, London.

other museums and other situations may have fared less well. What is certain is that it was a product of the broader context produced by the changes to the structure of the Army and the alienation of the lands previously occupied by several of the museums which ended up at Winchester. Support from the MOD in this instance allowed the museums to retain an independent identity, where those in earlier decades, such as the Duke of Wellington's Regiment and others, were required to join civic collections. As such it demonstrates not only the impact on museum management of the close relationship to the Army, but also that at times support could be applied inconsistently. In both instances museums had to respond to circumstances which were largely beyond their control.

4 1990-2020

In 1989 the Berlin Wall was torn down, and with a series of revolutions the collapse of the Soviet Union seemed inevitable. In response to this and the gradual shift of the traditional Cold War era international security dynamic, in July 1990 the UK Government announced *Options for Change*, intended to re-evaluate the UK's defence priorities in this changing environment.⁵⁰⁴ After a period of stability in the regimental and corps structure of the Army, changes in the wider international security environment at the end of the Cold War required a further round of amalgamations which would affect the extant museums in the early 1990s. It was not the only defence review of the 1990s, but it was the only policy which required amalgamations in order to reduce overall manpower requirements. As with those in the 1950s and 1960s, Table 4-3 (Appendix **Error! Reference source not found.**) again sets out the extent of the amalgamations along with notes regarding the museums represented and impacted by the reductions. Some of the cavalry regiments, unaltered since the 1920s, now faced amalgamation as the infantry had.⁵⁰⁵ By the time of *Options for Change*, the

⁵⁰⁴ C. Mills et al., *A brief guide to previous British defence reviews* (2020).

⁵⁰⁵ It is worth noting that a few cavalry regiments had undergone amalgamations for other reasons between 1957 (outcomes of the Defence White Paper) and the 1990s.

amalgamating cavalry regiments had established separate museums with a few exceptions.⁵⁰⁶ 12 cavalry regiments were amalgamated in 1992-93 as part of the reforms (including the Household Cavalry union). This had significant implications for their respective museums. Vignette 3 below demonstrates how quickly this impact was felt by the cavalry regiments, many of whom had only recently independently established museums (re-located from the RMAS Museum since the late 1960s). The case and the table show how several had attempted to carve out space for themselves before eventually unifying with the units they joined with. For the cavalry generally, by 1992 several regiments had already begun the process of combining their collections, though some remained in their original locations. *Options for Change* also spelled major change for several of the Service Corps, including those such as the Pioneers which, as with the cavalry had begun establishing their own museums. Several Corps were amalgamated amongst the Engineers, Logistics and administrative Corps. Several of these had marginal collections, which necessitated co-locating collections, for example those that formed into the Adjutant General's Corps. This was not a sustainable position in the long-term however, as at the time of writing all amalgamated cavalry regiments have co-located their collections, or are in the process of doing so. The amalgamations set out in *Options for Change* demonstrates the effects upon RCMs, and the continued impact of a close relationship to the Army in maintaining their relevance.

Vignette 3: 4th/7th and 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards

The 4th/7th were co-located with the Prince of Wales's Regiment of Yorkshire, in various locations in Yorkshire over time. This included with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment at Bankfield

⁵⁰⁶ The Household Cavalry's component collections, the Life Guards (1st and 2nd) and the Blues and Royals, were already co-located prior to their "union". The 4th/7th Dragoon Guards and the 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards were co-located with other collections, see Mini Case Study 3.

Museum, Halifax.⁵⁰⁷ Later, the collection moved to the Castle Museum in York for a time, before moving to Tower Street, where it now exists as part of York Army Museum.

Meanwhile the 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards were co-located with the 3rd Carabiniers in Chester. This collection had previously been housed within the Museum of Irish Cavalry Regiments at Carrickfergus, with the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars and the North Irish Horse (yeomanry).⁵⁰⁸ This museum closed down in the 1980s as their lease at Carrickfergus Castle expired.⁵⁰⁹ In line with the amalgamation of the 4th/7th and 5th Inniskilling in 1992, all the collections were eventually joined up as the Royal Dragoon Guards element of York Army Museum.

By the 1990s the further severity of funding reductions required of the Army and MOD, and the context of *Options for Change* in particular, a further review of the network was undertaken in 1992. Brigadier (Retd.) C. L. G. Henshaw carried out an extensive review of the position of RCMs, with a view to make recommendations about how the network should respond. As with the review in 1981, the findings and recommendations again represented the consistent challenges running through the course of this chapter in terms of funding, location, and purpose.

To begin with, the review again provided an insight into how the perceived purpose of the museums was evolving over time, reflecting on a half-century of operation. Henshaw expressed that:

⁵⁰⁷ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*, 14.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 32

⁵⁰⁹ HL Debate, *Carrickfergus Castle: Regimental Museums (Hansard, 25 March 1986)*, 1986. Available online: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1986/mar/25/carrickfergus-castle-regimental-museums> [Accessed 02/12/22].

The role of the museums is to preserve and display their collection for the information and benefit of the general public. They play an important role in the Nation's life.⁵¹⁰

Henshaw highlighted the value for money therein, by analysing the cost per visitor (estimated at 30p), as well as the significant educational benefit. He argued for their role as a 'major recruiting aid'.⁵¹¹ It is interesting to note that in the archival copy of the report, a handwritten note underlines this phrase, and denotes 'evidence?' in-line in the margin. It is interesting because it highlights the continued question mark not only over their originating purpose (in their capacity to generate *esprit de corps* for example), but also over the extent that they have a measurable benefit to drawing people into joining the Armed Forces, and the Army particularly. This note questions this recruiting capacity directly, but does not question a general public benefit in being able to simply view and learn from the collections. Henshaw's emphasis on public benefit within the executive summary, and this note in support, demonstrates that if the museums ever were for the Army and the benefit of serving soldiers, by the 1990s it was now increasingly seen as a marginal benefit. Later in the report, Henshaw does consider the benefit to the Corps and Regiments, but as third of three benefitting groups behind the 'Nation' and the 'Army' (in a recruiting/advertising capacity, as above). Henshaw wrote:

The museum is the place where the heritage and tradition of the Corps or Regiment is displayed. For the majority of Corps the museum is a valuable aid to instruction. For the Corps and regiments the museum is in effect the spiritual home of the Regiment.⁵¹²

⁵¹⁰ C. L. G. Henshaw, *Review of Regimental and Corps Museums*, 1992 [Review Report]. Ministry of Defence (Army): Registered Files and Branch Folders, The National Archives, London. para. 3

⁵¹¹ *Ibid*

⁵¹² *Ibid*, 10

The ‘spiritual’ element in Henshaw’s conceptualisation resembles the *esprit de corps* idea that we saw in earlier discussions of purpose, but it is clear that by the 1990s this was not the chief concern of the Army, or indeed, the museums themselves.

The Henshaw review provides a stark demonstration of the ways in which RCMs were certainly hindered in some regards by maintaining a close relationship to the Army structures, in particular by remaining on MOD property. Henshaw analysed data for most of the 100 museums explored within the review process. Henshaw compared the visitor data across museums in different and comparable locational circumstances. The data showed that by 1992, 35 RCMs had been ‘Transferred to Local Authority’, and in doing so their visitor numbers ranged from 37,500 to 689,000.⁵¹³ Meanwhile, ‘Museums in MOD Barracks or property’ (of which there were 22) failed to exceed the lowest visited local authority museum, with between 6,000 and 23,000 visitors per annum.⁵¹⁴ Finally, the ‘Small Museums in MOD owned barracks or property’, ranged from as low as 250 up to 5,900 visitors per annum.⁵¹⁵ For Henshaw, although this demonstrated ‘clear evidence’, that museums co-located with the local authorities received higher visitor numbers, he highlighted that it was ‘not an auspicious moment to go “local”,’ given uncertainty over local authority organisation going forward.⁵¹⁶ Equally, placement on MOD land did bring benefits in terms of reductions in payments for some services (such as lighting and heating). However, there had really been little change in the situation that R. J. L. Ogilby and contemporaries had explored in the 1930s, such as being located in buildings that were in reality not fit for purpose. The low visitor numbers almost certainly affected the long-term sustainability of the museums in and of itself, but another priority for Henshaw was to review the extent to which various MOD properties were alienable.

⁵¹³ *Ibid*

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid*

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid*

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid*, 11. This is in reference to the Local Government Commission 1992 which was in the process of reviewing the structure of local government under the Local Government Act 1992. See <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C177> for synopsis.

Alienable property owned by the MOD was liable to be sold off as pertaining to the requirements of MOD budgetary constraints, but as a result the museums themselves also came under these budgetary pressures, as they had in the late 1960s. Regardless of the changing strategic necessities, broader budgetary pressures made the requirement of review inevitable, though some commentators evaluated the defence reviews purely as a spending cuts exercise.⁵¹⁷ Whilst the expressed priority of Henshaw's review was to ensure the long-term sustainability of the museums, exploration of which MOD properties could be sold off and how this would affect tenant museums was also within the review's remit.⁵¹⁸ Henshaw highlighted more than 20 properties which could be sold off to generate income for the Army and MOD. The case of the grouping of museums at Winchester depot is discussed at the end of the previous section. Two museums hypothetically affected by Henshaw's list of alienable property were the Royal Military Police (RMP) and Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) museums. The latter was amalgamated with other administrative Corps to form the Adjutant Generals Corps (AGC) and Henshaw recommended that they should move to Peninsula with the new unit. Again, the requirements of the Army impacted museums in ways which were largely beyond their control, having implications for many aspects of the forward planning and collections care.

However, the review also existed in the context of recession in the UK in the early 1990s, and the economic situation had shifted enough in the next two years to necessitate further action by the MOD in more radically reducing the budgetary burden of Regimental HQs, and importantly, their museums. The bottom line for the 1994 report carried out by the Director General of the AGC on behalf of the AG (Adjutant General), was to achieve a 30% reduction in funding across all the museums

⁵¹⁷ Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting*, 128; Mills et al., *A brief guide to previous British defence reviews*.

⁵¹⁸ C. L. G. Henshaw, *Annex E - MOD Properties Potentially Alienable*, 1992 [Annex]. Ministry of Defence (Army): Registered Files and Branch Folders, The National Archives, London.

in receipt of public funding.⁵¹⁹ Reduction in funding was not the only priority of the 1994 review, in common with the Henshaw review a few years earlier. However, these objectives were caveated, in that achieving them was required in order to continue to receive public funding. These objectives included registering with the Museums and Galleries Commission, attracting a minimum number of visitors, cataloguing and storing archives in line with MGC best practice, and interestingly, charging for admission and opening for at least 300 days per annum.⁵²⁰ The latter is interesting in being a clear reversal of an earlier policy emphasis on admissions being discouraged (in the 1960s the MOD/War Office's view was to recuperate funds from those charging for admission). The review also linked minimum visitor number achievement to staffing provision, with a 'museums assistant' necessitating 15,000 visitors, and a 'curator' and 'assistant' necessitating 30,000 visitors.⁵²¹ In this context it is worth noting that no museums on MOD property as explored in the Henshaw review received the number of visitors required to justify the two members of staff.

As the international security dynamic changed after the attacks on September 11th 2001 the UK Government once again announced a further review of their defence priorities. This involved another round of amalgamations, which for many infantry regiments was the most far-reaching since the 1960s, if not ever. As in the earlier amalgamation tables, the impact on the museums is set out in Table 4-4 (App. **Error! Reference source not found.**). This round involved the reduction of 21 infantry regiments down to just six, becoming the regiments that we see today in the current Order of Battle. Just as the remaining Irish regiments had been reduced down to just one Royal Irish Regiment, so the same happened for the Welsh regiments, becoming The Royal Welsh, and the six Scottish regiments, becoming the Royal Regiment of Scotland. In the latter

⁵¹⁹ DGAGC, *The Future Organisation, Roles and Funding of HQs Divisions of Infantry, HHQs, RHQs and Corps and Regimental Museums: A paper by DGAGC for AG, 1994* [Report]. Ministry of Defence (Army): Registered Files and Branch Folders, The National Archives, London.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid*

⁵²¹ *Ibid*

case, some of the amalgamating partners were experiencing the process for the first time since their creation in the 17th century.⁵²² Once again, museums had to shift and alter to reflect the changing circumstances in which they found themselves, as shown in the commentary in Table 4-4 and the other amalgamation tables in Appendix **Error! Reference source not found.** Furthermore, several of the newly created regiments began to establish their own museums, for example the Royal Regiment of Scotland, and The Rifles. Now at the final point of the process of amalgamations, as conducted by the Army over the last century, the confusion of representation of the museums in terms of coverage of regimental history can be seen in its totality. Vignette 4 demonstrates these processes in their entirety, including the establishment of museums for newly and recently created regiments. It clearly demonstrates one of the greatest challenges in maintaining a close relationship to the Army structures on not just day-to-day operation but also long-term planning over the course of the museums' histories.

Vignette 4: The Light Infantry and Rifles' Regiments

Looking at just one example, after the Rifles was formed in 2007, the new regiment established its own museum in Winchester, covering not only the operations in which the new regiment was involved, but also aspects of its history. This was in addition to nearly 10 other museums representing other miscellaneous lineages of the regiment, including at one stage six museums for the Light Infantry alone (which went on to represent just two battalions within the Rifles). This included two museums for the

⁵²² The 1st Regiment of Foot, was raised in 1633, and known as The Royal Scots for most of its near 400-year existence, and in 2006 was partnered with the 25th of Foot, raised in 1689, and known as the King's Own Borderers (and later the King's Own Scottish Borderers) for most of its over 300-year existence. This pair became the 1st Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland after around a combined 700-years of independence.

short-lived Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry; one at Bodmin and one in Taunton. The regimental museum at Taunton co-located with the local civic museum, the Museum of Somerset, whilst Bodmin remained at the last Depot building in the town. Meanwhile, a new museum for the Light Infantry, as formed in 1968, had been set up, but by the early 2000s this had become unviable and itself moved to co-locate with Bodmin Keep, which had at that time been known as the DCLI (Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry) Museum (see Figure 4-1: the DCLI Museum as it appeared in around 1956); a name which was now no longer particularly relevant.

Thus, by the late 2000s, this one strand of the Rifles regiment was represented by Bodmin Keep (the DCLI Museum) covering founding-1959, and from 1968-2007; the Museum of Somerset (Somerset LI Museum) covering the founding of the Somersets to 1959/1968 (sharing coverage of the SCLI to some extent with Bodmin Keep); and the Rifles Museum covering 2007 to present day.

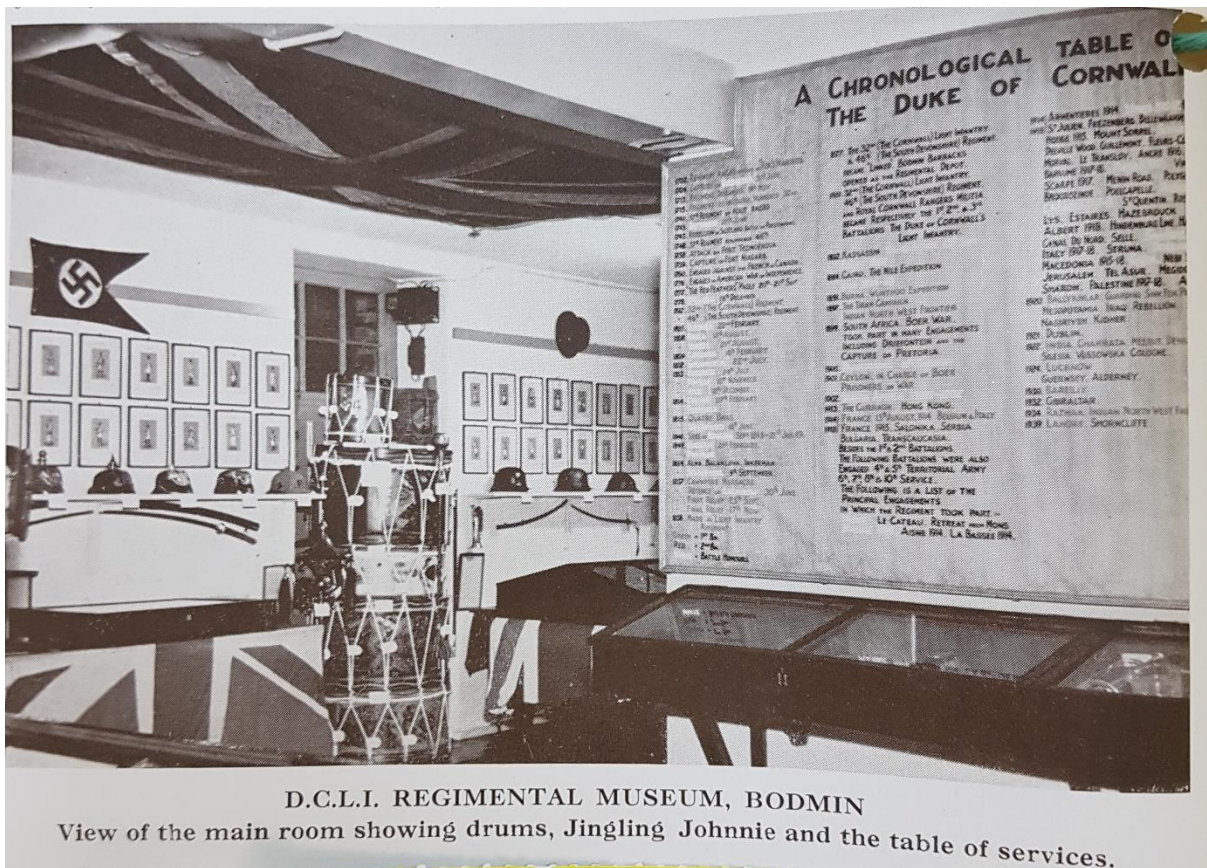


Figure 4-1: the DCLI Museum as it appeared in around 1956

As before, the figure above demonstrates the kinds of objects displayed at regimental museums. The DCLI Museum contains an updated form of the timeline on the right, and many of the drums, Jingling Johnnie (a type of musical instrument) and First and Second World War helmets remain on display.

Although the amalgamations had largely been completed for now, it was not plain sailing for RCMs. In addition to the challenges of amalgamations, they also had again to contend with the broader economic and sectoral challenges for the museum world of which they were an increasingly integrated part. The shape of the entire museums sector changed greatly over a relatively short period of time. The Museums, Libraries, Archives Council was formed in April 2000 to replace the MGC and the Library and Information Commission. Echoing the sentiment of David Fleming (the Director of National Museums Liverpool) writing in 2009, even today it is difficult to overestimate

the significance of the MLA Council in its decade-long existence.⁵²³ Fleming was writing about one of its pioneering projects, *Renaissance in the Regions*, which sought to direct national funding and support to non-national museums more broadly in the UK.⁵²⁴ After the recession of the early 1990s, the MLA Council's work arguably was a marker of a brief period of growth and success in museums, heritage and culture. In addition to *Renaissance in the Regions* the MLA Council saw its funding grow by 300% over the first eight years of operation, which was directed towards a wide range of projects for museums, libraries and archives.⁵²⁵ These projects included running the Portable Antiquities Scheme, the Museum Accreditation Scheme, and the Designation Scheme, all of which sought to enrich the quality and accessibility of museum collections and heritage across the UK, and all continue to operate today under different bodies.⁵²⁶ It was even responsible for ensuring that all libraries provided free and easy access to the internet in the early 2000s.⁵²⁷

This brief period of relative plenty came to an end with the 2008 recession which had massive ramifications for the funding picture of all museums in the UK. The RCMs network once again became a target for cuts from the MOD. In the introduction to this thesis we have already covered the most recent major policy from the MOD and Army that covered the role, responsibilities, and position of the network of RCMs in the UK. This was the Policy of 2008 produced by the Executive Committee of the Army Board. A Freedom of Information Request submitted by the researcher in 2018 confirmed that this remained the active policy from the perspective of the MOD. As such, the ECAB policy was discussed in greater detail – as representing the current policy position of the MOD – in the Introduction to this thesis. It was not the position

⁵²³ D. Fleming, *The changes started by Renaissance in the Regions need continuing support...*, 2009. Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/opinion/2009/11/29296-2/> [Accessed 02/12/22].

⁵²⁴ *Ibid*

⁵²⁵ The Museums Libraries and Archives Council, *Annual Report and Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2012* (London: Stationery Office, 2012), 4.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid*, 4-6

⁵²⁷ *Ibid*, 4

of the ECAB policy to reduce activity in the museums still funded by the MOD, but the economic recession soon after made this position redundant. In any case, the number of funded museums had fallen over time, from around 67 regimental (excluding corps) museums in 1967, to 54 regimental (and 15 corps) museums which were funded or accommodated by the MOD in the 2008 ECAB Policy.⁵²⁸ In 2011 the MOD announced that it would be significantly reducing the number of civil servant posts that it funded within RCMs.⁵²⁹ These cuts were to be made relative to the time elapsed since a regiment had been amalgamated. As such, once 25 years post-amalgamation had passed, candidate museums were no longer entitled to receive funding from MOD.⁵³⁰ The first round of these cuts came into force in 2017, this being 25 years since the remaining funded museums had their respective regiments amalgamated under *Options for Change* in 1992 (see Table 4-3 in App. 4). Fourteen museums initially lost their funding including the Museum of the King's Royal Hussars (which strictly covered the 14th/20th King's Hussars) in Preston and the Firing Line museum in Cardiff (Museum of the Royal Welsh). The 14th/20th was already facing challenges at this time as the Museum of Lancashire in Preston had closed its doors, and so the collection eventually moved to its amalgamation partner at Peninsula Barracks in Winchester.⁵³¹

5 CONCLUSION

The historical knowledge gained from this research provides vital findings in understanding the form and nature of RCMs in several regards. It establishes on a deeply evidential basis the foundations of the network. The key contribution of these first two research chapters are in establishing the value of historical research methods

⁵²⁸ Executive Committee of the Army Board, *ECAB Policy*, 2.

⁵²⁹ Steel, 'Army Museums Facing a Shake-up in Financing'.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid*

⁵³¹ C. Heeds, *Museum reopens to public after three years of closure*, 2019. Available online: <https://www.lancs.live/news/lancashire-news/lancaster-museum-reopens-public-after-15944265> [Accessed 02/12/22]; Horse Power Museum, *The Museum of The King's Royal Hussars* Available online: <https://horsepowermuseum.co.uk/> [Accessed 02/12/22].

in providing informative context for how to approach debates in the present. These chapters have also furthered understanding of some of the institutional links of the museums, and their people, with the British Empire and colonialism. In exploring the history, it has also identified how officers involved in setting up the network were embedded in ideas of Empire and ethno-cultural superiority. In the post-colonial era, the Army was deeply involved in conflicts that at times sought to thwart those seeking to decolonise their own countries. Thus, RCMs are institutions embedded in Empire, and aspects of their collections are emblematic of this colonial violence. This in turn though is juxtaposed with the clear dedication and sense of attachment of RCMs to the history and heritage of the units they represent. This develops as a challenging environment in which debates around imperial and colonial legacies occur in these museum spaces.

Simultaneously, building on Chapter 1, this chapter has demonstrated that from the earliest days of the museums, a network of support and guidance has grown around the museums. Without realising it, the individuals and organisations involved in the earliest elements of the network that supported the fledging museums in the 1930s created a framework that enabled the RCMs to survive a wide range of potentially existential challenges over the past century. From Leetham, through to Edmonds, and Ogilby through to Templer and beyond, the institutions that developed as a result of their work in NAM and AMOT continue to provide essential support to the museums today. This network produced long term benefits for the sector, in leading to the creation of key institutions which support the museums today. The networked co-ordination of key individuals and institutions provided support to the museums to mitigate the effects of amalgamations, loss of premises, and funding cuts. It also provided tools and guidance in literature to help train and up-skill curators, provide display materials and advocate for the museums in a wide range of theatres.

These institutions and other connections have provided, throughout their history, the museums with the support necessary to face the identified challenges and collectively weather them. These have at times been potentially existential challenges and whilst some of the museums have faded over time, others have grown, and all have had a network of resources and support to draw upon in addressing challenges. As a consequence, RCMs remain the largest sub-set of single-interest museums in the UK, and they continue to move from strength-to-strength in their continued work. In the context of this strong network, their multifaceted links with Empire and their unique collections position them to be sector leaders in challenging the legacies of colonialism in UK museum institutions and collections. But, the historical narrative also demonstrates the extent to which pathways for engaging with these debates must account for limited resources and capacity, and emotive investment by regiments and corps.

Chapter 3: History of Collections

Exploring the history of collections held by RCMs and the context of looting

1 INTRODUCTION

In order to respond to challenges around addressing colonial legacies, developing a fundamental and deepened understanding of complete object narratives (or as complete as possible) is essential. This chapter does not seek to treat the object narratives in isolation, seeing them instead as components in the whole story of the objects. Embedding the case studies and examples within both the legal and convention frameworks, as well as considering attitudes at the time of their take (or acceptance into collections in some cases), allows us to consider the whole picture of the narrative, as layered, complex and often contradictory. The object narratives represent both the meaning for source communities and individuals, as well as the meaning applied by capturers in service of the maintenance of regimental identity and by museum professionals over time. This identity was itself often founded upon ideas of colonial superiority. Later chapters and the discussion will build upon this research to identify issues in the present and set out pathways for addressing colonial legacies in collections.

This chapter will look at a range of examples and cases largely specific to regimental and corps collections (including the RUSI Museum and NAM as relevant).⁵³² The case studies and examples are set within the context of both the law binding the British Army and the international framework of agreements as they developed over time. The analysis of the objects and collections in particular takes account of the specific purpose for which they were collected and then displayed and interpreted within

⁵³² The RUSI and NAM act as proxies in some cases due to the limitations of the research methods discussed in the introduction.

RCMs. Furthermore, the research presents analysis of collections with colonial legacies in current museum practice, for discussion in later chapters.

A lock of hair encased in a snuff box from the Indian Rebellion 1857-9 cuts across the themes focussed on in this chapter. The Indian Rebellion occurred in a transitional period for British imperialism, as well as shortly before a shift in approaches to looting both internationally and within the British Army. Later cases of the looting of human remains explored in this chapter drew heavy criticism, and in recent years the restitution of remains has become an increasing focus for museums. Looking in detail at the object reveals its role in the conflict, its displacement as a result of looting actions, and the transformation of the object by encasing the hair in the snuff box. It is situated within a broad church of “loot” as having a varied definitional history, and the acceptance of looting and plundering as a natural part of soldiering has similarly shifted over time. The commodification of human remains, the significance of bodily associations of objects, the physical transformation that accompanied many “trophies”, the approach to describing people and places in colonial terms, and the interpretation of material and presentation of narratives all play key parts. Doing such analysis begins to reveal what the objects do once they are in the museum and what purpose they have served. It combines approaches utilised by Mack, drawn from Appadurai and other anthropological and material culture methods which explore object biographies.⁵³³ It also considers Smith’s invocation of Samuel in understanding that aspects of memory and identity imbued within objects are negotiated within the museum, and visitors are active participants in this process.⁵³⁴ The different ways in which this object and other cases in this chapter have been catalogued and displayed within collections influence how audiences understand objects across time. In this case, interpretation has arguably historically been in service of a broader Imperial mission, even as it shifted in importance over time.

⁵³³ See Mack, 'The agency of objects'. as discussed in *Historiography*.

⁵³⁴ See Smith, *Uses of heritage*. as discussed in *Historiography*.

One of the ways in which this has manifested is the exercise of control over human remains. Control over people's bodies through various methods has been described as a key element of 'racialization,' and was itself an important facet of Empire.⁵³⁵ A lock of hair taken during the Indian Rebellion [Mutiny] of 1857-9 opens exploration into the treatment and transformation of "enemy" material, and the labelling of objects. Towards the conclusion of this campaign, on 18th April 1859, the rebel leader Tatyá Tope was executed by the British at Shivpuri.⁵³⁶ It is interesting to note, that in a report from the time after Tope was executed (by hanging), 'a great scramble was made by officers and others to get a lock of hair, &c.'⁵³⁷ The line feels as a throwaway at the end of the article, as if it was to be expected behaviour of officers, including potentially British officers. Deputy-Surgeon-General Richard Chapman Lofthouse, M.D., began his career in the Army through the Army Medical Department, enlisting as an Assistant Surgeon in July 1854. He served for just over 30 years, retiring in 1884, and saw service across the Empire. During the 1857-9 Rebellion in India, Lofthouse was serving as Assistant Surgeon to the 14th Light Dragoons.⁵³⁸ Lofthouse died in 1907, and an entry appeared in the RUSI Museum collection catalogue of 1932.⁵³⁹ Exhibit number 7531:

Lock of hair cut from the head of the arch-rebel Tántia Topee [sic: Tatyá Tope] on the scaffold, immediately after his execution at Sepree [sic: Shivpuri], Central India.

Tántia Topee was commanding the forces of Nana Sahib, who was instrumental in betraying the helpless women and children of the 32nd

⁵³⁵ J. Littler, 'Heritage and 'Race'', in B. Graham & P. Howard (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 89-103.

⁵³⁶ Museums of India, *Achkan and a lock of hair of Tatyá Tope*, R3208 Available online: http://museumsofindia.gov.in/repository/record/vmh_kol-R3208-15251 [Accessed 04/01/22].

⁵³⁷ 'Capture, Trial, and Execution of Tántia Topee', *The Oswestry Advertiser and Montgomeryshire Mercury*. 25/02/1859.

⁵³⁸ H. G. Hart, *The New Annual Army List, and Militia List, for 1865*. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1865), 154.

⁵³⁹ E. L. Hughes, *R.U.S.I. Catalogue*. 8th edition, (London: n/a, 1932), 301.

Regiment which ended in the Cawnpore [Kanpur] massacre.

Bequeathed by Major R. C. Lofthouse, M.D.

A similar lock of hair belonging to Tatyá Tope is in the NAM collection today, with an accession number of: NAM.1965-09-54-1. Whilst its accession coincides with the dispersal of the RUSI collections after its closure (discussed in Chapter 2), this lock of hair is set within the lid of a gold, ornately decorated snuff box.⁵⁴⁰ Whether this detail was omitted in the RUSI catalogue, or it was a transformation made after its acceptance into the RUSI collection is unclear. As an object out of which snuff would be consumed, it has a caption engraved upon it which reads: 'Tantia Topee's [sic] Hair: Executed 18th April 1859' in ornate lettering. Objects captured from specific (or high profile) enemies of Empire and taken into the military or regimental collections frequently had their physical form manipulated in some way to actively change their meaning. Tythacott highlights the extreme but illustrative example of Chinese cannon purportedly melted down and used in the early Victoria Crosses. 'What better way', Tythacott writes, 'to assert complete domination over an enemy in war.'⁵⁴¹ Transformed and altered objects like the Tatyá Tope snuff box potentially had a life within the regimental messes (the Officers' mess or Sergeants' mess). Kirke and Hartwell cite the case of a tusk, captured in battle, which allegedly belonged to the Zulu King, Cetshwayo kaMpande. The tusk (a personal object from his tent) establishes the importance of the close personal association of the object with a vanquished foe. However, Kirke and Hartwell highlight that though interesting as a battle trophy, there was no display value in the context of the mess until this tusk had

⁵⁴⁰ National Army Museum, *Snuff-box containing a lock of Tantia Tope's hair, removed after his execution in 1859: NAM. 1965-09-54-1* Available online:

<https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?q=searchType%3Dsimple%26resultsDisplay%3Dlist%26simpleText%3Dcawnpore%2520hair&pos=2&total=4&page=1&acc=1965-09-54-1> [Accessed 05/01/2022].

This assumption is based upon a typical approach to setting accessions numbers, in which the number system begins with the year in which the object was accessioned (accepted into the collection). See Collections Trust, *Numbering*, 2019. Available online:

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/numbering/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁵⁴¹ Tythacott, 'Trophies of War', 470.

been transformed into a snuff mull.⁵⁴² Nonetheless, the physical transformation of an object—splitting, shaping, or adding silvering and plaques—demonstrates the control and power of the vanquisher over the vanquished. Plaques will often feature the name of the captor or gifting officer (from another regiment perhaps), and if the vanquished is prominent enough (a strong adversary), an emphasis on the object's *previous* association with them. In the case of Cetshwayo's tusk, the physical transformation of a *personal* possession of the vanquished King Cetshwayo into an object of utility, is also a metaphysical transformation into a representation of power and colonial dominance within the Officers' Mess. The transformation of objects such as the tusk in the context of the Mess brings it into the realm of objects associated with the establishment of *esprit de corps* in the regimental and corps culture.

However, a comparable exhibit in the RUSI Collection from this conflict, number 2336, juxtaposes the difference in the treatment of "enemy" material. Item 2336 also contains human hair, but was instead taken from British women and children killed at Kanpur (Cawnpore) in July 1857.⁵⁴³ The hair was mounted in a frame and remains this way, as this object is now in the collections of the NAM. In more detail, the hair is mounted on a velvet board within a frame, with a note and a plaque.⁵⁴⁴ The frame arguably has sensitivity and context, with a detailed label describing the events that precipitated the collection of the hair of women and children 'massacred' during the rebellion. Here we see a clear distinction in the way in which "enemy" material is treated as compared with remains representing white Western civilians. Where the snuff box is a trinket to be used and traded, the frame memorialises and commemorates.

⁵⁴² Kirke, Hartwell, 120. Mulls specifically are usually made from rams horns.

⁵⁴³ A. Leetham, *Official Catalogue of the Royal United Service Museum, Whitehall, S.W.* 4th edition, (Southwark: J. J. Kelihher & Co., Limited, 1914), 159.

⁵⁴⁴ National Army Museum, *Lock of hair taken from Cawnpore and mounted on velvet board, 1857: NAM. 1960-02-2-1* Available online:

<https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?q=searchType%3Dsimple%26resultsDisplay%3Dlist%26simpleText%3Dcawnpore%2520hair&pos=0&total=4&page=1&acc=1960-02-2-1> [Accessed 03/01/2022].

The roots of looting as described in modern legislation reach back only over the past 70 years or so and followed just behind broader shifts in international convention from the end of the 19th century. The fundamental concept of looting, as in the form of plundering or theft of various kinds, was, over this time, increasingly acknowledged as offensive to the military cause in a wide range of circumstances. Nonetheless the late 19th and early 20th centuries in British imperialism were defined by some of the most prolific cases of looting. These cases were tied intimately with the growth and maintenance of the Empire and colonialism, and were a vital part of it.

The Victorians were enthralled by military victory and there were great emotional surges of righteous outrage when British blood was spilt or the forward progress of British power temporarily halted by some insignificant tribe who had dared to stand in the way, or attempted to cling on to their own modes of life of their territory.⁵⁴⁵

In line with definitions of colonialism set out at the start of this thesis, Olusoga assesses the dominating authority of British colonialism in the face of barriers to its progress. Objects and material culture particularly, collected as part of this mission have supported its aims in various capacities, which this chapter will focus on. Olusoga's assessment highlights the undertones for the punitive expeditions which serve as the context for several of the cases and examples explored within this chapter. The chapter also begins to explore how the looting process and the circumstances around this have become part of the narratives of the objects, and towards later chapters, sets a context for thinking about how to include this within interpretation. By highlighting how this information has been omitted in past interpretation it implicitly embeds contemporary collections management issues within the history.

Viewed chronologically, looting in a general sense is not a value to which the army ascribes today. Furthermore, the removal or destruction of cultural property is now a

⁵⁴⁵ D. Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. (London: Picador, 2021), 403.

convention to which the Army has eagerly bound itself and is now enshrined in UK law.⁵⁴⁶ However, this was not always the case and cultural attitudes changed only very gradually over time. There have been a wide range of assessments of looting practices in the military following specific lines of enquiry. Spiers for example sets out a comprehensive historical context for a range of actions which involved looting.⁵⁴⁷ Changes expressed in the tightening up of army manuals (codes of practice) and legal mechanisms reflected broader cultural changes and shifts, particularly in following international convention. Over the period explored in this chapter, there was an increasing focus on the treatment of human remains, cultural property, and later all forms of looting (with the exception perhaps of battlefield trophies). Elsewhere, the UK has been far quicker to acknowledge responsibilities around supporting the restitution of Nazi spoliation, than of colonial loot. Overall, loot was taken as per laws at the time, but this position has become increasingly culturally troubling moving up to the present. However, what is important to acknowledge in this strict analysis of the laws of war is that these offences apply to the individual, engaged in an individual action, whilst in the service of the Crown. The cases explored in this chapter demonstrate that when the group takes these actions the situation is seen to be entirely different. It is important to explore cases within the context in which they were allowed to be taken. The 'prize' system for example acted as a legal loophole for the offences of theft and similar offences that are described for the individual soldier or officer. Ultimately, as we will see, the individual objects frequently ended up in the hands of individuals via deals that circumvented systems and regulations. It is also therefore important to understand the wider context in terms of the relationship between international conventions, national law, and culture and attitudes historically towards various aspects of looting.

⁵⁴⁶ *Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017*. Chapter 6 (Norwich: The Stationery Office Ltd.).

⁵⁴⁷ E. M. Spiers, 'Spoils of war: custom and practice', in H. Lidchi & S. Allan (eds.), *Dividing the spoils: perspectives on military collections and the British empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

2 ORIGINS OF LOOTING LEGISLATION AND CONVENTIONS, AND PRACTICE

Military legislation was largely limited to the Mutiny Acts which were, broadly, re-issued every year from around 1689 until 1878/9. Before 1879, military code was split between Articles of War (issued in relation to specific conflicts) and Acts of Parliament, and it was the Army Discipline and Regulation Act 1879 that overwrote this complication.⁵⁴⁸ The first Army Act was passed in 1881 which effectively repealed and renamed the Army Discipline and Regulation Act 1879. The Army Act was the legislation that bound the British Army and was renewed every year by the Army (Annual) Act of each given year, giving opportunity for minor amendments as needed. In the Army Acts, specific descriptions of forms of theft were illustrated and punishment ascribed, but as Spiers states, there was always space for the tradition of collecting 'battlefield trophies'.⁵⁴⁹

At the same time, the Army itself sought to make reforms to reduce the level of individual looting. In land warfare 'prize', was a bonus payment made to soldiers and officers via the sale of captured 'plunder' or 'booty' (which belonged to the Crown by default) during campaigns.⁵⁵⁰ It was a significant attractor to Army service and was at least in part intended to incentivise soldiers to refrain from plundering individually.⁵⁵¹ The 'prize' system involved gathering up plunder, the determination by 'prize agents' of what would be retained for the Crown, and the sale thereafter of the remainder at auction (abroad or shipped home); prize money was distributed amongst the soldiers, NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) and Officers according to escalating value of shares based upon rank.⁵⁵² Sir Garnet Wolseley's *Soldier's Pocket*

⁵⁴⁸ War Office, *Manual of Military Law*. (London: HMSO, 1914), II: 33.

⁵⁴⁹ Spiers, 'Spoils of war', 20.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid* The term 'prize' appears even today in a naval context in regard to captured ships – this definition is not discussed here.

⁵⁵¹ R. Gregorian, 'Unfit for service: British law and looting in India in the mid-nineteenth century', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 13, 1 (1990), 63-84.

⁵⁵² Spiers, 'Spoils of war', 21.

Book for Field Service further enshrined the 'prize' distribution system which had operated throughout the 19th century.⁵⁵³ It stated that:

All booty taken in war legally belongs to the Crown, and should not under ordinary circumstances be appropriated or distributed without the Sovereign's sanction. This view of the subject has not always been acted upon, but no G.O.C. [General Officer Commanding] in the field should depart from it except under most peculiar circumstances.⁵⁵⁴

The reforms and the provisions set out by Wolseley sought to discourage forms of individual looting, in favour of a formalised 'prize' system for the Army. The above provision featured in later editions of the pocket book, published after the 1870s, at a time when individual looting saw hard punishment in line with the requirements of the Mutiny and Army Acts.⁵⁵⁵ However, for the most part reforms to prize distribution of the 1860s running up to the introduction of the first Army Act were largely ineffective, and individual looting continued particularly in African campaigns.⁵⁵⁶ It was also prominent in other theatres such as China, as in the case of Yuanming Yuan (translated and known as the 'Old Summer Palace').⁵⁵⁷

2.1 CASE STUDY 1: CORPS OF ROYAL ENGINEERS & 'YUANMING YUAN'

This first case study explores material from Yuanming Yuan and looks at how the Museum of the Royal Corps of Engineers (hereafter the Royal Engineers Museum) has approached interpretation and documentation in the past. Particular narratives and approaches to labelling have dominated the focus of interpretation of this material in RCMs and its links with the British Empire. Academic work on Yuanming Yuan has

⁵⁵³ *Ibid*, 20

⁵⁵⁴ Viscount Wolsley, *The Soldier's Pocket-Book for Field Service*. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1886), 165.

⁵⁵⁵ Spiers, 'Spoils of war', 20.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 34

⁵⁵⁷ Sometimes written as Yuan Ming Yuan or Yuanmingyuan and more commonly known as the Summer Palace or Old Summer Palace in the UK

been undertaken particularly in the 2010s, and especially in museum and history journals inspecting the treatment of material in military museums.⁵⁵⁸ Exploring this case study in detail provides opportunities to improve interpretation, working with source communities and international academics, and developing co-produced projects with a range of stakeholders including volunteers. In the context of the post-colonial period it also raises important considerations in regard to the circumstances of China and East Asia in Britain's colonial past.

For China, British imperialism had much in common with its imperial mission elsewhere, however, unlike other regions the Qing government in the early 19th century had managed and limited coastal trade largely under its own terms.⁵⁵⁹ This was contrary to the British imperial mission and war soon followed with the First Opium War lasting from 1839 to 1842, ending in an unequal treaty.⁵⁶⁰ The landscape of China bears the scars of colonial interference in common with other theatres, as in the event of the sacking and burning of Yuanming Yuan in 1860. The British and the French, under the orders of the 8th Earl of Elgin, conducted the 'punitive' response to the reported torture and execution of members of an Anglo-French envoy mission.⁵⁶¹ The French and British contingents emptied Yuanming Yuan of its contents and systematically destroyed it. The loot was auctioned and exported to Europe, ending up in a wide range of museums and private collections.

Historic interpretative practices in regard to looted material have demonstrated the broader attitudes towards foreign or 'enemy' material, for example in the presentation of context which obscures the factual details of campaigns and actions. The Royal

⁵⁵⁸ N. Kutcher, 'China's Palace of Memory', *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-), 27, 1 (2003), 30-39; O. L. E. Blessing, 'China Weeps: The Opium Wars and China's Stolen History', *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archive Professionals*, 11, 1 (2015), 27-40; Tythacott, 'Trophies of War'; L. Tythacott (ed.), *Collecting and Displaying China's "Summer Palace" in the West: The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

⁵⁵⁹ J. L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 4.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 5

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid*, 74-75

Engineers Museum has material from Yuanming Yuan in its collection, as two companies from the Corps of Royal Engineers—the 23rd and the 8th—were present at the assault and sacking.⁵⁶² The museum of the Royal Engineers in its 1993 guidebook writes that '[Charles "Chinese"] Gordon was present at the sacking of the Imperial Summer Palace in Peking and he and other Sappers *rescued* a number of treasures which are now on display...'⁵⁶³ Elsewhere in the guide book, the use of the word 'recovered' in reference to the objects from Yuanming Yuan disguises the circumstances of its acquisition, a specific choice to uphold a narrative desired by the Corps and its museum. Interpretation of the material presents the Army as the saviour, instead of the perpetrator, obscuring the history of the event.

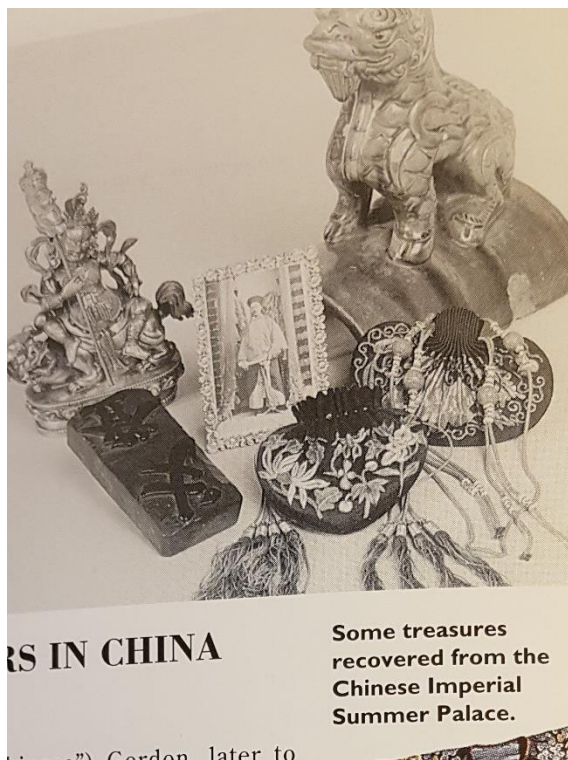


Figure 2-1: Royal Engineers Guidebook 1993

⁵⁶² Scott, "Chinese Gordon" and the Royal Engineers Museum. para 18.7

⁵⁶³ Royal Engineers Museum, *A Guide to the Royal Engineers Museum*. (n/a: n/a, 1993), 6. Author's own italicising for emphasis.

Transference and acquisition in a military context often uses specifically martial terms such as 'taken in action' and 'captured', and also 'spolia opima'.⁵⁶⁴ Use of this specific language, Hartwell argues, facilitates:

...the officers' apparent desires to emphasize their own military skill and valour. As shown, a consequence of the invocation of martial discourse appears to be the reassertion of internally recognized distinctions between the acquisition of artefacts that were presented as signifying victory and military prowess, and those taken during acts of unsanctioned appropriation and looting.⁵⁶⁵

However, it is worth noting that this expression of 'unsanctioned appropriation and looting' is inconsistent with the perception of Tythacott in the case of Yuanming Yuan. Not only was the looting of Yuanming Yuan sanctioned, but it was sanctioned at all levels, as was its destruction.⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, Tythacott draws on Hevia in commenting on the specificity of the material towards which soldiers were drawn, as having frequently a 'bodily' association with leadership (the Emperor), and so the looted objects were potentially symbols of subjugation of Chinese leadership.⁵⁶⁷ The position usually expressed through the language which describes acquisition in the museum space arguably perpetuates this subjugation. The museum holds the same power and authority over the objects as was exercised by the British forces over the Chinese.

Yuanming Yuan highlights other challenges in accurately interpreting material when contextual information is lacking or ignored. There are a few aspects to draw attention to here, exploring the context of the events surrounding the sacking and looting of Yuanming Yuan. The first is that the translation frequently used — The Summer Palace

⁵⁶⁴ N. M. Hartwell, 'Framing colonial war loot: The 'captured' *spolia opima* of Kunwar Singh', *Journal of the History of Collections* (2021): 12.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶⁶ Tythacott, *The Yuanmingyuan and its objects*. para 12.29

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid*, para 12.31

or Old Summer Palace—does little to describe the scale and cultural importance of Yuanming Yuan by the time of its levelling. The second is that the use of terms like destruction, similarly do not connote the necessary understanding of the extent of the devastation ordered by Elgin as retribution. Sources differ, but Scott’s understanding is that it took 4,800 British troops (the French did not take part though some sources claimed that they did) two full days to destroy Yuanming Yuan in its entirety.⁵⁶⁸ To appreciate the scale of this, a UK comparator may be useful. The destruction of the gardens and palaces of Yuanming Yuan would be broadly analogous to the razing of Buckingham Palace, Kensington Palace and all the buildings, follies and gardens in Hyde Park and surrounding the palaces. This should give some appreciation to not just the scale of the site, but also to what ‘destruction’, involved physically, emotionally and culturally. Even at the time, when cultural destruction of this sort was a relatively common mode of operation in Imperial expansion, it was criticised heavily by the French government, and even some British politicians.⁵⁶⁹ Supposedly Gordon himself, though party to it, felt guilt and sorrow for the actions undertaken.⁵⁷⁰

Another point to consider is the reported presence of 300 eunuchs and maids who were concealed within the complex at the time, who were burned to death following the actions of the British.⁵⁷¹ Ignorance of this information is problematic especially considering that the sacking specifically was punitive in retaliation for the execution of the Anglo-French envoy mission by the Chinese government in Beijing.⁵⁷² This representation reinforces a specific narrative of the event, as Wang Daocheng, a prominent Chinese scholar on the subject, has argued.⁵⁷³ The continued attempt to hide behind the Chinese government’s actions in the days preceding the looting,

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid*, para 12.36

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid* Para 12.37

⁵⁷⁰ A. E. Hake, *The Story of Chinese Gordon* [eBook] (London: Remington & Co., 1884), 33.

⁵⁷¹ Blessing, 'China Weeps', 31.

⁵⁷² Hevia, *English Lessons*, 74-75.

⁵⁷³ Daocheng, W., referenced in Kutcher, 'China's Palace of Memory'.

encompasses only an attempt 'to maintain the so-called moral high ground.'⁵⁷⁴ The Royal Engineers educational booklet from 1993 below (Figure 2-2) demonstrates how these misrepresentations filter into the museum's material at all levels.

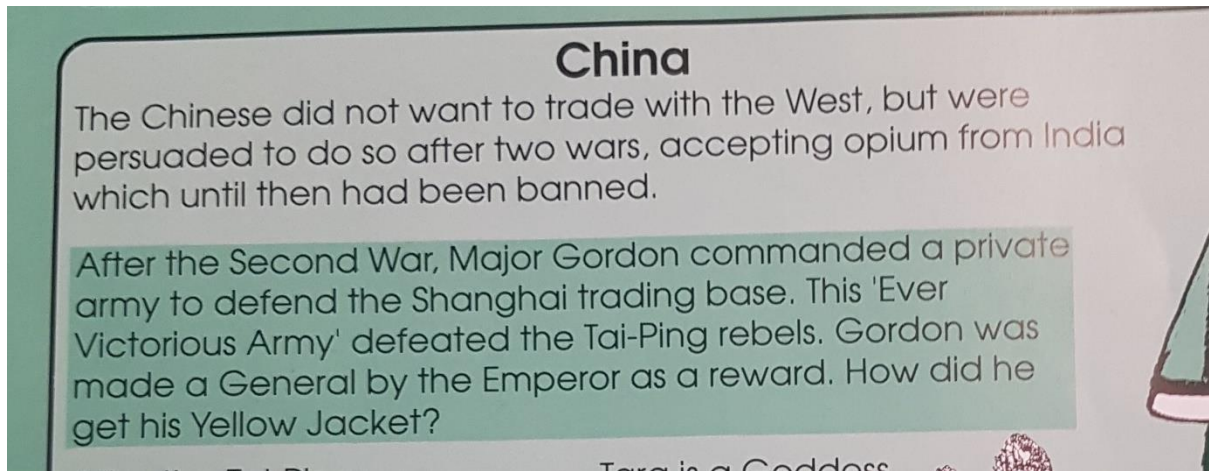


Figure 2-2: Royal Engineers Educational Material 1993

Much detail around the event is absent in the educational material above, which encapsulates the diplomatic relationship in a misleading way. For example, though it indicates that the Chinese had banned Opium imports, it makes only veiled reference to the wars. It neglects to mention the extent to which the wars were a product of British attempts to renegotiate unbalanced treaties agreed following conflicts caused by the proliferation of opiates in China at the hands of British traders, against the Chinese Government's wishes.⁵⁷⁵ Even when further wider context is drawn upon the situation was arguably manufactured by the British and French from the start.⁵⁷⁶ The British consistently refused to meet the requirements of the Chinese government and were all too ready to launch military campaigns to achieve their aims.

⁵⁷⁴ C. Bowlby, *The palace of shame that makes China angry*, 2015. Available online: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30810596> [Accessed 06/12/2021].

⁵⁷⁵ Blessing, 'China Weeps', 29-30.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 29

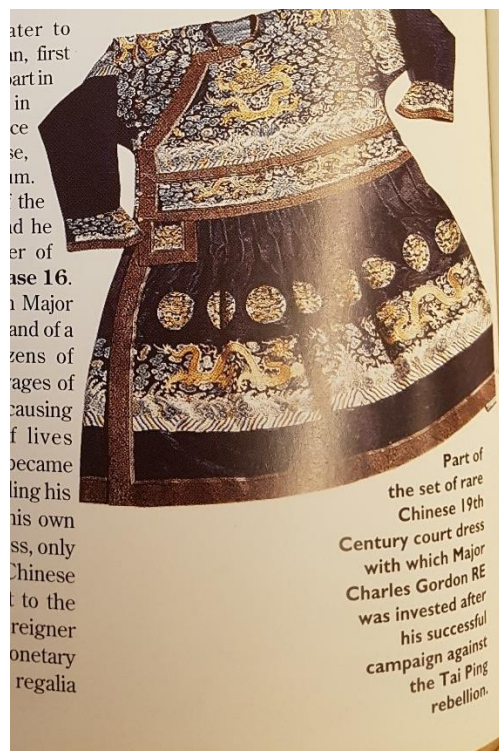


Figure 2-3: Royal Engineers Guidebook 1993

Another misperception is fostered through the ways in which material collected from different sources is presented together without distinction. There are a wide range of objects in collections in UK RCMs which were purchased or perhaps gifted by dignitaries to British Officers. The Royal Engineers' Yuanming Yuan case demonstrates how the assumption that all objects collected through Empire were acquired through specifically illegitimate methods can be fostered. During the latter stages of the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) for example, General Charles Gordon worked closely with the Qing dynasty forces to achieve their aims in the campaigns against the rebels. As a result of this, he was gifted objects by the Chinese which have made their way to the Royal Engineers collection alongside objects from Yuanming Yuan (for example, the court dress in Figure 2-3). In the guidebook the looted material is presented alongside Gordon's personal effects, which were gifted. Depending on perspective, this gives the impression that all were collected legitimately. Simultaneously however Gordon is also purposefully disassociated as much as possible from the material looted from Yuanming Yuan, despite his prominent role as

Second-in-Command of the Royal Engineers contingent present there.⁵⁷⁷ Scott attributes this to Gordon's position in the cultural memory of the regiment as a martyr for the unit and for Great Britain, which is arguably an emotional decision taken in the approach to interpretation. It seeks to appease the Corps as stakeholders in the museum. However, no such emotional language can be found within the interpretative elements related to the sacking of Yuanming Yuan itself. 'Destruction', as highlighted above, is the purposefully unemotive language so as not to bring the Corps, or Gordon, into disrepute.⁵⁷⁸

However, understanding the actual circumstances in which the Yuanming Yuan material was collected nonetheless raises questions about the material belonging to Gordon. Gordon held great reverence for China and when invited back to the country to serve in 1880 was 'nostalgic,' towards his earlier service there.⁵⁷⁹ In his later career he was also a philanthropist and abolitionist at home and abroad.⁵⁸⁰ The absence of clarity would have fostered misperceptions about the nature of the collections and how they were developed. This creates a difficult situation in researching and presenting more accurate information about the nature of the collections and their links with wider context around colonial relations, foreign policy, diplomacy and the clashing of military cultures. The historiography in this thesis considered how Winter had conceptualised the inter-relationship between museums and research, and how museum representations might impact on research. The material from Yuanming Yuan further demonstrates how the circumstantial development of RCMs creates challenges in interpreting material now. This case also exemplifies how inaccurately interpreting looted material can obscure information about collections developed through more 'legitimate' pathways of collecting.

⁵⁷⁷ Scott, "Chinese Gordon" and the Royal Engineers Museum. Para 18.25

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁷⁹ I. C. Y. Hsu, 'Gordon in China, 1880', *Pacific Historical Review*, 33, 2 (1964), 147-166.

⁵⁸⁰ P. Mersh, *Charles Gordon's Charitable Works: An Appreciation*, 2016. Available online: <https://victorianweb.org/history/empire/gordon/mersh2.html> [Accessed 07/01/2022].

3 THE LIEBER CODE 1863 AND OXFORD MANUAL C.1880

The careful regulation of looting during military campaigns began to emerge more clearly around the time of the sacking of Yuanming Yuan, but first developed prominently in the United States. Situated three decades before the passage of the first Hague Conventions the changes can be viewed in that context as representing a gradual shifting in attitudes towards the conduct of military campaigns. The American Lieber Code (1863), passed as *General Order No. 100* during the US Civil War, had already established principles around cultural property by the 1860s.⁵⁸¹ The code was concerned with a great range of factors in the regulation of Union soldiers in their military conduct.⁵⁸² Included within were several provisions for the protection of proscribed cultural property, including those containing artwork and scientific collections as well as libraries, in addition to services such as hospitals.⁵⁸³ The principles set out in the Lieber Code made their way into international convention by the end of the 19th century. The influence of the Lieber Code on the ICRC's Geneva Convention of 1864 has been contested. However, it was directly referenced by the *Oxford Manual on the Laws of War on Land* produced in around 1880.⁵⁸⁴ It was this (the Oxford) manual which formed the foundation of the Hague Conventions agreed in 1899 and 1907.⁵⁸⁵ In the time around the introduction of the Lieber Code and the Oxford Manual, further prominent examples of looting of what might be defined as cultural property took place.

⁵⁸¹ A. Mindrup, 'The Lieber Code: A Historical Analysis of the Context and Drafting of General Orders No. 100', *The Cardinal Edge*, 1, 1 (2021).

⁵⁸² G. Boda, 'One Hundred Years of Protecting the Cultural Heritage: The Lieber Code (1854) - The Hague Convention (1954)', *Plural*, 8, 1 (2020), 9-15; Mindrup, 'The Lieber Code'.

⁵⁸³ Boda, 'One Hundred Years of Protecting the Cultural Heritage', 10.

⁵⁸⁴ A. Roberts, 'Foundational Myths in the Laws of War: The 1863 Lieber Code, and the 1864 Geneva Convention', *Melbourne Journal of International Law*, 20 (2019), 1-39; Boda, 'One Hundred Years of Protecting the Cultural Heritage', 12.

⁵⁸⁵ Boda, 'One Hundred Years of Protecting the Cultural Heritage', 12.

4 LATE 19TH CENTURY CAMPAIGNS

The influence of international conventions more broadly and changing sentiments in the UK appear to have impacted upon laws affecting the British Army, as seen in cases in the late 19th century. Comparing the treatment of material from the Indian Rebellion for example, with that of the treatment of the human remains of a later rebel leader—the Sudanese Mahdi—shows these shifts beginning to emerge.⁵⁸⁶ In January 1885, as part of the Mahdist War, General Gordon—the same as “Chinese” Gordon above—was killed at Khartoum following a long siege by the Mahdist forces; a ‘national humiliation,’ which required armed response.⁵⁸⁷ After nearly 15 years of subsequent expeditions and campaigns from various armies, an Anglo-Egyptian force under the command of General Kitchener defeated the remainder of the Mahdist’s supporters (also referred to as ‘Anṣār’ throughout this chapter) at the Battle of Omdurman, September 1898.⁵⁸⁸ The Mahdi had in fact passed away shortly after the conclusion of the Siege of Khartoum and Gordon’s death, and was buried at Omdurman in a large mausoleum. Following the battle, the Mahdi’s body was exhumed in public and extreme retribution was taken for the death of Gordon at Khartoum.⁵⁸⁹ The Mahdi’s body was thrown into the Nile, but Kitchener reportedly kept the skull and allegedly considered converting it into an ink-well.⁵⁹⁰ Kitchener’s purported intentions for the skull of the Mahdi drew criticism in some cohorts in Britain. Winston Churchill was one who was outspoken on the matter and even Queen Victoria was indirectly critical of the action of looting tombs and graves in such fashion.⁵⁹¹ Questions on the matter of the treatment of the Mahdi’s remains were asked on several occasions in Parliament, and transcriptions from Spring 1899 recorded notable outcry and

⁵⁸⁶ The Mahdi was the self-described leader of the Sudanese Mahdist Caliphate.

⁵⁸⁷ National Army Museum, *Egypt and the Sudan* Available online: <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/egypt-and-sudan> [Accessed 10/03/23].

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid*

⁵⁸⁹ Mack, 'The agency of objects', 52.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 52-53

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid*, 51-52

opposition from Irish benches on hearing reports as to the treatment of the Mahdi's remains.⁵⁹² His actions also drew the ire of some including John Morley, MP for Montrose Burghs at the time. Morley questioned Kitchener's orders and approach to the treatment of the Mahdi's remains, as well as questioning the government line in denying that the body was 'mutilated'.⁵⁹³ Ultimately, Kitchener claimed that the skull was reinterred in the town of Wady [Wadi] Halfa.⁵⁹⁴ However, the treatment of the human remains was retribution and was the ultimate exercise of power by Kitchener and the British over its vanquished foe. None of the Mahdi's remains were taken into any museum collections unlike those of the Sepoy rebel for the RUSI. However, the treatment of the tomb itself highlights another element of how 'enemy' items were treated when collected, and the campaign sits closely in precedence to the agreements within the Hague Convention 1899.

When the body itself cannot be controlled indefinitely, material culture with bodily association can be used as a proxy for control. Bodily association in the narrative of the object can be as important as any other factor in the determination to acquire material on campaigns, particularly when linked to a prominent individual. Returning to the case of Sudan above, the tomb of the Mahdi itself also formed an important part of the British's retribution. In the RUSI 1932 catalogue, entry 5214:

Metal Top of the Tomb of the "Mahdi," at Omdurman. It was shelled by the 37th Field Battery, R.F.A.⁵⁹⁵

The entry purposefully omits under whose instructions the Royal Artillery had shelled the tomb, this being a specific command by Kitchener as part of the attack on Omdurman. The distribution, as trophies, of the tomb itself is also potentially

⁵⁹² 'The Madhi's Tomb', *The North Star and Farmers' Chronicle*. 23/02/1899, 6; 'The Mahdi's Tomb: Questions in Parliament', *Cardiff Times and South Wales Weekly News*. 25/02/1899, 5.

⁵⁹³ Hansard, *HC Deb 05 June 1899 vol 72 cc327-408*, 1899. Available online: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1899/jun/05/supply>.

⁵⁹⁴ 'The Mahdi's Tomb: Lord Kitchener's Explanation', *The Morning Post*. 23/03/1899, 5.

⁵⁹⁵ Hughes, *R.U.S.I. Catalogue*, 182.

significant in highlighting the importance of the bodily association the tomb had with the vanquished Mahdi. In one sense this is demonstrated by the several regimental and corps institutions into which fragments of the tomb were deposited. The finial from the RUSI collection, as other objects covered in this section, likely ended up in the NAM collection:

Architectural staff finial, from the tomb of Abdul Ahmed the Mahdi at Omdurman, which was destroyed by the British Army during the 2nd Sudan Campaign, 1898 (c).⁵⁹⁶

Another of the gold finials from the Mahdi's tomb can be found at the Royal Engineers Museum. In the past, the interpretation of such looted material has disregarded context and information in favour of a focus on the regimental or corps angle, and the collector. Scott described displays which presented little or no context even in relation to striking and significant objects such as the decorations from the tomb of the Mahdi, destroyed and sacked at Omdurman.⁵⁹⁷ These objects from the war in the Sudan coincide with the start of a period of changes in statute toward individual looting, towards the end of the 19th century, also as discussed earlier. Nonetheless the destruction and distribution of the material from the Mahdi's tomb formed one element of the exercise of ultimate power by the British Empire over a vanquished enemy. The museums in accepting and displaying this material played an important role in presenting conflicts from the perspective of the Army and promoting Imperial missions to expand and protect British interests abroad.

For bodily association to occur the object need not be limited to contact with human remains, and such objects can be seen as opportunities for collecting by military forces. The list of potential examples of this are countless across regimental and corps collections, representing a distinction but also a grey area between the looting of material culture and the taking of battlefield trophies. A Sudanese Mahdist Qur'an

⁵⁹⁶ Accession No.: 1963-12-174 in National Army Museum Collection

⁵⁹⁷ Scott, 'Objects and the representation of war in military museums', 492.

(most frequently Romanised in collections material as 'Koran') contained within a box—allowing it to be worn on the arm—was taken in the Sudan campaign and features in the RUSI collections catalogue. It was 'taken from the body of a dead Dervish on the battlefield of El Teb'.⁵⁹⁸ The role of the object within the museum, and its 'value,' is derived from the fact that it was 'taken.'⁵⁹⁹ In a similar vein, we find also in the RUSI collection a prayer book belonging to Osman Digna—a senior military commander in the Mahdist army—which was taken in 1885.⁶⁰⁰ As with Cetshwayo's tusk (discussed in the introduction to this chapter) the Qur'an worn by the Anṣār highlights the close personal, emotional and religious significance objects are imbued with. In particular, the close bodily association of the Qur'an worn on the arm demonstrates again a manifestation of the dominance of British imperialism (and potentially, Christianity) over defeated enemies. Again, the museums in their presentation of the history of Empire played a key role in demonstrating this dominance to the public.

Approaches to labelling, interpreting and cataloguing objects in RCMs have historically played a role in maintaining specific viewpoints and approaches, in support of Empire for example. The expression 'dervish' or 'darwish' (and other derivatives) has been well understood as a term not in use by the Mahdists in describing themselves. The preferred term, to reflect their religious beliefs was the demonym 'Anṣār'.⁶⁰¹ This fact was well understood at the time but members of the British military establishment continued to use the term 'dervish' in a purposefully derogatory or 'pejorative' sense.⁶⁰² Perceptions of the Anṣār were also shaped over time by their prowess in combat against the British, and so some used 'Dervish' in the context of imparting respect for the combat experience of their opponents. Osman

⁵⁹⁸ Leetham, *RUSI Catalogue*. Exhibit no.: 323

⁵⁹⁹ Scott, 'Objects and the representation of war in military museums'.

⁶⁰⁰ Hughes, *R.U.S.I. Catalogue*, 287.

⁶⁰¹ F. Nicoll & O. Nusairi, *A note of the term Ansar* Available online:

<https://makingafricanconnections.org/s/archive/item/2027> [Accessed 05/01/2022].

⁶⁰² *Ibid*

Digna was mentioned by a Lieutenant-Colonel J. Ward in House of Commons debate in 1923. Ward called Osman Digna a 'bonny old fighter,' whom he 'had the pleasure of meeting in the Sudan over 40 years ago.'⁶⁰³ Once again looking at the RUSI object catalogue demonstrates the widespread use of the term within its description of objects from Sudan.

External demononyms have consistently been the favoured approach historically, maintaining the focal point as being the perspective of the British and its Empire. Further examples from the RUSI catalogue demonstrate this approach. An object in the collection described as a 'Ju Ju Figure' taken during an expedition against the 'Munshis', entry number 6511.⁶⁰⁴ In a military history context we can view the campaign against the 'Munshis' [sic: Tiv People] as part of a series of 'expeditions' in Africa largely against local tribes affecting British interests across the continent.⁶⁰⁵ The Ashantee [sic: Asanti or Asante] Medal from the 1873-4 campaign was re-issued with clasps for a wide range of actions between 1887 and 1900, including 'Benin 1897' and a clasp for '1900' which covered the 'Munshi and Kanuda expeditions'.⁶⁰⁶ Between 1900 and 1907 with the establishments of the Southern and Northern Nigeria Protectorates, British interests clashed with those of the Tiv people while attempting to cement their colonial interests in the region. Whilst the Islamic emirates of Northern Nigeria (encompassing, amongst others, the Hausa kingdoms) had been largely subjugated through treaties and military expeditions, the Tiv objected to expansion in the Benue Valley.⁶⁰⁷ In this context, it is interesting that the object description expresses the connection to the 'Munshis' of Northern Nigeria, which was a

⁶⁰³ Hansard, *Osman Digna*. *HC Deb 19 July 1923 vol 166 c2502*, 1923. Available online: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1923/jul/19/osman-digna> [Accessed 05/01/2022].

⁶⁰⁴ Hughes, *R.U.S.I. Catalogue*, 299.

⁶⁰⁵ H. T. Dorling, *Ribbons and Medals*. New Enlarged Edition edition, (London: George Philip, 1974), 106-107.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 107

⁶⁰⁷ D. C. Dorward, 'The Development of the British Colonial Administration among the Tiv, 1900-1949', *African Affairs*, 68, 273 (1969), 316-333: 316-317.

derogatory Hausa demonym for the Tiv.⁶⁰⁸ Further expeditions were covered by the Africa General Service Medal, in this instance one of the several Nigeria clasps indicated service for these actions, again showing its role as part of a wide range of actions seeking to protect British colonial interests.⁶⁰⁹ The association between 'Ju Ju', human sacrifice and cannibalism, and the Tiv is one that merits further investigation. The Tiv, as Dorward described them were egalitarian and their political structure was based upon 'kinship ties'.⁶¹⁰ This was represented for example in their emphasis on the significance of ancestors over deities within religious and spiritual practice.⁶¹¹ More broadly 'juju' is an element within a general 'magic', significant to a range of spiritual belief systems across Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana in particular.⁶¹² Specifically it tends to refer to the imbuing of objects with magical power, usually for protective purposes, though it has also been known to be used for more nefarious purposes.⁶¹³ There are myriad layers to the object narratives that are alienated from the object's description within the museum documentation. Alongside the use of colonial demonyms, this alienation serves to support the historic actions against the Tiv within the Imperial mission at the time of the collection of such objects. The clashes with the Tiv people within the Nigerian Protectorates sit bracketed between the Hague Conventions 1899 and 1907, where a shift in attitudes towards looting cultural property began to be reflected in international conventions (discussed below, see Section 5). Another prominent case from the region now included in Nigeria is that of the punitive expedition by the British to Benin in 1897, explored below.

⁶⁰⁸ R. Fardon, 'Do You Hear Me? It Is Me, Akiga': Akiga's Story and Akiga Sai's History', *Africa*, 85, 4 (2015), 572-598: 579.

⁶⁰⁹ Dorling, *Ribbons and Medals*, 118.

⁶¹⁰ Dorward, 'The Development of the British Colonial Administration among the Tiv, 1900-1949', 316.

⁶¹¹ M. K. Asante & A. Mazama (eds.), *Encyclopedia of African religion* (California: SAGE Publications, 2009), 665-666.

⁶¹² *Ibid*, 355

⁶¹³ *Ibid*

4.1 CASE STUDY 2: EAST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT & 'BENIN BRONZES'

This second case study focuses on the 'Benin Bronzes', a group of objects derived from the actions of British forces in west Africa in 1897. This case in general again cuts across aspects of the debate in the museums sector in the present, but in this case study the focus is on the East Yorkshire Regiment (EYR) collection and on the importance of collections data as being vital to progressing with discussions about how to approach re-evaluating and re-interpreting objects. As above, within the historical timeline of protections against looting of various forms, the punitive expedition to Benin sits at a time when cultural property was garnering greater protection internationally. The extent to which this was reflected or respected in the UK armed forces is brought into examination by this case study.

As with the other instances of approaching labelling discussed in the previous section, the 'Benin Bronzes' has its own challenges. Phillips problematises the term as a generic descriptor, as the true extent of the material looted represents an artistically and historically diverse range of cultural objects.⁶¹⁴ The ubiquity of 'Benin Bronzes' as a label creates a perpetual association with the punitive expedition making it challenging to investigate and evaluate the cultural significance of the artefacts on their own merits. The raid and massacre at Benin was carried out by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, and subsequently, looted cultural art and artefacts were extracted, shipped back to Europe and auctioned to various institutions.⁶¹⁵ The British Museum collected one of the largest single sets, and as with other institutions has come under significant pressure specifically with regard to the restitution of these pieces.⁶¹⁶ Several institutions have undertaken to return this material to Nigeria (discussed in Chapter 4, section 6).

⁶¹⁴ B. Phillips, *Loot: Britain and the Benin Bronzes* [eBook] (New York: Oneworld Publications.

⁶¹⁵ D. Hicks, *The British Museums: the Benin Bronzes, colonial violence and cultural restitution* [eBook] (London: Pluto Press, 2020), 144.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid*, 243

The intricacies of this case study highlight the importance of historical understanding of collections in terms of provenance research. Not only is this about having in depth knowledge of objects in collections but it is also about having an understanding of why objects are in certain collections, grounded in good documentation.⁶¹⁷ This latter element is straightforwardly important when it comes to working with broader groups on questions of how to work with material culture in the present.

The East Yorkshire case has several moving parts, and this research has not thus far produced a clear answer, which in itself demonstrates the kinds of challenges faced by collections practitioners around due diligence. There is a piece of Benin Art in the Wilberforce House Museum which has unclear provenance based on the evidence available to the researcher currently.⁶¹⁸ Its history as a museum object however is interlinked with the dynamics around lack of permanent homes discussed in detail in Chapters 1 and 2. The art was damaged during the Second World War (in the museum in Hull), meaning it was there before the 1940s. Hicks lists the EYR Collection in Hull and Hull Museums as possible holders of Benin material within the appendices to his work on Benin Art.⁶¹⁹ However, the EYR was not in Benin in 1897; the battalions of the East Yorkshire Regiment (15th Foot) were in Tipperary and Belgaum (Madras) at the time.⁶²⁰ Their museum was also not in Hull, but rather in Beverley, and closed sometime around the 1980s.⁶²¹ Its collections at that time were dispersed to several museums including Hull Museums, which may have also held militia collections prior to this. An ex-officer (Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce Hamilton) of the EYR was the head of the Niger Coast Protectorate Force involved in the punitive expedition to Benin in

⁶¹⁷ T. Goskar, *Get your history right: Research your collections*, 2021. Available online: <https://curatorialresearch.com/decolonising-practice/get-your-history-right-research-your-collections/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁶¹⁸ Hull Culture & Leisure, *Slavery Collections at Wilberforce House* Available online: <http://museumcollections.hullcc.gov.uk/collections/storydetail.php?irn=558&master=29> [Accessed 25/10/2021]; Hicks, *The British Museums*.

⁶¹⁹ Hicks, *The British Museums*, 248.

⁶²⁰ H. G. Hart, *The New Annual Army List, Militia List and Yeomanry Cavalry List, for 1898*. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1898), 249.

⁶²¹ See Chapter 2, Table 1

1897.⁶²² Hamilton is known to have collected material during the expedition, secured either through prize auction or perhaps put to one side for Hamilton by 'prize agents' in recognition of his leadership of the strike group.⁶²³ Three guns he had held were donated to the Royal Armouries.⁶²⁴ The Digital Benin project tracks the location of material from Benin, taken in 1897, to their contemporary locations where possible. Hamilton's entry in the project indicates that it is not known how many objects he took, as his possessions were mistakenly burned during the closing hours or days of the expedition.⁶²⁵ Thus, it is entirely possible that while the guns went to the Royal Armouries, the Benin art was transferred to his old regiment, which was then passed on to Hull Museums in some form before the 1930s and that they were recovered from the fire post-1940s but the paperwork was destroyed. It is described within the Digital Benin project pages cited above that the EYR paperwork no longer exists.

This case study highlights several important elements to consider regarding the position, role and conduct of RCMs. One is their position, in the museum world, as the host of the stories of some of the most prominent collectors during the British Empire. Officers of the British Army are amongst the class of those conducting significant amounts of collecting, alongside other military branches such as the Navy. One prominent example is Lieutenant General Augustus Pitt Rivers, a Grenadier Guard officer and military careerist, and founder of the eponymous Oxford museum.⁶²⁶ Sir Garnet Wolseley is another interesting example, some of whose material ended up in the RUSI Museum collection.⁶²⁷ It is worth noting that, as discussed earlier, Wolseley was an important figure in refining the 'prize' system as a

⁶²² A. Boisrangan, *The Benin Massacre*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1897), 171.

⁶²³ P. Docherty, *Blood and Bronze*. (London: Hurst & Company, 2021), 204. Hamilton was promoted to [Brevet] Colonel for his contribution.

⁶²⁴ Digital Benin, *Digital Benin* Available online: <https://digitalbenin.org/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁶²⁵ *Ibid*

⁶²⁶ See C. Evans, 'Solidering archaeology: Pitt Rivers and collecting "Primitive Warfare"', in H. Lidchi & S. Allan (eds.), *Dividing the spoils: perspectives on military collections and the British empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

⁶²⁷ Leetham, *RUSI Catalogue*, 135. Exhibit nos.: 2030 and 2031.

sanctioned mechanism in the distribution of loot, and the funds therefrom.⁶²⁸ This does not necessarily mean that most of the collections ended up in RCMs, as much ended up in other national and regional institutions; Benin constitutes a good example of the 'prize' dispersion mechanism. In part this was down to the Army's use of this system to recoup costs of the expedition.

The case of the Benin Artwork generally is also prominent in discussions today for a variety of reasons, including particularly the position of the British Museum on repatriation whilst still holding one of the largest individual collections. It has also been discussed notably by another institution, the Pitt Rivers Museum, which has been engaged in a dialogue with a range of partners across Europe and in West Africa about the potential and pathways for returning stolen artwork. Its prominence is highlighted in a sequence of academic and sector policy pieces published over time discussing the matter specifically.⁶²⁹ The significant 229-page report published in November 2021, written by Dan Hicks (Curator for World Archaeology & Professor of Contemporary Archaeology at Pitt Rivers) identified the exact extent of the looted collection held at Pitt Rivers (accessioned and loaned), and was a product of extensive archival-based provenance research.⁶³⁰ The expectation as set out in the executive summary is that it should inform pathways forward in regard to trustee decisions around deaccessioning and return, set in the context of the Pitt Rivers Museum's interaction and engagement with the Benin Dialogue Group. The significant number of museums that hold Benin Art, as well as the prominence of these institutions, combined with the circumstances in which this material was taken, have made it a prominent case and thus one that should be considered in the context of regimental and corps collections also.

⁶²⁸ Spiers, 'Spoils of war', 20.

⁶²⁹ D. Hicks, *The University of Oxford's Benin 1897 Collections: An Interim Report* (2021); Docherty, *Blood and Bronze*; Phillips, *Loot*.

⁶³⁰ Hicks, *Uni of Oxford Benin Collections Report*.

The East Yorkshire case study highlights the impact of historic staffing of RCMs' on collecting practices. Although there are complicating factors in this case, such as the loss of paperwork potentially as a result of fire damage, the absence of museum-trained staff for much of their history has impacted on the provenance data. As shown in the previous chapters, characteristics of their historical development in this regard were well-observed by both the Army and those interested in the network early on in its development.⁶³¹ For example, the emphasis within Army Council Instructions from 1961 on the importance of accession registers, which could be provided by the Army Museums Ogilby Trust upon request.⁶³² However, the lack of emphasis on following best practice in gathering information and context about objects had consequences for things like provenance. Significantly, there is an acknowledged grey area in understanding collections' origins. Incomplete information about context can make it difficult to know whether objects were looted, stolen, bought, gifted, or exchanged. This demonstrates the need to have nuanced exploration of these colonial objects, that understands the detail and complete narrative of the objects.

The disruption to the physical location of RCMs is one of the key challenges discussed in the previous chapter. The East Yorkshire Regiment example provides a case in point and demonstrates the effect this has on the ability to manage objects and collections in the long term. The location of the Benin Art at the Wilberforce House Museum, away from the rest of the collection highlights this issue. Beverley, in East Yorkshire, was the barracks town for the East Yorkshire Regiment prior to the establishment of a museum representing the regiment. The museum was located at Butcher Row in Beverley until it closed sometime after 1969 and its collection was dispersed. Most of the collection moved to join the amalgamated regiment's collection (the Prince of Wales' Own Regiment of Yorkshire) at the Castle Museum in York. In turn this would mostly end up at Castle Street, opposite Clifford's Tower in York (the

⁶³¹ Cowper, 'The Making of a Regimental Museum'.

⁶³² Army Council, Appendix to Army Council Instructions

home of the York Army Museum at present). Some objects in the collection were moved to the Beverley Art Gallery and Museum Collection, and the remainder moved to Hull with the Wilberforce House collection. Here is where we find the Benin Art. The disruption caused by the lack of a permanent home creates a legacy in this regard. This challenge uniquely affects RCMs as a result of their close relationship with the Army and its structures. This is a product of being initially housed primarily at Depots and barracks, and so were required to relocate because of the changing obligations of the Army. In the case of the East Yorkshire Regiment and Benin Art, it can confuse processes around understanding how the material was acquired and by whom. It can also create challenges in deciding what the right course of action is in regard to that material, especially in this instance, as other institutions begin to undertake the process of returning looted cultural artefacts from the same origin. Understanding the way in which the historical development of the sector has progressed can equip curators and managers now to respond to potentially challenging collections-based issues in terms of locality and situation.

5 HAGUE CONVENTION 1899

Returning to the broader context, the Hague *Convention with respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land* was signed in 1899 by 51 countries, and as Phillips indicates, entirely too late for the actions in Benin.⁶³³ Nonetheless, the Convention included specific provisions for the protection of private property (Article 46), the prohibition of pillage (Article 47) and specific protections for the property of religious, charitable, educational, arts and science institutions. The 1899 Convention was followed in 1907 by a further Convention re-iterating the principles of the first. Both had relied on key elements of the Lieber Code—the concepts of which had gradually received greater recognition since its creation—and in part were a response to a perceived concern around the potential increasing devastation of war as a consequence of

⁶³³ Phillips, *Loot*, 129.

industrialisation.⁶³⁴ Despite Phillips' indication as to the missed opportunity for Benin, the conventions were clearly Eurocentric in their conception and so their applicability is questionable. Furthermore, as Ashbridge notes in exploration of the contemporary Geneva Convention of 1906, although international convention might follow a certain direction, the implementation by signatory parties did not necessarily achieve the overarching aims.⁶³⁵ Ashbridge uses the case of identity discs in the First World War, which were implemented by Britain in line with the broad requirements of convention, but usage of inferior material undermined their usefulness.⁶³⁶ In the same way, although international convention moved in one direction in regard to looting, practice lagged behind and cases of removal of private property continued to occur into the 20th century. Nonetheless, international consensus was clearly moving in that direction.

5.1 CASE STUDY 3: ROYAL REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS & TIBET

The Younghusband Expedition of 1903-04 provides the basis for another case to explore. The 'mission,' was supposedly about reducing Russia's influence in Asia but it came at the cost of both native lives and resources.⁶³⁷ Carrington sets out the extent of atrocities and looting of temples on the road to Lhasa, and the explicit recognition that the campaign was an opportunity for looting a culture which had had limited contact with the British before this stage.⁶³⁸ In some senses it is a 20th century campaign reminiscent of the goals of other case study expeditions such as Benin, Yuanming Yuan, and actions against the Tiv explored elsewhere in this chapter.

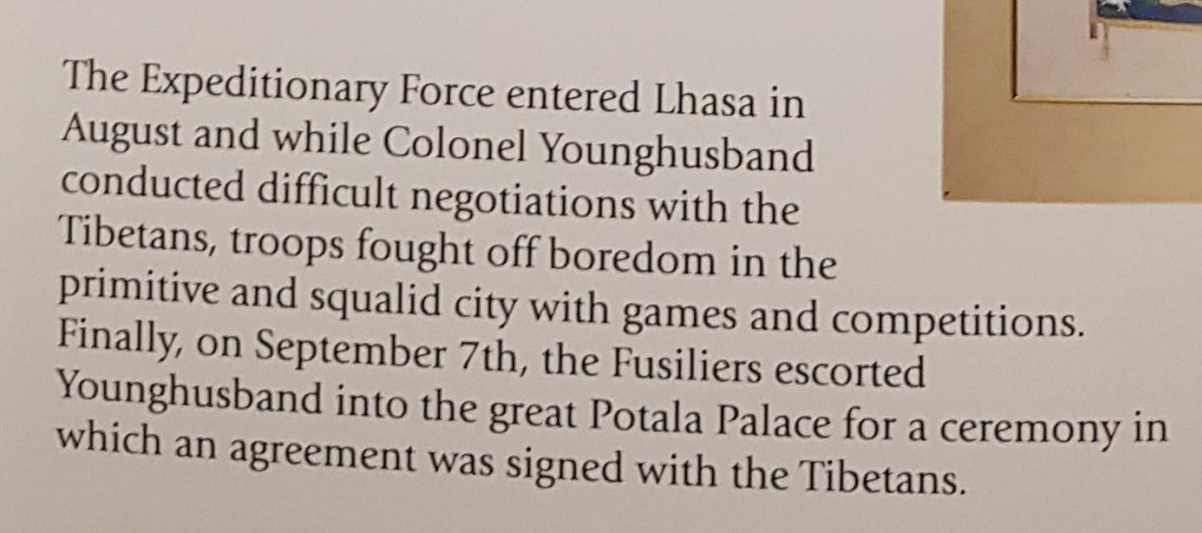
⁶³⁴ A. Cuning, 'The Safeguarding of Cultural Property in Times of War & Peace', *Tulsa Journal of Comparative and International Law*, 11, 1 (2003), 211-238: 215-216; Hevia, *English Lessons*, 237.

⁶³⁵ S. I. Ashbridge, 'Military Identification: Identity Discs and the Identification of British War Dead, 1914-18', *British Journal for Military History*, 6, 1 (2020), 21-42: 29.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid*, 42

⁶³⁷ See C. Allen, *Duel in the Snows* [eBook] (London: John Murray (Publishers), 2004).

⁶³⁸ M. Carrington, 'Officers, Gentlemen and Thieves: The Looting of Monasteries during the 1903/4 Younghusband Mission to Tibet', *Modern Asian Studies*, 37, 1 (2003), 81-109: 93-99; A. McKay, 'The British Invasion of Tibet, 1903-04', *Inner Asia*, 14, 1 (2012), 5-25: 18-19.



The Expeditionary Force entered Lhasa in August and while Colonel Younghusband conducted difficult negotiations with the Tibetans, troops fought off boredom in the primitive and squalid city with games and competitions. Finally, on September 7th, the Fusiliers escorted Younghusband into the great Potala Palace for a ceremony in which an agreement was signed with the Tibetans.

Figure 5-1: Text extract from *Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum guidebook*, c1999⁶³⁹

The guidebook extract above (Figure 5-1) for the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum (London) uses particular language to describe actions in Tibet, and the museum describes Lhasa as 'primitive', and 'squalid'.⁶⁴⁰ Historically, Lhasa as the capital of Tibet was a vital trade centre in central Asia, the seat of Buddhist culture, and home to the White and Red Palaces (the Potala Palace) of the Dalai Lama (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site).⁶⁴¹ In the matter of looting, Myatt describes that looting was specifically forbidden through campaign orders, and quotes Allen in relation to the significance of the expedition sitting less than a decade after the 1899 Hague Convention.⁶⁴² Nonetheless, looting was widespread and as a result material made its way into a wide range of private and museum collections, including the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum. Figure 5-2 & Figure 5-3 illustrate the type of material on display as linked to the expedition to Tibet in 1903-04. The guidebook does not

⁶³⁹ Alternative text: 'The Expeditionary Force entered Lhasa in August and while Colonel Younghusband conducted difficult negotiations with the Tibetans, troops fought off boredom in the primitive and squalid city with games and competitions. Finally, on September 7th, the Fusiliers escorted Younghusband into the great Potala Palace for a ceremony in which an agreement was signed with the Tibetans.'

⁶⁴⁰ Fusiliers Museum, *The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers: the Fusiliers Museum, HM Tower of London*. (Derby: English Life, c. 1999).

⁶⁴¹ UNESCO, *Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa* Available online: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/707/> [Accessed 05/01/2022].

⁶⁴² T. Myatt, 'Looting Tibet: Conflicting Narratives and Representations of Tibetan Material Culture from the 1904 British Mission to Tibet', *Inner Asia*, 14, 1 (2012), 61-97.

describe the methods by which the material was gathered, indicating only that they were representative of the Younghusband expedition.



Figure 5-2: Images and caption from Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum guidebook, c1999

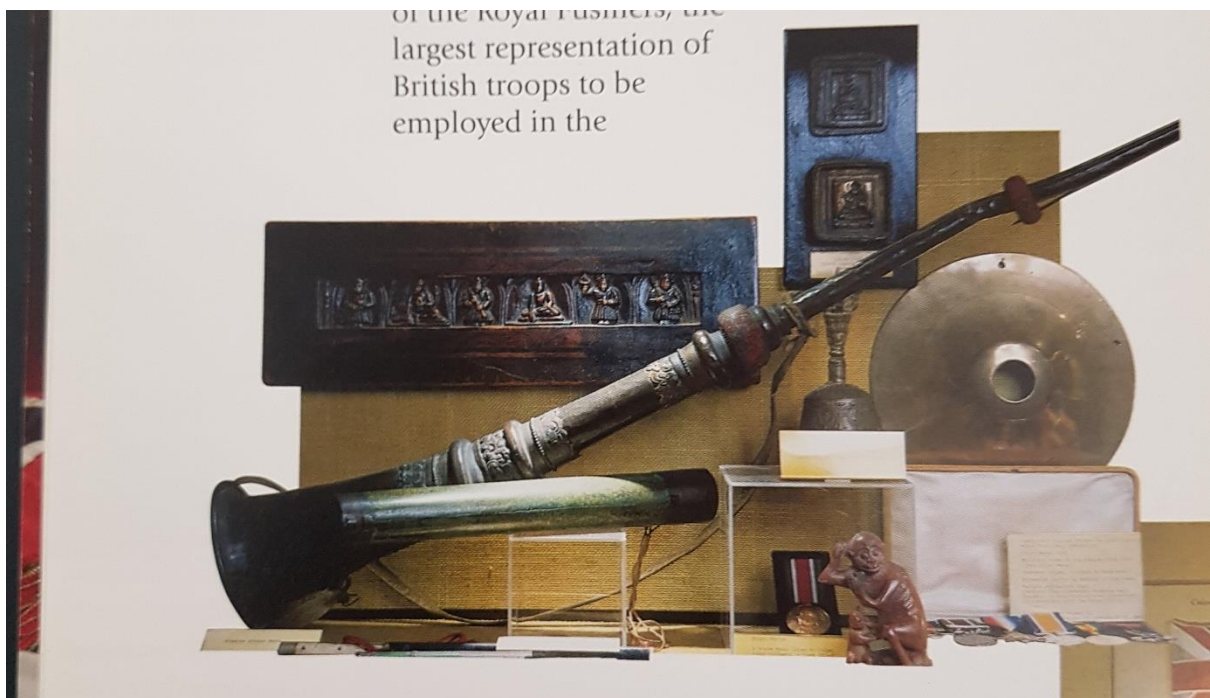


Figure 5-3: Image of display objects from Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum guidebook, c1999

We might be inclined to assume that some of the material culture may have been purchased privately during the expedition, but Carrington deals with this in questioning the rights of any individuals to sell cultural property, specifically in this case monks who sold material from monasteries to the British.⁶⁴³ The introduction of a significant amount of purchasing power through the mission created a power imbalance in the region between purchasers and sellers which raises questions as to whether the objects could be legitimately purchased. The situation also demonstrates the gaps and shortcomings in the ways in which international conventions were progressing at this time. The museum collection hides behind labelling objects as 'acquired,' 'collected,' and 'purchased,' and the latter particularly can obscure a great deal.⁶⁴⁴ In its interpretation the museum has historically played a role in presenting one perspective or account of the expedition, favouring the British cause in its civilising mission.

The presentation of the material in a particular way reiterates the material as trophies, representing the victory of this civilising campaign. The researcher's MA thesis explored this matter in greater detail, however the Royal Fusiliers museum's guidebook provides an example of this. The display earlier (Figure 5-3) is interesting in its likeness to historic photographs proudly showing captured ephemera from various battles (see Figure 5-4). It is arguable that there is a limit to the ways in which material as this can be displayed in the museum space. Indeed, material culture from the expedition is displayed alongside medals and material from serving members of the regiment. In this it does differ from the display of looted material alone, but there are numerous examples in RCMs where this has not historically been the case, and some persist today. The process of displaying looted, or otherwise collected, foreign material culture has the effect of continuing to present source communities as separate

⁶⁴³ Carrington, 'Officers, Gentlemen and Thieves', 106.

⁶⁴⁴ Myatt, 'Looting Tibet', 73.

and 'othered,' from the regiment. Furthermore, whilst regimental and corps material represents humanised individuals, often, looted material is ethnographic and represents monolithic homogenous cultural identities.



Figure 5-4: Photograph of loot from Battle of Omdurman, copyright Mack⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁵ Mack, 'The agency of objects', 47.

6 TWENTIETH CENTURY

The examples around the Sudan Campaign of the 1880s, and the looting and poor treatment of human remains which took place in this colonial conflict was clearly seen as increasingly intolerable amongst political elites in the UK. Objects did not always immediately make their way into museum collections, but later additions were examined in the context of the time of their addition. The skull of a rebel Sepoy who had allegedly murdered a woman during the Indian Rebellion (1857-9) was not deposited into the RUSI Museum collection until sometime around 1911.⁶⁴⁶ For the alleged crime, the man was ‘blown away from a gun at Scalkote [sic: Sealkote or Sialkot],’ along with 18 other rebels.⁶⁴⁷ The human remains were unnamed and held as a curio in this military collection. The response to its display begins to show how broader public feeling towards these kinds of displays was shifting at the start of the 20th century.⁶⁴⁸ Wagner cites an article from *The Sphere* of the same year which described how the ‘ghastly memento’, appearing to have been ‘converted into a cigar box’, represented both the ‘cruelty of the natives and the cruel retribution which followed’.⁶⁴⁹ Specifically, the transformation of human remains into a commodity was also a central issue, and this approach was undertaken for a broad range of looted material. The article advocated that a question should be asked in Parliament of the War Office or India Office to intervene and order the removal of the object from display.⁶⁵⁰ Later investigations argued that the skull was likely the remains of Alum Bheg, and it had ended up in a pub by the 1960s and then into an attic, before being taken on by historian Kim Wagner, who researched the remains extensively.⁶⁵¹ Wellington—citing Harrison’s specific work on the collecting of human remains in the

⁶⁴⁶ K. A. Wagner, *The Skull of Alum Bheg: The Life and Death of a Rebel of 1857* [eBook] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6.

⁶⁴⁷ Leatham, *RUSI Catalogue*, II: 1. Exhibit no.: 3365

⁶⁴⁸ Wagner, *The Skull of Alum Bheg*. A Sepoy was a professional Indian soldier of the Mughal period, later seeing service with the East India Company and the British Army

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 6

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid*

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid*

Victorian army—draws attention to the role of collecting human remains, such as skulls, in asserting prowess and establishing *esprit de corps*.⁶⁵² Wagner argues that the skull, in testifying to the defeat of the threat of rebellion, becomes a ‘trophy of colonial retribution,’ and is ‘ultimate proof of colonial power.’⁶⁵³ The skull of the Sepoy, as with other looted material and human remains acted as a physical reminder that Empire exercised absolute control over those who stood against it.

Clarity around the Army’s approach to indiscriminate individual looting became clearer in the 20th century. A key document setting out further restrictions to individual looting in the UK armed forces was the Manual of Military Law published in 1914, and especially Chapter XIV on the Laws and Usages of War on Land.⁶⁵⁴ This chapter, and indeed the remainder of the manual, drew heavily on the various Army Acts and added interpretation as necessary. As of 1914 there was no offence for ‘looting’, but provisions in several sections of the 1914 Manual covered these types of transgression. In Section 6.1 of the Army (Annual) Act 1913 which the manual includes, offences related to ‘plundering’, were established.⁶⁵⁵ These were largely in relation to the dereliction of duty, but 6.1.f established an ‘offence against the property or person of any inhabitant of or resident in the country in which he is serving;’ and 6.1.g established an offence of breaking and entering somewhere in search of plunder.⁶⁵⁶ On active duty the maximum possible sentence in all instances (officer or soldier) was death.⁶⁵⁷ It is also worth noting that section 5.2 created a broad and ambiguous offence for ‘[w]ithout orders from his superior officer wilfully [destroying]

⁶⁵² Wellington, 'War Trophies, War Memorabilia, and the Iconography of Victory in the British Empire'.

⁶⁵³ Wagner, *The Skull of Alum Bheg*, xx.

⁶⁵⁴ Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre, *JSP 383: The Joint Service Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict* (London: Ministry of Defence, 2004), v.

⁶⁵⁵ *An Act to consolidate the Army Discipline and Regulation Act, 1879, and the subsequent Acts amending the same. 1914.* 44 & 45 Victoria, Chapter 58 (London: HMSO). Part 1: Section 6.1 in War Office, *Manual of Military Law*.

⁶⁵⁶ *An Act to consolidate the Army Discipline and Regulation Act, 1879, and the subsequent Acts amending the same. 1914.* 6.1.f-g

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 44.a-g

or [damaging] any property.’⁶⁵⁸ Stealing, in various regards, is largely treated as a civil offence ‘punishable by ordinary law’, and so the complexities of law apply in this regard.⁶⁵⁹ The Army Act above explained in the notes that offences such as these are detrimental to garnering broader public support in countries in which soldiers may be based.⁶⁶⁰ Thus, although no specific offence of looting appears until much later, provisions at this time created various circumstances in which the theft of property of civilians could be treated as an offence in several regards. As the Hague Conventions which preceded this manual defined the international perspective, so too the domestic perspective in the UK clearly began to shift in favour of developing additional and specific offenses around looting. The process continued through the 20th century, especially in relation to defining events of the period as in the First and Second World Wars particularly.

7 POST-1950S CONVENTIONS AND LEGAL CHANGES

The destruction that the global conflicts of the 20th century wrought was a significant contributing factor in the development of greater legal protections for cultural property.⁶⁶¹ Broader sentiments against looting grew further as a consequence of the Second World War due to the spoliation of property (especially Jewish property) by German Nazis. The 1954 Hague *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* as enacted gave a broad definition to cultural property and outlined provisions for the protection, safeguarding and respect for defined cultural property.⁶⁶² This convention built upon earlier conventions and agreements, as it included reference to earlier Conventions of The Hague (1899 and 1907) and the

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 5.2

⁶⁵⁹ War Office, *Manual of Military Law*, III: 22-23.

⁶⁶⁰ *An Act to consolidate the Army Discipline and Regulation Act, 1879, and the subsequent Acts amending the same. 1914.* In War Office, *Manual of Military Law*, 383.

⁶⁶¹ Cunning, 'The Safeguarding of Cultural Property', 237.

⁶⁶² UNESCO, *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention* (The Hague: UN).

Washington Pact of 1935.⁶⁶³ It outlined a wide range of obligations from cosignatories including ‘Protection’, ‘Safeguarding’, and ‘Respect’.⁶⁶⁴ These broader sentiments were also reflected in the UK’s domestic legislation guiding the armed forces. The Army Act 1955, Section 30 described the offence of looting, and this set the course for the next half century, with later acts such as the 2006 Armed Forces Act which continued to broaden this definition further. It is important to note that although the UK signed the 1954 Convention in the same year as the Army Act 1955, the provisions which it contained were not formally ratified by the UK until the Cultural Property (Armed Conflict) Act 2017.

The pace of increasing protection internationally continued after the 1950s, and in 1970 UNESCO agreed the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris)*. Two years later, dealing more with ‘immovable property,’ was the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris)*.⁶⁶⁵ In 1995 the UNIDROIT (International Institute for the Unification of Private Law) *International Convention for the Restitution of Stolen and Illegally Exported Works of Art and Culture* prescribed legal channels, though limited, through which states might seek restitution. However, both UNESCO and UNIDROIT have been seen to have fallen short, lacking sufficient powers and members to succeed.⁶⁶⁶ For example, there had been no recourse available in the case of the Parthenon Marbles when the UK withdrew from UNESCO in 1985 and refused to comply (though the reasons for withdrawal were given more generally as seeking reform and it re-joined in 1997).⁶⁶⁷ Briefly returning to discussions of broader sentiments, there was a substantial campaign throughout the 1990s to

⁶⁶³ *Ibid*

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁶⁵ J. Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures*. 2nd edition, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1996), 187-189.

⁶⁶⁶ G. Robertson, *Who Owns History? : Elgin’s Loot and the Case for Returning Plundered Treasure*. (La Vergne, UNITED STATES: Biteback Publishing, 2019), 17-18.

⁶⁶⁷ Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures*, 74; UNESCO, *Our History* Available online: <https://unesco.org.uk/our-history/> [Accessed 21/03/23].

encourage the UK to re-join UNESCO.⁶⁶⁸ It has also been argued that UNESCO and UNIDROIT trod much of the same ground as the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention, which has been effective in both peace and war-time due to the provision of collective funds to support contracting parties in protecting and preserving cultural property.⁶⁶⁹ As such, there was clearly an international desire to see further and enhanced protection for cultural property across a wide range of definitions. This momentum continued throughout the remainder of the 20th century. In spite of the limitations indicated of the international conventions, more than a dozen cases of returned artefacts from Western and European states occurred between 1950 and 1981, encompassing thousands of objects.⁶⁷⁰

The UK was far quicker to acknowledge responsibilities around returning Nazi loot than it has been in confronting its colonial legacies as regards loot. This debate has historical roots both in increasing attempts to improve protection for material culture of various types, but also in broader debates in politics and academia. In the last 25 years the debate has impacted keenly on discourse in the museums sector and by the end of the 20th century guidance for the cultural sector was already being produced by relevant sector bodies. In April 1999, the Museums and Galleries Commission (which was soon after reorganised as the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council) produced a *Statement of Principles on the Spoliation of Works of Art During the Nazi Holocaust and World War II Period*. The guidance pointed to the earlier Museums Association Code of Practice for Governing Bodies (1994) which stated that a museum's 'Collections Management Policy should ensure, through the appropriate documentation, that the museum does not acquire or exhibit any stolen or illegally exported works and that it acquires legal title to items accessioned to its collections'.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁸ UNESCO, *Our History*.

⁶⁶⁹ Cunning, 'The Safeguarding of Cultural Property', 236-237.

⁶⁷⁰ J. Greenfield, 'The return of cultural property', *Antiquity*, 60, March (1986), 29-36.

⁶⁷¹ Museums and Galleries Commission, *Statement of Principles of the Museums and Galleries and Commission: Spoliation of Works of Art During the Nazi Holocaust and World War II Period* (MLA Council, 1999). Available online: <https://www.lootedart.com/MFEU4P56510> [Accessed 29/04/2023].

Furthermore, in March 2000 MGC also produced a Memorandum to government, recommending that it give 'serious consideration to acceding to the UNIDROIT and UNESCO Conventions.'⁶⁷² The UK had re-joined UNESCO in 1997 under the new Labour government, but as discussed earlier would not ratify the conventions until 2017.⁶⁷³ This Memorandum pointed to the MA 1997 Museums and Repatriation report and MGC's own February 2000 Restitution and Repatriation: Guidelines for Good Practice as useful tools. It also re-emphasised the importance of its earlier comments on spoliation of Second World War loot. The extent to which this debate manifested in guidance for museums should be viewed in the context of important caveats, in that much historically looted material was viewed as being legitimately held by the museums. Though historically looted, the transfer of title itself prior to relevant conventions constituted one which was legal. This position has begun to shift in the last decade or so, and recent developments demonstrate the rate at which this conversation has been moving. The 2000 MGC guidance above was only superseded in 2022 by new guidance produced by its successor organisation (ACE), updating guidance to reflect recent shifts in the debate around repatriation and restitution.⁶⁷⁴

The UK military's attitude towards looting today is clearly derived from the internationally agreed standards explored in this chapter. The UK only recently ratified the Hague Convention into law, after changes made via the Second Protocol of this convention (1999). The UK announced its intention to ratify it in the early 2000s, though it took until 2017 to complete the process.⁶⁷⁵ Nonetheless, in response to UNESCO requests for information on implementation, the UK highlighted its

⁶⁷² Museums and Galleries Commission, *Memorandum submitted by the Museums & Galleries Commission* (2000). Available online: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmcomeds/371/0032302.htm> [Accessed 29/04/2023].

⁶⁷³ S. Dutt, 'UNESCO: Britain Returns to the Fold', *New Zealand International Review* (c. 1997).

⁶⁷⁴ Arts Council England, *Restitution and Repatriation A Practical Guide for Museums in England* (Manchester: A. C. England, 2022), 3.

⁶⁷⁵ DCMS & J. Glen MP, *Government ratifies Hague Convention on protecting cultural property*, 2017. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-ratifies-hague-convention-on-protecting-cultural-property> [Accessed 28/12/2021].

longstanding commitment to be bound to its provisions.⁶⁷⁶ This was ensured through the UK Joint Service Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) (JSP 383). JSP 383 highlighted that despite the unratified status of the Convention, soldiers and officers were to be aware of the key principles for the purposes of operating in or with nations that are ratified signatories.⁶⁷⁷ It highlights prohibition on stealing or destroying cultural property (and the buildings in which they are contained, if the property is moveable), either directly, or as part of reprisals.⁶⁷⁸ It also highlights prohibitions on pillaging (synonymous with plundering in this regard) in captured territory and looting in the same.⁶⁷⁹ It emphasises the need for respect of private property with very limited provisions for exemption. The manual reads:

Nothing is more subversive of military discipline than plundering or looting. Theft and robbery remain punishable crimes in peace and war. The soldier in an enemy country must observe the same respect for civilian property as he would at home.⁶⁸⁰

JSP 383 also had its basis in the Manual of Military Law 1914 described above, which it references directly. It develops an idea of the extent to which a lack of respect for personal and civilian property is counter to the role and responsibilities of the Armed Forces. JSP 383 supplements the legislation, not being a statutory instrument but rather a manual for how to abide by such instruments. It is broader in its understanding in many regards, though not legally binding in the same sense as the Armed Forces Act.

The Armed Forces Act 2006 describes ‘looting,’ as an offence under Section 4, and includes an expansive definition.⁶⁸¹ An offence can include taking property from

⁶⁷⁶ UNESCO, *National report on the implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols: The Response of the United Kingdom: 7th July 2021* (Paris: UN).

⁶⁷⁷ Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre, *JSP 383*. Section 5.26

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid*, section 5.25

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid*, section 5.35

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid* section 11.76.2

⁶⁸¹ *Armed Forces Act 2006* (Chapter 52). (Norwich: The Stationery Office), 4.

anyone who has been killed, injured, captured or detained during an operation, or searching someone for the purpose of taking property. It also includes taking property 'left exposed or unprotected,' both in a general sense, but also refers to military equipment (for personal use).⁶⁸² The punishment varies depending on the severity of the offence but can extend as far as life imprisonment. The 2006 Act was a consolidation of other 'Service Discipline Acts', conducted in line with the Strategic Defence Review 1998, to bring disciplinary actions largely in line across the Army, Navy and Air Force.⁶⁸³ The AFA was renewed and amended by the Armed Forces Acts of 2011 and 2016, and a new Armed Forces Bill was passed at the end of 2021. This renewal was required every five years, as stipulated in the AFA 2006, and made some amendments though these are immaterial to the current discussion.⁶⁸⁴ Although there is a distinction between the supplementary guidance, with a heritage in part in international convention, and the legislation which binds the Armed Forces, both emphasise the end point in a long trajectory of discouraging and punishing looting by the Army and Armed Forces.

8 CONCLUSION

The virtue of using historical methods to inform heritage approaches has been a key thread in this chapter. In particular, it has sought to apply ideas and approaches from material culture studies, as others have, to military collections. In this it has further contributed to demonstrating the value in developing more nuanced investigations of the complex and interweaving layers within the biographies of objects. But what are the implications of this for RCMs in contemporary museum practice?

⁶⁸² *Ibid*, section 2a

⁶⁸³ *Armed Forces Act 2006 Explanatory Notes*, Available online: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/52/notes> [Accessed 20/03/2023]; T. Dodd & M. Oakes, *The Strategic Defence Review White Paper* (London, 1998), 59.

⁶⁸⁴ Ministry of Defence, *Armed Forces Bill 2021*, 2021. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-bill-2021> [Accessed 28/12/2021].

Overarchingly the content of this chapter and its research focus demonstrates the level of work required in unpicking object biographies related to just three campaigns in which the Army was involved across the Empire. The three case studies show how the ways in which objects have been catalogued, interpreted and displayed in the past poses challenges for museums in the present. They show both how educational material has omitted details that affect the outcome of understanding of historical events, and how objects can be used to obfuscate such details. The EYR Benin case study also showed how other challenges identified through the course of Chapters 1 and 2 can compound these challenges. The lack of a permanent home for the EYR collection complicates matters when delving into the history of objects held in RCM collections. As Chapter 2 demonstrated this is not a challenge unique to the EYR museum and will be repeated across the network. The chapter has also showed how other issues such as a lack of documentation and provenance, labels which contain outdated or offensive terminology, or even the active transformation of objects to change their characteristics all add to the challenges which face RCMs in working with these objects.

The understanding of material culture is contextualised within changes in law and attitudes by exploring the gradual attempts by Army and Government to discourage individual informal looting by soldiers over the 19th and 20th centuries. These shifts were in consequence to changing sentiments in politics and the public at home, as well as being informed by international conventions and discussions. Viewed in the context of these changes, the case studies and examples in this chapter have illustrated the potential pitfalls that staff in RCMs face now. The Fusiliers case study shows how objects acquired in the context of these shifting attitudes have been historically interpreted in ways which obscure the details of their collecting, and aspects of their narratives. Moreover, when viewed through the contemporary context of attitudes to looting and changes in law and convention, material that was gathered in a manner

that could be now deemed unlawful, but at the time was conventional practice, makes conversations in the present complex and challenging.

Chapter 4: Decolonial Debates and Perceptions in RCMs

Exploring staff perspectives, broader debates and approaches to decolonisation, and identifying relevant pathways

1 INTRODUCTION

In the exploration and evaluation of guidance on the topics of decolonisation and addressing colonial legacies in Section 6.1 of this chapter, a range of key steps and actions are outlined. Several of these approaches advocate for open and honest identification of the initial problem – the argument here is that this cannot occur without detailed archival and object-based research which contextualises and rebalances the meaning and status of museum collections.⁶⁸⁵ The interview and survey responses in this research chapter therefore explore the extent to which staff and others working in RCMs are aware of these issues. Accounting for what they identify as key issues from the perspective of their work is essential. Alongside their insights, broader perspectives from museum academia and practice help to further identify both challenges and pathways in this field. The central purpose of this chapter therefore is to embed the experiences of those working in the RCMs network, within broader debates and conversations. It considers where they align, where they depart and what this means for approaches which seek to engage with colonial and imperial legacies in RCM collections.

2 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS: PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

The literature review extensively explored decolonial literature, the definition of decolonisation and the implications for a wide range of fields, largely from an

⁶⁸⁵ Proponents of this approach are set out and explored later in this chapter.

academic perspective. Turning towards museums specifically, a key question asked of interviewees was about colonial legacies and the definitions of key terms. The definition of what the decolonisation of *museums* means is the subject of keen current debate and is open to interpretation. Goskar for example has indicated that what the decolonised museum looks like is still unknown and up for debate, but that the complexity of the issue is an opportunity and should not be 'a simplistic us vs them judgement.'⁶⁸⁶ Some have argued that whilst the potential scope of decolonising the museum is better understood, defining museum praxis is much harder.⁶⁸⁷ The degree of disconnect between museum theory and museum practice also explored in the literature review potentially explains the lack of clarity about key terms which was highlighted by several interviewees. Museums have grappled with this debate and research interviewees considering the definition of decolonisation reflected this. Some interviewees highlighted the extent to which decolonisation had different understandings in different contexts.⁶⁸⁸ Interviewees were clearly aware of how much decolonisation and related terms, as applied to different contexts, were subject to debate currently. Importantly though, the lack of clarity around key terms were as such identified as a challenge in making it difficult to engage and develop actionable approaches.

Several interviewee responses noted the distinction between structural decolonisation, as in the cases of colonies dismantling colonial structures (for example, ending of colonial rule and removal of colonial government) and the application of the term to other fields, such as museums. One interviewee for example spoke about a clear distinction between these two applications, where for countries it related to 'becoming independent,' but for a museum it was about the language being used,

⁶⁸⁶ Goskar, *Curatorial thoughts on decolonisation*.

⁶⁸⁷ Giblin et al., 'Dismantling the Master's House', 472.

⁶⁸⁸ Interviewee 3, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 23/06/21 10:00. MS Teams; Interviewee 5, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 09/08/21 15:00. MS Teams.

narratives being told and presenting history not just from the perspective of the ‘victor’, the colonial power.⁶⁸⁹ This idea of reflecting different perspectives in the understanding of history was reiterated by other interviewees, who talked about breaking habits in looking at material and telling wider stories.⁶⁹⁰ Thus, the differing definitions of decolonisation were seen as largely distinct in the ways in which interviewees described their application. In other words, decolonisation of places and decolonisation of “things” were not explicitly described as having any overlapping theoretical foundation.

Staff, as compared to academics or broader debates, arguably did not see these foundational frameworks as significant to their understanding of decolonisation as a method for broadening understanding. For example, one interviewee highlighted the challenges around determining who material should be returned to and a better approach was to reappraise and reinterpret material to reflect broader narratives.⁶⁹¹ Another was sceptical of its specific applicability in looking at the colonial legacies in collections, in the sense of its politicisation in current debates.⁶⁹² The impact of this may be minimal, but it could also have implications for the transference of such ideas from academia to museum practice.

Survey respondents were also asked their perspectives on defining decolonial terms, such as decolonisation and decoloniality. Some focussed on defining them in more “structural” terms, focussing on decolonisation. They typically understood decolonisation as a dismantling of colonial frameworks in ex-colonies. Others had a more “expanded” definition of the terms and sought to move beyond this classical

⁶⁸⁹ Interviewee 5, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁶⁹⁰ Interviewee 8, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 31/08/21 14:00. MS Teams; Interviewee 9, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 03/09/21 11:00. MS Teams.

⁶⁹¹ Interviewee 3, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁶⁹² Interviewee 1, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 28/06/21 14:00. MS Teams.

definition to focus on other applications. This group was split in their response, with some replying in generally positive terms, some in generally negative. Generally positive responses talked about increasing diversity across several areas, exploring and expanding historical understanding and repatriation. Perspectives around enhancing and improving the stories being told within the museum were reinforced by the survey findings, but there was a more vocal opposition within the survey to terms like decolonisation as they appear in debates currently. Generally negative responses talked about the politicisation of the terms being discussed and repatriation from an opposing perspective. Some interviewees also focussed on aspects of the debate which called for the return of material. They were generally hesitant about this approach in favour of a focus on re-appraising and re-interpreting colonial material to give a more balanced perspective.

Respondents to the survey were also asked the extent to which decolonisation (as they understand and define it) specifically factored into their working, if at all. Around 37% indicated that it 'significantly' or 'moderately' factored into their working, whilst 42% expressed that it factored into their working 'minimally'. Just over a quarter (26%) said that it did not factor into their working at all. Thus, whilst for the overwhelming majority, decolonial thinking factored into respondents' working on some level, most frequently this was a minimal contribution.

3 DEFINING DECOLONISATION: LITERATURE PERSPECTIVES

The literature review explored the wider historiography of decolonisation, decoloniality and related concepts. The topic of decolonisation has been increasingly debated in different sectors, including museums and heritage, in exploring if or how it applies. Debates around decolonisation can be situated within wider moves in conversations around the purpose and definition of museums. In particular, situating it within the shifts defined by New Museology since the 1990s and specifically the ways in which the relationship between museums and audiences have been re-

defined over time. However, it has been contested by some as the re-writing of history. The Policy Exchange, a UK think tank, has identified ‘changes to the way history is taught in education curricula,’ as part of ‘a new culture war,’ though it claims to catalogue cases of this without ‘offer[ing] any judgement’.⁶⁹³ One example from its ‘compendium’ draws attention to the British Museum’s moving of a bust of Sir Hans Sloane. Sloane’s collection was foundational to the museum though the move added interpretation which highlighted his links with British colonialism and imperialism.⁶⁹⁴ Despite seeking not to pass judgement, the same article problematises the extent to which identifying links between historical figures and Empire, for example, are a ‘concern’ and ‘being politicised’.⁶⁹⁵ In contrast, museum sector bodies have been adamant to demonstrate the rationale and benefits of exploring colonial legacies and decolonisation.

The extent to which debates around decolonisation have transferred from academia to museum practice is not extensive. The Museums Association identified this ‘gap between theory and practice,’ in the area of decolonial work and has sought to provide support and guidance for museums working on decolonisation.⁶⁹⁶ This took the form of a 2020 report, which in its definition, identified the historical context as to earlier definitions of decolonisation in its description of the ‘political processes...that ended direct colonial rule.’⁶⁹⁷ Linking forward, it describes the use of ‘decolonising practice’ to challenge ‘legacies of oppression’ and work towards ‘an honest and accurate reappraisal of colonial history.’⁶⁹⁸ For museums, it argues, this means shifts in the way and with whom they work with, and ‘what they value.’⁶⁹⁹ Aspects of the MA’s

⁶⁹³ Policy Exchange, *History Matters Project: a compendium of evidence*, 2020. Available online: <https://mailchi.mp/policyexchange/policyexchange-1988096> [Accessed 07/08/2023].

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁹⁶ Museums Association, *Our statement on Decolonisation* Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonisation/our-statement-on-decolonisation/> [Accessed 11/10/2022].

⁶⁹⁷ Museums Association, 'Supporting Decolonisation in Museums' (c. 2020): 4.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid*

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid*

approaches to defining decolonising align clearly with key elements of the debate identified by interviewees and respondents in this research. Both groups were aware of the distinction between decolonisation as a historical political process and as a contemporary re-appraisal of the legacies of colonialism. The understanding that the same term could describe different processes was acknowledged by research interviewees and respondents, as it has been by the MA. Other aspects of the MA's definition revolved around 'reimagining,' 'rebalanc[ing],' and 'redress[ing]' highlighting an emphasis on progressive approaches to working with museum collections.⁷⁰⁰ The MA guidance establishes a clear definition of decolonisation for museum work but identified a partial disconnect between academic theory and museum practice in this field. Nonetheless, the current research shows that interviewees and respondents were aware of key elements of the definition of decolonisation, as well as room for developing a clearer definition for museums.

Moving beyond an understanding of what decolonisation means for museums, the MA guidance also considers what it means to be a 'Decolonising Museum' or a museum undertaking decolonial practice. The guidance sets these out as a 'vision' for what the decolonising museum is:⁷⁰¹

- A genuinely open and inclusive space
- A safe and comfortable space
- A place where all the senses are engaged
- A place to which everyone can bring their whole selves
- A place where people are encouraged to share their experiences and their creativity
- A place where everyone's stories can be told.

Although the MA has clearly seen the priority of addressing colonial legacies in collections and decolonisation, the vision it sets out is arguably vague in comparison to other areas of its report and other strategies it has produced in recent years.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid*

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid*, 9

However, the report acknowledges that '[t]here is no single 'right' way to decolonise museums,' with each institution needing to take account of its own circumstances.⁷⁰² The 'principles' for decolonising included in the report focus on specific actions and are reviewed alongside other guidance in Section 6.1 in this chapter. The MA's main strategic report from 2019 set out 'Strategic Aims for Collections', rather than a sweeping vision.⁷⁰³ Recommendations made in the report aligned in support of the strategic aims; ensuring that collections are 'empowering,' 'relevant,' and 'dynamic.'⁷⁰⁴ The approach has some value in identifying issues, but the specificity of the remainder of the report has a greater strength and relevance for guiding museums in decolonisation.

In the broader sector, prominent museum and heritage institutions have begun the process of identifying specific issues within their own collections, including built heritage in the case of the National Trust (NT). A 2020 Interim Report sought to look at its properties and identify and explore links with colonialism and chattel slavery.⁷⁰⁵ The research comprised contributions from a wide range of academics and NT curators and researchers. The overarching assessment found that around a third of NT properties were connected in some way to colonial histories.⁷⁰⁶ This included involvement in the slave trade and chattel slavery in addition to other economic engagement across the British Empire, links with abolitionists and anti-colonial campaigns.⁷⁰⁷ Significantly, 29 properties were also found to have direct links to families which received financial compensation for the enslaved people they had owned, under the Slave Compensation Act 1837.⁷⁰⁸ Clandon Park in Surrey, for

⁷⁰² *Ibid*

⁷⁰³ Museums Association, *Empowering Collections* (c. 2019), 6.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid*

⁷⁰⁵ The National Trust, *Addressing our histories of colonialism and historic slavery* Available online: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/who-we-are/research/addressing-our-histories-of-colonialism-and-historic-slavery> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁷⁰⁶ F. Bailey et al., *Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery* (Swindon, 2020), 5.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 5-6

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 5

example, was built in its current form by the Onslow family in the 1730s using the family's income from the transporting and trading of enslaved people and their exploitation on the family's plantation in Jamaica.⁷⁰⁹ It is worth noting that until its destruction by fire in 2015, Clandon Park housed the regimental collection of the East Surrey Regiment (see Appendix **Error! Reference source not found.**), demonstrating the extent to which these links can persist. The research both reveals the existence of links between prominent NT properties and chattel slavery, and demonstrates the need for more research in this area.

The issue of addressing colonial legacies has however attracted resistance from some groups. The NT report for example received criticism, including from some Conservative MPs, one of whom accused the Trust of conflating colonialism with slavery.⁷¹⁰ However, as shown above, the connections between colonialism and slavery do manifest clearly within the history of the properties. The release of the report was also set within the context of a letter from then Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, indicating that national cultural institutions would lose their funding if they did not follow the government line on contested heritage.⁷¹¹ It highlighted concern over the weaponization of funding in a perceived "culture war", in response to an independent trust simply researching the history of its own properties. Adams however emphasised that other institutions reliant on government funding may be discouraged from conducting research on contested histories.⁷¹² The issue is politically charged, making it difficult to even simply identify areas to address, let alone take action.

Historic England has also carried out its own research into the links between the history of the transatlantic slave trade and England's built heritage environment.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 70

⁷¹⁰ G. K. Adams, 'A question of independence', *Museums Journal*, January/February (2021), 6.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid*

⁷¹² *Ibid*

⁷¹³ M. Wills & M. Dresser, *The Transatlantic Slave Economy and England's Built Environment: a Research Audit* (H. England, 2020).

An initial research audit conducted by two academic consultants demonstrated the extent of myriad links between the transatlantic slave trade and the built environment of English cities, towns and villages. The research audit demonstrates, in tandem with the NT report, the breadth of the influence of slavery upon built heritage in England, going far beyond the homes of wealthy land-owning families. For example, as English Heritage covers a wide array of industrial properties, the research audit identified the close connections between the properties it holds and English industrial heritage.⁷¹⁴ These links included goods produced in England which sustained the slave economy, such as goods used directly in the transatlantic slave trade (the ships themselves for instance), goods to trade on the West African coast for enslaved people and goods to be supplied to plantations in their maintenance.⁷¹⁵ The extensive report identifies a wide range of connections and as with the NT report, constitutes an important first step in identifying colonial legacies within ‘collections’ to be addressed.

Similarly in Scotland, identifying the issues around colonial legacies, specifically exploring approaches to decolonising various aspects of museums, has been an area of work for Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS). In January 2020, MGS hosted a conference on the subject and included speakers from the Royal Museum for Central Africa (Belgium), the University of Aberdeen and the David Livingston Centre.⁷¹⁶ This work continued apace and the Scottish government working through its National Museum body (MGS), coordinated a national consultation with the support of Glasgow Life—a Glasgow-based charity focussed on community projects—to understand public and expert perspectives.⁷¹⁷ The result was the *Empire, Slavery & Scotland’s Museums* (ESSM) project which set out a series of recommendations to

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid*, 10-13

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid*, 11

⁷¹⁶ Museums Galleries Scotland, *Decolonising your museum*, 2023. Available online: <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/advice-article/decolonising-your-museum/> [Accessed 20/06/2023].

⁷¹⁷ E. Mills, *Scottish government to review colonial and slavery history in museum collections*, 2020. Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/09/scottish-government-to-review-colonial-and-slavery-history-in-museum-collections/#> [Accessed 20/06/2023].

enable museums in Scotland to ‘confront challenging histories’.⁷¹⁸ As with the MA report discussed above, the recommendations of the ESSM report are explored as with other guidance later in this chapter. Importantly though, the recommendations report sets out a broad definition of decolonisation, encompassing the political processes in ex-colonies as well as its use in ‘non-political contexts’, to describe long-term processes seeking to recognise the role of ‘colonial mentalities in museums,’ up to the present.⁷¹⁹ It also accounts for the continuing extent to which, in spite of the “ending” of colonialism in the middle of the 20th century, ‘nearly 2 million people worldwide still live in non-self-governing territories’.⁷²⁰ The approach demonstrates to some extent the unhelpfulness of seeking to divide up the definitions of decolonisation. Both political and ‘non-political’ definitions describe phenomena which are historical but also endemic in the present. The project identifies the context for exploring colonial legacies within the enduring systemic racism which still affects Black and minority ethnic communities in Scotland. For example, it highlights the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the health and wellbeing of these communities.⁷²¹ Identifying issues around colonial legacies includes thinking specifically about how historic problems manifest in the present in order to develop effectual approaches to making change.

However, some major UK institutions have remained largely quiet or completely silent on even the identification of issues. Hicks draws attention to the British Museum as a holder of one of the largest numbers of Benin Art in the world.⁷²² In this regard, the museum has claimed that it has not been able to provide a full list of the Benin Art, therefore making initial conversations, especially around restitution,

⁷¹⁸ The National Trust, *Addressing our histories of colonialism and historic slavery*.

⁷¹⁹ ESSM Steering Group, *Empire, Slavery & Scotland’s Museums: Steering Group Recommendations* (2022), 41.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid*

⁷²¹ *Ibid*, 9-10 citing K. Qureshi et al., *Submission of evidence on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on ethnic minorities in Scotland* (2020).

⁷²² Hicks, *The British Museums*, 243.

difficult to begin.⁷²³ Hicks also critiques the reactionist engagement from major institutions, such as the British Museum, which have sought to rebrand themselves as internationalist, museums for the world.⁷²⁴ Others have argued that with few exceptions, 'the majority of museums still feign colonial amnesia hoping for history to heal the injuries and injustices and time to erase the memories of the past.'⁷²⁵ Museums in general have been notably resistant to the idea of their complicity by heritage in the destruction wrought by colonialism.

It is also important to reiterate the nuance of the definition of museums. Ünsal argued that 'museums,' have evolved over time from royal and aristocratic collections to monuments of colonial domination and from nationalist projects to brands of corporate power.⁷²⁶ One could make the case that this generalisation does not take account of the heterogeneity of museums. However, the levels through which the systemic oppression of colonialism identified by Ünsal was amplified are evident in how the *idea* of the museum as a concept was emulated at regional and local levels throughout the sector's history. Confining these ideas to national museums delegitimises critiques of museums at other levels, such as in civic or local authority museums, and of course, RCMs. Minott provides a particularly haunting example from Birmingham Museums Trust that illustrates the importance of thinking about museum institutions as complicit in colonial violence:⁷²⁷

I was telephoned by a Mr. D. Cooper on Thursday who is offering to us, as a gift, one or two relics which he captured personally from members of Mau Mau during all that trouble, I suppose that he was in the Army. They include one or two blood-stained knives and a home-

⁷²³ *Ibid*, 237

⁷²⁴ *Ibid*, 213-214

⁷²⁵ G. O. Abungu, 'Museums: Geopolitics, Decolonisation, Globalisation and Migration', *Museum International*, 71, 1-2 (2019), 62-71: 66.

⁷²⁶ Ünsal, 'Positioning museums politically for social justice'.

⁷²⁷ Minott, 'The Past is Now', 561.

made rifle. I thought they might make an amusing addition of a specialised sort to our [Africal] collections.⁷²⁸

Minott encapsulates the issue thus:

Such an attitude provides insight into mentalities about former colonies, and about how their fights for self-determination were viewed, and shows how these views are permeated the museum collections. This in turn leaves a legacy, which affects the museum's ability to effect a balanced telling of historical events relating to the Empire.⁷²⁹

The case demonstrates the proximity and persistence of ideas of colonial domination within local museums alongside nationals. The consequences of this impact, as Minott states, is on the ability of interpreters to present a balanced interpretation when the museum documentation is predicated on such biases. Furthermore, for a case like Kenya (and the Mau Mau Uprising), the proximity is even closer for RCMs in which the units that they represent may have served. There is an additional layer of emotional investment to navigate and moving towards a balanced perspective requires dealing with these legacy issues within collections documentation alongside this.

Finally, it is vital to not only identify generalisable issues, but also specific problems and challenges within collections. Minott's example draws attention to deeper issues in documentation in museum collections, further reiterating the central importance of exploring the history of collections as in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In further support of this, in an interview with Ananda Rutherford (Tate-based Research Associate), Goskar asked about the nature of museum documentation in the context of efforts to

⁷²⁸ *Ibid*, 562-563. Current researcher's square brackets added to identify outdated term, technically grammatically incorrect.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid*, 563

decolonise.⁷³⁰ Rutherford drew attention to the problematic nature of object descriptions across collections and draws attention to questions around who or what is missing in research; understanding what is obscured in how objects are catalogued and described.⁷³¹ This echoes projects at other institutions including another Pitt Rivers museum project which seeks to improve labelling in object displays to address racist, racialised, and derogatory language used in describing objects.⁷³² However, Rutherford emphasises the importance of letting go control to embrace new methods and approaches to documentation to support decolonisation.⁷³³

For RCMs, this idea of the intrinsic link with the legacies of colonialism and as being imbued with institutional racism may not be easily accepted by some audiences. Pabst argues (drawing on Roger Simon) that strong emotional effects can impede learning, as information which ‘contradicts a previously established conception of reality’ is not easily absorbed by people.⁷³⁴ An often quoted 2014 YouGov poll found that a majority felt that they had pride in the British Empire and its achievements, which makes this issue clearer.⁷³⁵ Frost cites it in the context of his role in the British Museum and explored responses to the museum’s exhibitions and outputs which begin to explore its colonial and imperial legacies.⁷³⁶ An audience which holds the view—its ‘conception of reality’—that the British Empire was an inherently positive thing, will have great challenges in absorbing information which contradicts this perspective, regardless of the factual basis of this. As Yeaman argues alongside Frost and others,

⁷³⁰ Goskar, *Ananda Rutherford on Provisional Semantics, documentation and decolonising collections management*.

⁷³¹ *Ibid*

⁷³² Pitt Rivers Museum, *Labelling Matters*.

⁷³³ Goskar, *Ananda Rutherford on Provisional Semantics, documentation and decolonising collections management*.

⁷³⁴ Pabst, 'Considerations to Make, Needs to Balance', 91.

⁷³⁵ C. Kølvrå, '1917, Brexit and imperial nostalgia: A longing for the future', in B. T. Knusden et al. (eds.), *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices in and beyond Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 44-62: 55; Giblin et al., 'Dismantling the Master's House', 471-472; Frost, "A Bastion of Colonialism", 487.

⁷³⁶ Frost, "A Bastion of Colonialism", 487.

the process will be difficult and ‘will generate discomfort,’ but is ultimately a positive process for constructive change.⁷³⁷

4 CONCERNS & CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY INTERVIEWEES/ RESPONDENTS

In discussing broader debates about colonial legacies in museums and heritage, the concerns and challenges identified by interviewees and survey respondents were varied, but common themes emerged across the responses. In general, responses also tended to focus on addressing colonial legacies broadly, rather than narrowing down the discussion to decolonisation and decoloniality. This potentially points to aspects of confidence in approaching decolonisation under that definition when engaging with a topic which has become politically loaded for some.

Diversity was a key term employed by several interviewees, which was raised in a variety of contexts in relation to identifying concerns and barriers when approaching decolonisation. Diversity of workforce was highlighted by a few interviewees, with one additionally highlighting diversity of trustees.⁷³⁸ This perspective is reinforced by data collected in 2015/16, highlighted in the introduction to this thesis.⁷³⁹ The data showed that the vast majority of trustees in RCMs were White British (95.5%), reflecting to some extent the historically narrow remit of the museums and their traditional engagement of ex-servicemen (mainly officers).⁷⁴⁰ However, simultaneously the data showed that staff in RCMs across roles were also predominantly White British, reflecting issues around diversity across the museums sector.⁷⁴¹ Interviewees who mentioned this highlighted the impact that this lack of diversity has on expertise in relevant areas, lacking understanding and appreciation,

⁷³⁷ Yeaman, *Curating Discomfort*.

⁷³⁸ Interviewee 8, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷³⁹ Reilly et al., *Scoping the Army Museums Sector*.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 37-38

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid*, 42

alongside reducing the ability to develop a plurality of stories within the museum.⁷⁴² Some went further, drawing attention to the potential impact of missing diversity targets on future funding and identified the importance of maintaining progress in this area as it becomes increasingly required by funders.⁷⁴³ Diversity has been and is increasingly becoming an important element in the priorities of major museum institutions (some of which are discussed in this chapter) and as such, becoming important to funding applications to such bodies.

Specific challenges were highlighted by interviewees, and these most frequently revolved around getting the balance right. For some this was about ensuring that there was, as far as possible, a balanced perspective of history, or adding in broader perspectives to achieve balance.⁷⁴⁴ In particular, one interviewee identified the challenge in demonstrating that the expansion of perspectives would not diminish existing stories within museums.⁷⁴⁵ In relation to this, ensuring that existing audiences and stakeholders did not feel alienated by addressing issues with colonial collections was identified as important.⁷⁴⁶ Again, one element of this was that in updating terminology it was vital not to alienate existing understanding and points of reference (for example the shift from 'Indian Mutiny' to 'Indian Rebellion').⁷⁴⁷ In this sense, reinterpretation needs to take account of the current understanding of contemporary audiences, but demonstrate clearly the need to address outdated terminology.

One interviewee indicated that they felt that RCMs without trained museum staff might face particular challenges in dealing with their colonial collections.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴² Interviewee 8, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁴³ Interviewee 3, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁴⁴ Interviewee 5, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 7, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 09/09/21 15:00. MS Teams.

⁷⁴⁵ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁴⁶ Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁴⁷ Interviewee 8, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁴⁸ Interviewee 3, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

Elsewhere, those that are run by museum professionals still highlight the challenges posed by their retired/veteran community at times, as being resistant to or lacking confidence in accepting changes.⁷⁴⁹ Increasingly though, it is seen that these are in the minority, as the Army itself as an example has already been vocal and progressive in areas such as diversity and LGBTQ+ issues.⁷⁵⁰ One interviewee spoke of a clash between themselves and an ex-staff member (ex-military) as to the museum's role in interpreting 'enemy' material.

...I apologized, said I'm sorry, I'm quite focused on [campaign] at the moment because I'm working on an exhibition for it because we did a [country] flag translation project. He flipped out. Which was quite surprising, said that, we shouldn't be spending money on- on the enemy's items, which is a very, very strong viewpoint to have taken.

Interviewee 7⁷⁵¹

The interviewee highlighted the challenge for RCMs through the emotional attachment linked to the loss of life in conflict. Competing identities and competing interpretations of specific events play out within a wide range of museum spaces, which can be difficult for military collections to approach due to emotive attachment. This experience aligned to some extent with that of another interviewee.

... I remember having a conversation in the museum the other day about a redisplay that we did where we were looking at a period of British history from multiple perspectives, rather than just looking at what happened to the British soldiers and what their perspectives were, we were trying to incorporate non-British perspectives as well,

⁷⁴⁹ Interviewee 6, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 28/09/21 14:30. MS Teams; Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁵⁰ Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁵¹ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

and the person I was talking to was saying that they expect to see British points of view in a British museum.

Interviewee 5⁷⁵²

In the context of this engagement with a visitor, the interviewee considered a wider and significant question about the very idea of 'Britishness' and what it means. As the interviewee points out the idea of Britishness is not fixed and has become increasingly multicultural; a product of Britain's colonial past.⁷⁵³ In this context, exploring colonial legacies in collections in more detail provides opportunities to explore these kinds of questions in depth and see how these identities, through object narratives, exist in the museum space.

Several of the challenges highlighted above, particularly around staffing and the diversity of staff, are closely interlinked with the typical size of RCMs. Interviewees who raised the issue of time pressures focussed on their position as generally small independent museums.⁷⁵⁴ RCMs often work with only a handful of full-time staff and frequently only one full-time curator. As such, fitting in additional work alongside the existing high workload for staff was highlighted as a serious challenge.⁷⁵⁵ One interviewee spoke in detail on this subject, expressing that they felt larger museums were far more able to respond flexibly to the topic of decolonisation.⁷⁵⁶ The perspective contradicts that of Goskar, who has argued that it is smaller museums who should be leading the field on decolonisation.⁷⁵⁷ Goskar set this argument within preliminary findings of the Mapping Museums project which indicated that 40% of

⁷⁵² Interviewee 5, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁵³ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁵⁴ Interviewee 2, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 30/06/21 10:00. MS Teams; Interviewee 4, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 02/08/21 09:30. MS Teams; Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁵⁵ Interviewee 2, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 4, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁵⁶ Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁵⁷ T. Goskar, 'Small museums should spearhead drive to decolonise museum practice', *Museums Journal*, January/February (2021), 12.

UK museums are in rural areas.⁷⁵⁸ In this sense, for Goskar it was an element of necessity, to understand the colonial links with rural heritage across the UK. Smaller museums, with fewer moving parts, should be more dynamic and therefore able to more nimbly respond to contemporary issues, with fewer members of staff to build these ideas into their practice and potentially less exposure to reputational risk. But, as the interviewee above argues, finding the time to keep up with discussions around contemporary challenges is difficult.⁷⁵⁹ In the interview data those from larger corps museums (or regimental collections in other museums, e.g. local authorities) had either undertaken their own projects, or were aware of or involved in projects across a broader organisation. Conversely, interviewees from smaller museums were cautious or sceptical of the ability to undertake projects or even prioritise decolonial practice alongside their broader workload.

Another area of concern highlighted by interviewees was around a sense of fear in engaging with the topic. One interviewee felt that there was a clear split within RCMs between those wanting to get involved and those wanting to avoid the matter.⁷⁶⁰ Attention was drawn by the heightened emotional investment as a result of the lives lost in the context of military collections impacting on the ability to approach this topic.⁷⁶¹ The apprehension identified was manifest in several areas. One area was around engaging with 'problematic objects in the collection', where, as a result of this perceived fear, objects were not engaged with, but hidden away and ignored.⁷⁶² This has long-lasting implications for collections management, with the potential to further compound historic collections issues rather than dealing with them. Another area identified was a fear of 'backlash' against the museum undertaking decolonial work, however one interviewee indicated that this was not typically coming from current

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid*

⁷⁵⁹ Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁶⁰ Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁶¹ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁶² Interviewee 3, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

serving soldiers. This potentially aligns with the current position of the Army as increasingly outwardly vocal and progressive on social conversations around racism and LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Amongst survey respondents in the area of concerns and challenges, responses were divided between those that were generally positive, generally negative and generally neutral. Generally positive responses were those in which the focus was on getting things “right” and achieving targets around inclusivity and diversity. Those responses which were generally negative focussed on threats and risks in several senses. Neutral responses expressed no discernible emotive qualification. However, across the interviewees and survey respondents, the sense that some form of re-interpretation and improving diversity were important, was not diminished by the concerns and challenges identified. RCM staff and stakeholders as such align within broader perspectives of museums and museological academia in identifying that progress in this area is increasingly important.

Finally, some interviewees also raised the important matter of addressing colonial legacies as a contemporary issue, in the context of the arguably expansive array of other issues which museums and heritage more broadly have been called upon to respond to. A few interviewees for example highlighted the extent to which climate security and environmentalism, and health and wellbeing have also been recent topics to which many museums have had to respond.⁷⁶³ In this context, one interviewee queried the extent to which addressing colonial legacies was situated in common with other societal issues against which institutions were expected to take action.⁷⁶⁴ The significance of this issue in to museums generally, and RCMs specifically is potentially existential. The introduction to this thesis dealt with the significance of this issue in the present and the need to take action. Later in this chapter the opportunities

⁷⁶³ Interviewee 4, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁷⁶⁴ Interviewee 4, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

identified by interviewees and respondents reinforce the significance of addressing colonial legacies.

5 DECOLONIAL DEBATES & MUSEUMS

5.1 ACADEMIC DEBATES

The debate within museum studies and museology began well ahead of the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020. Several articles featured in the University of Leicester's prominent School of Museum Studies' *Museological Review* referred extensively to the topic of decolonisation in its 2019 issue for example.⁷⁶⁵ Green, drawing on museologists such as Tony Bennett, highlights the archaism in natural history museums, which have historically disproportionately displayed Indigenous objects as part of a broader 'colonial project.'⁷⁶⁶ Art history as an academic discipline is identified by Bouwhuis as one with origins in 19th century colonial Europe and thus one which preserves an implicit bias against non-European visual and material art.⁷⁶⁷ They include art museums as an extension of his discipline and identify similar biases within such institutions. Ładosz highlights the role that museums can play in perpetuating 'Indigenous Historical Trauma' through the retention of cultural objects and especially human remains, and examine debates and processes around restitution.⁷⁶⁸ Many of these works have built upon research frameworks established over decades, some of the core works of which have already been explored within the literature review in this thesis.

⁷⁶⁵ School of Museum Studies, 'Museological Review: (Dis)empowered Museums', *Museological Review*, 23 (2019).

⁷⁶⁶ C. Green, 'Natural History Disavowed: Confronting Colonial Legacies in the Musée des Confluences', *Museological Review*, 23 (2019), 25-36.

⁷⁶⁷ J. Bouwhuis, 'Decolonise Art History, Decolonise Art Museums!', *Museological Review*, 23 (2019), 37-45.

⁷⁶⁸ J. Ładosz, 'The Return of Cultural Objects and Human Remains as a Way of Healing the Historical Trauma of Indigenous Communities', *Museological Review*, 23 (2019), 115-125.

It is also important to draw attention to the issue of Eurocentrism within academic museology, museum theory and museum studies itself. Soares and Leshchenko identify that the way in which these disciplines have developed since the mid-20th century are necessarily embedded in Western countries, therefore have produced knowledge within this cultural framework.⁷⁶⁹ In common with Bouwhuis above, Soares and Leshchenko specifically explore coloniality and decoloniality within the critical model developed by Mignolo and colleagues whose work was explored in the literature review.⁷⁷⁰ For museums there has been a recognition of the impact of coloniality in the formation of knowledge, as in the framework advanced by Mignolo and others.⁷⁷¹ Museum theory has begun to undertake 'a revision of its own paradigms,' as the consideration of 'non-European authority' has slowly filtered into museum practice.⁷⁷²

There is also the debate around the application of the term decolonisation to work which does not fit neatly within its original definition. Tuck and Yang have argued that applying the term to diversification projects, for example, did not have parity with the dismantling of colonial structures in ex-colonies.⁷⁷³ However, while this certainly should be considered, the meanings of words change as they are used in different contexts over time and this is certainly true to some extent with decolonisation. Interview and survey respondents identified the intricate interlinking between diversity and decolonial work in museums, as highlighted by broader academic and sector investigation. In some instances, there was a conflation of diversity with decolonisation and it is important to treat them as distinct but linked. Specifically looking at it through the framework of Tuck and Yang, achieving diversity in workforces and audiences is not decolonial on its own terms. Rather, achieving

⁷⁶⁹ B. B. Soares & A. Leshchenko, 'Museology in Colonial Contexts: A Call for Decolonisation of Museum Theory', *ICOFOM Study Series*, 46 (2018), 61-79.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 63

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid*

⁷⁷² *Ibid*, 63-64

⁷⁷³ Tuck & Yang, 'Decolonization is not a metaphor'.

diversity can support decolonial work in the museum by broadening perspectives and approaches, as well as critically engaging with current interpretation.

A key element in this debate is the extent to which museums match expectations of representativeness in an increasingly multicultural and demographically diverse audience. The ways in which objects of empire are exhibited can have the effect of 're-traumatising' visitors who have cultural experience of the darkest elements of colonialism.⁷⁷⁴ Thus, uncritical attempts at interpretation succeed only in further alienating particular groups, though Binter argues that there are ways to exhibit which does not traumatise Black people and People of Colour.⁷⁷⁵ Frost's experience in interpretation at the British Museum contradicts this perspective to some extent, indicating that 'exhibition-like interventions' in permanent galleries can be enough to change how the museum is perceived. However, as Frost's own primary research shows, without a gravitational shift, young non-visitors are unlikely to alter their perceptions, which is reinforced by one of Binter's cases (Itsekiri at the National Maritime Museum) as well.⁷⁷⁶

5.2 IN SECTOR PRESS & GREY LITERATURE

At the national level, some have identified the opportunities for building relationships and promoting international cooperation by returning looted artefacts. David Olusoga, interviewed by the MA in 2018, argued that serious consideration should be given to the repatriation of museum objects in support of positive relations with Commonwealth nations post-Brexit.⁷⁷⁷ Olusoga discussed the Benin Bronzes (and Benin Art broadly) and objects from the battle of Maqdala (against the Ethiopian

⁷⁷⁴ Binter, 'Beyond Exhibiting the Experience of Empire?', 583.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid*

⁷⁷⁶ Frost, "A Bastion of Colonialism", 496-497; Binter, 'Beyond Exhibiting the Experience of Empire?', 582.

⁷⁷⁷ J. Knott, 'Historian calls for repatriation of objects to former colonies', *Museums Journal*, (2018). Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2018/05/30052018-olusoga-calls-for-object-repatriation/> [Accessed 11/10/2022].

Empire under Emperor Tewodros [Theodore] II).⁷⁷⁸ In 1868, the British Army (though comprised mostly of units serving in India or from the Indian Army) conducted a punitive expedition in Ethiopia in response to the Ethiopian Empire's taking of British hostages.⁷⁷⁹ Olusoga's interview highlighted the necessity of museums to consider and understand their relationship with the British Empire. Whilst Olusoga's assessment focussed on national museums, such as material from Maqdala held in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), the invocation of material looted from battles has clear implications for military museums. Some of the remains of Emperor Tewodros II were held in the NAM collection for example. The related object entry in question explains both the context and shows the current status of the lock of hair (in author's bolding), which will be discussed specifically later in this chapter.

Framed letter bearing the great seal of the Emperor Theodore II od [sic] Abyssinia, with a lock of the emperor's hair taken after death (**now repatriated**), nd; with a translation of the letter and six other documents. Associated with Emperor Theodore (Tewodros) II of Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Abyssinia (1867-1868).⁷⁸⁰

Several regiments, with their own established extant museums, were present during the battle and the campaign generally and thus looted material held by them is implicated in these broader conversations. Olusoga also focussed on the international political dynamics interrelated with the question of repatriation, but museums generally have become increasingly cognisant of the need to decolonise.

Looking at sector press, as in the MA's Journal, consciousness of decolonisation has clearly accelerated since 2018. An article assessing the context at this time stated that museums were 'facing up to their problematic pasts and starting the slow process of

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid*

⁷⁷⁹ National Army Museum, *Abyssinia Expedition* Available online: <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/abyssinia> [Accessed 10/03/23].

⁷⁸⁰ Accession No.: 1959-10-71 in National Army Museum Archive collection.

decolonising their collections and operations...'⁷⁸¹ The article highlighted the example of the Belgian Royal Museum of Central Africa, which had recently rebranded as the *AfricaMuseum* in line with a shift in focus to 'a more honest representation of the relationship between the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] and Belgium.'⁷⁸² Another article from 2018 linked the increasing focus on decolonising displays, particularly in ethnographic museums, to an increasing number of repatriation claims.⁷⁸³ Articles discussing the subject of decolonising museums similarly increased in frequency through 2019 where the October issue of the journal was dedicated to the topic and covered restitution, reinterpretation and calls to action in general.

The October 2019 special issue featured a range of articles focussed on the issues surrounding decolonisation, though all centred on its necessity in some capacity. There was a concern in this regard that in comparison to European ('continental') museums, such as the Belgian *AfricaMuseum*, museums in the UK were falling behind in areas such as proactive provenance research and repatriation.⁷⁸⁴ The changes in dynamics around debates on repatriation were also interlinked within one article with the notable increase in cultural institutions appearing across Africa.⁷⁸⁵ This was identified by Adams as interlinked with growing calls for repatriation of colonial-era objects.⁷⁸⁶ Historically, elements of the debate around repatriation have pivoted to some extent on the claim that returning objects would present a danger to them in terms of security.⁷⁸⁷ The argument itself is embedded within ideas of Western dominance of museum practice and of superiority complexes.

⁷⁸¹ G. K. Adams, 'Tackling colonial legacies', *Museums Journal*, November (2018), 22-27: 22.

⁷⁸² *Ibid*, 23

⁷⁸³ R. Sharp, 'Return of colonial-era artefacts to become more pressing issue', *Museums Journal*, June (2018), 7.

⁷⁸⁴ G. K. Adams, 'A sea change in restitution', *Museums Journal*, October (2019), 7.

⁷⁸⁵ G. K. Adams, 'Out of Africa', *Museums Journal*, October (2019), 22-27.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid*

⁷⁸⁷ Hicks, *The British Museums*, 198.

Articles related to wider debates around approaches to decolonisation reflect this idea, by seeking to ‘disrupt dominant and exclusionary museum narratives,’ within interpretation.⁷⁸⁸ Mutch considers how such interpretation and narratives might be received by audiences and visitors with lived experiences. She gives the example of visiting the Horniman Museum, looking for ‘reflections of [her] east European/Zulu/South African family,’ but finding only ‘masks and headdresses that bore no resemblance to [her] lived experience.’⁷⁸⁹ Mutch iterates further that ‘the only black people [she] saw were the guards or porters,’ cutting across the essential issue of workforce diversity within museums and cultural institutions, and the impact that this has on interpretation by gatekeeping against non-white voices.⁷⁹⁰ The October issue notably also coincided with the establishment of a working group by the MA’s Ethics Committee, tasked with producing guidance on the subject of decolonisation.⁷⁹¹ The guidance itself and the opportunities it identifies are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Writing in the MA Journal, Yosola Olorunshola argued that even the changing of displays and interpretation is only part of the process, with the impact being the extent to which actions change minds, structures, and people.⁷⁹² This approach has been reflected amongst broader sector staff, as Yeaman (at the Hunterian, Glasgow at the time of their writing) argued, that decolonisation must be more than just symbolic gestures and must be about real change.⁷⁹³ There are several ways to demonstrate the speed at which both debates and action around decolonisation have accelerated in recent years. The example of Thembi Mutch’s experience of the Horniman Museum can be compared with recent developments. Though one cannot speak to a shift in another individual’s potential experience, the Horniman Museum in November 2022

⁷⁸⁸ T. Mutch, ‘Decolonisation: Making the case for it’, *Museums Journal*, October (2019), 74-75.

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid*

⁷⁹¹ ‘MA focuses on decolonisation’, *Museums Journal*, December (2019), 4-5.

⁷⁹² Y. Olorunshola, ‘The past is now’, *Museums Journal*, November (2019), 26-31: 31.

⁷⁹³ Yeaman, *Curating Discomfort*.

repatriated objects of Benin Art to Nigeria in line with broader debates.⁷⁹⁴ Other museums such as the Pitt Rivers, though starting the process sooner, have fallen behind other institutions in this regard. The Horniman Museum leaves empty plinths currently, both signifying the return itself, but also what it represents in terms of progress. This shift is a signifier of an increasing, not a decreasing pace, making clear the case for action on the part of those whose collections are embedded in Empire, as are RCMs. However, alongside this progress, there has also been a degree of criticism and some backlash in this debate.

Increased focus on debates around colonial legacies after 2020 was followed by a concern within the museum sector about ramifications of engaging with decolonisation. As with much of the recent context, the toppling of a statue of slaver Edward Colston in Bristol became a flashpoint for debate. The implications of this became apparent when, alongside the increase in institutions looking at their colonial legacies, Oliver Dowden (then Secretary of State for the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) made clear to its Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs) that they should share the government's opposition to the 'removal of statues or other similar objects,' and indiscreetly drew attention to the 'significant support that [they] receive from the taxpayer.'⁷⁹⁵ Elsewhere, in 2021 the publication of the NT Interim Report discussed earlier received criticism from some, including NT members.⁷⁹⁶ Broader fears subsequently indicated that momentum for carrying out important critical work in museums and heritage institutions could waver in the face of the threat of funding cuts and backlash.⁷⁹⁷ Viewed in the broader context of the emerging new definition for museums discussed by ICOM since 2019, Fraser also highlights concerns around

⁷⁹⁴ Press Office, *Six objects to return to Nigeria as Horniman formally transfers ownership of 'Benin Bronzes'*, 2022. Available online: <https://www.horniman.ac.uk/story/six-objects-to-return-to-nigeria-as-horniman-formally-transfers-ownership-of-benin-bronzes/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁷⁹⁵ O. Dowden, *RE: HM Government Position on Contested Heritage* 22/09/2020, Letter.

⁷⁹⁶ S. Young, *Subscribers cancel National Trust memberships accusing organisation of 'getting political' over slavery*, 2020. Available online: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/national-trust-slave-trade-colonialism-links-cancel-membership-twitter-a9685026.html> [Accessed 08/07/2023].

⁷⁹⁷ Adams, 'A question of independence'.

the idea that a museum must be 'not-for-profit,' in this climate.⁷⁹⁸ Museums funded or operated by governments, work within the political disposition of those governments. In conversation with Goskar, Rutherford has also highlighted this vital point about the wider context of economic security of museum institutions in the 21st century.⁷⁹⁹ This case exemplifies the need for museums to be independent and to operate with curatorial independence, and demonstrates ways in which political sentiments can interfere with decolonial work.

6 IDENTIFYING PATHWAYS

6.1 GUIDANCE FROM ACADEMIA AND MUSEUM SECTOR BODIES

An increasing range of guidance has been produced in supporting museums to decolonise and address colonial legacies. These include those from academic sources, often in conjunction and consultation with museums, as well as those from sector bodies related to museums and heritage. The next section looks at this guidance and assesses key aspects in the context of the history and development of RCMs. On this basis, drawing on the opportunities in addressing colonial legacies highlighted by research interviewees and respondents, it sets out a range of potential pathways for RCMs to make progress in this field.

Academic projects

As a critical issue for museums and heritage, the vacuum of effective guidance on decolonisation has attracted notable attention from academics in this field. Ariese and Wróblewska set out a conceptual framework for practising decolonial work in museums comprised of six aims:⁸⁰⁰

1. Creating visibility

⁷⁹⁸ Fraser, 'A Discomforting Definition of Museum'.

⁷⁹⁹ Goskar, *Ananda Rutherford on Provisional Semantics, documentation and decolonising collections management*.

⁸⁰⁰ C. E. Ariese & M. Wróblewska, *Practicing Decoloniality in Museums: A Guide with Global Examples* [eBook] (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022).

2. Increasing inclusivity
3. De-centring
4. Championing empathy
5. Improving transparency
6. Embracing vulnerability

The approach above is not the only way to go about carrying out decolonial work. There is far from the only guidance from academia to be published since 2020. Dalal-Clayton and Purini set out their ‘provocations’ to undertake work.⁸⁰¹

1. Naming and framing the problem
2. White fragility
3. Neutrality and balance
4. Knowledge
5. Time
6. Diversity
7. Power and change
8. Taking action, (9) self-reflection and (10) care.

Across the guidance outlined above, there are a range of common aspects, but the researchers also approach decolonial work in different ways as well. Chief amongst the similarities is the importance of identifying exactly what the issue is. Dalal-Clayton and Purini outline this in their first provocation, in terms of ‘naming and framing the problem,’ but for Ariese and Wróblewska this necessity sits before their first step. The latter include it in their emphasis of Piwowar’s roadmap to designing ‘decolonial practice,’ which includes ‘identify[ing] the problem,’ as its first step.⁸⁰² This approach has informed not only this current chapter, but also this work in general and is a vital first step for RCMs seeking to explore the colonial legacies in their collections.

Amongst the range of issues identified, diversity is one element in the decolonisation of museums which has been focussed on across much of the guidance. Improving diversity and inclusion, in line with Tuck and Yang, is not used lightly in setting

⁸⁰¹ Dalal-Clayton & Puri Purini, *Doing the work*.

⁸⁰² Ariese & Wróblewska, *Practicing Decoloniality in Museums*, 18.

roadmaps and guidance for decolonisation of museums. For example, Delal-Clayton and Purini included diversity as one strand of their ten ‘Provocations’ to create change working within a decolonial framework. Similarly, Ariese and Wróblewska, included increasing inclusivity as part of their six aims for disentangling museums from their colonial roots. Interview and survey respondents in the current research also highlighted aspects around ‘increasing inclusivity,’ reflecting the issue of diversity they identified. Ariese and Wróblewska contextualise this issue within the history of museums as exclusive institutions of the elite.⁸⁰³ They set out a range of potential scenarios and case studies that seek to address this, but key amongst their emphases is ensuring that inclusivity is not ‘tokenistic’.⁸⁰⁴ The identification of these as key issues draws on wider understanding across museums, heritage, arts and culture more broadly, that diversity and inclusion is not at the level it should be. Guidance for decolonisation definitively ties these elements to effective working in this area, reflecting the experiences of those such as Mutch discussed in the previous section as to the impact of low diversity on public interpretation.

Approaches have also focussed on the idea of being non-judgemental about doing work and making progress. Goskar highlights the impact of fear of offending and fear of being judged as barriers for making a start, but also the impact that not taking action and staying silent has.⁸⁰⁵ This was echoed in the concerns and challenges from research interviews and respondents. Goskar argues that decolonising practice is slow and methodical and sets out ten things to think about when doing this kind of work. These are:

- Checking your understanding
- Being careful about language and being specific
- Finding the origins of your own museum

⁸⁰³ *Ibid*, 37-38

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 40

⁸⁰⁵ T. Goskar, *Top 10 tips to start decolonising your practice*, 2020. Available online: <https://curatorialresearch.com/top-tips-in-curating/top-10-tips-to-start-decolonising-your-practice/> [Accessed 08/07/2023].

- Critiquing your mission statement
- Identifying automatic behaviours in yourself
- Delving into collections data
- Thinking about global links in local history
- Being self-aware and practising self-care
- Diversifying your network
- Making time for small steps

As highlighted both in general and from the interview and survey data, approaching decolonial work can seem intimidating. Goskar’s approach works well to alleviate some of the pressure felt by RCMs staff, particularly in reiterating the element of ‘time’, which also features within Delal-Clayton and Purini’s guidance. For Goskar the importance of seeing potential for progress in ‘small steps,’ was a vital emphasis. She expands, that decolonisation work can be ‘as simple as starting a new conversation.’⁸⁰⁶ Decolonial work on its surface presents an extra responsibility for staff already facing significant pressures on their time. Thus considering how to incorporate small-scale changes is an important mitigating factor.

Sector bodies

The extent to which decolonisation and related practices are a priority for museums is also demonstrated in the extent of response and guidance from major sector bodies. In 2019 the MA produced their *Empowering Collections* report which recommended support for the reinterpretation and decolonisation of collections.⁸⁰⁷ At the request of the MA Ethics Committee, a Decolonisation Guidance Working Group was established in response to recommendations put forward within the *Empowering Collections* report.⁸⁰⁸ This working group later produced guidance to support decolonisation in museums as a product of its collaborative work and consultation with external facilitators and critical friends. The guidance covers both key principles and information on collaboration, collections, workforce, and messaging. The key

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid*

⁸⁰⁷ Museums Association, *Empowering Collections*.

⁸⁰⁸ Museums Association, *Our statement on Decolonisation*.

principles set out within the guidance echoed sentiments from other sector documents, and are:

1. Challenge neutrality
2. Acknowledge power and privilege
3. Build relationships
4. Value all forms of knowledge and expertise equally
5. Be brave
6. Be accountable
7. Do the work
8. Take care
9. Be creative
10. Aim for justice

Other institutions have determined to approach specific questions in relation to pressing collections issues, such as repatriation. ACE has produced guidance on the subject of restitution and repatriation to support museums in working ethically, within the law and in evaluating claims for repatriation and restitution fairly and transparently.⁸⁰⁹ The key elements outlined within align with both broader issues explored in this chapter and thesis, and other guidance discussed above. For example, it points to the importance of good provenance research, to learn about the history of an object, to identify its movements and its past owners.⁸¹⁰ We can also understand this in the terms and context of doing valuable historical research, seeking to understand rich object narratives in collections and be open in discussing those narratives in the museum. In the rest of the guidance, as above, it sets out pragmatic steps in how to work through and assess claims, and following this process how to implement outcomes.

In devolved nations museums, culture and heritage sector bodies have also been exploring colonial legacies, decolonisation and anti-racism. In Summer 2022, the Welsh government produced its action plan for an anti-racist Wales.⁸¹¹ Through this

⁸⁰⁹ Arts Council England, *Restitution and Repatriation A Practical Guide for Museums in England*, 3.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid*, 4

⁸¹¹ Welsh Government, *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan* (2022).

work the Welsh government has established its priorities for taking urgent action. In Scotland, as discussed earlier, a Working Group for the ESSM project sought to identify in specific terms the links between Scottish museums, and Empire and slavery. As a result of its consultation, it set out six recommendations which were:

1. Scotland should create a dedicated space to address our role in empire, colonialism, and historical slavery. A new organisation should be created to lead this work.
2. Museums should ensure anti-racism is embedded in their workplaces and public spaces.
3. Museums should involve the people of Scotland in shaping their work through co-production, to promote cultural democracy and participation for all.
4. Museums should commit to research, interpret, and share the histories of Scotland's links to empire, colonialism, and historic slavery.
5. Museums should support efforts to promote and embed race equality and anti-racism in the curricula in a meaningful, effective, and sustainable way.
6. Scottish Government should demonstrate their support for restitution and repatriation of looted or unethically acquired items in Scottish collections.⁸¹²

In common with the Welsh guidance, anti-racism is situated strongly within the guidance in terms of the internal operations of museums and their public-facing work for both visitors and education provision. It also highlights again the importance of effective and transparent research into the links, in this case of Scotland, to empire, colonialism and slavery. As with much of the other guidance explored, this work towards the identification of the key issues once again is apparent as a vital step in undertaking work on colonial legacies and decolonisation.

Funding has been highlighted in other pieces of guidance, but has also been a feature of general concerns around doing decolonial work. In this area AIM secured funding in 2023 to work on the Welsh government's priorities in the areas of culture, heritage and sport. Its Re:Collection programme will facilitate the delivery of 'consultancy,

⁸¹² ESSM Steering Group, *Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums*, 15.

mentoring, workshops, grants and opportunities to share experience and learning.’⁸¹³ Working with a range of sector professionals and academics, it responds in the same vein as the MA to the increased discussions around ‘diversity, decolonisation, antiracism, equity and inclusion.’ In a general sense funding pressures are a concern, but as demonstrated across the work reviewed thus far, as decolonial work becomes an increasing priority for the broader museums sector, more funding sources to support work may become available in the future.

6.2 OPPORTUNITIES – INTERVIEW/SURVEY RESPONSES

It is also important to focus on the opportunities afforded by undertaking decolonial work in RCMs, for which interviewees and survey respondents were asked for their perspectives. For interviewees these were myriad but included opportunities to: develop new exhibitions; access new, more diverse audiences; work with other museum professionals, researchers, and communities; explore different perspectives; and importantly improve workforce diversity. One interviewee in particular pointed towards the significance that has been placed on increasing diversity in the serving Army.⁸¹⁴ Interviewees also saw opportunities in provoking conversations nationally and internationally about the topic. These perspectives were partially reinforced by survey data but responses were again divided between those that were generally positive or generally negative (no neutral responses identified). Generally positive responses focussed on forward movement, making improvements in various areas, exploration, explanation, and engagement. Generally negative responses were limited, but focussed on threats and restrictions. In the context of both the guidance and the identification of opportunities by RCMs, it is important to set out potential

⁸¹³ Association of Independent Museums, *Re:Collections - Ethical co-creation and engagement with Global Majority communities*, 2023. Available online: <https://aim-museums.co.uk/events/recollections-ethical-co-creation-engagement-global-majority-communities-cyd-greu-ac-ymgysylltiad-moesegol-gyda-chymunedau-mwyafrif-byd-eang-2/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁸¹⁴ Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

approaches to consider and be aware of, that take account of their unique history and situation.

6.3 APPROACHES

Beginning first with repatriation and restitution, prominent discussions in the context of the UK's colonial legacy have been ongoing for decades, surrounding notable cases such as the Elgin Marbles.⁸¹⁵ The classification of human remains has been the subject of debate. Museums demonstrate the desire for Western museums to categorise and define this in their own terms and for their own purposes.⁸¹⁶ These arguably perpetuate colonial legacies in the present. Since Curtis' exploration of this debate, numerous institutions have actually removed from display or repatriated human remains on the terms of communities and cultures outside the UK. For example, the case of the lock of hair belonging to Emperor Tewodros II of Ethiopia, previously held by the NAM. In 2018, the Ethiopian government made a formal request that the hair, 'considered to be of cultural sensitivity to Ethiopian citizens,' be returned to Ethiopia.⁸¹⁷ The NAM conducted extensive research on the object to confirm accuracy and provenance, and in this context evaluating the claim of the Ethiopian government. A curatorial recommendation was made to the NAM Council to repatriate the remains. The request was approved and a handover ceremony between the museum and the Ethiopian Embassy in London took place in March 2019.⁸¹⁸ The cultural significance of the human remains to the people of Ethiopia demonstrates the way in

⁸¹⁵ N. G. W. Curtis, 'Universal museums, museum objects and repatriation: The tangled stories of things', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 21, 2 (2006), 117-127: 117-118.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid*, 118

⁸¹⁷ National Army Museum, *National Army Museum responds to repatriation request from Ethiopia* Available online: <https://www.nam.ac.uk/press/national-army-museum-responds-repatriation-request-ethiopia> [Accessed 10/03/23].

⁸¹⁸ Ethiopian Embassy, *Ethiopians celebrate historic return of Emperor Tewodros' Hair*, 2019. Available online: <https://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/ethiopians-celebrate-historic-return-of-emperor-tewodros-hair/> [Accessed 10/03/23].

which fair treatment and interpretation of looted material is vital for RCMs to address colonial legacies.

The subject of human remains is not the only area in which repatriation has been discussed and the focus on material looted through punitive expeditions bears keen relevance for regimental and corps collections. Hicks' research indicated that a substantial amount of Benin loot was held by non-national museums, such as University collections, which Hicks argued were free to return material at will as they were not bound by external frameworks such as the National Heritage Act 1983.⁸¹⁹ Since this research several UK universities have already decided to return looted material to Nigeria in various capacities. Some have already completed the process, for example the University of Aberdeen returned a piece of Benin Art—a bronze of the Head of an Oba—'to partners in Nigeria'.⁸²⁰ The return was arranged between the university and Nigerian stakeholders including the Oba of Benin's palace, the Edo State Government and the Nigerian Government.⁸²¹ Neil Curtis, the university's project lead indicated simply that '[t]he decision to return the bronze was simple because it was looted.'⁸²² Benin is however not the only case where returns have been undertaken.

⁸¹⁹ Hicks, *The British Museums*, 237, 243-234.

⁸²⁰ Museums Galleries Scotland, *Decolonisation in Scotland* Available online: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/scotland/> [Accessed 20/06/2023].

⁸²¹ T. Adebola & N. Curtis, 'The Repatriation of Benin Bronze and Decolonisation of Museums', (2021). Available online: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/law/blog/the-repatriation-of-benin-bronze-and-decolonisation-of-museums-views-from-the-university-of-aberdeen/> [Accessed 21/06/2023].

⁸²² *Ibid*



Figure 6-1: Explanatory note at the National Museum of Scotland, Author's photo from a visit in June 2023

During a recent visit to the National Museum of Scotland, the explanatory note in Figure 6-1 above, attached to a partition wall around a North American Indigenous object explained that it would be being repatriated.⁸²³ However, repatriation and restitution is not straightforward and Curtis highlighted a range of challenges including the cost in terms of time and finances, but also the emotional cost on all sides.⁸²⁴ This is an important factor for many museums and particularly for RCMs, where existing financial challenges have increasingly compounded with current and planned changes in their funding situation.

Repatriation must also be balanced with the ability of organisations to undertake the necessary research, lay groundwork and secure funding to enable this to take place in

⁸²³ It should be noted that the return of this objects has now taken place, see J. Knott, 'Return of Nisga'a Nation pole from National Museums Scotland begins', *Museums Journal* (2023).

⁸²⁴ Adebola & Curtis, 'The Repatriation of Benin Bronze and Decolonisation of Museums'.

an adequate way. It is important therefore to look at repatriation as just one element within a broader range of approaches which this chapter has begun to identify. Where it has been difficult or challenging, for whatever reason, for institutions to make immediate effective change, other ways of acknowledging the issues can be undertaken. The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich ‘disowned’ its slavery gallery, distancing current approaches to curatorial authorship from that which had designed the gallery.⁸²⁵ During a visit in 2021, a sign could be seen within the gallery acknowledging this and outlining the steps that the museum would take to redevelop the gallery over time.

Finally, several of the approaches outlined for doing decolonial work in museums relate to or revolve around co-production. This kind of work has already begun to be undertaken in RCMs in the UK which is the focus of the final chapter of this thesis. This approach has been emphasised elsewhere, including for example within the recommendations from Museums Galleries Scotland, which stated that ‘[m]useums should involve the people of Scotland in shaping their work through co-production, to promote cultural democracy and participation for all.’⁸²⁶ This approach could certainly be applied more broadly for RCMs and the final research chapter sets out the benefits of this approach exemplifying the impact through a case study project which the researcher supported.

⁸²⁵ *National Maritime Museum disowns its own slavery gallery as it ‘no longer reflects’ its vision*, 2021. Available online: <https://uk.newschant.com/uk-news/national-maritime-museum-disowns-its-own-slavery-gallery-as-it-no-longer-reflects-its-vision/>.

⁸²⁶ ESSM Steering Group, *Empire, Slavery & Scotland’s Museums*.

Chapter 5: Co-production Approaches

New Stories, New Directions

1 INTRODUCTION

The debate around the need to address colonial legacies within museum collections has developed substantially over the past 10 years, and at elevated pace since 2020. The clear demonstration and result of this is the broad spectrum of guidance for museums and heritage institutions outlined in the previous chapter. The broader museums sector is moving quickly in this field in recognition of the importance of this issue, alongside other sector priorities such as the environment. On the basis of the historical investigations of this thesis, and the establishment of the current position of the sector and network, consideration must be given to the capacity of institutions at all levels to respond to these priorities. In common with many museums, the RCMs network in general terms faces challenges around staffing and funding. Approaches to addressing colonial legacies must take account of these factors, and of the specific constraints faced by RCMs. Approaches should also consider the strength of their position, supported as they are by a close-knit network that has grown since the 1920s and 1930s, and the nature of their collections in comprising objects that represent key aspects of the history of empire. Co-production offers a potential model and platform through which limitations might be overcome and the benefits of exploring colonial legacies can be acted upon. Key elements of the internal logic of co-production approaches around the sharing and redistribution of power fit closely with dynamics of decolonisation, and so other projects approaching colonial legacies within museums have utilised it as a method.

This chapter sets out definitions of co-production, explores staff experiences of (or lack thereof) co-production working, and details a case study project which the researcher

supported. It seeks to establish the potential benefits and limitations of the approach for addressing colonial legacies whilst recognising capacity issues faced by many RCMs. The case study begins to tie some of the strands of the overall thesis together, thinking about challenges as a product of historical development, about collections in RCMs, and about decolonial work through co-production methods. The case study highlights in a practical and translatable way, that small, cost-effective, iterative projects could build confidence within the network. It also shows pathways towards challenging existing outdated perspectives to directly improve interpretation of colonially embedded collections.

2 CO-PRODUCTION APPROACHES & MUSEUMS

Co-production has been applied in an incredibly broad range of fields, for example in academic research, healthcare, public planning, criminal justice, and sport and exercise provision, to name a few.⁸²⁷ It is not the remit of this current work to survey the history of co-production in general, as this has been extensively developed in others' works. Seal outlined a wide range of literature which has explored both participatory research and the various other forms of participation, including co-production.⁸²⁸ Elsewhere, Smith has also extensively reviewed and classified the broad range of co-production literature across these different fields.⁸²⁹ Rosen and Painter trace core elements of co-production to Arnstein's *Ladder of Citizen Participation* from 1969.⁸³⁰ In particular the conceptualisation of the benefits of citizen participation

⁸²⁷ H. Campbell & D. Vanderhoven, *Knowledge That Matters: Realising the Potential of Co-Production* (Manchester: E. S. R. Council, 2016); D. Johns et al., *Co-production and Criminal Justice*. (London: Routledge, 2022); S. Redman et al., 'Co-production of knowledge: the future', *The BMJ*, 372, 434 (2021); B. Smith et al., 'Co-production: A resource to guide co-producing research in the sport, exercise, and health sciences', *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 15, 2 (2023), 159-187; J. Rosen & G. Painter, 'From Citizen Control to Co-Production', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85, 3 (2019), 335-347; Campbell & Vanderhoven, *Knowledge That Matters: Realising the Potential of Co-Production*; M. Seal, *Participatory Pedagogic Impact Research: Co-Production with Community Partners in Action*. (Georgetown, Canada: Taylor & Francis Group, 2018).

⁸²⁸ Seal, *Participatory Pedagogic Impact Research*, 3.

⁸²⁹ Smith et al., 'Co-production'.

⁸³⁰ Rosen & Painter, 'From Citizen Control to Co-Production'.

in planning processes were identified as beneficial to making such processes more inclusive. Since this pivotal work, other fields have sought to develop principles of co-production which set it as distinct from simply involving community partners. As Seal argues though, whilst it is 'difficult to argue against in principles of,' community participation and inclusivity, setting out specific practices to achieve effective co-production is much more difficult.⁸³¹

Across these approaches, they seek to produce something tangible or intangible through collaborative methods. The collaborative element is important but there are other essential elements advanced as part of co-production approaches. Some have seen a degree of shifting or sharing of power as key in distinguishing a collaborative project as 'co-production'.⁸³² Furthermore, some see the circumvention of traditional hierarchies within institutions and hierarchies of knowledge itself as important.⁸³³ Some have spoken to this need for co-production to remove hierarchies of knowledge forms, especially between academic and non-academic communities.⁸³⁴ Others specifically point to the significance of this in the need to account for 'different ways of knowing what we know,' in order to achieve positive outcomes.⁸³⁵ Returning to Smith's categorisations, their third category—*Equitable and experientially-informed research*—speaks most closely to the approaches relevant for museum work. Smith defines this as a 'collaborative process,' which 'positions people or communities with relevant lived experience/experiential knowledge as *essential* to the research process.'⁸³⁶

Co-production is not without its limitations and drawbacks though. Where decision-making authority is transferred to communities which already lack power and

⁸³¹ Seal, *Participatory Pedagogic Impact Research*, 17.

⁸³² Redman et al., 'Co-production of knowledge'.

⁸³³ K. Weber-Sinn & P. Ivanov, 'Collaborative' provenance research - About the (im)possibility of smashing colonial frameworks', *Museum & Society*, 18, 1 (2020), 66-81: 73.

⁸³⁴ Campbell & Vanderhoven, *Knowledge That Matters: Realising the Potential of Co-Production*, 11-12.

⁸³⁵ Johns et al., *Co-production and Criminal Justice*, 123.

⁸³⁶ Smith et al., 'Co-production', 164-165.

resources, Rosen and Painter indicate that this may necessarily lack effective impact.⁸³⁷ Smith similarly draws attention to the lack of funding in general for co-production, and importantly funding for evaluating the impact of such projects.⁸³⁸ Museums may be in a more fortunate position in this regard due to the focus on such processes and projects from major sector bodies, such as ACE and the MA, which points to its potential as a funding priority going forward.⁸³⁹ Seal, drawing on Nestor and Galletly, indicates that a central barrier is the suitability of certain public services or charities (in the field of health) to be able to share power and engage local communities effectively as a product of their structure.⁸⁴⁰ This is certainly something that museums have had to pay regard to, with their own history having been characterised as gatekeepers to culture and heritage at times. The projects explored in this chapter have often engaged with breaking down these kinds of barriers.

For the purposes of the current research co-production therefore functions as an umbrella term to describe a wide range of forms of collaboration. The idea of collaboration with people and communities external to the museum is not new, but as shown above the conceptualisation of specific forms of collaboration under the umbrella of co-production is a more recent development. The focus then, as above, is on core aspects which make this approach distinct from other forms of collaboration, for example sharing power with partners. For museums, these partners could include stakeholders, audiences, and museum professionals. There are also other terms such as co-creation, co-curation, and co-authorship which are relevant to the sphere of arts, culture, heritage and museums which can have some synonymy with co-production.

As part of this research, interview and survey participants were asked to explain how they understood 'co-production' in their own words. Responses focussed in on the

⁸³⁷ Rosen & Painter, 'From Citizen Control to Co-Production', 337.

⁸³⁸ Smith et al., 'Co-production', 169.

⁸³⁹ Arts Council England report on co-creation. AIM grant programme running through to October 2023 funding partnerships working with local communities etc., to widen participation. See <https://aim-museums.co.uk/for-aim-members/grants/new-stories-new-audiences/>

⁸⁴⁰ Seal, *Participatory Pedagogic Impact Research*, 22.

collaborative elements of working with others outside of the museum, but there was a variance in who these partners were. Several interviewees highlighted the academic potential of co-production, working with university researchers and students.⁸⁴¹ Others focussed on work with other museums, both within and outside the RCMs network, as well as organisations outside museums altogether.⁸⁴² Working with indigenous and diaspora communities, and with veterans were also highlighted, and some interviewees had undertaken projects working with these groups.⁸⁴³ Thus, working with partners external to the museum was an important element, but who these partners were could be broadly defined. In terms of the definition and aims of co-production, it was seen as a method for approaching shared history; an important factor within RCMs where this shared history can be particularly complex.⁸⁴⁴ Another interviewee drew attention to the significance of removing existing power dynamics within co-production work, and creating an equal platform between the museum and partners.⁸⁴⁵ It was also identified, importantly, that whilst there was cross-over between co-production, co-creation and co-curation, they were distinct from one another.⁸⁴⁶ It is important to draw out these distinctions as they describe different projects with different outputs.

In museum practice the roots of co-production as a tool relied on shifts in museum studies and theory, as engendered in debates in the late 1980s and the advent of 'New Museology'.⁸⁴⁷ Museum practice historically saw visitors as 'passive receivers' with a consistent white, middle-class demographic.⁸⁴⁸ The identification of museum visitors

⁸⁴¹ Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁴² Interviewee 3, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 5, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁴³ Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 8, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁴⁴ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁴⁵ Interviewee 5, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁴⁶ Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁴⁷ P. Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology* (London: 1997).

⁸⁴⁸ Coghlan, "My voice counts because I'm handsome.", 797.

as ‘customers’ in receipt of a service provided by the museum ‘business’ has been explored within this thesis’ historiography, but bears repeating in this context.⁸⁴⁹ The role of the audience in the museum space was an unsettled debate, and to some extent the current debates in museum theory and practice emulate and repeat many earlier conversations.⁸⁵⁰ This theory and critique has filtered into practice over time, and the Museums Association’s (MA) *Empowering Collections* report from 2019/20 demonstrates to some extent the idea of using collections to empower people as active participants in the museum space.⁸⁵¹ For the MA the democratisation of museums has become a key priority in recent years, and the utility of co-curation, co-production and participation play a vital role.⁸⁵² At least one interviewee from the current research had undertaken a co-production project with veterans. They highlighted the significance of involvement of participants being recognised strongly within the museum, moving beyond consultative approaches such as oral history to become active creators.⁸⁵³

The shift in focus highlighted by Witcomb was demonstrated in changing approaches continuing through the 2010s. The Happy Museum Project for example advocated for the development of ‘a holistic approach to wellbeing and sustainability.’⁸⁵⁴ Whilst it indicated the continuing significance of the scholarship, stewardship and learning roles of museums, it drew attention to the need for museums to shift with broader priorities for society, such as climate change.⁸⁵⁵ The influence of this more socially engaged approach provides a key element in the foundation of co-production’s use in the museum space. Derby Museum’s handbook on Human-Centred Design (HCD)

⁸⁴⁹ Hudson, ‘Museums and their customers’, 7.

⁸⁵⁰ A. Witcomb, *Re-imagining the museum: beyond the mausoleum* [eBook]Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003).

⁸⁵¹ Museums Association, *Empowering Collections*.

⁸⁵² *Ibid*

⁸⁵³ Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁵⁴ Happy Museum Project, *About*, 2023. Available online: <https://happymuseumproject.org/about/> [Accessed 09/07/23].

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid*

and Co-production quotes directly from the Happy Museum paper.⁸⁵⁶ Specifically it draws its emphasis on the role of museums in enabling ‘individuals and communities to learn together,’ and the collaboration and creation enabled by its approaches.⁸⁵⁷ Furthermore it draws attention to the ability for co-production to enable museums to ‘[learn] from each other,’ when working with a range of communities, ‘[exchange] knowledge and expertise,’ ‘[share] experiences,’ and ‘[build] our communities.’⁸⁵⁸ The approach echoes many of the central opportunities and benefits of co-production working, and the Derby Museums report also outlines the range of partners for whom co-production can work, including volunteers, partners and audiences.⁸⁵⁹ This understanding was reflected in the definitions given in the current research’s interviews, where interviewees identified co-production as applicable for a diverse range of communities.

Other benefits were emphasised by research interviewees, for both internal and external partners. For staff it was seen as something to build confidence in talking about difficult subjects, whilst for external partners such as students it was seen as a good CV building opportunity.⁸⁶⁰ For the collections it could be a platform to ensure that they were better understood and interpreted, and a way to ensure honesty and openness about how material has been collected historically.⁸⁶¹ This last element is especially pertinent for colonial collections where, as discussed in Chapter 3, looted material can be disguised behind terms which obfuscate the nature of their acquisition. Though co-production approaches can be challenging, interviewees who had not undertaken projects of their own still advocated for the approach as being

⁸⁵⁶ Derby Museums, *Human-Centred Design & Co-production Handbook* (Derby, 2016), 2.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid*

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 4

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid*

⁸⁶⁰ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁶¹ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 8, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

generally positive and were keen to engage in the right projects.⁸⁶² But as Chapter 3, and indeed the broader historical work of this thesis shows, breaking down complex layered narratives requires significant time investment and experience to conduct effectively. Co-production has been increasingly feeding into museum practice, particularly over the last decade or so, and the approach and key tenets outlined above have arguably been gradually defined more clearly. The positive impact of co-production as the interviewees understand it drew on a range of benefits and opportunities for museums and co-production partners. Co-production seeks to move beyond a purely participatory enterprise, to one which engenders broader shifts in power dynamics and in better outcomes for people and institutions. Whilst this supports a democratising of museum work, it potentially challenges the value of trained historians and museum professionals at a time when museum funding and staffing has been under pressure. More work is needed in museums to develop robust methodologies to ensure that participatory approaches engage with complexity in an effective way.

2.1 APPLICATION FOR DECOLONIAL WORK IN MUSEUMS

Projects in museums focussed on colonial topics have frequently used co-production and other collaborative approaches. Guidance as to how to conduct this kind of work has focussed on the power element outlined above as key to co-production theories. The transference of power to co-producers of all types, especially those who have been traditionally marginalised by the museum (and in general) has been seen to make projects genuinely impactful.⁸⁶³ It also involves the dismantling of institutional hierarchies and complicated operations in order to give more power and influence to those who have traditionally had the least.⁸⁶⁴ In this sense it disrupts traditional museum models of operation and this can be a keen challenge for museums. It also

⁸⁶² Interviewee 3, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*; Interviewee 5, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁶³ Dalal-Clayton & Puri Purini, *Doing the work*, 17.

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid*

fits closely within broader moves to democratise the museum.⁸⁶⁵ The shifting of power and disrupting of traditional hierarchies as a key facet of co-production is central to its relevance for decolonial work, where critical engagement with who holds power is also central.

Co-production as a priority for museums has been demonstrated in its significance within sector body guidance, as within the MA. Bodies such as the MA have also identified its significance in relation to exploring colonial legacies in collections.⁸⁶⁶ It saw the importance of using collections to 'empower people', as 'active participants', as a priority for museums in the next decade and the extent to which this would require museums to engage with criticisms of historic collections practices and with debates around decolonising.⁸⁶⁷ The report identified that whilst museums have been proactive there was a lack of information and guidance about how to approach these issues.⁸⁶⁸ The extent to which the debate around colonial legacies in museum collections has been a priority conversation for sector bodies such as the MA was clearly demonstrated in the previous chapter. But it bears repeating here as to the ways in which collaborative efforts, through co-production for example, have also been identified as a pathway for addressing these issues and engaging with broader debates.

However, co-production introduces the risk of exploitation of co-producers for the benefits of the museum, creating an imbalance between the museum and participants. This is particularly important when involving the lived experience of participants in projects covering colonial legacies. It raises a wide range of risk factors that must be considered. As co-curators are often volunteers or paid only nominal fees, these types of projects raised ethical concerns regarding the use of people's skills, expertise and

⁸⁶⁵ Hondsmerk, 'Let's play in lockdown', 54.

⁸⁶⁶ Museums Association, *Empowering Collections*.

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 8

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 10

lived experiences without proper or adequate compensation.⁸⁶⁹ A complicating dynamic in addition is the extent to which museum staff are exposed as “counsellors” for the impact of these experiences on people. An example of this was highlighted at a recent talk at the Museums and Heritage Show (2023) by Manchester Museums and the British Museum National Partnerships programme. This talk covered a co-production project around South East Asia at Manchester Museum, and included within its remit exploration of the Partition of India in 1947.⁸⁷⁰ For some contributors this was an experience they had both lived through and fled, and thus experienced trauma as a result. The museum project staff were not equipped as counsellors for this type of trauma. In close proximity to this, as funding and staffing have come under increasing pressure in recent years, the role and value of staff is potentially called into question. In this sense, the risk from the other perspective is how the over-reliance on external producers also exploits the broader positionality of historians and museum professionals.

There are a wide range of case studies across the UK, Commonwealth and other colonial powers that provide lessons for operating collaborative and co-production projects. Sometimes approaches to projects—where power within existing structures is transferred—can be inconsistent with museum and conservation best practice, such as object-handling. Project work at Pitt Rivers with First Nations diaspora sought to physically reconnect participants with their ancestors and heritage through unimpeded access to collections.⁸⁷¹ This enabled greater equality of access to the collections, at the cost of reducing conservational intensity.⁸⁷² Museum practice places and has placed great emphasis on limiting manual handling of material in order to protect objects. The Pitt Rivers project as an example showed the importance of

⁸⁶⁹ K. Lawther, *Documentation as a Site for Critical Decolonial and Anti-Racist Work* (Contemporary Arts Society, 2022), 62-63.

⁸⁷⁰ See ‘South Asia Gallery’ on Manchester Museums, *Galleries* Available online: <https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/visit-us/galleries/> [Accessed 20/11/2023].

⁸⁷¹ Binter, ‘Beyond Exhibiting the Experience of Empire?’, 579.

⁸⁷² *Ibid*

breaking down those hierarchies identified by advocates of co-production. But as before, building these approaches into concrete methodologies to balance and mitigate risk identified by collections best practice is also essential.

As suggested in Chapter 3 the labelling and cataloguing of objects were frequently a product of the contextual knowledge at the time of their acceptance or formal documentation within collections. Co-production and collaborative approaches have already begun to situate within sector practice in addressing these issues. The Collections Trust, which oversees the Spectrum standard indicated the significance of historical collections data, as being dominated by ‘generations of white curators’.⁸⁷³ The importance, it argued, in challenging the ways that colonial objects have been catalogued and interpreted in UK museums was in ‘enabling [a] two-way flow of collections-related information.’⁸⁷⁴ Co-production approaches for addressing issues in historic collections practice have also been employed by the Museum of the Corps of Royal Engineers. As above, Chapter 3 drew attention to the use of the term ‘Dervish’ for example, in historic labelling and documentation. The Royal Engineers Museum, have made a concerted effort to update their collections catalogue to reflect nuanced understanding of the terms used to describe Mahdists and their accoutrements accurately.⁸⁷⁵ The work was part of a broader project run by the University of Sussex across three museum sites with a view towards addressing colonial histories in their collections.⁸⁷⁶ Co-production and co-curation approaches formed elements within the project, including working with relevant academics across institutions, and the delivery of exhibition displays utilising the researched material.⁸⁷⁷ This work is important because unless proper investigation of the appropriateness of

⁸⁷³ Collections Trust, *Decolonising the database* Available online: <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/decolonisation/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid*

⁸⁷⁵ Royal Engineers Museum Library & Archive, *Anṣār Jibba: 5001.9.2* Available online: <http://81.145.194.75/Details/collect/4074> [Accessed 05/01/2022].

⁸⁷⁶ Museums Association, *Empowering Collections*, 11.

⁸⁷⁷ J. McGregor et al., *The Making African Connections Digital Archive*, 2019. Available online: <https://makingafricanconnections.org/s/archive/page/about> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

terms takes place, as in the case of the Royal Engineers Museums, it is often assumed that the historic terminology is correct or appropriate. In this project, co-curation was a pathway to investigating poorly understood and underexplored colonial collections in a way that, as the project argued, did not overburden already stretched museums organisations. It is worth noting though, how this project approached complexity by utilising academically based co-producers, to offer pathways to producing valuable work and research with limited resources. Working with non-specialist co-producers could have created more work internally for an organisation. The project approach therefore needs to take detailed account of what it seeks as an outcome to determine the best approach within co-production.

The historical mislabelling of objects—intentionally and unintentionally—creates legacies in the persistence of inaccurate terminology, as in the case of Sudanese material discussed above. However challenges for curators today to address can also revolve more specifically around language and terms that are offensive, derogatory or otherwise insensitive. The volume of material to review is arguably insurmountable for one curator over a defined period due to the nature of museum collections. This fact has been reflected in changes made in 2022 to collections standards through Spectrum 5.1 for example, which has shifted to '[dispel] the concept of an 'ideal' or 'finished' catalogue record'.⁸⁷⁸ This is a gap into which co-production approaches could support this ongoing process through collaborative power. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford has an ongoing project headed up by Dr Laura Van Broekhoven. The 'Labelling Matters' project has sought to update interpretation to reflect the expectations of modern audiences and remove 'derogatory and other problematic language,' including euphemistic or Eurocentric labels across its archives,

⁸⁷⁸ Spectrum 5.1 is the current iteration of an international standard in collections care, and which, for example, is a central requirement in attaining Accreditation in the UK. Collections Trust, *What's new in Spectrum 5.1?* Available online: <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/spectrum-5/summary-of-changes/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

collections data and its galleries.⁸⁷⁹ Collated examples given within the project information include the use of terms like ‘savages,’ and ‘primitive,’ to describe ethnographic material. The project, as stated above, had an ongoing rationale and key to this was ensuring that development makes its way into permanent galleries. Alongside this was a focus on co-production, in this case by working with the University of Oxford.⁸⁸⁰ This academic co-production sought to utilise the expertise of the Dictionary Lab at Oxford to support addressing the language issues in cataloguing and documentation, and filter into displays.⁸⁸¹ The Dictionary Lab itself places great importance on collaborative approaches with its inclusion in its research priorities.⁸⁸² The co-production approach again therefore demonstrates its ability to develop collections priorities in a cost- and time-effective way.

The issue of co-production within RCMs is not necessarily as straightforward as just getting on with these types of projects. Interview and survey respondents highlighted a range of barriers and limitations faced with this kind of work. Most interviewees variously highlighted a lack of time, staff and resources as being key factors in undertaking this kind of work in the future. In regard to time, one interviewee highlighted the extent to which this could be beyond the control of a single organisation, where co-production was focussed on inter-institutional approaches. In other words, having enough overlapping available time between partners could be a barrier to making progress in a project.⁸⁸³ Goskar considers the issue of time directly in her guidance for making progress in decolonial work, highlighting that small steps are also valuable.⁸⁸⁴ Decolonial work is a process rather than a final product, and the

⁸⁷⁹ L. Van Broekhoven & M. Thompson-Odlum, *Labelling Matters: Reviewing the Pitt Rivers Museum’s use of language for the 21st century* Available online: <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/labelling-matters> [Accessed 05/01/2022].

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid*

⁸⁸¹ Dictionary Lab, *Labelling Matters* Available online: <https://dictionarylab.web.ox.ac.uk/labelling-matters-0> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁸⁸² Dictionary Lab, *About* Available online: <https://dictionarylab.web.ox.ac.uk/about> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁸⁸³ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁸⁴ Goskar, *Top 10 tips to start decolonising your practice*.

case studies explored in this chapter seek to highlight ways in which co-production can alleviate this time issue. The lack of staff was highlighted and was also clearly linked to the issue of time. In a sense it was a cascading issue where the lack of time was in part due to a lack of staff. However, a respondent from a multi-museum service highlighted that they also lacked specific staff with expertise to work on world cultures material specifically.⁸⁸⁵ This in turn was seen by the respondents as the product of a lack of funding.⁸⁸⁶ The lack of expertise need not be a barrier to decolonial work, where again, co-production projects can help to bring expertise into the museum, though they should still account for the issues highlighted in relation to potential exploitation.

3 THE HIGHLANDERS' MUSEUM: COMMUNITY CURATORS CO-PRODUCTION PROJECT

3.1 CONTEXT

In March 2022 I delivered a workshop on writing labels in museums for volunteers at the Highlanders' Museum (Queen's Own Highlanders), as part of a wider project the museum was running. Volunteers were participating in a project called Community Curators, and my contribution was part of a series of workshops and lectures. The project, with a focus on aspects of decolonisation through co-production methods provided an excellent case study to explore good practice and draw out lessons in this field, from first-hand experience and feedback from the project lead. The case study of the project and the museum, draws on a range of areas this thesis has explored thus far, showing the extent to which the elements of it tie together in practice.

⁸⁸⁵ Interviewee 8, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁸⁸⁶ *Ibid*

The findings and outcomes presented here are primarily drawn from the interview conducted with the project lead with some of the researcher's own analysis included. The interview was conducted just after the project's conclusion and followed the same methodology as the other interviews carried out for this thesis, with some adjustment to the questions asked. During the interview we discussed the challenges and opportunities presented by these kinds of projects in general. We also discussed aspects of the project specifically, but we also focused on the role of decolonisation and of co-production, and the key lessons and outcomes of the project.



Figure 3-1: Map of Fort George from Highlander's Museum visitor leaflet, 2022. Location 10 for museum highlighted in red.

The Highlanders' Museum is located within the Fort George complex near Ardersier in the Scottish Highlands. The fort is situated on a peninsula extending into the Moray Firth from the south bank, and is a designated listed building on the HES (Historic

Environment Scotland) list in category A.⁸⁸⁷ For several years it was also a Scheduled Monument, but in 2019 it was removed by HES in preference of continuing to recognise the site as a listed building with special architectural or historic interest.⁸⁸⁸ Fort George remains an active military base currently as the home of 3rd Battalion (The Black Watch) The Royal Regiment of Scotland. It is simultaneously a heritage visitor attraction managed by HES.⁸⁸⁹

The museum itself sits in the north-eastern corner of the building complex, within the Deputy Governor's House (see Figure 3-1 above).⁸⁹⁰ The collection is distributed across three floors (see Figure 3-2 below). The entrance is on the ground floor, with an exhibition room (holding a selected collection of medals at the time of visiting), displays on the modern regiment, an armoury, and shop. The first floor predominantly follows the represented regiments and units in timeline order, beginning with the separate regiments from the 18th century, through to the First and Second World Wars, and into the Cold War and slightly beyond. This floor also displays the collections of the volunteer, militia and territorial battalions, including the Lovat Scouts. The second floor features 'The Blue Hackle Room' (a dining room representing an Officers' Mess), and a dedicated medal and award room, and further space for temporary displays. Offices for staff, volunteers and researchers are distributed throughout.

⁸⁸⁷ Historic Environment Scotland, *Fort George, excluding the interior and roof of the Junior Ranks Mess and Kitchen within the rear enclosure of North Stores Block (Building 9), Ardersier. LB1721* Available online: [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁸⁸⁸ Historic Environment Scotland, *Fort George, SM6692* Available online: [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁸⁸⁹ Historic Environment Scotland, *Fort George* Available online:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/fort-george/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁸⁹⁰ Historic Environment Scotland, *Fort George, LB1721*.

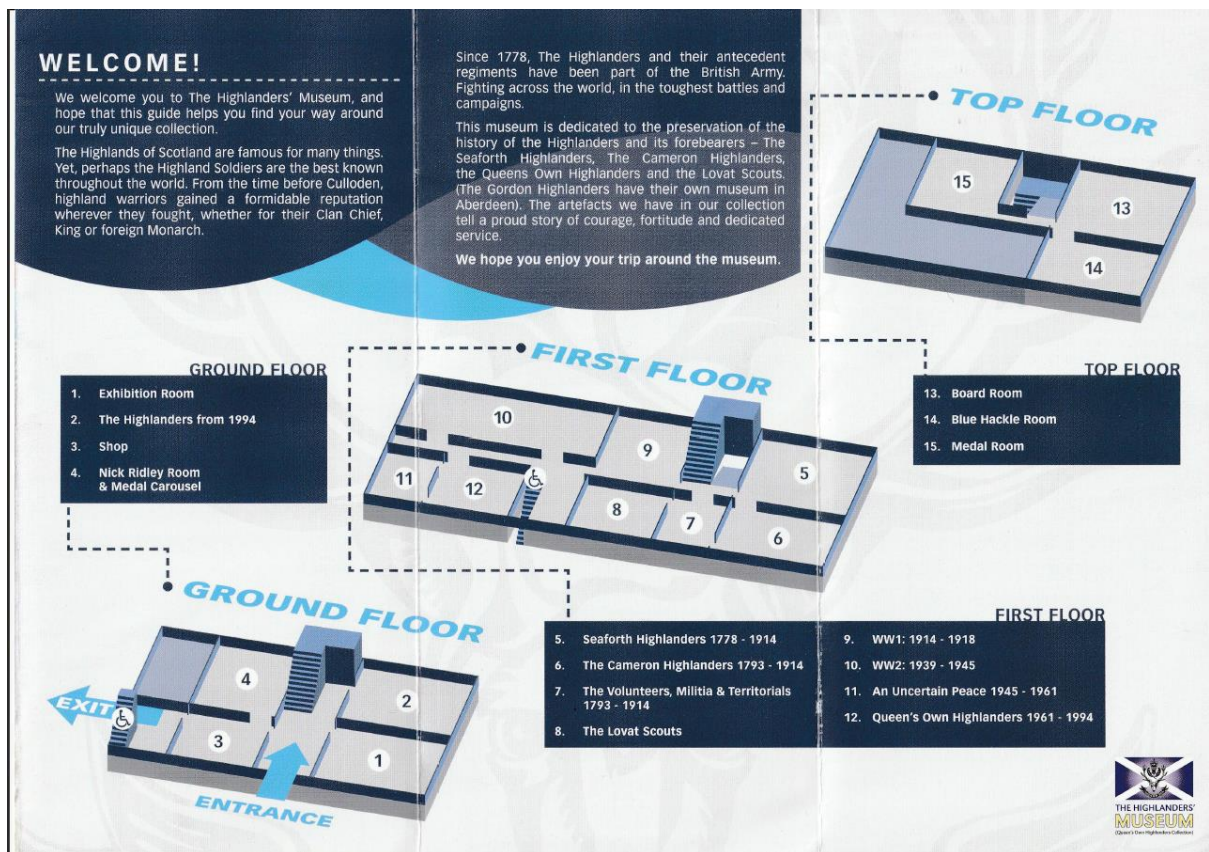


Figure 3-2: Floor plan of the Highlanders' Museum from visitor leaflet 2022.

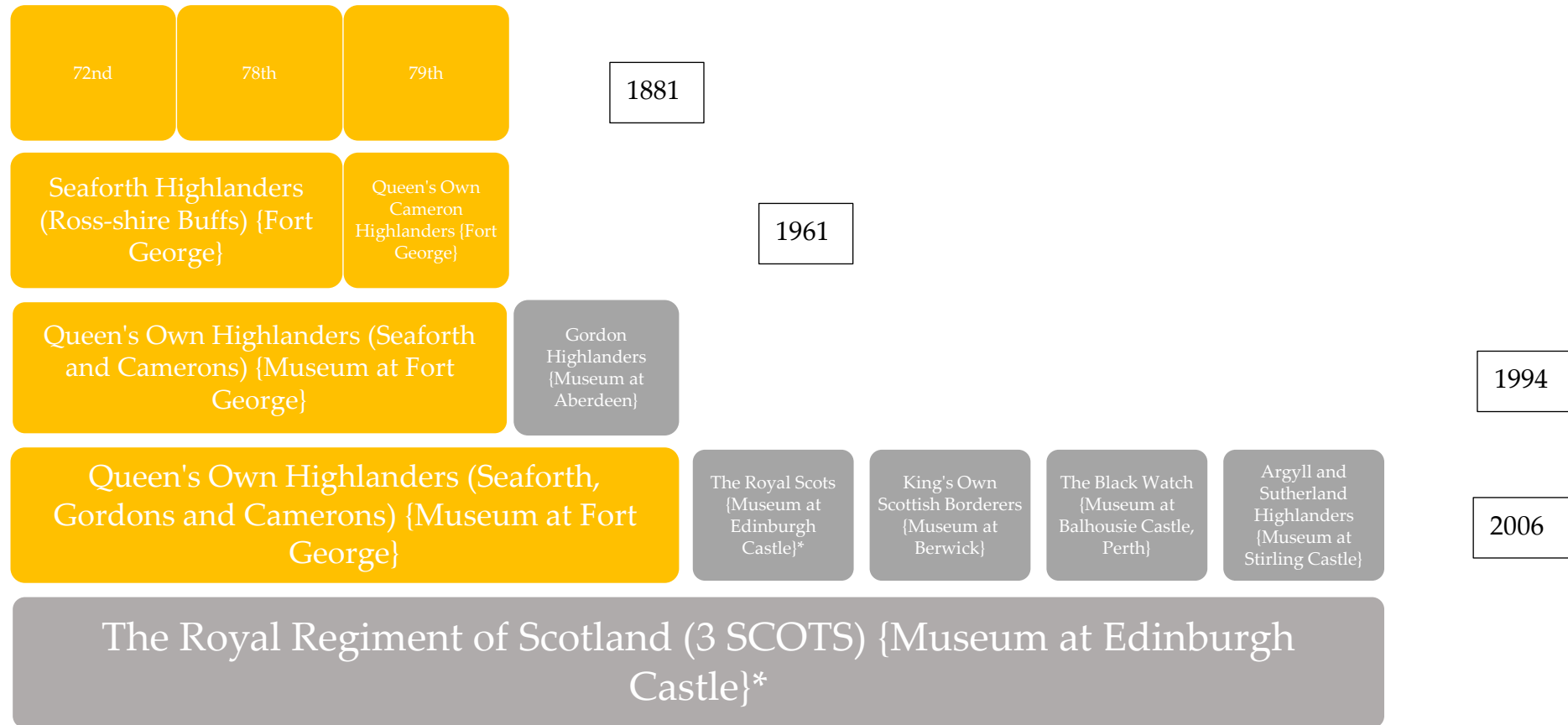
In conjunction with the other regimental museums across Scotland, the collection at the museum forms a component of the Scottish Regimental Museums' Collection as managed and cared for by the Association of Scottish Military Museums.⁸⁹¹ It is identified as a Nationally Significant Collection by Museums Galleries Scotland's (MGS) Recognition Scheme.⁸⁹² The collection at the Highlanders' Museum covers The Highlanders Regiment, which became 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland in 2006, and its antecedents on the Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons) side. This stretches back to the numbered regiments of the 72nd, 78th, and 79th. The museum also covers the Lovat Scouts, and various other volunteer and militia units.

⁸⁹¹ Museums Galleries Scotland, *The Recognised Collections of National Significance*.

⁸⁹² Museums Galleries Scotland, *Recognition Scheme*, 2023. Available online:

<https://www.museumsgalleriesScotland.org.uk/recognition/recognition-scheme/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

Figure 3-3: Amalgamations affecting regiments covered by the Highlanders' Museums, as well as other related regiments and museums



*The Museum of the Royal Regiment of Scotland is co-located with the Museum of the Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), the latter being an antecedent of the former. Yellow colouring indicates collections held at Fort George.

3.2 MUSEUM HISTORY

Neither the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders nor the Seaforth Highlanders appeared on R. J. L. Ogilby's list of extant museums in 1935.⁸⁹³ That said, 40% of the Scottish regiments (of 10 regiments in total) at that time had museums, of which the majority were open to the public. The museums were all located on the Depots of their respective regiments, and so have since mostly moved to other locations, though often within their historic depot towns.⁸⁹⁴ The Queen's Own Camerons were based in Cameron Barracks, Inverness whilst the Seaforths were at Fort George, Ardersier. The regimental depots here continued to serve various roles until the reforms to the British Army structure in the late 1950s/early 1960s.⁸⁹⁵ In line with these reforms the regiments were amalgamated in 1961 and became the Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons). The Regimental Headquarters was situated at Cameron Barracks and a conjoined regimental trust was formed.⁸⁹⁶ By 1962 there were museums for both antecedents but in differing situations. Cameron Barracks had been largely vacated, though the museum remained, situated in a single large room in one corner of the site.⁸⁹⁷ Meanwhile, the Seaforths' museum at Fort George found itself in 'a thriving and bustling centre of brigade activity,' owing to the situation of the Queen's Own Highlanders' depot initially, followed briefly by the Highland Brigade Depot after the reforms.⁸⁹⁸ So, by 1969 the Camerons' collection had been transferred to Fort George forming a museum for the combined QOH Regiment (Seaforth and

⁸⁹³ Edmonds, Letter from Edmonds to Sir Hebert Creedy, Permanent Undersecretary for War

⁸⁹⁴ The Royal Scots Fusiliers: Depot, Ayr – now in Glasgow; The Cameronians: Depot, Hamilton – now online only; The Black Watch: Depot, Perth – now at Balhousie Castle, Perth; Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders: Depot, Stirling Castle – remain at Stirling Castle.

⁸⁹⁵ Farrie 182

⁸⁹⁶ Farrie 183

⁸⁹⁷ T. H. McGuffie, 'Two Highland Regiments and their Museums in 1962', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 55 (1963), vii-viii. vii

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid* *ibid*; Farrie 182

Cameron's).⁸⁹⁹ Wise gives a valuable overview of the nature of the museum and collection around this time:

Fort George is the best example of an 18th century fort in Western Europe and is still garrisoned by an infantry battalion. The history of the regiments and their dress are well illustrated by means of uniforms, paintings, prints, photographs and statuettes. Of special interest are the 2,000 medals including 11 V.C.s. the Mahdi's personal standard and spear from the [sic: Soudan] and an Armoury containing small arms from the past 200 years. The Seaforths and Camerons were amalgamated in 1961 to form the Queen's Own Highlanders and have already seen service in Brunei, Malaya, North Borneo and Sarawak. They are truly a Highland Regiment, with their recruiting area covering three quarters of the Gaelic speaking area of Scotland. At time of going to press the regiment was expected to return to Edinburgh from Berlin. Many of the honours of both regiments are shared: the Redan at Sevastopol, Relief of Lucknow, Tel-el-Kebir and the Atbara in Egypt against the [sic: Dervishes] and at Dunkirk, St Valery and El Alamein.⁹⁰⁰

Wise makes a point to distinguish that the museum covered the history of all the component parts of the QO Highlanders, these being the 72nd, 78th and 79th as shown in Figure 3-3. The museum also covered the Lovat Scouts, Banff Artillery and Caithness Artillery. In 1969 the curator was Major H. Barker, and the museum was open to the public year round; 7 days a week in the Summer (April to September), and 5 days the remainder of the year. As today, the museum itself did not charge for

⁸⁹⁹ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*, 28; Am Baile, *Cameron Barracks, Inverness* Available online: <https://www.ambaile.org.uk/asset/14501/1/> [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁹⁰⁰ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*.

admission, but 1 shilling was charged for access to the Fort permitting entry to the museum as well.

The Henshaw Review (1992) gives us an insight at a pivotal moment in the history of the QO Highlanders regiment.⁹⁰¹ It sets out the situation just prior to the penultimate amalgamation of the Queen's Own Highlanders, this time with the Gordon Highlanders. Assessing the situation across RCMs in 1992, Henshaw gathered data and information in a wide range of fields. For the museum at Fort George, taking up 495m² and on a site owned by the MOD, it drew in just short of 54,000 visitors in the year.⁹⁰² Of these, just under 13,500 were military visitors. The museum was operated by four members of staff, at a cost of £20,900 to the MOD, but had a wide range of other income sources including £4,819 in donations, and £7,624 of income from retail operation. Because the museum was on a MOD site, the ministry covered utilities and maintenance, which Henshaw as such identifies as unquantifiable. Otherwise, Henshaw described it as a 'Good, if old-fashioned, large [museum]. High visitor numbers. Excellent card index system for collection and archives.'⁹⁰³ The museum was also 'Registered'; a precursor scheme to Museum Accreditation.

The relationship between the Gordons and the Queen's Own Highlanders as it was developing in the 1990s demonstrates the long-lasting impact of the closure of the Depots on the museums. As with the Queen's Own museum, Henshaw also reviewed the situation faced by the museum of the Gordon Highlanders. At the time of the review in 1992, the museum was housed with the Regimental HQ on Viewfield Road in Aberdeen. The building had been purchased by the MOD and the Regiment for this purpose in 1960, the MOD took over full ownership soon after, in return for covering all maintenance costs and so forth. Henshaw's assessment explored the alienability of the property, and the options thereafter for the museum, in the face of

⁹⁰¹ More information about this review was covered in Chapter 2.

⁹⁰² C. L. G. Henshaw, *Annex D - Corps and Regimental Museums - Statistical Data, 1992* [Annex]. Ministry of Defence (Army): Registered Files and Branch Folders, The National Archives, London.

⁹⁰³ *Ibid*

the amalgamation planned to take place in 1995. 'The building,' Henshaw writes, 'has high alienation value (£300,000) and is expensive to retain,' and he also commented on the museum's low visitor numbers.⁹⁰⁴ In the context of developments and this information, the review set out options for the future of the museum to consider. These were: moving to Fort George and co-locating with the Queen's Own Highlanders or to Gordon Barracks (Bridge of Don); co-locating with a private institution or local authority, with the MOD offsetting the cost of moving; or remaining at Viewfield Road, but working to improve viability through increased visitor numbers.⁹⁰⁵ Amalgamation, accentuating the challenges faced by the closure of the depots (the circumstances leading to moving to their own site on the outskirts of Aberdeen) demonstrates the uneasy position that the museums have often found themselves in. The Queen's Own Highlanders has been fortunate in their situation thus far, not having the insecurity that the Gordons faced in the 1990s, but this may not always be the case.

The policy of the MOD and the Army has continually impacted upon the museums representing the regiments and corps of the British Army. As discussed above, MOD owned property inhabited by the museums can lead to insecurity of tenure. However, in addition to this, the fact that the first option considered in the Henshaw Review in regard to the Gordon Highlanders museum was co-location demonstrates two things. First is that it appears to favour an interpretation of the role of the museums in favour of tying closely to the active regiment; looking forwards instead of looking to the past. The second is that it clearly contradicts earlier ideas expressed by individuals concerned with the longevity of the museums, in avoiding damage to collections by repeatedly moving objects from one place to another. Had the Gordon's collection co-located it could have set a precedent in relation to future Army and MOD policy

⁹⁰⁴ Henshaw, Annex E - MOD Properties Potentially Alienable

⁹⁰⁵ *Ibid*

around amalgamation, and developed a situation in which tenure of a location is never permanent.

3.3 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Become a Community Curator at The Highlanders' Museum and make sure your voice is heard!⁹⁰⁶

In early 2022 the Highlanders' Museum designed and ran a project called *Community Curators*. The quote above from the original project webpage encapsulated the aim of the work in aiding the 'Community Curators', to have a voice within the museum space. It was devised as a wider project, but then narrowed down into an initial decolonial project within the museum space.⁹⁰⁷ The project's central aim was to confront themes of Empire and colonialism within the collection and to consider 'how decolonisation can be expressed within the setting of a military Museum.'⁹⁰⁸ The project had a broad-minded recruiting policy though the museum was in particular keen to hear from those who had a passion or interest in regard to the project aims. And although the project operated on a hybrid basis from the start it primarily sought to invite those from the local community to the museum.

The project webpage also set out the range of activities which the volunteers were being invited to assist with. These were:

- Writing exhibition interpretation
- Creating object labels
- Uncovering objects within the museum stores
- Collaborating on historical narratives⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁶ The Highlanders' Museum, *Community Curators*, 2023. Available online:

https://www.thehighlandersmuseum.com/?page_id=30512 [Accessed 09/07/2023].

⁹⁰⁷ Interviewee 10, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 01/06/22 14:00. In-person.

⁹⁰⁸ The Highlanders' Museum, *Community Curators*.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid*

A group of eight people took part in the project as volunteers, selected on a first-come first-served basis, who then participated in a six-week course which included lectures and workshops.⁹¹⁰ There were three in total, of which the researcher's own workshop was a part, from historians and researchers from around the UK. The project also included tours of the museum to introduce the community curators to the collection and displays. These were intended to help guide the volunteers in developing the main project output, which was to create updated gallery labels in the Seaforth and Cameron rooms (see Rooms 5 and 6 in Figure 3-2) for objects relating to the Indian Rebellion.

Each volunteer took two or three object labels or context panels to work on. The new material would be displayed alongside the existing labels and panels within the gallery space. This was a conscious decision so as not to erase the existing interpretation within the gallery space.⁹¹¹ Where necessary, participants would carry out research with the aim of presenting a more balanced perspective in interpreting the objects and beginning to think about and address their colonial legacies.⁹¹² As part of their agreement to participate, volunteers followed a Community Curators Code, which was set out on the project webpage (Figure 3-4 below).⁹¹³

⁹¹⁰ Interviewee 10, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid*

⁹¹² *Ibid*

⁹¹³ The Highlanders' Museum, *Community Curators*.

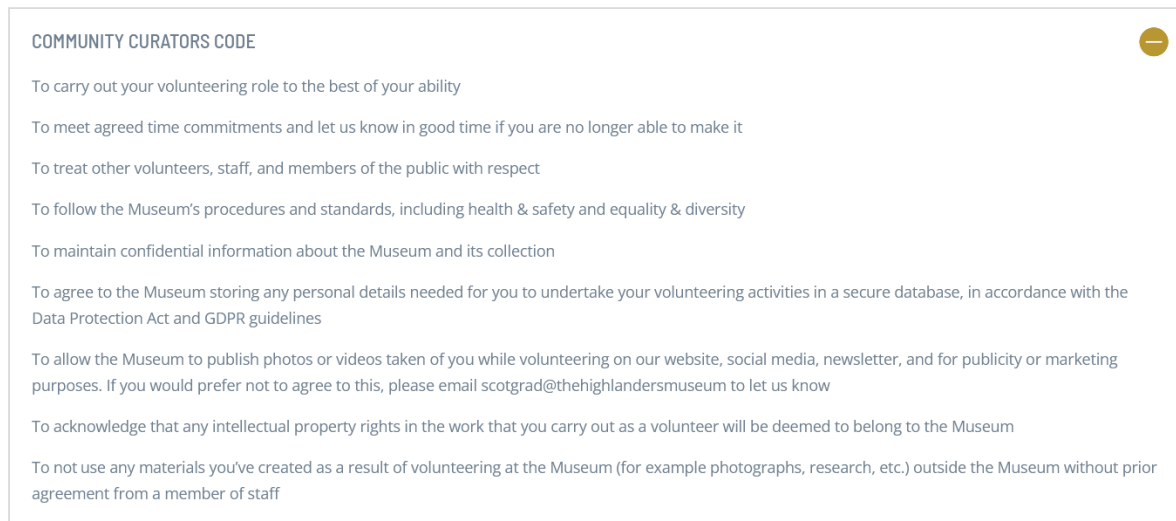


Figure 3-4: Screenshot from the Highlanders' Museum webpage on Community Curators project, setting out the code for participants. Accessed: 22/05/2023.

As discussed above, the project was initially envisaged as something much broader. At the time of interview there was a future version of the project planned for later in 2022 covering the Second Anglo-Boer War. This later shifted to explore the Sudan Campaign, resulting in a temporary exhibition. The successes and learning from the first project, discussed next, informed the decision to continue working in this area and provided lessons to apply to its design.

3.4 PROJECT OUTCOMES

3.4.1 Challenges and opportunities

One of the key challenges identified by the project lead was about balancing the need for the project to take place in the museum space with the potential need to explain the project rationale to museums audiences and stakeholders. They recognised that the small level of resistance to the project primarily came from those who had a more direct and emotional interest in the history of the regiment. Terms such as decolonisation and decolonial can put certain segments off as the debate around these ideas can be divisive.⁹¹⁴

...in confronting colonialism, I think people immediately think that that means total repatriation, and it means slamming people's historic deeds and you know, undermining the value of things like awards and medals... I think the important thing with, with addressing this in the collection is we're not trying to undermine any of that. We're just trying to open up the narrative and look at it from another perspective.⁹¹⁵

The project lead felt that misinformation and a lack of information in general, and about the intentions of these kinds of projects can lead to a pushback, with a perception that the project is “woke”.⁹¹⁶ Their perception however was that explaining things carefully does make people more receptive and few people actually have an issue with anti-colonial or anti-racist work in projects like these when they are clearly understood.⁹¹⁷ The important reality is demonstrated in the ways in which the volunteers themselves engaged with the project. During the project the volunteers voted by majority to refer to the Indian Mutiny as the First War of Indian

⁹¹⁴ Interviewee 10, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid*

⁹¹⁶ *Ibid*, ‘air quotes’ were physically performed by the Interviewee during interview.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid*

Independence in the material, highlighting mutiny as an outmoded description of the event.

Returning to some of the key concepts, the project lead felt that it was important for people more widely to have a better understanding of what terms like decolonial and decolonisation actually mean, and comprehend the nuances between different but similar sounding terms.⁹¹⁸ On a personal level, the project lead preferred terms like anti-racist in describing the work that the project was doing, relying less on more structural terms like decolonisation. However, in the museum's public communication about the project the work is described and labelled as 'Decolonising Museums', ensuring that the project intentions and rationale were clear to participants.⁹¹⁹ For the project lead, this was more appropriate from an organisational perspective and represented an umbrella term covering work that was tackling racism, and confronting Empire and imperialism.⁹²⁰ Understanding and acknowledging is just one step, taking action and actively doing something about the legacies of empire and imperialism must follow. It was the project lead's view that there are many intermediate steps to take before repatriation projects become the focus, rather than the idea that these terms are ultimately focused on restitution and repatriations of objects.

The challenges identified were however, significantly overshadowed by the myriad potential opportunities when undertaking such a project. Ideas around opening up narratives and looking at things from a different perspective were key. The project lead emphasised the importance of ensuring that the museum was not neutral, but presented history in as balanced a way as possible.⁹²¹ The co-production element enabled the project to bring in wider voices to develop interpretation, letting the community feed into what is happening in the physical displays of the museum,

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid*

⁹¹⁹ The Highlanders' Museum, *Community Curators*.

⁹²⁰ Interviewee 10, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁹²¹ *Ibid*

providing a significant opportunity for the museum to engage with its audience directly. In turn, these new agents became active participants in the continual process of negotiating meaning within the museum space. On the basis of their research and lived experience they opened up layers of the narratives imbued in objects that they evaluated as important.

In terms of the challenges highlighted above, the project itself also served as an opportunity to demonstrate this kind of decolonial work in action, potentially mitigating criticisms in line with the project lead's assessment. The project lead indicated that future projects of this type might include using temporary exhibitions to display more objects from the collection stores and more collaboration with other museums. For the Highlanders' particularly, this could include other regimental museums across Scotland. As we saw in the context section, the Highlanders are in a position of being a part of a broader designated collection of national significance within Scotland with other regimental and military museums. Co-production projects could help to bring elements of this dispersed collection together under a contemporarily relevant theme.

3.4.2 Key lessons

You just got to do it. I feel like, don't be too worried about getting it wrong because trying is better than not trying. Trying and, sort of, making mistakes and learning from things is better than just being too scared to try.⁹²²

One of the core lessons could essentially be distilled down to simply taking action. This approach reflects other decolonial approaches explored in this chapter, as in the expression 'Doing the Work', employed by 'anti-racist discourse', to denote meaningful action.⁹²³ It was the view of the project lead that doing something was

⁹²² *Ibid*

⁹²³ Dalal-Clayton & Puri Purini, *Doing the work*, 8.

better than inaction. The project lead highlighted the importance of the process itself, where the wider lessons learnt from the project on the Indian Rebellion can be implemented on the next iteration of the project. Equally, lessons will be learned from the next project as well.

In a more practical sense there were three key lessons that the project lead highlighted during our interview. These related to the form and format of the project as it was carried out at the Highlanders museum.

The first was related to the way in which the sessions were hosted. As discussed earlier the project was a hybrid composition in its approach, with both online and in-person participation. This approach in some senses was a compromise with the view towards making the project more accessible to wider audiences in itself reflecting the fact that the museum has a much broader audience than just its geographic locality.⁹²⁴ That said, this hybrid format led to some isolation of online participants, as those attending in person were much more easily able to socialise within that environment. A more equitable approach, the project lead said, with all participants engaging online would likely have led to a more level playing field in terms of engagement, especially during sessions.⁹²⁵

The second lesson was related to the way in which participants were recruited. Though ultimately the volunteers were passionate about the project, they were in reality 'totally thrown into it'.⁹²⁶ As such the project lead felt that in the future it would be worth thinking about instituting some form of application process for volunteers. A more structured recruiting process to ensure that project participants' dedication would have mitigated this risk. The project lead was keen to emphasise that this would not extend to an interview process.⁹²⁷ The main factor was fundamentally

⁹²⁴ Interviewee 10, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁹²⁵ *Ibid*

⁹²⁶ *Ibid*

⁹²⁷ *Ibid*

about gauging commitment and not necessarily about other factors such as the likelihood of participants changing their opinion or perspective on the subject. Finally, it may have also supported the recruitment of a more demographically diverse group of participants, something which the museum is working on generally with its audiences. But the project lead stressed that it was important not to be tokenistic in this regard; that they should not approach people with a specific agenda in mind, but rather make future projects more appealing to broader audiences and inviting broader engagement.⁹²⁸

Third was related to the subject matter itself and the core ideas behind the project. Through the process the project lead realised that, in general, participants going into the project did not really have depth of knowledge of the key concepts like museum interpretation and colonial narratives. The project was quite academic as was the concept, and instructing volunteers in these complex areas presented and presents challenges. At least one participant struggled to grasp the ideas behind the project and though the project lead stressed that there was nothing wrong with this specifically, it reflected the abstract challenge of the project process; taking a label, critically engaging with it, and rewriting it in a new way. In spite of the provision of training and workshops, the feeling that giving participants free rein was the best approach was not realised. Further guidance was still required and in the future more 'handholding' in some form may be necessary to ensure that participants understand the core point of the sessions and of the overarching project.⁹²⁹

Though at the time of interview the project lead had not collected any specific data on the extent of positive or negative feedback, there had been no openly negative criticism of the project itself. Furthermore, when the project was completed the museum hosted a 'mini-launch' on *Facebook Live* to show the labels within the gallery

⁹²⁸ *Ibid*

⁹²⁹ *Ibid*

space to an online audience.⁹³⁰ With few exceptions the response during this as expressed in comments during the launch was positive. Audiences expressed that they were pleased with the project and they were impressed that this kind of work was happening in the museum.⁹³¹

3.5 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

As discussed earlier, the decision to present the new labels alongside the existing interpretation was a conscious decision. This, the project lead said:

was one of the ways that we are kind of easing the project into the regimental museum space because to go in with a project totally fresh, that takes away something, takes away initial interpretation. It would have been fine for a- [sic] from our perspective, but it was too bold in terms of keeping everybody happy.⁹³²

Having the new labels alongside the old, allowed visitors to see the difference and evolution in interpretation practices and invited them to engage in the process. The project lead's own assessment above was that it helped them to explain to the regiment and to audiences the process that was going on. The downside however, was that it had made an already text-heavy display even more so, now having two text-based labels per object in certain areas of the gallery, as seen in Figure 3-5 and Figure 3-6 for example.

⁹³⁰ *Ibid*

⁹³¹ *Ibid*

⁹³² *Ibid*



Figure 3-5: Photograph showing the Community Curators' labels (black) alongside the accompanying original interpretation labels. Researcher's own photograph, 2022.

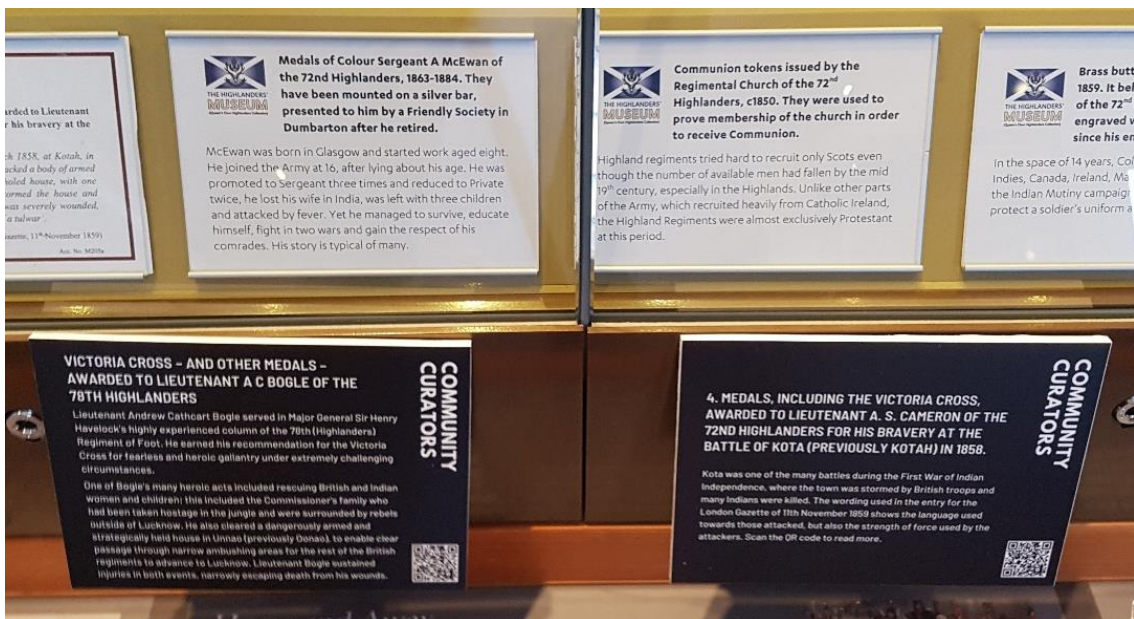


Figure 3-6: Photograph showing closer view of Community Curators' display labels (black) situated alongside the original interpretation within the display cases. Researcher's own photograph, 2022.

The project lead felt that pathways to navigate around this issue might be to utilise digital technology to reduce the amount of physical text. At some stage in the future with these kinds of projects it may become less necessary to have older interpretation remaining in place. Instead, perhaps opting to remove old labels from display, and keeping them as records of how interpretation has been approached in the past. These then could be displayed, interpreted, collected or collated in another form, perhaps digitally, for audiences to explore the history of museum interpretation alongside the objects.

As with the label arrangement discussed above there was another element of the project design which had an underlying rationale of gradually introducing these types of project into the museum space. This was making the gallery interpretation ultimately temporary in its nature. As can be seen within the figures above, and Figure 3-7 below specifically, the labels are set outside the display case. This first project however has given great confidence to the museum in not only their ability to do these kinds of projects, but also in the positive response from audiences and participants. As such the project lead emphasised that they were keen to undertake projects which were less transient and temporary, for example involving permanent changes to the gallery spaces.

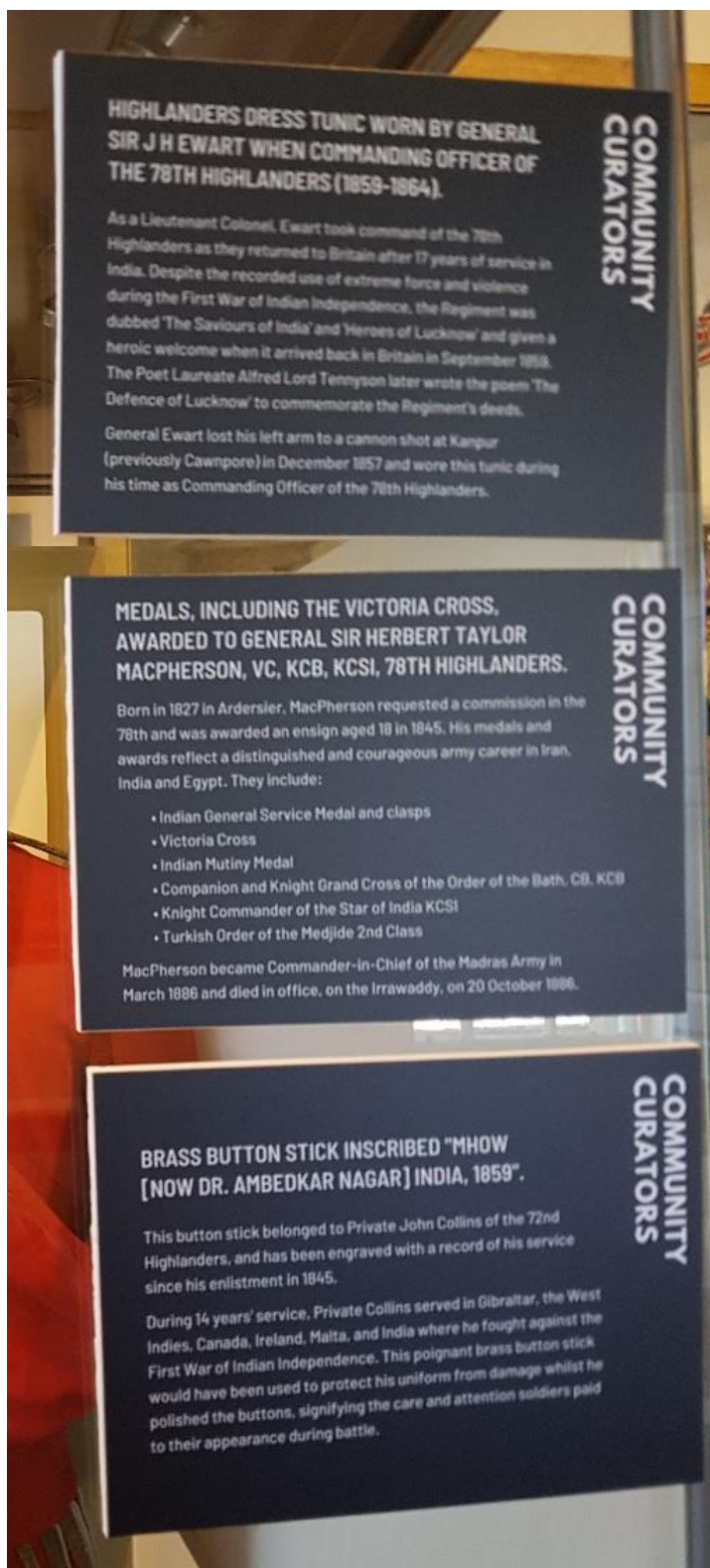


Figure 3-7: Photograph showing the Community Curators' display labels situated on the outside of the display case. Researcher's own photograph, 2022.

The underlying element here was highlighted by another research interviewee in regard to perceived quality of project outputs. Whilst the Highlanders' project had consistency across its output and the labels had a professional appearance, the project was conducted with minimal budget. Project funding, however, has been highlighted as important in ensuring that outputs match the professionalism of other exhibitions and displays within the museum.⁹³³ Doing so is important from several perspectives, including as a benefit for participants in seeing the value ascribed to their work, and for audiences seeing a consistency of approach across the museum in terms of quality. There is an additional element here, which is the remuneration that can be built into funding such a project for the benefit of participants. This is especially significant in cases where lived experience and expertise is the foundation of the co-production. This was highlighted in relation to co-curators in a decolonial project at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery discussed in Chapter 4. The project co-curators contented that they had not been fairly remunerated for their work, especially given the 'emotional and intellectual labour,' they invested in the project.⁹³⁴ The potential for exploitation here is keen, but should also be balanced with the precarious financial situation in which many museums find themselves in the current operating environment.

It is with the benefit of the project lead's self-evaluation that we can extract some elements of instruction from the key lessons discussed in the previous section, for the benefit of those considering this kind of project. This attitude was also taken by another interviewee who had undertaken a co-production project, in recording what they had done throughout the project in order to reflect later on what worked well and what they might do differently next time.⁹³⁵ In other words, there are ideas that

⁹³³ Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁹³⁴ Adams, 'Tackling colonial legacies', 25.

⁹³⁵ Interviewee 6, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

the Highlanders' project would have done differently, which new projects should look to build into their work from the start:

- First is beginning with a formal or informal application process, not so as to vet volunteers or in an exclusionary way, but rather to gauge their passion and dedication for this kind of decolonial and anti-racist work.
- Second, a more equitable approach in terms of relying on online engagement, rather than a hybrid design, is in all likelihood the best approach. This reflects the digital engagement progress made across museums necessitated by the Covid lockdowns in the UK.
- Finally and most complicated of all is dealing with the academic nature of these projects and the concepts behind them. Ways in which this may be mitigated could be through further and more detailed instruction and guidance. There could also be opportunity for providing access for volunteers to a museum mentor outside of the project staff.

The project lead identified some aspects that they would change for their own next project, which are useful generally in thinking about a multi-project programme of activities. At the time of interview they were deciding whether to continue exploring the same topic (the Indian Rebellion) or move onto a different one. As discussed in the project outline, the museum eventually decided to explore the Sudan Campaign in the project which followed. A temporary exhibition was successfully delivered for this in late 2022 and a third project on the British Indian Army is set to run from August to September 2023.⁹³⁶ In each instance the project lead was also keen not to use the same group of participants in order to give a new group of volunteers the chance to get involved in the museum.

Another important outcome of the project was how working on it changed the preconceptions of the volunteers involved, demonstrating the potential for other

⁹³⁶ The Highlanders' Museum, *Community Curators*.

projects to do the same. Data collected by the project lead showed that the overwhelming majority of participants had changed how they felt about addressing colonial legacies in military museums.⁹³⁷ It also reinforced their understanding of how these legacies should be addressed. They reflected upon the importance of the accurate use of emotive and inclusive language, and of the significance of having an honest and balanced approach to interpretation in museums. Furthermore when asked what they would focus on if they had the opportunity to do the project again, participants elected to choose other colonial conflicts or more deeply explore the Indian Rebellion. This clearly demonstrates a fundamental recognition of the importance of carrying out this nature of work on colonial conflicts, to reflect a more balanced understanding and up-to-date historical research. Though some may need nudging towards thinking about British military and colonial history in this way, not only did project participants engage well with the core ideas, but they ultimately were able to critique their own standpoint and preconceptions. In the researcher's own workshop, people engaged in critiquing previously received and assumed narratives, asking why things were understood in the way that they were. The skills they were already developing in their engagement in the project helped them to critically engage with the legacies of colonialism and Empire, make evaluations, and direct this towards correcting historical misunderstandings in historically biased museum interpretation. Through the project the museum developed a completely new set of relationships with researchers and academics who were involved with the project. The discovery of relevant researchers and academics was conducted by the project lead through simple internet searches, followed by direct email communication to invite them to be involved. Another research interviewee identified with this approach, describing how reaching out, or being contacted, for co-production projects had tended to happen organically.⁹³⁸ A "cold-call" approach can be an intimidating and time-consuming

⁹³⁷ Interviewee 10, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁹³⁸ Interviewee 7, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

process. As such the Highlanders' project lead indicated a potential demand for a more structured way to make these kinds of projects with academic expertise and input more straightforward. Having a foundation and structure to guide museums may make this kind of project more accessible for other museums in the future.

The project has also shown that many of the broader concerns highlighted in previous chapters about engaging with decolonial work may not necessarily be as severe as anticipated. This concern was raised by at least one of the other interviewees when talking about decolonial projects, with social media playing a role in a feeling of being potentially unfairly criticised for making errors.⁹³⁹ Backlash, particularly through online platforms, was not notable in the response to the Highlanders' project. However, as expressed by the project lead just doing the work in an honest and balanced way is the best way to build confidence in working on decolonial and anti-racist projects in museum spaces. This sentiment was echoed by another interviewee, who highlighted the significant impact that such projects had had on staff confidence in engaging in this kind of work in the future.⁹⁴⁰

The project carried out by the Highlanders' Museum has in the first instance demonstrated the efficacy of this co-production approach, with volunteers and academics cooperating together to improve museum interpretation. The opportunities and positive outcomes of the project arguably outweigh negative reception and pushback. The Highlanders' project also demonstrated a range of key lessons that can be implemented by future projects. At the time of interview the project lead was planning a second project. This has since been successfully implemented as a temporary exhibition on the Sudan campaign, using co-production methods. Implementation was after the main research phase of this work and thus the initial project findings have been the focus of this case study. However, it is understood that the second run of the project sought to learn from as many lessons as

⁹³⁹ Interviewee 5, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

⁹⁴⁰ Interviewee 9, *History, decolonisation and co-production in RCMs*.

possible. Situating the output as a temporary exhibition dealt with issues around text-heavy displays, whilst the shift to a fully remote rather than hybrid approach enabled more equitable participation.

Conclusion

This thesis set out with two overarching objectives. The first was to explore and understand the history of the UK's army museums and expand on existing historical understanding. In the context of broader histories of museums, RCMs have been largely overlooked and broad sweeping statements about their founding and origins have functioned only as precursors to the analysis of other issues. The positionality therefore of this work as a piece of historical research seeking to inform museum and heritage practice in the present underpins large components of this research. Overall, it has emphasised that specialism and training in historical methods is necessary prior to or in support of unpicking and understanding nuanced object legacies in the context of a complex history of the network. It has tested an assumption that RCMs had largely developed in the 1920s and 1930s. When considered in the context of broader museum history, their distinctiveness became apparent, as their origins came later than broader periods of growth across museums generally. Existing narratives have been challenged by utilising network analysis approaches newly applied to RCMS, to understand central facets that have come to define them. Exploring museums, as other works have done, through their objects has considered how collections of objects were acquired by regiments, by their officers and soldiers, and held in regimental barracks, depots, and messes until eventually they coalesced into formalised museums. Importantly, objects in these collections represent the role of the Army in the expansion and maintenance of the British Empire, having been acquired through various methods through its zenith.

The second objective of this thesis has been to address the significance of this new historical research in the context of greater calls for institutions, including museums, to confront the legacies of imperialism and colonialism. These calls have accelerated since 2020 but are by no means new. In exploring and evaluating key aspects of the current debate within the museums sector and academia, this thesis drew closely

upon interviews and surveys carried out by this research to compare these approaches with the perceptions of people working in the network. Their insights have been a critical finding of the research, and inform appraisal of the most important aspects of current guidance and approaches. It is upon this basis that recommendations for co-production are based, which seek to respond to stakeholder concerns whilst also communicating the virtue of historically-grounded enquiry. The interview data found that staff were concerned about diversity. Specific challenges meanwhile identified by staff included getting the balance right, experiencing push back and negative responses, and existing time pressures.

Though it did not set out to understand why it was difficult to progress in this area, the research has demonstrated that, stretching back from the present, the work of RCMs is interlinked with bodies and organisations which today exert pressure and influence on RCMs, and seek to pull or push them in certain directions. Yet the network of RCMs and partners, such as NAM and AMOT, today provide a vital range of support and guidance for one another. This broader network exists as the result of inter-personal connections which developed before the formal museums were even established. The extent of connections, mainly between officers, which formed and expanded after the First World War revolved particularly around interest in military history and heritage. The research expanded the periodisation of previous historical narratives to take account of the extent to which some of these network members were a product of experiences of Empire and of Army reforms of the 19th century. The analysis questioned in part the phenomenon of *esprit de corps*, as being far more important to those who founded the museums than to those who visited. It also examined the role of the Imperial War Museum, instead identifying the importance of other bodies such as the Society of Army Historical Research (SAHR) and Royal United Services Institution (RUSI). A major node identified early on in the network analysis was Sir Arthur Leatham whose interest in maintaining military heritage and identities extended to the establishment of the SAHR, and a curatorial and directorial

role with the RUSI Museum. Around Leetham and these bodies a network of interested individuals and associated organisations began to form. It was individuals in this network that advocated to the War Office for formalised support and recognition for the early regimental and corps museums.

The narrative of RCMs after the Second World War explored how the network has been affected by a wide range of challenges during their growth and development. The major challenges of the latter part of the 20th century for RCMs were produced by significant changes to the form and structure of the Army in the wake of several defence reviews. Regiments and corps which had existed since the 1880s, and lineages beyond, had in many cases established their own museums around these identities. However, from the 1950s through to 2015 virtually all were affected by amalgamations with other regiments, in combination with the closure of the regimental depots which had in large part housed many of the museums. The defence reviews also involved cuts to funding for the Armed Forces as a whole, and RCMs were swept in with these cuts. Thus, RCMs were simultaneously affected in shifts in the material that they covered, the premises in which they were housed, and the funding with which they were provided. Nonetheless, experience and influence transferred through the network over time, through key individuals such as Sir Robert Ogilby, later founder of AMOT. The longevity of this support was a vital lifeline as the support from the War Office and later MOD shifted on the basis of the various defence reviews. The responsibilities earlier undertaken by the SAHR transferred to AMOT and NAM who began to provide an increasing range of support and guidance to the museums. The network established evolved along with the museums and has been vital in supporting them through such challenges to the present day. One challenge, emerging from the deep interconnections between RCMs, the history of the Army and its relationship with Empire is grappling with colonial legacies in their collections.

These objects have their own narratives or biographies which are formed from complex layers, and a nuanced understanding of these is vital to addressing

understanding and interpretation in the present. But in order to set out pathways for working with colonial collections, it is first important to identify not only these institutional histories and the influence of multiple stakeholders, but also the complex and shifting status of the collections. Case studies in Chapter 3 focussed on objects closely linked to controversial imperial and colonial conflicts and explored these events within the broader context of attitudes towards looting. The case studies, embedded in the trajectory of British legal, public and political attitudes towards looting, establish a greater nuance to narratives of the objects themselves.

The material from Yuanming Yuan had been historically interpreted in the Museum of the Royal Corps of Engineers. Historic guidebooks from the museum showed how obfuscated details portrayed the sacking of Yuanming Yuan in a particular light. For audiences and even researchers it had the potential to misrepresent the nature of the collections and how they were collected. It demonstrates how the way that RCMs have developed over time can create challenges in interpreting material in the present. It is for researchers and curators to accurately represent the links between the collections and wider colonial relations, foreign policy, diplomacy and the clashing of military cultures. Inaccuracies in historical interpretation of looted collections can also make it more difficult to differentiate it from material that may have otherwise been gifted or bought, which arguably requires a different approach in considering imperial and colonial history.

Benin material potentially associated with the East Yorkshire Regiment shows how the disruption caused by impermanent premises creates legacies for collections research. It is a phenomenon which has been largely unique in affecting RCMs in comparison to museums more broadly. Their close relationship with the Army and its structures included the initial housing of museums at Depots and barracks. But, the changing defence priorities of the Army eventually led to the closure of many Depots. For the EYR and its potential links with Benin Art, understanding how the material was acquired and by whom is a significant challenge. It has been

hypothesised by this thesis that this material has been connected in some way with the EYR collection, but the tumultuous history of the collection itself makes these kinds of investigations difficult. This has an impact on decision-making particularly in this case, as other institutions have undertaken to return looted cultural artefacts from Benin. But grappling with the historical development of the network and collections can support museum professionals to engage in conversations about the history and material their museums represent.

Guidebooks interpreting the Younghusband Expedition from the Fusiliers Museum in London also demonstrates how the material had been treated historically. But whilst the regimental material has focussed on the individual, the looted material instead attempts to represent monolithic homogenous cultural identities as some undefined 'other'. This in some ways had been reinforced by the ways in which the interpretation arguably sought to delegitimise this perceived other by misrepresenting details of the expedition. The case also considered how the material's visual layout within the museum space was reminiscent of photographs from other campaigns of collated loot. But here we can also look forward to how the display and interpretation of the material has changed over time. The interpretation at the Fusiliers Museum today shows some movement towards balance and accuracy, highlighting that whilst some material may have been purchased, some was certainly not acquired legitimately. It demonstrates a level of reflection on some of these processes, and begins to highlight the complexity of different layers of narrative within looted objects (Figure 3-8 and Figure 3-9).

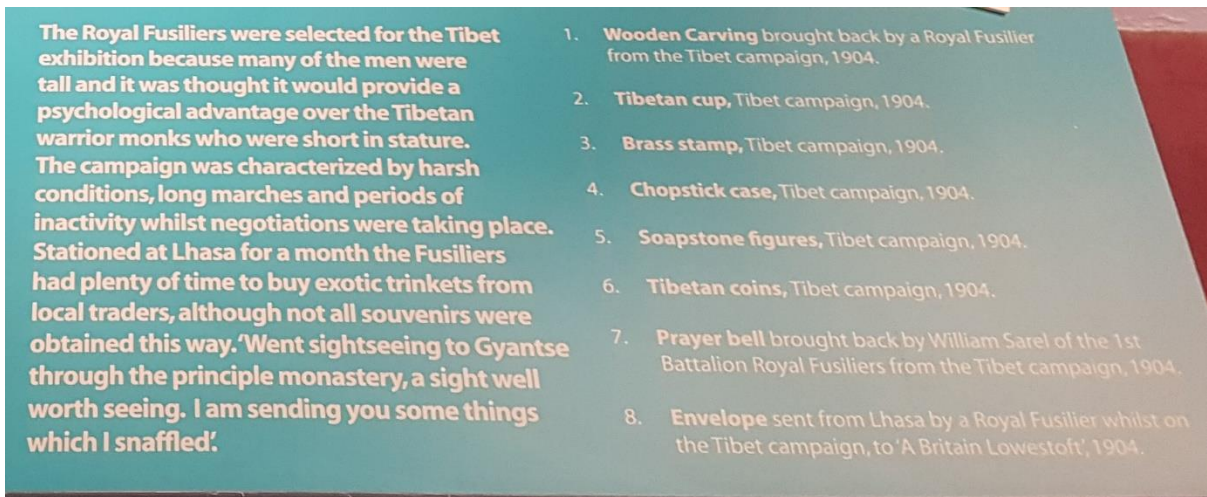


Figure 3-8: Label and context for material from Tibet at the Royal Fusiliers Museum, London, December 2022 – researcher’s own image



Figure 3-9: Material from Tibet at the Royal Fusiliers Museum, London, December 2022 – researcher’s own image

These cases were embedded in a historiography of the changing legal and social attitudes towards looting. The gradual attempts by the Army and Government in the UK to limit certain forms of looting through the 19th and 20th centuries was a focal point. These shifts arguably had much to do with changing sentiments in politics and

the public both at home and in international conventions and debates. Thus, the complex object narratives and biographies are formed from intricate layers of meaning imbued within the objects. For RCMs it is arguably necessary therefore to develop a nuanced understanding of collections to improve interpretation and documentation in the present. The potential challenges that regimental and corps museum professionals may face include lacking documentation and provenance, shifting legal frameworks and ethical considerations in the present, or labels which contain outdated or offensive terminology.

Further understanding of the history of the museums and collections form findings in and of themselves. But they have also demonstrated the importance of utilising networks and working across museums to support each other, particular when looking at collections intimately connected with debates in museum practice today. Sharing knowledge and expertise has underpinned the history of the network. This dynamic is a vital component of the network and equips RCMs to engage in debates in the present. On this basis, this thesis also argues that co-production approaches should be used to support work which seeks to address colonial and imperial legacies in RCM collections. The historiography highlighted how co-production had featured strongly in decolonial projects in museums generally.

The research has sought to unpick and assess aspects of the debates and guidance seeking to inform museum practice around decolonial work. It also conducted research interviews with staff working in RCMs in 2021 and 2022, and a wider survey which included staff and trustees. For staff who were interviewed, they were asked their perceptions as to both the challenges and opportunities presented by engaging with colonial legacies in collections. All were acutely aware of the current debates and the impact that it might have and was already having on their work. The responses generally demonstrated a diversity of perspectives from those who were fully supportive of decolonising museums and collections to those who were more hesitant and even critical of its politicisation. However, the broadest consensus included those

who were hesitant towards decolonisation specifically, but nonetheless emphasised the importance of engaging with the legacies of imperialism and colonialism to represent the history in a nuanced, truthful and accurate way.

The findings from these interviews were compared and contrasted with the broader museum academic work, sector press and grey literature, particularly since 2020. This included in particular the range of advocacy from the Museums Association in its role as the major overarching body representing the UK museums sector. It reviewed an extensive range of articles from both academics and museum professionals to show the range of approaches which have been considered in this field. It further highlighted both the strong advocacy for decolonial work across all museums, but also the ways in which backlash and criticism had been experienced and dealt with. In the context of the concerns, challenges and opportunities identified across the interviews, surveys and sector press the chapter culminated in an assessment of cutting edge research and guidance. Importantly, the key facets of the guidance focussed upon in this chapter seek to be those which best mitigate the concerns and challenges highlighted by interviewees and survey respondents. But also, in the context of the history on which this is all predicated, it takes account of the challenges which the network more broadly has faced.

From academic projects, several conceptual frameworks for how to approach decolonial projects were drawn upon. A fundamental factor across many of these frameworks was the importance of identifying the issues before any real work could commence. This approach underpins aspects of this thesis in particular, where developing nuanced understanding of objects with complex pasts is an indispensable first step in addressing collections practice in museums now. Across several of the academic and sector guidance documents, another fundamental commonality was time; specifically making time for small and iterative steps. There is arguably no such thing as a decolonised museum, where the focus instead should be on gradual improvements that seek to address legacies in collections progressively. This was an

important finding in the context of the perspectives of RCM staff, for whom time and funding were always in short supply. On the basis of the guidance and experiences explored this thesis has sought to evaluate the utility of co-production methods in advancing this debate.

The key benefits of co-production approaches and their applicability for museum projects were explored through a case study of a co-production project. A further research interview with the project lead demonstrated some practical learning for these kinds of projects. These included how to approach project partners and participants, and other essential considerations. But there is also a conceptual level above this about understanding the key components of the rationale of the project – who and what is such a project for, and importantly, around working within complex subject areas. The potential implications of this complexity for a decolonial co-production project arguably demonstrate the need for historians and museum professionals in some form, not as gatekeepers, but as educators and at least as facilitators. The historical research in this thesis has clearly shown how much work is required to unpick complicated histories and the layered narratives of objects with complex biographies.

Thus, key questions must be asked of projects to ensure their efficacy. Considering what their intentions are at the outset is important, as with many project approaches. Assessing how complexity functions within a project is essential in building projects which ensure they are meaningful without oversimplifying the topic or focus. Within community history activities it is vital to ensure people do not feel uncomfortable when navigating complexity. It is also important to consider the extent to which democratisation might decentre knowledge and expertise. Taking co-production to its endpoint could be exploitative of both museum staff and of participants in varying degrees. Asking too much of audiences and participants potentially replaces staff in a sector (and network) which has historically been underfunded. It relies on the good will of people, potentially unpaid, to produce something which does not provide

additionality. This is particularly significant in the view of both the current network and historical network analyses which highlight how funding has shifted over time in a generally downward trajectory. Whilst this does not necessarily contradict some the findings from the co-production case study, such as the potential to ease staff time and capacity, the experience showed how complexity may require more time to initiate participants around complicated, sensitive and emotive topics. Ultimately, there are shortcomings in the methodological approaches encompassed in co-production and more work is needed to consolidate and solidify its methodological underpinnings.

Appendices

1 ABBREVIATIONS

- NAM – National Army Museum
- SAHR – Society for Army Historical Research
- RUSI – Royal United Services Institute
- ACE – Arts Council England
- NPO – National Portfolio Organisation
- NT – National Trust
- MLA – Museums Libraries Archives (Council)
- MGS – Museums Galleries Scotland
- ASMM – Association of Scottish Military Museums
- SUSM – Scottish United Services Museum
- RMAS – Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (Museum)
- Ranks:
 - F-M – Field Marshal
 - Brig. Gen. – Brigadier General
 - Brig. – Brigadier
 - Col. – Colonel
 - Lt.-Col. – Lieutenant-Colonel
 - Maj. – Major
 - Capt. – Captain
 - Bt. – Brevet⁹⁴¹
- Rev – Reverend
- PUS – Permanent Under-Secretary of State (for War)⁹⁴²
- PUSS – Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (for War)⁹⁴³
- CIGS – Chief of the Imperial General Staff⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴¹ The definition of Brevet can vary, but typically means holding the rank but not the command; in other words, a Brevet Colonel or Lieutenant-Colonel holds the rank within the Army, but does not hold the command of a regiment or battalion as would be typical of such ranks.

⁹⁴² The War Office was the predecessor to the Ministry of Defence and was headed up by the Secretary of State for War. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State (also referred to as the PUS or Permanent Secretary) was usually the highest ranking civil servant within a given department, and would be supported by their own assistants and private secretaries.

⁹⁴³ Parliamentary Secretaries were, and remain, political appointments within a given department. Although the abbreviation PUS applies, this is more commonly used to refer to the Permanent Secretary within the material reviewed. As such PUSS is applied for the Parliamentary Secretary to avoid at least some confusion.

⁹⁴⁴ The Chief of the General Staff was head of DCIGS and was the senior ranking military appointment in the Army Council, supported by other military appointees such as the Adjutant General to the Forces. The SOS for War, PUS(W) and PUSS(W) also sat on the Army Council.

2 MUSEUM MAPPING DATA

Table 2-1: Museum Mapping Data showing opening/closure information and general research notes; unit coverage in footnotes

N	ECAB Name	Type	Current Name (2020)	Location	Museum/Collection Type	Open/Closed (2018)	Open/Closed (2020)	Admission?	Website?	Research Notes (2020)
1	The Tank Museum ⁹⁴⁵	Corps		Bovington	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.tankmuseum.org/	
2	Firepower, The Royal Artillery Museum ⁹⁴⁶	Corps	Firepower Museum	Woolwich	Independent Museum/Collection	Closed*	Closed	n/a	https://www.royalartillerymuseum.com/	*Museum closed in 2016 to relocate to new site, eta 2022
3	The Royal Engineers Museum ⁹⁴⁷	Corps	The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive	Kent	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.re-museum.co.uk/	
4	The Royal Signals Museum ⁹⁴⁸	Corps	Royal Signals Museum	Blandford Camp, Dorset	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.royalsignalsmuseum.co.uk/	BTW (Behind the Wire) - Located inside Blandford Camp - photo ID required to visit
5	The Museum of Army Flying ⁹⁴⁹	Corps	The Army Flying Museum	Stockbridge	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.armyflying.com/	Capital project 2018/19
6	Museum of Army Chaplaincy ⁹⁵⁰	Corps	Royal Army Chaplains' Museum	(Amport House, Andover, Hamps)	Independent Collection	Open (by appt)	Closed*	n/a	https://chaplains-museum.co.uk/	*Closed in late 2019 to enable re-location in 2020 to Shrivenham (with RAC Dept) - previously BTW

⁹⁴⁵ Royal Tank Regiment, and RAC post-1939

⁹⁴⁶ Royal Regiment of Artillery

⁹⁴⁷ Royal Engineers

⁹⁴⁸ Royal Signals

⁹⁴⁹ Army Air Corps; Royal Engineers; The Royal Flying Corps; Air Observation Post Squadrons; Glider Pilot Regiment

⁹⁵⁰ Royal Army Chaplains' Department

7	The Royal Logistics Corps Museum ⁹⁵¹	Corps	RLC Museum	Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut	Independent Museum (Regt Assoc)	Open	Closed*	?	https://www.royallogisticcorps.co.uk/museum/	*Closed in Oct 2019 to enable re-location in 2021 to Winchester
8	The Army Medical Services Museum ⁹⁵²	Corps	Museum of Military Medicine	Keogh Barracks, Aldershot	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Free	https://museumofmilitarymedicine.org.uk/	Likely closing soon? Planning move to Cardiff - BTW?
9	The REME Museum of Technology ⁹⁵³	Corps	REME Museum	RAF Lyneham	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	http://www.rememuseum.org.uk/	Near the base, but not BTW
10	The Guardroom Museum, Adjutant Generals Corps Museum ⁹⁵⁴	Corps	The Adjutant General's Corps Museum/Museum of the Adjutant General's Corps	Peninsula Barracks, Winchester	Independent Museum (Regt Assoc)	Open	Open	Free	https://www.rhqagc.com/museum.html	
11	the Royal Military Police Museum ⁹⁵⁵	Corps		Southwick Park, Fareham	Independent Museum (Regt Assoc)	Open (by appt)	Open (by appt)	Free	https://www.rhqmp.org/rmp_museum.html	BTW
12	The Infantry and Small Arms School	Corps		Waterloo Lines (Land Warfare	MoD Collection	?	Open (by appt)	Free*		BTW *specialist research collection

⁹⁵¹ Royal Logistics Corps; Royal Corps of Transport; Royal Army Ordnance Corps; Royal Pioneer Corps; Army Catering Corps; Royal Engineers Postal and Courier Section

⁹⁵² Royal Army Medical Corps; Royal Army Veterinary Corps; Royal Army Dental Corps; Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps

⁹⁵³ Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Corps

⁹⁵⁴ Adjutant General's Corps; Royal Army Pay Corps; Royal Army Educational Corps; Royal Military Police Museum; Military Provost Staff Corps; Women's Royal Army Corps Museum

⁹⁵⁵ Royal Military Police

	Corps Weapons Collection ⁹⁵⁶			Centre), Warminster						
13	Military Intelligence Museum ⁹⁵⁷	Corps		Chicksands, Shefford	Independent Museum	Open	Open (by appt)	Free	https://www.militaryintelligencemuseum.org/	BTW
14	Army Physical Training Corps Museum ⁹⁵⁸	Corps		Fox Lines, Aldershot	Independent Museum	(Open)	Open	Free	https://www.raptcmuseum.co.uk/	BTW
15	The Household Cavalry Museum ⁹⁵⁹	Cavalry		Horse Guards, London	Independent Collection	Open	Open	Paid	http://www.householdcavalrymuseum.co.uk/	
16	1st Queens Dragoon Guards ⁹⁶⁰	Cavalry	Firing Line	Cardiff Castle	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open?*	Open	Free*	http://www.cardiffcastle-museum.org.uk/	*Ticketed through Cardiff Castle
17	The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards ⁹⁶¹	Cavalry	The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Museum	Edinburgh Castle	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Free*	https://www.scotsdgmuseum.com/	*Ticketed through Edinburgh Castle
18	The Royal Dragoon Guards ⁹⁶²	Cavalry	York Army Museum	York	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.yorkarmymuseum.co.uk/index.php	YR and RDG Collections housed together in YAM
19	The Queens Own Hussars ⁹⁶³	Cavalry	The Museum of The Queen's Royal Hussars - Churchills Own	Warwick	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Closed	Closed*	n/a	http://qrhmuseum.uk/home	*Closed due to re-location to Trinity Mews, Warwick - co-housing with QRIH

⁹⁵⁶ Small Arms School Corps

⁹⁵⁷ Intelligence Corps

⁹⁵⁸ Royal Army Physical Training Corps

⁹⁵⁹ Household Cavalry (Household Division: The Life Guards; The Blues and Royals)

⁹⁶⁰ 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards (The Welsh Cavalry)

⁹⁶¹ Royal Scots Dragoon Guards; 3rd Dragoon Guards; 6th Dragoon Guards; 3rd Carabiniers; The Royal Scots Greys (2nd Dragoons); 25th Dragoons

⁹⁶² Royal Dragoon Guards; 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards; 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards

⁹⁶³ Queen's Own Hussars

20	The Queens Royal Irish Hussars (Royal Sussex Regimental Museum) ⁹⁶⁴	Cavalry	The Museum of The Queen's Royal Hussars - Churchills Own	Eastborne	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Closed?	Closed*	n/a	http://qrhmuseum.uk/home	*Closed due to re-location with QOH - previously at Eastbourne Redoubt: Sussex Combined Services Museum (now closed?)
21	9th/12th Royal Lancers (Derbyshire Yeomanry) ⁹⁶⁵	Cavalry	Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Soldier's Story Gallery	Derby	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open*	Open	Free	https://9th12thlancersmuseum.org/	
22	Horsepower, The Museum of the King's Royal Hussars, Winchester ⁹⁶⁶	Cavalry	HorsePower: The Museum of the King's Royal Hussars	Peninsula Barracks, Winchester	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	http://horsepowermuseum.co.uk/the-museum/	
23	14th/20th King's Hussars and Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry ⁹⁶⁷	Cavalry	Museum of Lancashire	Preston	Independent Collections in LA Museum	Closed*	Closed	n/a	https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums/museum-of-lancashire/	Two separate collections co-located within Museum of Lancashire - MoL closed in 2017, but intended to re-open
24	The Light Dragoons (15th/19th The Kings Royal Hussars) ⁹⁶⁸	Cavalry	Charge! The Story of England's Northern Cavalry (Discovery Museum)	Newcastle	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open*	Open	Free	http://www.lightdragoons.org.uk/museums.html	Two separate collections co-located within the Discovery Museum
25	13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) and The Light Dragoons ⁹⁶⁹	Cavalry	Charge! The Story of England's Northern Cavalry (Discovery Museum)	Newcastle	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open*	Open	Free		Previously based at Cannon Hall, but moved to the re-developed Charge! Gallery at some stage

⁹⁶⁴ Queen's Royal Irish Hussars

⁹⁶⁵ 9th/12th Lancers

⁹⁶⁶ King's Royal Hussars

⁹⁶⁷ 14th/20th King's Hussars; DLO Yeomanry

⁹⁶⁸ The Light Dragoons; Northumberland Hussars

⁹⁶⁹ 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own); 13th Hussars; 18th Royal Hussars QMO

26	The Queens Royal Lancers ⁹⁷⁰	Cavalry	The Royal Lancers and Nottinghamshire Yeomanry Museum	Thoresby Hall (Courtyard), Nottinghamshire	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Free	http://www.qlrlnymuseum.co.uk/museum.htm	Moved out of Belvoir Castle in 2007, and opened in new location in 2011
27	The Guards Museum ⁹⁷¹	Regiment		Wellington Barracks, London	Independent Collections?	Open	Open	Paid	https://theguardsmuseum.com/about-the-museum/	
28	The Royal Scots Regimental Museum ⁹⁷²	Regiment	The Museum of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) and the Royal Regiment of Scotland	Edinburgh	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Free*	http://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/museum/	*Ticketed through Edinburgh Castle
29	The Royal Highland Fusiliers ⁹⁷³	Regiment	The Royal Highland Fusiliers Museum	Glasgow	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Free	http://www.rhf.org.uk/museum/	
30	The Kings Own Scottish Borderers ⁹⁷⁴	Regiment	The King's Own Scottish Borderers Museum	Berwick Barracks, Berwick	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Paid*	https://www.kosb.co.uk/museum/	*Ticketed through Berwick Barracks (EH)
31	The Black Watch ⁹⁷⁵	Regiment	The Black Watch Castle and Museum	Balhouses Castle, Perth	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://theblackwatch.co.uk/museum/	
32	The Highlanders Regimental Museum ⁹⁷⁶	Regiment	Highlanders' Museum (Queen's Own Highlanders Collection)	Fort George, nr Inverness	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Free*	https://www.thehighlandersmuseum.com/	*Ticketed through Fort George

⁹⁷⁰ Queen's Royal Lancers (17th/21st & 61th/5th); Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry; South Nottinghamshire Hussars

⁹⁷¹ The Grenadier Guards; The Coldstream Guards; The Scots Guards; The Irish Guards; The Welsh Guards

⁹⁷² The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment); The Royal Regiment of Scotland

⁹⁷³ The Royal Highland Fusiliers (Royal Scots Fusiliers & Highland Light Infantry)

⁹⁷⁴ King's Own Scottish Borderers

⁹⁷⁵ The Black Watch Regiment

⁹⁷⁶ Highlanders Regiment; Highlanders Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland

33	The Gordon Highlanders ⁹⁷⁷	Regiment	The Gordon Highlanders Museum	Aberdeen	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://gordonhighlanders.com/	
34	The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders ⁹⁷⁸	Regiment	The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders' Museum	Stirling Castle, Stirling	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Closed*	Paid**	https://www.argylls.co.uk/	*Closed for re-development until 2020 (Spring). **Ticketed through Stirling Castle
35	The Prince of Wales' Royal Regiment (PWRR) and Queens Regiment ⁹⁷⁹	Regiment	PWRR and Queen's Regiment Museum	Dover Castle, Dover	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Paid*	http://www.armytigers.com/museums/princess-wales-royal-regiment-and-queens-regiment-museum-dover-castle	*Ticketed through Dover Castle (EH)
36	The Queens Royal Surrey Regiment ⁹⁸⁰	Regiment	The Surrey Infantry Museum	Surrey, currently Guildford	Independent Collection	Open (Moved)	Closed*	n/a	http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/new_museum/new_museum.shtml	*Closed following fire at previous site (Clandon Park) in 2015 - collection being restored, some on display at Guildford Museum (WWII exhibition)
37	The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum ⁹⁸¹	Regiment	Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum	Serle's House (Peninsula Barracks), Winchester	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Free	https://www.royalhampshireregiment.org/	
38	The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (London) ⁹⁸²	Regiment	The Fusilier Museum London	Tower of London	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Free*	https://www.fusiliermuseumlondon.org/	*Ticketed through Tower of London
39	The Fusiliers Museum of Northumberland ⁹⁸³	Regiment		Alnwick Castle, Northumberland	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Paid*	https://www.northumberlandfusiliers.org.uk/	*Ticketed through Alnwick Castle

⁹⁷⁷ Gordon Highlanders

⁹⁷⁸ Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regiment

⁹⁷⁹ The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment; Queen's Regiment

⁹⁸⁰ Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment

⁹⁸¹ Royal Hampshire Regiment

⁹⁸² City of London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers)

⁹⁸³ Royal Northumberland Fusiliers

40	The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (Royal Warwickshire) ⁹⁸⁴	Regiment		St John's House, Warwick	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Free	http://www.warwickfusiliers.co.uk/	
41	The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (Lancashire Fusiliers) ⁹⁸⁵	Regiment	The Fusilier Museum	Bury, Greater Manchester	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.fusiliermuseum.com/	
42	The Essex Regiment Museum ⁹⁸⁶	Regiment		Oaklands House, Chelmsford	Independent Museum/Collection	Open	Open	Free	https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums/	Building shared with Chelmsford Museum
43	The Royal Anglian Regiment Museum Duxford (Cambridgeshire Regiment Collection) ⁹⁸⁷	Regiment	IWM Duxford	Cambridge	Independent Collection in National Museum	Open	Open	Paid*	http://royalanglianmuseum.org.uk/	*Ticketed through IWM Duxford
44	The Royal Anglian Regiment (Northamptonshire Regiment) Northampton ⁹⁸⁸	Regiment	Abington Park Museum	Northampton	Independent Collection in LA Museum	Open	Open	Free	https://www.northampton.gov.uk/museums	
45	The Prince of Wales Own Yorkshire Regiment ⁹⁸⁹	Regiment	York Army Museum	York	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.yorkarmymuseum.co.uk/	YR and RDG Collections housed together in YAM
46	The Green Howards Museum ⁹⁹⁰	Regiment		Richmond	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://greenhowards.org.uk/	
47	The King's Own Royal Border Regiment ⁹⁹¹	Regiment	Cumbria's Museum of Military Life	Carlisle Castle	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Paid*	https://www.cumbriasmuseumofmilitarylife.org/	*Shared ticketing through Carlisle Castle

⁹⁸⁴ Royal Warwick Regiment

⁹⁸⁵ Lancashire Fusiliers, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

⁹⁸⁶ Essex 44th/56th Foot Regiment

⁹⁸⁷ Royal Anglian Regiment, 1/2/3 Royal Anglian, TA & Reserve (Cambridgeshire Regiment TF)

⁹⁸⁸ Northamptonshire Regiment 48th and 58th Foot

⁹⁸⁹ PWO Yorkshire Regiment; The Yorkshire Regiment

⁹⁹⁰ Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own) Yorkshire Regiment

⁹⁹¹ King's Own Royal Border Regiment (34th/55th foot); Duke of Lancs

48	The Queen's Lancashire Regiment ⁹⁹²	Regiment	Lancashire Infantry Museum	Fulwood Barracks, Preston	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Free	http://www.lancashireinfantrymuseum.org.uk/	BTW - Fulwood Barracks
49	York and Lancaster Regimental Museum ⁹⁹³	Regiment	Clifton Park and Museum	Rotherham	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open	Open	Free	http://www.cliftonpark.org.uk/homepage/27/york_and_lancaster_regimental_museum	
50	The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) Caernarfon ⁹⁹⁴	Regiment	The Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum, Caernarfon Castle	Caernarfon Castle, Wales	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Free*	https://www.rwfmuseum.org.uk/	*Ticketed through Caernarfon Castle
51	The Royal Welsh (Cardiff) ⁹⁹⁵	Regiment	Firing Line	Cardiff Castle	Independent Colleciton in Ind Museum	Open	Open	Free*	http://www.cardiffcastlemuseum.org.uk/museum.php	*Ticketed through Cardiff Castle
52	The Royal Welsh (Brecon) ⁹⁹⁶	Regiment	Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh	Brecon	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://royalwelsh.org.uk/	
53	The Cheshire Military Museum ⁹⁹⁷	Regiment	Cheshire Military Museum: Soldiers of Cheshire	Chester Castle	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.cheshiremilitarymuseum.co.uk/	Ticketed sepaaratly to Chester Castle
54	The WFR Museum (Worcestershire)	Regiment	Museum of the Mercian Regiment (WFR Collection)	Nottingham Castle	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Closed**	Paid***	http://www.stand-firm-strike-hard.org.uk/index.php/abouthome	*The WFR Collection covers all aspects of the WFR antecedents, extra coverage of Worcestershire (29th/36th) by another Mercian Museum, as well as aspects of 95th covered by Derby. **Museum is closed whilst Nottingham Castle is closed for re-development. ***Ordinarily paid through admission to Nottingham Castle?

⁹⁹² Duke of Lancaster's Regiment; Queen's Lancashire Regiment

⁹⁹³ York and Lancaster Regiment (65th/84th Foot)

⁹⁹⁴ The Royal Welch Fusiliers

⁹⁹⁵ The Royal Welsh (and some coverage of antecedent)

⁹⁹⁶ The Royal Regiment of Wales (and some RW coverage)

⁹⁹⁷ The Cheshire Regiment/The Mercian Regiment/The Cheshire Yeomanry/ 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards/3rd Carabiniers

	Regiment Collection) ⁹⁹⁸									
55	The WFR Museum (Sherwood Foresters Collection) ⁹⁹⁹	Regiment	Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Soldier's Story Gallery	Derby	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Open	Open	Free	https://www.derbymuseum.org/spaces/the-soldiers-story	
56	The Staffordshire Regiment ¹⁰⁰⁰	Regiment	The Staffordshire Regiment Museum	Whittington Barracks	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.staffordshireregimentmuseum.com/museum.html	Near previous base, but not BTW
57	The Military Museum of Devon and Dorset ¹⁰⁰¹	Regiment	The Keep Military Museum	Dorchester	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.keepmilitarymuseum.org/	
58	The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum ¹⁰⁰²	Regiment		Gloucester	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.soldiersofgloucs.com/	
59	The Rifles (Berkshire and Wiltshire) Museum ¹⁰⁰³	Regiment	The Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum	"The Wardrobe", Salisbury	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.thewardrobe.org.uk/	
60	The Rifles Light Infantry Regimental Museum ¹⁰⁰⁴	Regiment	Bodmin Keep	Bodmin, Cornwall	Collection in Independent Museum	Open?*	Open	Paid	https://bodminkeep.org/museum-history/	*Lack of clarity on earlier investigation - Light Infantry Collection moved from previous home (Winchester) to Bodmin in 2009

⁹⁹⁸ The Mercian Regiment; Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment; The Sherwood Foresters - 45th lineage*

⁹⁹⁹ Sherwood Foresters - 95th lineage

¹⁰⁰⁰ Staffordshire Regiment (some Mercian Regiment)

¹⁰⁰¹ Devonshire and Dorset Regiment

¹⁰⁰² Gloucestershire Regiment 28th/61st Foot & Royal Gloucestershire Hussars

¹⁰⁰³ 49th, 62nd, 66th, 99th; The Royal Berks, The Wilts Regiment and DERR

¹⁰⁰⁴ The Light Infantry Regiment

61	The Shropshire Regimental Museum (Light Infantry) ¹⁰⁰⁵	Regiment	Soldiers of Shropshire Museum	Shrewsbury Castle	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://www.soldiersofshropshire.co.uk/	
62	The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Regimental Museum ¹⁰⁰⁶	Regiment	Bodmin Keep	Bodmin, Cornwall	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://bodminkeep.org/museum-history/	
63	The Rifles Royal Green Jackets Museum ¹⁰⁰⁷	Regiment	The Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum	Winchester	Independent Museum*	Open	Open	Paid	http://rgjmuseum.co.uk/	*Co-located with the new Rifles Museum, which covers the new regiment
64	Airborne Forces Museum ¹⁰⁰⁸	Regiment	Airborne Assault Museum @ IWM Duxford	Duxford	Independent Museum*	Open	Open	Paid*	https://www.paradata.org.uk/article/airborne-assault-museum-parachute-regiment-and-airborne-forces	*Co-located at IWM Duxford National Museum
65	The Gurkha Museum ¹⁰⁰⁹	Regiment	The Gurkha Museum	Winchester	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Paid	https://thegurkhamuseum.co.uk/	

¹⁰⁰⁵ KSLI and antecedent, Yeomanry, RHA, Militia etc.

¹⁰⁰⁶ The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

¹⁰⁰⁷ The Rifles Regiment; Royal Green Jackets

¹⁰⁰⁸ Parachute Regiment

¹⁰⁰⁹ Royal Gurkha Rifles/The Queen's Gurkha Engineers/Queen's Gurkha Signals/The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment/The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support Company.

66	The Royal Irish Regimental Museum ¹⁰¹⁰	Regiment	Royal Irish Regiment Museum	(Armagh, Northern Ireland)	Independent Museum	Closed	Closed	n/a	https://www.royal-irish.com/museums/royal-irish-regiment-museum	"When St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena closed, the Museum went into storage until the three antecedent regiments' museums were able to include in their displays and exhibitions the story of The Royal Irish Rangers, The Ulster Defence Regiment and The Royal Irish Regiment."
67	The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers ¹⁰¹¹	Regiment	The Inniskillings Museum	Enniskillen Castle, NI	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Open	Open	Paid*	http://www.inniskillingsmuseum.com/	*Ticketed through Enniskillen Castle Museums
68	The Royal Irish Fusiliers ¹⁰¹²	Regiment	The Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum	Armagh, Northern Ireland	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Free	https://royalirishfusiliersmuseum.com/	
69	The Royal Ulster Rifles ¹⁰¹³	Regiment	Royal Ulster Rifles Museum	Belfast	Independent Museum	Open	Open	Free	https://www.royal-irish.com/museums/royal-ulster-rifles-museum	

¹⁰¹⁰ Royal Irish Regiment (1992); Royal Irish Rangers and UDR

¹⁰¹¹ Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards (1922)

¹⁰¹² Royal Irish Fusiliers 87th/89th Foot

¹⁰¹³ Royal Ulster Rifles Regiment 83rd/86th Foot

- a. Location data as recorded in the mapping is narrow, as a notable number of RCMs are located on or very close to MoD or Army land. Therefore, the name of the barracks or camp has been included, as well as the town/city/county name. This is particularly important for highlighting museums which are 'behind the wire', that being those where visiting requires passing through a checkpoint into the base or barracks, often requiring some form of photographic identification.
- b. Museum/Collection Type has the following categories:
 - i. Independent Museum
 - ii. Independent Collection
 - iii. Independent Museum in a Heritage Site
 - iv. Independent Collection in an Independent Museum/Local Authority Museum/National Museum
- c. Operational picture expresses whether the museum is open, closed, or open by some other specific arrangement (such as appointment only). Where closure is a product of a refurbishment it is noted. This is important to note this as they should or may have re-opened latterly. The number of RCMs which are or have gone through re-development (particularly in the last 10 years) is notable.
- d. Admissions policy sets out whether the museums charges or not for general admission to the museum. It also indicates whether the museum is part of any relevant joint ticketing schemes or is ticketed through other sites (co-location).
- e. Source webpages for the museum used in the research is also included.
- f. Funding position in the next table highlights which of the remaining funded museums will be de-funded in due course.

Table 2-2: Museum Mapping Data setting out the changing funding position over time

N	ECAB Name	Current Name	Museum/ Collection Type	Admission?	Funded (2008)	Funded (2022)	Funded (2030)
1	The Tank Museum		Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Firepower, The Royal Artillery Museum	Firepower Museum	Independent Museum/ Collection	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	The Royal Engineers Museum	The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	The Royal Signals Museum	Royal Signals Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	The Museum of Army Flying	The Army Flying Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Museum of Army Chaplaincy	Royal Army Chaplains' Museum	Independent Collection	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	The Royal Logistics Corps Museum	RLC Museum	Independent Museum (Regt Assoc)	?	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	The Army Medical Services Museum	Museum of Military Medicine	Independent Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	The REME Museum of Technology	REME Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes

10	The Guardroom Museum, Adjutant Generals Corps Museum	The Adjutant General's Corps Museum/Museum of the Adjutant General's Corps	Independent Museum (Regt Assoc)	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	the Royal Military Police Museum		Independent Museum (Regt Assoc)	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	The Infantry and Small Arms School Corps Weapons Collection		MoD Collection	Free*	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Military Intelligence Museum		Independent Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Army Physical Training Corps Museum		Independent Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	The Household Cavalry Museum		Independent Collection	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	1st Queens Dragoon Guards	Firing Line	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Free*	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards	The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Museum	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Free*	Yes	Yes	Yes
18	The Royal Dragoon Guards	York Army Museum	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	The Queens Own Hussars	The Museum of The Queen's Royal Hussars - Churchills Own	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes

20	The Queens Royal Irish Hussars (Royal Sussex Regimental Museum)	The Museum of The Queen's Royal Hussars - Churchills Own	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	n/a	Yes	No	No
21	9th/12th Royal Lancers (Derbyshire Yeomanry)	Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Soldier's Story Gallery	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	Horsepower, The Museum of the King's Royal Hussars, Winchester	HorsePower: The Museum of the King's Royal Hussars	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	No	No
23	14th/20th King's Hussars and Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry	Museum of Lancashire	Independent Collections in LA Museum	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	The Light Dragoons (15th/19th The Kings Royal Hussars)	Charge! The Story of England's Northern Cavalry (Discovery Museum)	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
25	13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) and The Light Dragoons	Charge! The Story of England's Northern Cavalry (Discovery Museum)	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Free	Yes	No	No
26	The Queens Royal Lancers	The Royal Lancers and Nottinghamshire Yeomanry Museum	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Free	Yes	Yes	Yes
27	The Guards Museum		Independent Collections?	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
28	The Royal Scots Regimental Museum	The Museum of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) and the Royal Regiment of Scotland	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Free*	Yes	Yes	Yes
29	The Royal Highland Fusiliers	The Royal Highland Fusiliers Museum	Independent Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	No

30	The Kings Own Scottish Borderers'	The King's Own Scottish Borderers Museum	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid*	Yes	Yes	No
31	The Black Watch	The Black Watch Castle and Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	No
32	The Highlanders Regimental Museum	Highlanders' Museum (Queen's Own Highlanders Collection)	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Free*	Yes	Yes	No
33	The Gordon Highlanders	The Gordon Highlanders Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	No	No
34	The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders' Museum	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid**	Yes	Yes	No
35	The Prince of Wales' Royal Regiment (PWRR) and Queens Regiment	PWRR and Queen's Regiment Museum	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid*	Yes	Yes	Yes
36	The Queens Royal Surrey Regiment	The Surrey Infantry Museum	Independent Collection	n/a	Yes	No	No
37	The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum	Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum	Independent Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	No
38	The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (London)	The Fusilier Museum London	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Free*	Yes	No	No
39	The Fusiliers Museum of Northumberland		Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid*	Yes	No	No
40	The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (Royal Warwickshire)		Independent Museum	Free	Yes	No	No
41	The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (Lancashire Fusiliers)	The Fusilier Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
42	The Essex Regiment Museum		Independent Museum/Collection	Free	Yes	No	No

43	The Royal Anglian Regiment Museum Duxford (Cambridgeshire Regiment Collection)	IWM Duxford	Independent Collection in National Museum	Paid*	Yes	Yes	Yes
44	The Royal Anglian Regiment (Northamptonshire Regiment) Northampton	Abington Park Museum	Independent Collection in LA Museum	Free	Yes	No	No
45	The Prince of Wales Own Yorkshire Regt	York Army Museum	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
46	The Green Howards Museum		Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	No
47	The King's Own Royal Border Regiment	Cumbria's Museum of Military Life	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid*	Yes	Yes	Yes
48	The Queen's Lancashire Regiment	Lancashire Infantry Museum	Independent Museum	Free	Yes	Yes	No
49	York and Lancaster Regimental Museum	Clifton Park and Museum	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Free	Yes	No	No
50	The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) Caernarfon	The Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum, Caernarfon Castle	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Free*	Yes	Yes	No
51	The Royal Welsh (Cardiff)	Firing Line	Independent Colleciton in Ind Museum	Free*	Yes	Yes	Yes
52	The Royal Welsh (Brecon)	Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	No	No
53	The Cheshire Military Museum	Cheshire Military Museum: Soldiers of Cheshire	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes

54	The WFR Museum (Worcestershire Regiment Collection)	Museum of the Mercian Regiment (WFR Collection)	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid***	Yes	Yes	No
55	The WFR Museum (Sherwood Foresters Collection)	Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Soldier's Story Gallery	Independent Collection in Ind Museum	Free	No	No	No
56	The Staffordshire Regiment	The Staffordshire Regiment Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	No
57	The Military Musuem of Devon and Dorset	The Keep Military Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
58	The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum		Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	No
59	The Rifles (Berkshire and Wiltshire) Museum	The Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	No	No
60	The Rifles Light Infantry Regimental Museum	Bodmin Keep	Collection in Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	No
61	The Shropshire Regimental Museum (Light Infantry)	Soldiers of Shropshire Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	No	No
62	The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Regimental Museum	Bodmin Keep	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	No
63	The Rifles Royal Green Jackets Museum	The Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum	Independent Museum*	Paid	Yes	Yes	No
64	Airborne Forces Museum	Airborne Assault Museum @ IWM Duxford	Independent Museum*	Paid*	Yes	Yes	Yes

65	The Gurkha Museum	The Gurkha Museum	Independent Museum	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes
66	The Royal Irish Regimental Museum	Royal Irish Regiment Museum	Independent Museum	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes
67	The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers	The Inniskillings Museum	Independent Museum in Heritage Site	Paid*	Yes	No	No
68	The Royal Irish Fusiliers	The Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum	Independent Museum	Free	Yes	No	No
69	The Royal Ulster Rifles	Royal Ulster Rifles Museum	Independent Museum	Free	Yes	No	No

3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST (2018)



Army Secretariat
Army Headquarters
IDL 24 Blenheim Building
Marlborough Lines
Andover
Hampshire, SP11 8HJ
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Ref: Army/Sec/17/04/FOI2018/08696
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

E-mail: ArmySec-Group@mod.uk
www.army.mod.uk
Website:

6 July 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 2 July 2018 in which you requested the following information:

"I am looking for an updated version of 'Policy for National, Regimental and Corps Museums' produced by The Executive Committee of the Army Board in 2008. I understand that the policy was updated in 2012, and wanted to see if it would be possible to access this document in whole or in part."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that this information is not held by the MOD.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it useful to note the following:

The policy for National, Regimental and Corps Museums that was produced in 2008 and agreed with by the Executive Committee of the Army Board is still the most current policy used today. ECAB did agree to funding changes for museums in 2011 but there was no revision to the policy that was agreed in 2008.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Army Secretariat

4 AMALGAMATION TABLES

Table 4-1 shows the extent of the amalgamations conducted in this first phase between 1958 and 1961.¹⁰¹⁴

¹⁰¹⁴ Compiled from various sources, including Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting*. and G. Rosignoli, *Army Badges and Insignia Since 1945*. (Dorset: Blandford Press Ltd., 1986). Other sources used for specific information indicated throughout table.

Table 4-1: Amalgamations between 1958 and 1961 with explanatory notes regarding relevant museums and collections

Year	New Unit	Antecedents	Related Museum(s) ¹⁰¹⁵	Notes ¹⁰¹⁶
1958	The Queen's Own Hussars	3 rd (King's Own) Hussars	Cavalry collections were held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Museum, before it became the National Army Museum and independent Cavalry museums were later established. ¹⁰¹⁷	
		7 th Queen's Own Hussars		
	The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars	4 th (Queen's Own) Hussars		
		8 th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars		
	3 rd East Anglian Regiment (16 th /44 th)	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment	Kempston Barracks, Bedford	Kempston Barracks closed in 1958. ¹⁰¹⁸ Beds & Herts collection now housed in Wardown House, Luton. ¹⁰¹⁹
Essex Regiment		Warley, Essex*	Essex collection now in Oaklands House, Chelmsford ¹⁰²⁰	
Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire	Prince of Wales's Own West Yorkshire Regiment	York, West Yorkshire	Originally located at Imphal Barracks, York, with some objects loaned to York Military Museum (Castle Museum). ¹⁰²¹ Later entirely housed at the Castle Museum, and then to the Drill Hall. ¹⁰²²	

¹⁰¹⁵ Taken from a distribution list for Major-General Walsh's 1949 letter to regimental depot commanders, corroborated against Ogilby's list of 1935. Walsh, Letter from Major-General Walsh, Director of Weapons and Development for general distribution. **An asterisk (*) indicates where a recipient was listed on the distribution list but was not included in Ogilby's 1935 list.**

¹⁰¹⁶ Notes include any information about relevant depot closures, usually as a product of the reorganisation of the Defence White Paper, and notes about where collections moved to or have ended up today (a combination of additional sources cited, and the Current Sector Position mapping set out in the introduction).

¹⁰¹⁷ 'Service Museums', 451.

¹⁰¹⁸ Bedfordshire Archives, *Kempston Barracks* Available online: <https://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityHistories/Kempston/KempstonBarracks.aspx> [Accessed 16/11/22]; 'The military depot at Kempston Barracks, Bedford, has closed down', *Somerset County Herald*. 6/09/58, 3.

¹⁰¹⁹ The Culture Trust Luton, *The Regiment Gallery* Available online: <https://www.culturetrust.com/take-partour-collectionsour-wardown-collection/regiment-gallery> [Accessed 16/11/22].

¹⁰²⁰ Chelmsford City Museum, *Essex Regiment Museum* Available online: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums/visit/essex-regiment-museum/> [Accessed 16/11/22].

¹⁰²¹ P. E. Abbott, 'The West Yorkshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Own)', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 22 (1954), xxi-xxii.

¹⁰²² Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*, 26; York Army Museum, *Collections: York Army Museum* Available online: <https://yorkarmymuseum.co.uk/collections/> [Accessed 16/11/22].

		East Yorkshire Regiment	Victoria Barracks, Beverley	First museum opened at Beverley Depot in 1920, with a new museum opened in 1956. ¹⁰²³ Collection later distributed amongst several museums. Majority moved to Butcher Row, Beverley before joining PWO collection at YAM. ¹⁰²⁴
Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	Devonshire Regiment	Exeter, Devon	Dorsetshire Regiment	Devonshire collection moved to be co-housed with Dorsetshire collection, at The Keep Military Museum in Dorset. ¹⁰²⁵
	Dorsetshire Regiment	Dorchester, Dorset		
King's Regiment (Manchester and Liverpool)	King's Liverpool Regiment	Seaforth, Liverpool (1935) Harington Barracks, Formby (1949)	Manchester Regiment	Unclear whether collection housed at Seaforth or Harington until amalgamation. Harington Barracks vacated by regiment in December 1958, demolished sometime after WW2; rubble remains at Formby Point. ¹⁰²⁶ Seaforth Barracks was closed and demolished in early 1960s. ¹⁰²⁷ Collection housed with City of Liverpool Museums from at least 1969, now National Museums Liverpool. ¹⁰²⁸
	Manchester Regiment	Ashton-under-Lyne*		Manchester Regiment collection (covering up to 1958 amalgamation) housed in Ashton Town Hall. ¹⁰²⁹

¹⁰²³ 'The East Yorkshire Regimental Museum', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 29 (1956), xiii-xv.

¹⁰²⁴ For further detail, see C. Berriman, *Missing Museum: East Yorkshire Regiment Collections*, 2021. Available online: <https://museumhistories.blogspot.com/2021/10/missing-museum-east-yorkshire-regiment.html> [Accessed 16/11/22].

¹⁰²⁵ The Keep Military Museum, *About The Keep* Available online: <https://www.keepmilitarymuseum.org/about/> [Accessed 16/11/22].

¹⁰²⁶ The National Trust, *News: Solution to Formby rubble trouble*, 2022. Available online: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/liverpool-lancashire/formby/solution-to-formby-rubble-trouble-one-step-closer> [Accessed 12/07/2023]; 'Army will quit Formby Barracks at end of month', *The Liverpool Echo and Evening Express*. (Liverpool). 8/12/1958, 9.

¹⁰²⁷ 'Housing Progress at Thornton', *The Liverpool Echo and Evening Express*. (Liverpool). 24/02/1962 1962, 11.

¹⁰²⁸ National Museums Liverpool, *The King's Regiment collection* Available online: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/collections/museum-of-liverpool-collections/kings-regiment-collection> [Accessed 16/11/22]; Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*, 16.

¹⁰²⁹ Tameside Museums and Galleries, *Museum of the Manchester Regiment* Available online: <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/LibrariesandLeisure/MuseumsandGalleries/Museum-of-the-Manchester-Regiment> [Accessed 07/08/23].

	Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales Volunteers)	East Lancashire Regiment	Depot Barracks, Fulwood, Preston	Main collection at Fulwood Barracks since 1935. However, East Lancs collections have also been held at Towneley Hall Art Gallery and Museum (Burnley) and Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. ¹⁰³⁰ Fulwood Barracks still open until 2030 (closure delayed from 2022 and 2027). Current Lancashire Infantry Museum hope to continue occupying site under lease from MOD. ¹⁰³¹ Barracks still open, but PoWs' Volunteers collection co-located with others at Lancashire Infantry Museum sometime after 1992. ¹⁰³²
		Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire) Regiment	Peninsular/Peninsula Barracks, Warrington, Lancs.	
1959	Queen's Dragoon Guards	1 st (King's) Dragoon Guards	See Cavalry (Queen's Own/Queen's Own Irish Hussars) above.	
		The Queen's Bays (2 nd Dragoon Guards)		
	Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own City of Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment)	Royal Scots Fusiliers	Ayr	Housed within Churchill Barrack, and allotted accommodation increased after Second World War. ¹⁰³³ Moved to 518 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, where it remains. ¹⁰³⁴ The Highland Light Infantry undertook their last parade at Maryhill in late 1958 and vacated the barracks soon after. ¹⁰³⁵ Partial demolition undertaken in 1961 to replace part of site with housing. ¹⁰³⁶ Co-located with RSF collection above.
		Highland Light Infantry	Maryhill Barracks, Glasgow*	

¹⁰³⁰ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*; Henshaw, Annex D - Corps and Regimental Museums - Statistical Data; R. Batten, *Britain's Regimental Museums*. (London: R. Batten, 1982).

¹⁰³¹ Lancashire Infantry Museum, *Important Announcements: Future of the Lancashire Infantry Museum* Available online: <https://www.lancashireinfantrymuseum.org.uk/important-announcements> [Accessed 16/11/22].

¹⁰³² Henshaw, Annex D - Corps and Regimental Museums - Statistical Data

¹⁰³³ H. D. Watt, 'The Royal Scots Fusiliers', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 5 (1950), xxviii-xxix: xxviii.

¹⁰³⁴ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*.

¹⁰³⁵ 'Last Parade for H.L.I.', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*. (Coventry). 27/09/1958 1958, 5.

¹⁰³⁶ 'March of Time', *Edinburgh Evening News*. (Edinburgh). 08/06/1961 1961, 6.

Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment	Queen's Royal West Surreys	Guildford, Surrey	Stoughton Barracks (Guildford) closed and in around 1959 the Queen's Royal West Surrey collection was reportedly due to transfer to the East Surrey Depot at Kingston. ¹⁰³⁷
	East Surrey Regiment	Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey	Kingston Barracks was largely demolished in 1962. ¹⁰³⁸ By 1982 the joint collection moved to a NT property near Guildford. ¹⁰³⁹ The property was Clandon Park House, where the collection was held until 2015 when destroyed by fire. ¹⁰⁴⁰
King's Own Royal Border Regiment (KORBR)	King's Own (Royal Lancaster) Regiment	Lancaster, Lancs. (Old Town Hall)	King's Own collection remains located in Lancaster City Museum as it was when founded in 1929. ¹⁰⁴¹
	The Border Regiment	The Castle, Carlisle	Remains in the Castle grounds, though moved to Alma Block from Queen Mary's Tower, in 2014. ¹⁰⁴² Responsible for the KORBR period (post-1959).
1st East Anglian Regiment (Royal Norfolk and Suffolk)	Norfolk Regiment	Britannia Barracks, Norwich	Museum briefly closed around amalgamation, but remained at Britannia Barracks after 1960. ¹⁰⁴³ The land was sold to the local authority in around 1966 but the collection remained housed in Cameron House on the barracks. ¹⁰⁴⁴ The collection later moved to Norwich Castle where it is now managed by Norfolk Museums. ¹⁰⁴⁵

¹⁰³⁷ 'Traditions of an old regiment cannot die', *Croydon Advertiser and East Surrey Reporter* (1959), 10.

¹⁰³⁸ Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association, *Regimental Depots, Kingston-up-Thames* Available online: <https://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/depots/depots20.shtml> [Accessed 14/07/2023].

¹⁰³⁹ Batten, *Britain's Regimental Museums*.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association, *Surrey Infantry Museum* Available online: https://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/new_museum/new_museum.shtml [Accessed 14/07/2023].

¹⁰⁴¹ King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, *King's Own Royal Regiment Museum Lancaster* Available online: [Accessed 14/07/2023].

¹⁰⁴² Cumbria's Museum of Military Life, *About The Museum* Available online: <https://www.cumbriasmuseumofmilitarylife.org/museum/museum-history/> [Accessed 14/07/2023].

¹⁰⁴³ 'Regimental Association chairman', *Lynn News & Advertiser*. 01/03/2023 1960, 10.

¹⁰⁴⁴ 'The Royal Norfolk Regiment Association', *Lynn News & Advertiser*. 27/09/1966, 1.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Norfolk Museums, *Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum's Collection* Available online: <https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/collections/explore-the-collections/royal-norfolk-regimental-museums-collection> [Accessed 18/07/2023].

		Suffolk Regiment	Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk	Housed at Gibraltar Barracks, which has since been mostly demolished, except the Keep, in which the collection remains. ¹⁰⁴⁶
Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's)		South Staffordshire Regiment	Lichfield, Staffs.*	Opened at Whittington Barracks in 1933, moved to St. Johns Lodge in 1937 (later renamed Davidson House). ¹⁰⁴⁷ Moved back to Whittington Barracks in 1963. ¹⁰⁴⁸
		Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire) Regiment	Lichfield, Staffs.	
Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire)		Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire) Regiment	Brock Barracks, Reading	Brock Barracks still open, home to 7 RIFLES. ¹⁰⁵⁰ Collection/museum dismantled and relocated in 1977. ¹⁰⁵¹ Given larger accommodation in 1948, improved lighting and heating. ¹⁰⁵² Wiltshire Regiment left Le Marchant Barracks in around 1967. ¹⁰⁵³ Collections of combined Berkshires and Wiltshires (DERR) co-located at The Wardrobe, Salisbury in 1982 where they remain. ¹⁰⁵⁴
		Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment	Le Marchant Barracks, Devizes*	

¹⁰⁴⁶ Suffolk Regiment Museum, *History of the Gibraltar Barracks* Available online: [Accessed 18/07/2023].

¹⁰⁴⁷ H. C. B. Cook, 'Davidson House, Lichfield: Museum of the South Staffordshire Regiment', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 57 (1963), xiii-xiv: xiii.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ibid*, xiv

¹⁰⁴⁹ The Staffordshire Regiment Museum, *The Museum* Available online: <https://staffordshireregimentmuseum.com/the-history-of-the-museum-single-column/> [Accessed 18/07/2023].

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ministry of Defence, *Reserve RIFLES* Available online: <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/infantry/the-rifles/reserve-rifles/> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁵¹ Reading Museum, *Brock Barracks, Reading Postcard 1904* Available online: [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁵² G. W. Richardson, 'The Wiltshire Regiment', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 23 (1955), xxv-xxvi.

¹⁰⁵³ Historic England, *Gatehouse to Le Marchant Barracks with gate piers*, 2019. Available online: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1271946?section=official-list-entry> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁵⁴ The Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum, *Museum History* Available online: <https://www.thewardrobe.org.uk/our-story> [Accessed 18/07/2023].

	Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry (SCLI)	Prince Albert's Somersetshire Light Infantry	Taunton, Somerset	Re-opened in 1963 within Regimental HQ, Jellalabad Barracks (14 Mount Street). ¹⁰⁵⁵ Later co-located with Museum of Somerset, Taunton Castle as the Somerset Military Museum. ¹⁰⁵⁶
		Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (DCLI)	Bodmin, Cornwall	Housed in ground floor of main admin block, just inside main gate. ¹⁰⁵⁷ DCLI Museum still housed on the original Bodmin Depot site, now in 'Bodmin Keep' main building.
1960	9 th /12 th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's)	9 th (Queen's Royal) Lancers	See Cavalry above	
		12 th (Prince of Wales's Royal) Lancers		
	2 nd East Anglian Regiment (Duchess of Gloucester's Own Royal Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire)	Lincolnshire Regiment	Lincoln	The museum of the Lincolnshire Regiment remained at Sobraon Barracks in Lincoln until at least 1982. ¹⁰⁵⁸ By 1992 the collection had moved to co-locate with the local authority museum. ¹⁰⁵⁹ Remain co-located with Museum of Lincolnshire Life at Old Barracks, Lincoln. ¹⁰⁶⁰
		Northamptonshire Regiment	Northampton Castle ¹⁰⁶¹ , Northamptonshire	Opened in Gibraltar Barracks (Barrack Road, Northampton) in the 1930s. ¹⁰⁶² Moved to Quebec (later Simpson) Barracks, Northampton in 1950. ¹⁰⁶³ Transferred to the Borough Museum in Abington Park in 1958. ¹⁰⁶⁴ Some increment of the collection may

¹⁰⁵⁵ A. C. M. Urwick, 'The Museum of the Somerset Light Infantry', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 58 (1964).

¹⁰⁵⁶ South West Heritage Trust, *Somerset Military Museum* Available online: <https://swheritage.org.uk/museum-of-somerset/explore/somerset-military-museum/> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Museum Supplement No. 27 (June, 1956) - The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Museum, 1956* [Journal Article]. War Office and successors: Registered Files (General Series), The National Archives, London.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Batten, *Britain's Regimental Museums*.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Henshaw, Annex D - Corps and Regimental Museums - Statistical Data 2

¹⁰⁶⁰ Lincolnshire County Council, *Museum of Lincolnshire Life* Available online: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/history-heritage/museum-lincolnshire-life> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁶¹ Northampton Castle does not appear to refer to the actual Castle, which had been a ruin for some time, see Friends of Northampton Castle, *Timeline* Available online: <https://www.northamptoncastle.com/timeline/> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁶² P. Sumner, 'The Northamptonshire Regiment (48th and 58th)', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 18, 71 (1936), 185-186: 185.

¹⁰⁶³ C. J. M. Watts, 'The Museum of the Northamptonshire Regiment', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 37 (1958), xxi-xxii: xxi.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Ibid*

				have remained at Barrack Road until at least 1969. ¹⁰⁶⁵ Collection remains co-located at Abington Park Museum, Northampton Museum Service. ¹⁰⁶⁶
1961	Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons)	Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, The Duke of Albany's Own)	Fort George, Inverness*	Originally in the Barrack Block, Regimental Depot at Fort George. ¹⁰⁶⁷ Later moved into Governor's residence on same site, remains at Fort George. ¹⁰⁶⁸
		Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders	Inverness*	Located at Carmeron Barracks, Inverness into early 1960s, remaining at site until just after amalgamation. ¹⁰⁶⁹ Moved to Fort George by 1969. ¹⁰⁷⁰ Remains at Fort George as The Highlanders' Museum (Seaforth and Camerons).
	Queen's Own Buffs, Royal Kent Regiment	Buffs (East Kent) Regiment	Canterbury, Kent	Howe Barracks, Canterbury active until 2015? Buffs printed material housed in University of Kent library. ¹⁰⁷¹ Museum collection transferred to NAM. ¹⁰⁷²
		Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Maidstone, Kent	Collection co-located with the Maidstone Museum. ¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁶⁵ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*, 20.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Batten, *Britain's Regimental Museums*.

¹⁰⁶⁷ H. P. E. P., 'The Seaforth Highlanders', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 2 (1949), xi-xii.

¹⁰⁶⁸ McGuffie, 'Two Highland Regiments and their Museums in 1962'.

¹⁰⁶⁹ H. P. E. P., 'The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 2 (1949), xii.

¹⁰⁷⁰ McGuffie, 'Two Highland Regiments and their Museums in 1962'.

¹⁰⁷¹ University of Kent, *Queen's Own Buffs, The Royal Kent Regiment Collection* Available online: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/library-it/special-collections/queens-own-buffs> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁷² National Army Museum, *What the Museum holds* Available online: <https://www.nam.ac.uk/collections/what-museum-holds> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁷³ Maidstone Museum, *Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regimental Museum* Available online: <https://museum.maidstone.gov.uk/our-museums/queens-own/> [Accessed 03/11/23].

1966	1 st Green Jackets (43 rd /52 nd)	Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry	Cowley Barracks, Oxford	Cowley Barracks closed in 1966. ¹⁰⁷⁴ Ox and Bucks LI collection now forms Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum. ¹⁰⁷⁵
	2 nd Green Jackets (King's Royal Rifle Corps)	King's Royal Rifle Corps	Rifle Depot, Winchester	Rifles Depot at Peninsula Barracks closed, but whole site now home to six military museums, including Royal Green Jackets Museum. ¹⁰⁷⁶ Co-located in 1989, along with part of the Ox and Bucks collection. ¹⁰⁷⁷
	3 rd Green Jackets (Rifle Brigade)	Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own)	Rifle Depot, Winchester	

¹⁰⁷⁴ Oxford History, *Cowley Barracks, Oxford* Available online: [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁷⁵ Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, *About SOFO (Soldiers of Oxfordshire) Museum* Available online: <https://www.sofo.org.uk/about/> [Accessed 03/11/23]. The RGJ (Rifles) Museum at Winchester also covers the Ox and Bucks – SOFO only opened in 2014.

¹⁰⁷⁶ The Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum, *About the museum* Available online: <https://rgjmuseum.co.uk/our-story/about-the-museum/> [Accessed 03/11/23].

¹⁰⁷⁷ The Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum, *History of the museum* Available online: <https://rgjmuseum.co.uk/our-story/history-of-the-museum/> [Accessed 03/11/23].

Table 4-2: Amalgamations between 1964 and 1968 with explanatory notes regarding relevant museums and collections¹⁰⁷⁸

Year	New Unit	Antecedents	1967 ¹⁰⁷⁹	1969 (Wise) ¹⁰⁸⁰	Notes
1964	Royal Anglian Regiment	1 st East Anglian Regiment (East Anglian Brigade) ¹⁰⁸¹	Norwich (NORFOLK) Bury St Edmunds (SUFFOLK)	Britannia Barracks, Norwich (NORFOLK) The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds (SUFFOLK)	Regimental collections for the 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd East Anglians, and the Royal Anglian Regiment co-located with IWM Duxford. ¹⁰⁸²
		2 nd East Anglian Regiment (East Anglian Brigade)	Lincoln (R LINCOLNS) Northampton (NORTHAMPTONS)	Sobraon Barracks, Lincoln (R LINCOLNS) Gibraltar Barracks, Barrack Road (NORTHAMPTONS)	See Table 4-1 above for antecedent regimental museums: - Bedfs. & Herts. Regt. - Essex Regt. - Norfolk Regt. - Suffolk Regt. - Lincs Regt. - Northants Regt.
		3 rd East Anglian Regiment (East Anglian Brigade)	Bedford (BEDFS & HERTS) Warley (ESSEX)	n/a Eagle Way, Warley (ESSEX)	
		Royal Leicestershire Regiment (Midland Brigade)	Leicester (likely Glen Parva Barracks)	City of Leicester Museums & Art Gallery, New Walk, Leicester	Moved to Magazine Gateway in 1960s, then to New Walk again in 1990s (Magazine closure), and finally to Newarke Houses Museum (present location). ¹⁰⁸³
1966	Queen's Regiment ¹⁰⁸⁴	Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (Home Counties Brigade)	Kingston	Surbiton Road, Kingston-upon-Thames	See Table 4-1.
		Queen's Own Buffs, Royal Kent Regiment (Home Counties Brigade)	Maidstone (BUFFS) Canterbury (R WEST KENT)	Maidstone Museum (BUFFS) RHQ The Queen's Regt, Howe Barracks, Canterbury (RWK)	See Table 4-1.

¹⁰⁷⁸ General sources and for amalgamation information see Rosignoli, *Army Badges and Insignia Since 1945*; Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting*.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Steering Committee on the Reorganisation of the Infantry, Regimental Offices and Museums: Report by the Chairman of the Steering Committee (Draft) – Included where relevant, i.e., if the regiment was not included in Table 4-1 – illustrates any consideration of long-standing museum or material change.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Wise, *A Guide to Military Museums*. – Included if materially different from the 1968 location/condition.

¹⁰⁸¹ 1st, 2nd and 3rd East Anglian Regiments were formed between 1958 and 1960 as shown in Table 4-1 above.

¹⁰⁸² The Royal Anglian Regiment Museum, *Welcome to the website of the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum!* Available online: [Accessed 04/11/23].

¹⁰⁸³ See Vignette 2.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Half of the regiments forming the Queen's were amalgamated themselves in the preceding decade (see Table 4-1).

		Royal Sussex Regiment (Home Counties Brigade)	Chichester	Chichester City Museum	No longer housed at Chichester City Museum (now the Novium Museum). Previously at Eastbourne Redoubt, but now online only? ¹⁰⁸⁵
		Middlesex Regiment (Home Counties Brigade)	Edgware	RHQ TA Centre, Deansbrook Road	Transferred to NAM. ¹⁰⁸⁶
	Royal Green Jackets ¹⁰⁸⁷	1 st Green Jackets (43 rd /52 nd)	Oxford	Peninsular Barracks, Winchester	See Table 4-1.
		2 nd Green Jackets (King's Royal Rifle Corps)	Winchester		See Table 4-1.
		3 rd Green Jackets (Rifle Brigade)	Winchester		See Table 4-1.
1968	Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	Royal Northumberland Fusiliers (Fusilier Brigade)	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	The Armoury, Fenham Barracks, Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Fenham Barracks still open, but museum moved to Alnwick Castle. ¹⁰⁸⁸
		Royal Fusiliers (Fusilier Brigade)	London (Tower of)	Tower of London	Remains current location. Covers the current Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. ¹⁰⁸⁹
		Lancashire Fusiliers (Fusilier Brigade)	Bury	Wellington Barracks, Bury	Remains in Bury, co-located with Tourist Information Centre.
		Royal Warwickshire Regiment (Midland Brigade)	Warwick	St. John's House, Warwick	Remains current location.
	Royal Irish Rangers	Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (North Irish Brigade)	Omagh	St. Lucia Barracks, Omagh	St Lucia Barracks closed. Now co-located with Enniskillen Castle Museums. ¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁸⁵ The Royal Sussex Regiment, *The Royal Sussex Regiment Online Museum* Available online: <https://www.theroyalsussexregt.org.uk/museum/> [Accessed 04/11/23].

¹⁰⁸⁶ National Army Museum, *What the Museum holds*.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Following the name changes in the preceding decade, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Green Jackets were conjoined in one regiment in line with having composed the Green Jackets Brigade after 1958.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Fusiliers Museum of Northumberland, *The museum* Available online: <https://www.northumberlandfusiliers.org.uk/about/museum/> [Accessed 04/11/23].

¹⁰⁸⁹ The Fusilier Museum London, *Our Collection* Available online: <https://www.fusiliermuseumlondon.org/our-collections> [Accessed 04/11/23].

¹⁰⁹⁰ Inniskillings Museum, *Enniskillen Castle Museums - The Inniskillings Museum* Available online: <https://www.royal-irish.com/museums/inniskillings-museum> [Accessed 04/11/23].

	Royal Ulster Rifles (North Irish Brigade)	Belfast	5 Waring Street, Belfast	Museum closed for re-location and is now at another location in Belfast. ¹⁰⁹¹
	Royal Irish Fusiliers (North Irish Brigade)	Armagh	Sovereign's House, The Mall, Armagh	Remains current location. ¹⁰⁹²
The Light Infantry ¹⁰⁹³	Somerset and Cornwall Light Infantry (Light Infantry Brigade)	Taunton (SOM LI) Bodmin (DCLI)	14 Mount Street, Taunton (SOM LI) The Keep, The Barracks, Bodmin (DCLI)	See Table 4-1.
	King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (Light Infantry Brigade)	Pontefract	Wakefield Road, Pontefract	Now located in Doncaster, co-located with Doncaster Museum and Gallery.
	King's Shropshire Light Infantry (Light Infantry Brigade)	Shrewsbury	n/a 4 th Bn at T & AVR Centre, Coleham, Shrewsbury	Previously at Sir John Moore Barracks, Copthorne. ¹⁰⁹⁴ Moved to Shrewsbury Castle in 1985, now forming the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum. ¹⁰⁹⁵
	Durham Light Infantry (Light Infantry Brigade)	Durham	Aykley Heads, Durham Co-located with Arts Centre	Closed in 2016, but currently planned to re-open. ¹⁰⁹⁶

¹⁰⁹¹ Royal Ulster Rifles Museum, *Royal Ulster Rifles Museum* Available online: <https://www.royal-irish.com/museums/royal-ulster-rifles-museum> [Accessed 04/11/23].

¹⁰⁹² Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum, *Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum* Available online: <https://www.royal-irish.com/museums/royal-irish-fusiliers-museum> [Accessed 04/11/23].

¹⁰⁹³ The 4th battalion The Light Infantry, formed from the DLI, was disbanded the next year, ending the direct lineage of this regiment.

¹⁰⁹⁴ E. N. Thursby, 'The Museum of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and the Herefordshire Light infantry (T.A.)', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 56 (1963), ix-x.

¹⁰⁹⁵ 'Castle museum', *Birmingham Evening Mail*. 1/5/1985 1985, 11; Soldiers of Shropshire Museum, *Regimental Museum* Available online: <https://www.soldiersofshropshire.co.uk/regimental-museum/> [Accessed 04/11/23].

¹⁰⁹⁶ BBC, *Durham Light Infantry Museum: Plan to extend and reopen revealed*, 2022. Available online: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-60771392> [Accessed 04/11/23].

Table 4-3: Amalgamations between 1992 and 1994 with explanatory notes regarding relevant museums and collections¹⁰⁹⁷

Year	New Unit	Antecedents	1992 ¹⁰⁹⁸	1995 ¹⁰⁹⁹	Notes
1992	The Household Cavalry ¹¹⁰⁰	The Life Guards (1 st and 2 nd)	Windsor (MOD)	Windsor	Co-located at Horse Guards, London as the Household Cavalry Museum.
		The Blues and Royals		Windsor	
	Royal Dragoon Guards	4 th /7 th Dragoon Guards	York (shared with PWO) (MOD)	York	Co-located at York Army Museum, RDG Collection.
		5 th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards	Chester (shared with 3 Carabiniers) (Crown/MOD)	Chester	
	King's Royal Hussars	Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own)	Winchester (MOD)	Winchester	Housed at Peninsula Barracks as HorsePower Museum.
		14 th /20 th Hussars	Preston (LA)	Preston	Housed at Museum of Lancaster until closure, moved to Winchester to be co-located with sister collection. ¹¹⁰¹
	Light Dragoons	13 th /18 th Royal Hussars	Barnsley (LA)	Barnsley	Co-located in Discovery Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, as Charge! The Story of England's Northern Cavalry
		15 th /19 th Hussars	Newcastle (John Joicey Museum – closed due to low visitor numbers, Hussars moving to LA)	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	
	Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)	Queen's Regiment		Dover or Guildford	Queen's Regiment and PWRR co-located at Dover Castle.
		Royal Hampshire Regiment		Winchester	Co-located at Peninsula Barracks, in Serle's House.
Royal Irish Regiment	Royal Irish Rangers (27 th (Inniskilling), 83 rd and 87 th)		Armagh, Belfast and Enniskillen	Post-Royal Irish Rangers collections (and UDR collection) currently in suspended animation	

¹⁰⁹⁷ Gaylor, *Military Badge Collecting*.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Henshaw, Annex D - Corps and Regimental Museums - Statistical Data

¹⁰⁹⁹ Annex A to D/AG/2722: *Defence in the Public Eye - Corps/Regimental Museums*, 1995 Ministry of Defence (Army): Registered Files and Branch Folders, The National Archives.

¹¹⁰⁰ Though included as an amalgamation here, this was technically a "union" between the two mounted Household guards regiments. The Blues and Royals itself had formed in 1969 from the Royal Horse Guards and the Royal Dragoons.

¹¹⁰¹ Horse Power Museum, *The Museum of The King's Royal Hussars*.

		Ulster Defence Regiment ¹¹⁰³		n/a or Ballymena?	until co-location organised. ¹¹⁰² See Table 2 otherwise.
1993	Queen's Royal Hussars (Queen's Own and Royal Irish)	Queen's Own Hussars	Warwick (Private)	Warwick	Eastbourne Redoubt appears closed, recently redeveloped Queen's Royal Hussars co-locates collections now.
		Queen's Royal Irish Hussars	Eastbourne (LA)	Eastbourne	
	Queen's Royal Lancers	17 th /21 st Lancers	Grantham (Private)	Belvoir Castle	Co-located in Thoresby Hall, Nottinghamshire
		16 th /5 th Lancers	Stafford (MOD)		
1994	Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons)	Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons)		Fort George, Inverness	Remains current location.
		The Gordon Highlanders		Aberdeen	Remains current location.
	Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment	Gloucestershire Regiment		Gloucester	Remains current location as Soldiers of Gloucestershire.
		Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire and Wiltshire)		Salisbury	See Table 4-1.

¹¹⁰³ The Ulster Defence Regiment had been newly raised in 1970.

¹¹⁰² Royal Irish Regiment Museum, *Royal Irish Regiment Museum* Available online: <https://www.royal-irish.com/museums/royal-irish-regiment-museum> [Accessed 04/06/23].

Table 4-4: Amalgamations between 2006 and 2015 with explanatory notes regarding relevant museums and collections¹¹⁰⁴

Year	New Unit	Antecedents	1995 ¹¹⁰⁵	Notes ¹¹⁰⁶	
2006	Royal Regiment of Scotland	The Royal Scots Borderers, 1 st Battalion (1 SCOTS)	Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)	Edinburgh	Remains current location. Museum of the Royal Regiment of Scotland is co-located here.
			King's Own Scottish Borderers	Berwick-upon-Tweed	Remains current location.
		The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2 nd Battalion (2 SCOTS)	Royal Highland Fusiliers	Glasgow	See Table 4-1
		The Black Watch, 3 rd Battalion (3 SCOTS)	The Black Watch	Perth	Remains current location.
		The Highlanders, 4 th Battalion (4 SCOTS)	The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons)	Aberdeen (GORDONS) Fort George (QUEEN'S OWN)	See Table 4-1
	The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 5 th Battalion (5 SCOTS) ¹¹⁰⁷	The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	Stirling	Remains current location.	
Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's,	3 rd Battalion (3 LANCS) ¹¹⁰⁸	King's Own Royal Border Regiment	Carlisle	See Table 4-1	

¹¹⁰⁴ HC Debate, *Written Ministerial Statements, Thursday 24 November 2005, Col 127WS: Defence*, 2005. Available online: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo051124/wmstext/51124m01.htm#51124m01.html_spmin2 [Accessed 06/12/23].

¹¹⁰⁵ Annex A to D/AG/2722: Defence in the Public Eye - Corps/Regimental Museums,

¹¹⁰⁶ Current locations determined in the Museum Mapping Data exercise, see Appendix 2

¹¹⁰⁷ The A&S Highlanders were later reduced to company strength and renamed 'Balaklava Coy.', losing their association in name with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

¹¹⁰⁸ The three battalions would be reduced to two in March 2007. This was put into effect by the disbandment and redistribution of 3 LANCS, effectively ending the lineage of the KORBR.

	Lancashire and Border)	2 nd Battalion (2 LANCS)	King's Regiment (Manchester and Liverpool)	n/a	Co-located with National Museums Liverpool, ¹¹⁰⁹ with pre-1881 Manchester element covered by Museum of the Manchester Regiment at Ashton Town Hall. ¹¹¹⁰	
		1 st Battalion (1 LANCS)	Queen's Lancashire Regiment	Preston	See Table 4-1. (Note: separately, the Queen's Lancashire were formed in 1970 from the Lancashire and Loyal Regiments).	
	Yorkshire Regiment (14 th /15 th , 19 th and 33 rd /76 th)	1 st Battalion (1 YORKS)	The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire	York	See Table 4-1.	
		2 nd Battalion (2 YORKS)	The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment)	Richmond	Remains current location.	
		3 rd Battalion (3 YORKS)	The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (East Riding)	n/a	Located in Halifax.	
	The Royal Welsh	1 st Battalion (1 R WELSH)	Royal Welch Fusiliers	Caernarvon	Co-located at Caernarfon Castle.	
		2 nd Battalion (2 R WELSH)	Royal Regiment of Wales (24 th /41 st Foot)	Cardiff Brecon	Note: Royal Regiment of Wales formed in 1969 from South Wales Borderers and Welch Regiment). Firing Line at Cardiff covers Royal Welch, whilst museum at Brecon covers SWB.	
	2007	The Rifles	1 st Battalion (1 RIFLES)	Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	Dorchester	See Table 4-1.
				Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment	Gloucester & Salisbury	See Table 4-3.
			3 rd Battalion (3 RIFLES) 5 th Battalion (5 RIFLES)	The Light Infantry	Winchester Bodmin Shrewsbury	See Table 4-2.
2 nd Battalion (2 RIFLES) 4 th Battalion (4 RIFLES)			The Royal Green Jackets	Winchester	See Table 4-1 and Table 4-2.	

¹¹⁰⁹ National Museums Liverpool, *The King's Regiment collection*.

¹¹¹⁰ Tameside Museums and Galleries, *Museum of the Manchester Regiment*.

	Mercian Regiment (Cheshire, Worcesters and Foresters, and Staffords)	1 st Battalion (1 MERCIAN)	Cheshire Regiment	Chester	Soldiers of Cheshire at Chester Castle.
		3 rd Battalion (3 MERCIAN)	Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's)	Lichfield	See Table 4-1.
		2 nd Battalion (2 MERCIAN)	The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters (29 th /45 th Foot)	Worcester Nottingham	Note: Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters formed separately in 1970. Museum now co-located in Nottingham Castle (Mercian, Worcesters and Foresters). 95 th Foot lineage of Foresters (Derbyshire Regiment) co-located with Derby Museum and Art Gallery.
2015	The Royal Lancers (Queens Elizabeth's Own)	9 th /12 th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's)		Derby	See Table 4-3.
		The Queen's Royal Lancers		Belvoir Castle	See Table 4-3.

5 INTERVIEW AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

5.1 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General

1. Tell me a bit about your career path - don't have to go into specifics, but interested in your general career trajectory: do you have a primarily museum or military background for example?

Museum/Sector History

1. How is the history of regimental and corps museums recorded and understood? Both generally and within your own museum - is it something you have worked on or developed? Are you interested in developing in this area?
2. How important is this historical understanding from the perspective of your work?
3. What do you understand as the purpose of the founding of these museums?

Object collecting legacies

1. Thinking about the history of the museum collections, how is the history of objects recorded and understood? Such as how they were collected, by whom, when, and so forth.
2. How are objects gathered during the British Empire contextualised in the museum space, and what do you see as the challenges and opportunities of exploring the history of these objects?

Current priorities, values, challenges

1. Against the backdrop of greater focus on colonial legacies in the UK recently, what do you see as the key concerns, challenges, and opportunities going forward?
2. What do you understand by terms such as decoloniality and decolonisation - have you come across it in your research and reading?
 - a. (Have or will these approaches factor into your working, if so, how? - what are your priorities otherwise, or what are your organisational needs for this kind of work?)

Opportunities & challenges around co-production

1. What do you understand by co-production in the museum space, are you aware of different kinds of co-production projects and approaches, and what are the areas of interest and implications for your work?

2. Has your museums undertaken projects which have focussed on or been supported through co-production with groups outside the museum? If so, what were the key things you learned?
 - a. If not, is it on your radar, and what are some of your organisational needs for this kind of work?

5.2 SURVEY PREAMBLE

I, Christopher Berriman, would like to invite you as a staff member at a regimental or corps museum in the UK, to participate in this survey.

Before agreeing to take part, please read this information sheet carefully, and get in touch directly if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

About the Researcher

I began my career in museums in around 2015 with a role in a research company working on projects for a range of local, regional and national clients. After deciding to seek a career in the sector itself, I undertook voluntary and paid roles within several regimental museums. I also completed an MA in Cultural Heritage Management at the University of York, in which my thesis focussed on exploring challenges faced by regimental and corps museums.

About the Research

The aim of this research is to better understand the challenges currently faced by the sector, by developing a more complete understanding of the history and development of regimental and corps museums. Particularly, this research is interested in exploring the origins and nature of collections developed from colonial looting, capture, purchasing and gifting. Understanding how these legacies affect contemporary approaches to collecting and collections management is important in the context of greater calls for the decolonisation of knowledge. It is hoped that this research will help to develop tools for debate and discussion within the sector.

A key aspect of the methodology involves consulting with the sector in line with the project aims, to evaluate the perceptions and needs of the sector, the extent of engagement with decolonisation, and understanding the scope of co-production around colonial objects.

Ethical Review Information

This research has been subject to ethical review by members of the Faculty of Arts, Cultures and Education (FACE) Ethics Committee. The committee can be contacted directly via face-ethics@hull.ac.uk.

Survey and Your Data

The survey should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete.

All responses will be anonymised, and any and all data will only be released in aggregated form.

The analysis will be an aggregated presentation of themes emerging from the collated responses. No individual will be identifiable, and no identifiable quotes will be used in the research. Please ensure that you do not include information that makes you directly or indirectly identifiable in your response.

It is envisaged that the aggregated data will be archived with the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, on The Ogilby Muster platform after the conclusion of the project. After the project the researcher will continue to have access to this data which may be used in future publications or research to support the sector, in cooperation with AMOT. The aggregated survey data will be publicly accessible through TOM platform.

As all responses are anonymised and no personal data is collected, it will not be possible to withdraw your response from the research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you have any further questions please contact me via c.n.berriman-2019@hull.ac.uk. Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research.

5.3 SURVEY QUESTIONS

About You

1. Which of the following best describes the museum in which you work?
2. Which of the following roles do you undertake within your museum?
3. Do you have a background in military service?
4. Have you undertaken a museum or heritage post-graduate qualification at any point?

Museum & Sector History

5. How well understood is the history of your museum within your institution?
This could include how it was founded, how the collection was developed, how it became publicly accessible, or other related areas.
6. In your view, how well understood is the history of the regimental and corps museums sector within your institution?
7. How important is understanding the history of the regimental and corps museums sector from the perspective of your work?
8. What do you understand as the purpose of the founding of regimental and corps museums?

Object collecting legacies

9. In general, how well recorded are the histories of individual objects in your collection – for example, is information such as how objects were collected, by whom and when well documented?
10. How aware are you of objects in your museum collected through British colonialism/imperialism?
11. Thinking specifically about objects collected through British colonialism/imperialism, how are these objects approached within your museum?

Current priorities, values, challenges

Page preamble: In the UK and internationally, there has been a greater focus on colonial legacies recently. Going forward...

12. What do you see as the key concerns and challenges?
13. What do you see as the key opportunities?
14. What do you understand by terms such as decoloniality and decolonisation?
15. To what extent has decolonisation factored into your working, if at all?

Co-production and community engagement

16. What do you understand by the term co-production in the context of museums?
17. Are you aware of any co-production projects within other museums?
18. Has your museum undertaken any co-production projects?
19. Are you aware of any community engagement projects within other museums?
20. Has your museum undertaken any community engagement projects?

Final page

Thank you for taking part in this survey and contributing to this research.

All responses will be anonymised, and any and all data will only be released in aggregated form.

The analysis will be an aggregated presentation of themes emerging from the collated responses. No individual will be identifiable, and no identifiable quotes will be used in the research.

It is expected that updates and outputs from the research will be disseminated through Army museum network channels, so look out for further information in the usual places.

6 INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

A copy of the following information sheet was provided to all interviewees before consenting to participate.

Participant Information Sheet for Regimental and Corps Museums Staff Interviews 2021

Invitation to participate

I, Christopher Berriman, would like to invite you as a staff member at a regimental or corps museum in the UK, to participate in this research through a semi-structured interview.

Before agreeing to take part, please read this information sheet carefully, and get in touch directly if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

What is the purpose of the research?

The aim of this research is to better understand the challenges currently faced by the sector, by developing a more complete understanding of the history and development of regimental and corps museums. Particularly, this research is interested in exploring the origins and nature of collections developed from colonial looting, capture, purchasing and gifting. Understanding how these legacies affect contemporary approaches to collecting and collections management is important in the context of greater calls for the decolonisation of knowledge. It is hoped that this research will help to develop tools for debate and discussion within the sector.

A key aspect of the methodology involves consulting with sector staff in line with the project aims, to evaluate the perceptions and needs of the sector, the extent of engagement with decolonisation, and understanding the scope of co-production around colonial objects.

This research has been subject to ethical review by members of the Faculty of Arts, Cultures and Education (FACE) Ethics Committee. The committee can be contacted directly via face-ethics@hull.ac.uk.

What form will my participation take?

The process will be a recorded semi-structured interview, held online through Microsoft Teams. From the audio a transcript will be produced which will be the main data output used in the research analysis.

A short briefing will take place prior to the interview, to discuss any remaining questions on your part. It is expected that the interview itself will take no more than one hour to complete.

The interview discusses complex issues and issues that have had notable press attention in recent months. As such there is potential risk in regard to occupational reputation, however this will be mitigated through ensuring the anonymity of

participants as set out below. You also do not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering.

How will my data be used?

The interview data produced will be used in the analysis process of the thesis research. Your input will guide the findings of the research, and these findings will be communicated to you and to the sector. The analysis will be an aggregated presentation of themes emerging from the collated interviews. Quotes may be drawn from the interviews illustrating particular points, but these will not contain information which can be used to identify any individual participant.

It is envisaged that transcripts will be archived with the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, on The Ogilby Muster platform after the conclusion of the project. Permission for this will be sought towards the end of the project specifically and is a separate process to the use of interviews for the purposes of this research. To be clear, by participating in the interview you are not consenting for your data to be kept after the end of the project. You will be asked specifically for your consent towards the end of the project which you are free to refuse outright.

After the project, with permission, the researcher will continue to have access to transcripts which may be used in future publications or research to support the sector, in cooperation with AMOT. An approved, redacted version of the transcript may also be made publicly available through the platform to support wider research and understanding.

Who will have access to my data? How will it be kept secure?

Throughout the duration of the project the data will only be accessible to the researcher, who will be the interviewer in all instances, and the project supervisors. Anonymity of the participants will be ensured through various methods, and any concerns can be discussed in the pre-interview briefing. Participants are encouraged to avoid directly or indirectly identifying themselves, for instance, not mentioning their name or institution, as well as avoiding any cases or examples which might indirectly identify them. Analysis of the transcripts of interviews will be formed thematically, and responses are aggregated to ensure no individual response is identifiable. Quotes will not contain any information which would directly or indirectly identify participants.

The recordings and transcripts will be stored on the researcher's work computer as working versions (password protected and accessible only to the researcher), with back-ups made to Box – the university's secure licenced cloud storage system.

If, at the end of the project, participants consent to archiving their responses with AMOT it will be stored on The Ogilby Muster repository. The primary transcripts will have no personal data attached to them and will be accessible to the researcher and AMOT, and an approved redacted version may be publicly accessible. The researcher will have control over this data, and participants will retain the right to withdraw their consent at any stage, at which point the data will be removed from this repository and destroyed.

By default the data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project which is expected to be no later than September 2023. Ahead of this, the researcher will be back in touch with participants to secure express permission to archive transcripts with AMOT.

Can I withdraw from the research?

You are free to withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason, with the following limitation.

Aspects of the data gathered which are used in analysis in the final drafting of the thesis cannot be withdrawn from the thesis itself. This does not affect your ability to withdraw your data from the research at any time, but aspects used in the aggregated analysis in the thesis' final draft cannot be. However, as mentioned above, the analysis will be presented in an aggregated way such that no individual participant may be identified.

If you do choose to withdraw after this stage, the participant will be debriefed and informed about how their data is used in the final thesis.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you have any further questions please contact me via c.n.berriman-2019@hull.ac.uk. Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Please complete and return the participant consent form if you would like to participate in the project research.

7 INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

**FACE ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT FORM for INTERVIEW**

I,
NAME:

of
ORGANISATION:

hereby agree to be a participant in this study to be undertaken by Christopher Berriman and I understand the purpose of the research as set out in the information sheet, which I have been provided with.

and I hereby declare that

1. The aims, methods, anticipated benefits and possible risks/hazards of the research study have been explained to me.
2. I voluntarily and without pressure give my consent to my participation in the above research study.
3. I understand that all data will be de-identified using pseudonyms and stored using secure servers and password protected devices. It will be destroyed by default at the end of the project, and any consent for future archiving actions will be asked for separately.
4. I understand that aggregated results will be used for the research purposes outlined in the information sheet and may be reported in academic journals and conferences related to the research.
5. I understand that individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
6. I understand I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the research. My participation in the research will immediately stop and any information obtained from me will not be used. However, if notice to withdraw is given after the final draft (June 2022), I understand that it will not be possible to remove specific aspects from aggregated reporting within the thesis. Any information obtained from me will not be used further.

Signature: Date:

The contact details of the researcher are: c.n.berriman-2019@hull.ac.uk

Please contact the Faculty of Arts Cultures and Education (FACE) Ethics Committee for further information. Research Office, FACE, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. Email: face-ethics@hull.ac.uk

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Interviewee 2, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 30/06/21 10:00. MS Teams.

Interviewee 3, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 23/06/21 10:00. MS Teams.

Interviewee 4, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 02/08/21 09:30. MS Teams.

Interviewee 5, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 09/08/21 15:00. MS Teams.

Interviewee 6, *History of collections, and decolonisation and co-production in regimental and corps museums*. [Anonymous recorded interview] 28/09/21 14:30. MS Teams.

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