



IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUMS RESEARCH STRATEGY 2012-2017

1 Purpose of Strategy

1. To provide IWM with the knowledge basis to pursue its goals in the short, medium and long term in accordance with the Corporate Plan.
2. To enhance IWM's academic reputation and to contribute to the fullest possible understanding of our subject matter and collections.
3. To encourage scholarly use of IWM collections – both internally and externally - and to form and maintain research partnerships which assist IWM in the attainment of its long-term goals in the fields of Education, Exhibitions, Documentation and Web Development.
4. To support IWM staff in achieving their potential as far as subject expertise and collections knowledge are concerned, providing a user-friendly, well-regulated and encouraging environment in which historical and curatorial interest can be developed.

2 Background

IWM research was given added emphasis in 2008 with the setting up of a Research Board, the adoption of a Research Policy, and the publishing of Rules and Frameworks governing staff research. As a result research across the organisation has now been centrally managed in a structured and systematic way for nearly four years.

2010 saw the establishment of a new Research Department and in the following year IWM attained full Independent Research Organisation status with eligibility to apply to the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

IWM aspires to build on this progress and to ensure that:

1. The opportunity offered by our eligibility for UK Research Councils and other funding is deployed strategically, providing new and challenging avenues to better understand our subject matter;
2. Staff demonstrating commitment to research, and the ability to carry it out to a high standard, are given full support and direction in building their academic profiles;

3. IWM properly directs all relevant resources to ensure that its reputation as a research organisation is developed fully.

3 Research areas

Priority areas

Reappraising the First World War: preparations for the Centenary across the IWM, including its major new First World War galleries, are being supported by the *Reappraising the First World War* seminar series, a collaboration between IWM, King's College London and Queen Mary, University of London; by research resource projects, including, subject to approval, the online *Creating the film record of the First World War*, and a series of academic conferences. This theme includes the study of the history of the Imperial War Museum which was founded in 1917 to document the war then still being fought –two CDA students are currently investigating aspects of this history.

Scars of war: how armies and individuals cope with wounds, trauma, disease: the thousands of personal experiences – written and spoken – provide new and intimate slants on the effects of war on the body and the mind. From enduring ill-treatment and tedium in prisoner-of-war camps to witnessing death in the front line or withstanding weeks of bombing raids, the toll taken by such experiences could last a life-time.

Contemporary art and conflict: reflecting the designation of the 'white box space' to art installations, IWM's art curators are engaging with contemporary artists, and those who have critiqued their work, on how contemporary art, including sculpture and installations can engage the public in addressing the impact of war.

Empire and War: The history of the experiences of the peoples of the British Empire during the two world wars is an emerging area of study in the UK academic field, with emphasis now being given to 'reversing the gaze' - trying to bring to the surface the often barely recoverable voices of those troops and civilians from former British colonies who were involved in these conflicts.

Recognising that this area has been neglected in the past, yet has intrinsic interest for the UK's multi-cultural population, IWM staff are engaging on how the two world wars impacted on the people of Britain's former colonies. The following **collections-focussed subjects** will be taken forward incrementally, as opportunities arise:

Radio at war: 1939- 1945: reflecting the intention to open up and attract research effort into the transcriptions made by the BBC Monitoring Service , and the British Library's Foreign Research and Press Service collection, both institutions are jointly seeking ways forward to investigate the likely use by the academic sector of these large and hitherto under-used collections and to assist the review and management of the collection.

The material culture of the experience of Nazi persecution: the acquisition and documenting of material documenting the lives of those who were persecuted by the Nazis remains a key objective to support the replenishment of the Holocaust Exhibition's showcases.

The creation of the film record of the Second World War: reflecting the very extensive collection of film documenting all theatres where British and Commonwealth servicemen served in the Second World War, this theme seeks to understand the true provenance of wartime imagery created by the cameramen who served in the Army Film and Photographic Unit.

The preservation of digital heritage: the IWM's film preservation specialists continue to play a vital role internationally in producing long-term strategies for the preservation of film heritage.

The following are **emerging subject areas** where internal expertise will be built through seminar series and providing encouragement to designated staff to transfer existing historical skills to new areas:

Aspects of conflicts since 1945

Ireland 1914 to the present

Understanding the meaning of objects

4 Specific goals for 2012-2017

1. Make productive use of the Independent Research Organisation status from the UK Research Councils, formulating research funding proposals and submitting them, in full coordination with other members of the Research Board.
2. Continue to upgrade IWM's research environment, paying particular attention to the development needs of individual members of staff who have demonstrated commitment and ability in this area.
3. Once a number of research projects have begun successfully, fund-raise for a series of Fellowships to reside within the Research Department, enhancing the IWM's reputation as a centre for international scholarship.

5 Research Board

The attainment of the above and further goals will be directed by the Research Board, under the direction of Mark Whitmore, Director of Collections and Research and the Board's Chair.

The Board will

1. encourage open and proactive discussion of how goals can best be attained and promote a results-centred ethos.
2. approve all submissions for individual projects (in accordance with the Rules and Frameworks for Research published on the intranet) research funding, all collaborative doctoral awards and all research-related projects owned by external organisations in which IWM is named as a partner.
3. be the central body within IWM which oversees, champions, and monitors research activity across IWM
4. ensure that forward planning is harmonised so as to maximise all research effort carried out in the IWM (ie that research feeds appropriately into Learning and Interpretation and the Web and is published when of benefit to IWM).
5. Initiate and monitor curatorial research to ensure reliable and effective delivery of the IWM's strategic aims.
6. Encourage and assist all staff with demonstrable research and publishing capability to build their expertise and reputations, within agreed frameworks, thus maximising the intellectual capacity of IWM.
7. Encourage a cross-disciplinary approach to historical research

5 Executive direction of Research

The Director of Collections and Research has responsibility for developing and monitoring overall research activity for IWM in line with its Corporate Plan. The development of the strategy supporting this process, forward planning, external representation and the day to day management of research are the responsibility of the Head of Research.

6 Monitoring and dissemination of Research

Research outputs by the Research-Active Staff are monitored by the Research Board, with a view to ensuring that outputs are timely and of a high quality and that emerging talent is rewarded with opportunities. Research attainments are reported quarterly and an Annual Report of all IWM Research activity is published on the Research Pages of the Website. The Research Blog provides a more informal day to day account of research activity across the organisation.

The IWM's Publishing, Press and New Media departments will

1. Play a proactive role in disseminating research produced by IWM staff, seeking avenues in the UK media judiciously and in a manner which supports IWM public programmes and approved research activity;

2. Support the publication of books by staff, and online and paper catalogues;
3. Assist in maximising the outputs, scholarly and otherwise, resulting from IWM research projects.

7 Research Associateships

IWM offers the opportunity for individuals with a notable contribution to make to the Research Programme to become Research Associates. Research Associateships can be taken up by invitation by former staff with strong research reputations and by senior staff seconded to the Research Department. Research associateships are occasionally offered to external individuals with a clear and significant contribution to make to IWM's research effort.

7 Recommendation

The Board recommends endorsement of this Strategy.