

Institution: Cardiff University		
Unit of Assessment: English Language and Literature (27)		
Title of case study: Changing curatorial practice and public perceptions of creativity, gender and soldiering		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 01/09/2015-01/01/2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Holly Furneaux	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 14/09/2015 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/09/2015-31/07/2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Furneaux's research on the Crimean War overturned the dominant narrative of the unemotional soldier and offered a fresh reading of Victorian masculinities. Her work on artefacts made by soldiers challenged perceptions of soldiering, its emotional experience, and creativity in the battlefield. Based on this research, she worked with museum professionals to generate new ways of thinking about how soldiering is remembered and communicated, changing how two of the UK's leading war museums display creative soldiering artefacts. She devised and co-curated the 2018 exhibition "Created in Conflict: British Soldier Art from the Crimean War to Today" at Compton Verney Art Gallery, which changed how soldiers and veterans, school children, and the wider public, think about the emotional and creative life of soldiers and their response to war.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Furneaux's 2016 monograph <i>Military Men of Feeling</i> [3.1] challenged persistent contemporary preconceptions of Victorian men, and especially soldiers, as stiff upper-lipped and emotionally uncommunicative. Her research included previously unstudied soldiers' letters, diaries, scrapbooks and art at the National Army Museum, National Archives, Military Medical Museum as well as local records offices. Focused on the Crimean War (1853-56), Furneaux's monograph [3.1]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> revealed the cultural prominence of the gentle soldier, a popular figure who adopted children on the battlefield, cared for his enemies, and crafted gifts for his family; integrated analysis of soldiering with current work in feminist international relations, showing how myths about the gentle soldier helped to reconcile a self-styled civilised Christian nation to the constant Victorian wars of imperial expansion, and identifying similar ideological processes at work in contemporary presentations of the soldier as social worker and liberal warrior. <p>Furneaux extended this work (2016-18) via new research for a major exhibition in 2018 at Compton Verney Art Gallery: 'Created in Conflict: Soldier Art from the Crimean War to Today'. The research was conducted in partnership with exhibition partner the National Army Museum, and key lenders the Imperial War Museum and the Museum of Military Medicine (MMM). Spanning four rooms and exhibiting 65 objects identified through Furneaux's research, the displays challenged perceptions of crafting as feminine; broadened understandings of 'trench art' beyond objects made with weaponry; demonstrated less recognised facets of the emotional and tactile experiences of military personnel; and looked critically at how soldier crafts can be used to make us feel both better and worse about war.</p> <p>Furneaux built on two of her main research themes in the exhibition book [3.2]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making and gifting as a means of emotional communication, emphasising continuities between soldiers and their civilian identities, and maintaining connections with families; 		

- crafting as rehabilitation, as a form of therapeutically and economically valuable retraining, and for public propaganda about the care of physically and psychologically wounded soldiers and the social reintegration of veterans.

Furneaux's research for the exhibition also involved [3.2]:

- identifying unique First World War objects, including a rare surviving Occupational Therapy Bear, Lobley's famous painting of the Toymaker's Workshop at Sidcup in 1918, and a previously undisplayed collection of toys made by soldiers and sent to their children;
- uncovering, and making connections between, previously undisplayed objects, identifying new approaches to them and to the wider themes of soldiers' practical and emotional experience;
- tracing a long history of practical and emotional labour in military making, showing continuities with contemporary soldier experience.

Her research challenged previous views on "combat gnosticism" – the belief that war cannot be communicated to those who have not experienced it – by highlighting the strenuous effort soldiers made to express, often through material forms, at least some parts of war experience. It brings a critical military studies perspective to thinking on rehabilitative crafting, showing how soldier-made items have also been used to make the public feel better about war [3.2].

Alongside this work, Furneaux also discovered previously undiscussed holdings of nineteenth-century sailor art at the National Maritime Museum (NMM) and First World War nurses' autograph books at MMM. Furneaux designed two PhDs on these holdings, following her interdisciplinary method of reading these objects within their histories of conflict, gender and emotion. This generated heritage investment, resulting in two ongoing PhDs funded by NMM (with AHRC CDP from 2016) and Queen Alexandra Royal Nursing Corps (from 2019).

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

[3.1] Furneaux, H., *Military Men of Feeling: Emotion, Touch, and Masculinity in the Crimean War* (Oxford University Press, 2016), DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198737834.001.0001

[3.2] Furneaux, H., *Created in Conflict: British Soldier Art from the Crimean War to Today* (Compton Verney: 2018). Comprises an 8000 word illustrated essay by Furneaux drawing on her new research in over 10 archives, placing these objects for the first time in dialogue and historical context. Available from HEI on request.

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

Furneaux's research informed curatorial practice, shaped permanent displays and supported objects' acquisition and restoration at two national museums, and the creation of educational programmes. This has redefined the perception of soldiering and masculinity among museum practitioners and curators, the public, veterans and school children.

4.1 Shaping curatorial practice: National Army Museum

Following publication of her 2016 monograph [3.1], in 2017 Furneaux served as an advisor for the National Army Museum (NAM) on its permanent new 'Soldier' gallery which – drawing on Furneaux's work – emphasises the previously neglected physical and emotional experience of soldiering [5.1], as well as underpinning the museum's gender and sexuality public programming [5.1]. NAM Lead Curator Chris Cooper confirmed that Furneaux's research "*impacted heavily on thematic gallery planning and display choices as we sought to relate the everyday lives and experiences of soldiers and to reveal them as ordinary human beings like you and me – the core message of the Soldier gallery*" [5.1].

Her work enabled reinterpretation of artefacts, which "*highlight[ed] creativity in war...as well as bringing new and important perspectives on Victorian military masculinity to the fore in gallery displays*" [5.1]. For example, Furneaux's research demonstrating the long historical tradition of ornate, soldier-produced games resulted in NAM's accession of a backgammon board made from the lid of an explosives crate by soldiers serving in Afghanistan into its permanent collection.

Cooper stated: *“Our collaboration enabled the reinterpretation and reassessment of the object to the point where its newly ascribed significance enabled it to be accessioned”* [5.1].

NAM reopened in 2017 following £23.7 million re-development, with 230,000 visitors in that year. The ‘Soldier’ gallery, the first of five that visitors enter, is central to NAM’s reconceptualisation and revitalised visitor experience. 93% of those who visited the Soldier gallery in 2017 would recommend it to others [5.2]. Its reorganisation was described by *The Daily Telegraph* as *“a thought-provoking triumph”* [5.2] and the permanent galleries were shortlisted for the Museums and Heritage award, judged by a panel of leading heritage professionals.

4.2 Shaping curatorial practice: Museum of Military Medicine

Since 2017, Furneaux’s research shaped the strategy for the relocation and redesign of Museum of Military Medicine (MMM) through her roles as strategic advisor and story committee member. Jason Semmens, Director of MMM, confirmed that *“Furneaux’s critical approach to the ways in which rehabilitation, and the wider ethical framework in which military medicine must be understood”* formed part of the Museum’s successful application for £2 million of Libor Grant funding and that *“her work is helping the Museum to achieve its ambition of going beyond a regimental history of the medical corps to offer a more holistic and critical investigation of the relationship between war, medicine, and its civilian impact”* [5.3].

Furneaux’s research [for the 2018 Compton Verney exhibition, 3.2] uncovered unexplored parts of MMM’s collection, including the largest single archive of First World War nurses’ autograph books and a rare surviving Occupational Therapy Bear (1918) produced during toymaking workshops in a Scottish hospital for limbless soldiers. Previously undiscovered, the bear was fully restored for the exhibition, has since featured in MMM’s special WW1 exhibit, and will be on permanent display when the museum moves to its proposed new site as part of a section on rehabilitative arts and crafts [5.3]. Semmens confirmed that the *“respective provenances and stories associated with”* the other objects Furneaux researched for the exhibition *“are now more fully appreciated”* [5.3]. The bear was the most discussed object in exhibition feedback, provoking emotional engagement with the experience of the injured maker [5.4].

4.3 Changing perceptions and practice: Created in Conflict Exhibition

Furneaux conceptualised and co-curated Compton Verney’s (CV) major spring 2018 exhibition (17 March – 10 June 2018). Amy Orrock, CV’s Curator, stated: *“Furneaux’s work on military masculinities and soldiers’ feelings – emotional and tactile – was the catalyst for our exhibition, and revealing this little-known aspect of military life to a wider public is what underpins the show.”* Orrock further noted that Furneaux’s research *“has shaped the way that soldiering and war are curated and understood”*, and underpinned the exhibition from the selection of objects to the key themes and overarching narrative [5.5].

Lasting benefits to the gallery include the development of new relationships with major national collections including the National Army Museum (NAM) and Imperial War Museum (IWM), which loaned objects informed by Furneaux’s research. It led the CV Education Team to deliver its first externally-partnered Arts Award, and increased the gallery’s public profile: *“The originality of the exhibition’s concept has attracted a high level of national media interest and this has helped to establish Compton Verney’s reputation as an Art Gallery characterized by its thought-provoking, original and academically rigorous displays”* [5.5].

The exhibition attracted over 10,000 visitors and generated widespread media coverage (267 national and regional press responses, including ITV’s News at Ten) [5.6a]. Broadcaster Martha Kearney described the exhibition on BBC Radio 4’s World at One as highlighting the *“extraordinary contrast between what people think of military life...and some of the gentler crafts which soldiers have been involved in”* over the centuries [5.6b]. She interviewed D-Day veteran Ron Trenchard, who spoke of how the exhibition challenged gendered preconceptions about needlework that he and his soldier father made [5.6b].

Media responses emphasised that *“the exhibition is a challenge to redefine the viewer’s expectations – of what art can be, but also of who the soldier is”* [Art Quarterly, 5.6a]. Another review highlighted that *“as works of art, the pieces on display are often beautiful in their own right; but the stories they hold and the intimate insight they give into the lives and experiences of*

individual soldiers mean that their impact is doubly powerful...delicate objects encourage the viewer to challenge the traditional notion of military masculinity” [Museums Association, 5.6a].

Visitors responded to the unexpected facets of soldiers’ creative lives, noting their new awareness of the creativity of soldiers [5.4]. ‘Share your Soldier Art’, a supplementary online gallery, crowd-sourced works from civilian and military visitors and museum staff, each reflecting on how the exhibition had illuminated their personal collections [5.7].

4.4 Increasing soldiers’ and veterans’ validation and cultural participation

The exhibition was central to CV’s aims to foster closer engagement with the local military community, and the gallery’s commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant [5.5]. Soldiers and veterans were closely consulted in the exhibition development; there was an opening forces private view and a forces family day (c.80 people). Involvement in developing the exhibition provided new creative opportunities for military personnel, featuring work produced by contemporary soldiers and veterans in each of the three galleries. The exhibition and Furneaux’s accompanying book [3.2] explained the significance of each piece and brought public recognition to work mainly produced for private purposes.

Planning work with a focus group of eight military personnel (including army photographers and veterans who had participated in physical and psychological rehabilitation) informed the final selection of objects and the wording of accompanying texts. The exhibition recognised neglected facets of soldiers’ creative and emotional experience, and provided a framework in which they and their families could discuss the significance of the objects. Exit interview responses included: *“It made me think about the creative side of the things we do...Making a board game or designing a display (such as painting penguin rocks in the Falklands) is done to improve our conditions and keep us busy. I had never thought of it as art before this exhibition” [5.8a].*

Exhibition artist and ex-soldier Sapper Williams created a blast wall piece during operations. He commented: *“It wasn’t really until [the exhibition]...that I realised it evolved into more than just filling a few spare days...it was a way for me to disconnect from the pressures of the operational environment. It helped my mind to unwind and enjoy the process while lifting me out of the harshness of my surroundings” [5.8b].* Williams spoke at three events at CV about how his involvement had extended his sense of identity from soldier to artist and about the exhibition’s role in his *“transition from military to civilian life as a veteran. The experience has been a great way of bringing my career to a close, reflecting on it and realising that the general public appreciate the work I put in during my time. It has also been useful for me to engage with non-military personnel in a professional capacity” [5.8b].*

Visitors commended the attention to the therapeutic benefits of making art and to the questions raised about treatment of returning soldiers. A soldier who served in Northern Ireland stated: *“I never experienced art while I served, but now, as I struggle with PTSD, I use embroidery and quilting to try and manage my anxiety and fear. I very much appreciated the exhibition” [5.4].*

Furneaux was subsequently invited to convene an event with 60 war artists and veterans at National Museum Wales in partnership with veterans’ charity Re-Live. The event considered creative therapies and how objects can be used to tell different war stories. Karin Diamond, Re-Live Director, states that *“these amazing opportunities to share Arts in Health practice have influenced the charity’s therapeutic processes, showing the value of incorporating a historical dimension that further validates veteran” creative practice [5.9].* Re-Live are continuing to work with Furneaux *“to develop and model new research led creative methods in contemporary veterans’ well-being” [5.9].*

4.5 Generating new educational models

Furneaux co-developed education programmes alongside the exhibition which resulted in original creative responses to pieces from the CV exhibition. These include ‘Pieced’ (with Hampshire Music Service), in which 20 Year 9 students worked with Furneaux and a professional composer to write and perform musical works, and ‘Conflict Reimagined’, a choreography and dance response by Stratford Upon Avon College [5.10a]. One sixth-form dancer reflected, *“Created in*

conflict' has helped us as a group to make history a part of the art of dance...looking into all the stories behind the artwork themselves it made my performance more emotional" [5.10a].

Furneaux also co-designed and delivered a six-session primary school syllabus for the RAF's flagship STEM programme, introducing a new arts dimension and a more interdisciplinary approach. Chris Mossman, RAF officer and STEM ambassador, confirmed that *"the Created in Conflict exhibition was the catalyst for our entire STEM portfolio" [5.10b].* This included the 2019 pilot 'Toymaker's Workshop' (accredited by the Arts Council and STEM). It was inspired by the pieces from the exhibition: the rehabilitation teddy and a John Hodgson Lobley painting of wounded soldiers in a military hospital participating in a toymaking session as occupational therapy. The unique combination of STEM, Arts, and History *"allowed them [students] to fully participate and create a unique toy" [5.10b].* Thirty-one Year 5 students at Kineton Primary School received an Arts Award exhibiting the toys they produced at CV, and Mossman was shortlisted for an RAF Centenary Trophy for Inspiration 2019 [5.10b]. Students reflected on how the programme gave them new insights to the complex emotional experiences of soldiers in rehabilitation workshops; they might *"get frustrated"* and *"find it hard to be away from family", needing to "gather the strength to do it and actually make it work"; "Thinking about their [facially injured] condition...they might think their family doesn't love them anymore."* [5.10c].

The Toymaker's Workshop led to RAF Kineton base developing a STEM Zone, which Mossman states *"add[ed] another bow to our community engagement",* as the STEM team can now host their own engagement events on site [5.10b]. The Workshop is now offered to other schools in the STEM Zone through the online resource pack [5.10b], and in 2019 RAF Kineton conducted 124 STEM events, *"which equates to 40% of Army STEM and 25% RAF STEM nationwide" [5.10b].* Mossman notes *"without the Created in Conflict exhibition, we would not have had a STEAM [STEM plus Arts] programme at DM Kineton...The Toymakers workshop has been a highlight in my career as STEM Ambassador so far" [5.10b].*

Furneaux's research on military masculinity challenged preconceptions about war and soldiers by showcasing the importance of creativity and domesticity in theatres of war. Through her advisory and curatorial work for museums and galleries, she *"[opened] this complex topic up to a broader audience by adopting an appealing and manageable format for those new to the subject" [5.5].* This led to significant impact on how the National Army Museum and the Museum of Military Medicine curate and present the emotional experience of soldiering, underpinned a major art gallery exhibition at CV, and generated new artistic and educational responses for soldiers and veterans, and primary school children through RAF.

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

[5.1] Letter from Chris Cooper, Lead curator, Soldier Gallery

[5.2] National Army Museum annual report (2017) and *Telegraph* review

[5.3] Letter from Jason Semmens, Director, Military Medical Museum

[5.4] 'Created in Conflict' visitors' book comments and exhibition feedback sheets

[5.5] Letter from Amy Orrock, Co-curator, Compton Verney Art Gallery

[5.6] a. Media pack of 267 media mentions - including *Art Quarterly* Spring 2018 b. BBC Radio 4 World at One (20 March 2018), segment on Compton Verney Exhibition

[5.7] Share Your Soldier Art, online gallery

[5.8] a. Exit interview responses from soldiers and veterans private view b. Letter from exhibition artist, Sapper Adam Williams

[5.9] Letter from Karin Diamond, Director, Re-Live

[5.10] a. Student feedback from 'Pieced', and Dance students on working at Compton Verney for 'Conflict Reimagined' b. Letter from Chief Technician Chris Mossman c. 'Created in Conflict: Exhibition inspired Education', ICOMAM Magazine Dec 2019