



Exhibition Scope and Visitor Ideas

Exhibition Overview: Great Escapes

Great Escapes (working title) will be an exhibition occupying our temporary exhibition space. There will be the possibility of light touch extended elements around The National Archives, but the gallery space will be the main focus.

Ted Lees, a Prisoner of War in Germany said 'Captivity in life is something that very few could adequately describe. You have to feel it. You have to live with it and you have to know what it means to appreciate what a mental strain captivity is.' As you can see from this quote, captivity was hard and took its toll. However through the stories we showcase we are going to explore the ways individuals sought to cope with captivity, from real life attempts to escape camps to mentally escaping through setting up theatre performances, writing to loved ones, secretly producing artworks and falling in love. The exhibition will focus on the choices captives made rather than what was done to them or taken away from them.

Millions of people were held in captivity during the Second World War, a higher number than ever before (or since). The Great Escapes exhibition will highlight a diverse range of individuals (men, women and children), from a variety of backgrounds - ordinary civilians (Civilian internees/enemy aliens) as well as soldiers or airmen - who were captured in combat (Prisoners of war). Records of their captivity and documents from the camps will be displayed alongside fascinating first-hand accounts from the individuals. The records of the 12 individuals highlighted in the exhibition will offer examples of courage, love, heartbreak, ingenuity and determination.

Through the exhibition visitors will come to appreciate that there were many different ways individuals sought to survive captivity and also get a sense of what life was like, for example, in a German Prisoner of War camp vs a Civilian internee camp in the Far East and how those different camps operated. Away from the battle fields and the home front, this is a less well known story of the Second World War but an important one to tell.

Why Now?

March 2024 is the 80th anniversary of the Great Escape from Stalag Luft III, which will be one of the stories highlighted in the exhibition. We are also hoping to use this as a hook into the other 'escape' stories in the exhibition. We are therefore planning to open in October 2023 which we think will be a good time to tie into the publicity leading up to the anniversary.

Many of the Prisoner of War and Civilian Internee records relating to the Second World War have only recently been transferred to The National Archives and some are still in the process of being transferred so we are hoping to present some records that will not only be new to our visitors but also new to the press and media.

Audiences

The National Archives has an audience segmentation model and our primary target audiences for this exhibition will be 'Cultural Devotees', those who attend other exhibitions and cultural events, but would not necessarily be interested in coming to TNA for research purposes and 'Curious Minds', who are more intellectually-minded, but also want to attend public programmes. Our exhibition programme and public offer is aimed at new audiences, but should of course consider and cater for our existing research audiences. The Great Escapes exhibition has the potential to reach individuals who have a Second World War interest but we also want it to appeal more widely, with future visitors being enticed to visit to find out more about the individuals in the exhibition.

Audience Insight

Please note, the **Behind the Wire** exhibition has subsequently evolved into the **Great Escapes**. The Great Escape exhibition was a different idea as outlined below. Although the Great Escape story will still be part of the Great Escapes exhibition it will

feature as part of a broad range of escape experiences and will not be the only story highlighted, as was the plan with the Great Escape proposal.

While carrying out initial scoping into those held captive during the Second World War we narrowed our exhibition ideas down to two main options- Behind the Wire (an exploration of different experiences in captivity) and The Great Escape (one focussed story of the breakout of 76 men from Stalag Luft III- [Stalag Luft III - Wikipedia](#)).

We decided to engage with our potential visitors at an early stage to help us decide which option we should go with. We created a survey which was sent out via social media and also through our TNA newsletter. We used the survey to find out which exhibition prospective visitors would be more interested in visiting and what elements they liked or didn't like.

We had 464 respondents and these are some of the key findings:

Which exhibition would you be most likely to visit?

Behind the Wire – 79%

The Great Escape – 21%

Which approach do you prefer?

Multiple stories about different people's different experiences – 90%

A more focused, in-depth exploration of one story of escape in one camp – 10%

We also asked if visitors would be worried about visiting an exhibition that encompassed some tragic stories of ill-treatment and struggle and only 10% had some concerns.

People were most interested in:

- First-hand accounts from people held captive (94%)
- What happened to captives afterwards (92%)
- Finding out about a variety of individuals from a variety of background (89%)
- Everyday life in the camps (88%).

We felt these insight results gave us a clear direction and so we have proceeded with the Behind the Wire exhibition.

Some key comments that came back in favour of Behind the Wire include:

- *"It offers a lot of diverse options for stories, and can give a brilliant "bottom up" history of the Second World War."*

Much of the content in the exhibition will have quite a serious tone so the design needs to be sensitive to this and create the appropriate atmosphere for audiences.

We hope the visitors will have various ways to understand and engage with the messages of the exhibition by using layered interpretation approaches such as through graphics, maps, archival records, objects, audio and film. We have also been wondering about bringing in an item that is in some way emblematic of each of the individuals, for example an RAF uniform, paint brushes and paint for an artist or a type writer for a journalist. We feel that a priority is to find new and exciting ways for the visitors to engage with the individuals in the exhibition and bring them 'to life'. We would like to explore ways to do this.

In the concluding area of the exhibition we would like to have a public memory and photo montage of stories from relatives of those who were held captive as Prisoners of war or internees. We would put a call out to the public in advance of the exhibition opening to put this together. We would also look to solicit stories/photos from well-known people such as David Baddiel, Mark Rylance and Hue Edwards who had relatives who were captives during the Second World War.

On the back of the call to the public, if we think any of their stories are really good we might consider them as one of the main 12 individual stories and carry out research into what records we have on them at TNA.

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Huw Edwards: My grandfather, Prisoner of War

This week marks the 75th anniversary of the official end of the Second World War, when Japan signed its deed of unconditional surrender. It ended six years of global conflict, which claimed the lives of more than 80 million people and changed the lives of hundreds of millions of others.



The final, concluding area would also lend itself to expert discussion through A/V to analyse topics such as the significance of so many people being in captivity during the Second World War and its impact and legacy.

Challenges

One of the challenges of this exhibition will be to bring about a unifying feel to a set of disparate individuals and stories. We are hoping that by unifying the experiences of individuals being showcased through the connection of 'escape' it will make a more coherent experience for visitors. We would also like the design to help create a cohesive journey.

Furthermore, there will be a lot of potentially new information to take on board for visitors, we want them to feel that the exhibition is engaging and the stories are fascinating. We don't want them to feel overwhelmed or feel that they are only able to connect to the individuals on a very superficial level. We also don't want the experience to feel repetitive.

Look and feel

We are open to ideas in terms of the look and feel of the exhibition. At the moment we are imagining that the exhibition would have a pared back, minimal feel.

We could possibly mirror the brutalist concrete aesthetic of TNA within the look, this would also encapsulate a nod towards the stark walls of an environment of captivity. Lighting could be used to bring some warmth and intimacy where the individuals in the exhibition are showcased. The space wouldn't necessarily have to be dark and oppressive. We could also bring in occasional elements of plain wooden furniture along the lines of what would have been in the camps such as chairs.

There would also be the potential for the different areas or rooms of the exhibition to have slightly different atmospheres, for example the final section could be lighter and brighter with a more positive feel to end on.

We are imagining we will include some photographs of life inside the camps within the exhibition and we are also wondering whether large-scale images around the perimeter of the gallery of life outside the camps could be an interesting addition - to convey a sense of what the prisoners and internees were isolated from - from the noise and fury of battlefields and invasions, but also from life at home.

Exhibition Scope

As above, this is not fixed however we are currently imagining three stages to the exhibition:

Area 1- Introduction/Setting the Scene:

This area will give visitors an introduction to the exhibition and initial overview of the topic. It will set out what Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees are and will orientate the visitor, providing them with key knowledge to understand the rest of the exhibition.

Area 2- Great Escapes experiences:

This section will be the main bulk of the exhibition and will be where visitors encounter the 12 or so individuals who spent time in captivity. The visitor will encounter a sense of what it was like, for example, being a Prisoner of War in Germany and then examples of how individuals 'escaped' from that reality. Area 2 will be divided into three sections:

1. War Captives under Nazi/Italian authority (geographic areas: Germany, Italy)

- Prisoners of War X2 examples of individuals
- Civilian Internees X2 examples of individuals

2. War Captives under British Authority (geographic areas: UK, Dominions, Africa, Middle East)

- Prisoners of War X2 examples of individuals
- Civilian Internees X2 examples of individuals

3. War Captives under Japanese Authority (geographic areas: Far East)

- Prisoners of War X2 examples of individuals
- Civilian Internees X2 examples of individuals

Each section could:

- Have an overview of the section including a map detailing where all the camps were in that section
- Highlight two individuals who have differing 'escape' experiences (12 individuals in total).
- Provide details about the camp each individual was in as well as highlight records relating to the individual.
- Use records from TNA alongside external records, objects and first hand audio and film recordings providing as much of an in depth picture and varied sources of engagement as possible.

Area 3- End of the Second World War and captivity/ Legacy

This area will provide visitors with a sense of what happened after the Second World War relating to POWs/internees. It will consider captives making it home,

the impact of captivity and what changes made after the Second World War relating to war captives such as international agreements.

Records at The National Archives

TNA has a uniquely rich collection of records relating to Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees during the Second World War. These records highlight individuals and their stories as well as higher level information about the camps and administration. Many of these records are newly released to TNA and much of the material is under researched so has not been utilised to its full potential by academics or readers.

Staff at The National Archives and volunteers have also been working hard over recent years to catalogue our Prisoner of War and Internee records, as part of this exhibition we will be showcasing some of these newly accessible files.

We are still scoping the records but below is a sample of those shortlisted so far. We will also include external images, audio and objects to complement our collection.

External loans

As highlighted, the exhibition will bring together our records alongside external objects and, first hand audio and film testimonies from individuals.

This exhibition will also be the first time we will be able to bring in several external loans. Possible examples include Jimmy James' hat that he wore during the great escape, Ronald Searle's artwork from his time as a Prisoner of War in the Far East, a sweater from a red cross parcel given to a boy at Lughwa Camp which was signed by his fellow internees and Frank Falla's secret GUNS newsletter created and shared in secret during the Nazi's occupation of the Channel Islands.

We would also look to approach relatives of individuals who we are considering as part of the 12 individuals stories to see if they have any artifacts connected to them. This is likely to provide us with items that have never been seen before.

Audience Outcomes

Learn

- That people sought various ways to survive life in captivity
- That those held captive came from all different walks of life- men, women and children- in the services and civilians
- That there were some surprising and less bleak aspects to life behind the wire- such as a spirit of comradeship that comes through in leisure activities such as performances
- That this is an important though lesser known aspect of the history of the Second World War involving thousands of people
- That The National Archives has amazing records!

Do

- Engage with the different people stories and the broader topic and take part in any available participation opportunities
- Find out more about their Second World War relative
- Take part in the associated event series

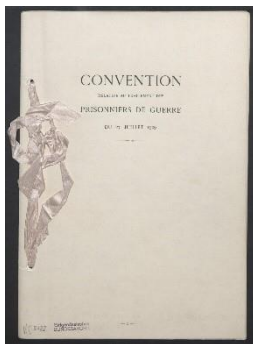
Feel

- Connected to the individuals in the exhibition and moved by their stories
- Feel surprised by some of the lesser known experiences

Possible Content and Records

Area 1: Introduction/setting the scene

Millions of people were held in captivity during the Second World War, a higher number than ever before (or since). This included Prisoners of War, those in the services who were captured during conflict, and ordinary citizens who were believed to pose a potential threat. These Prisoners had hugely varied experiences based on their nationality, race, where they were captured and whether they were in the services or a civilian internee. Through the stories we showcase we are going to explore the ways individuals sought to cope with their lives in captivity, from real life attempts to escape camps to mentally escaping. Legal protection for Prisoners of War is amongst the oldest form of modern international law. The Geneva Convention 1929 was in place for the Second World War and defined the basic rights of wartime prisoners (civilians and military personnel).



Geneva Convention 1929

Preparation for capture: Like other nations, The British Military Services went to significant lengths to ensure their recruits did not get captured. MI9 (British Directorate of Military Intelligence Section 9) were responsible for escape training and supplying escape aids.



Escape map



MI9 manual



RAF boot with a concealed knife

Area 2: Great Escapes experiences

Section 1:

War Captives under Nazi/Italian authority (geographic areas: Germany, Italy):

Prisoners of War

Germany had 248 Prisoner of War camps during the Second World War, and many more labour camps for Eastern front Prisoners. The Prisoner of War camps were either purpose built barracks or in commandeered buildings such as schools, convents, fortresses, or castles. Camps in Germany were segregated and either housed officers (Oflags) or other ranks (Stalags). Stalag Luft camps existed for air force personnel.

142,319 men are listed as POWs whilst serving in the armed forces of the United Kingdom in the war against Germany and Italy. The majority of those captured

were either airmen shot down over Europe, or during defeats in France in 1940, and in North Africa and the Balkans until 1942.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ensured that each Prisoner was entitled to send a minimum of two letters and four postcards from 1940 until the end of the war. Prisoners were also permitted to receive parcels, principally Red Cross food parcels supplied from Britain, the US, and Commonwealth countries, and parcels could be received from next of kin every three months.



Possible example of a Prisoner of War under Nazi/Italian authority: Jimmy James

Escape experience: The Great Escape



"Jimmy" James was an officer of the Royal Air Force. As a Prisoner of War, James made 13 attempts at escape over 5 years. He was a central figure in the famous escape from Stalag Luft III in 1944, which was later dramatized in the 1963 film *The Great Escape*. He was one of 76 Prisoners who escaped through a 336 foot long tunnel called 'Harry'. James had been largely responsible for depositing the soil from Harry under seat 13 in the camp's theatre. Once the escape was discovered a national alarm was raised initiating an immense search. James was recaptured along with 73 other Prisoners, 50 of whom were later shot. Only three escapees managed to get away successfully. After James was recaptured

he was taken to Sachsenhausen concentration camp where he managed to escape again but was later caught. He was liberated on 6 May 1945.



James describes how he escaped through 'Harry' in civilian clothes, TNA ref: WO 344/169/2



Stalag Luft III photographs and plan

Stalag Luft III was a purpose built Prisoner-of-war (POW) camp established in 1942. It held captured Western Allied air force personnel, eventually being able to house around 11,000 individuals. The site was selected because its sandy soil made it difficult for POWs to escape by tunnelling. Seismograph microphones

Possible example of a Prisoner of War under Nazi/Italian authority: Patrick Nelson

Born in Jamaica, Nelson was a member of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (76 Company). Injured during fighting and was a POW for 4 years. Before the war, had met the Bloomsbury Group artist Duncan Grant, and was in a relationship with him from 1938. Nelson previously worked as a gentleman's valet and an artist model. His Service record will come to TNA soon and it contains letters Nelson sent to his family and Grant from his Prisoner of War camp.

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Section 1:

War Captives under Nazi/Italian authority (geographic areas: Germany, Italy):

Civilian Internees

Tens of thousands of British and Allied civilians were interned in hundreds of lags across German occupied territory between 1940 and 1945. There were reportedly over 200 lags in France alone but also over 100 in Germany and other countries occupied by Germany, including the Channel Islands which are dependent territories of the British Crown. The number of British individuals interned during the Second World War is somewhere between 15,000 and 30,000.

Possible example of Civilian Internee under Nazi/Italian authority: Frank Falla

Escape experience: Defying authority by producing and distributing GUNS newsletter



During the Second World War the Channel Islands came under Nazi occupation from 30 June 1940 until 9 May 1945, making its residents civilian internees. Falla, a journalist, was one of five men involved in the writing of an underground newsletter named GUNS (Guernsey Underground News Service). The Germans did not want people to hear pro-Allied propaganda from London, and after June 1942 it became a punishable offence to retain a radio set or listen to the news. The Islanders were then reliant on people like Falla to listen to his hidden radio and type up the war news, which was then distributed in the newsletter. Between May 1942 and February 1944 around 300 copies of the newsletter were produced every day. It was a lifeline for many islanders and helped to keep up

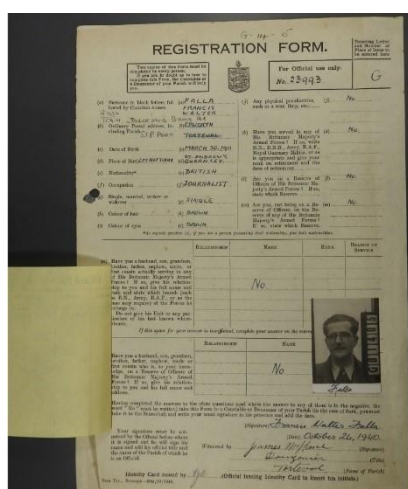
morale. Falla was informed upon, arrested and deported for his role in GUNS. On 26 July 1945 Falla was liberated and sailed back to Guernsey.

A/V: BBC interview with Falla

<https://www.frankfallaarchive.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/BBC-interview-1946.mp3>



External: Falla's archive



External: Frank Falla occupational ID, Guernsey Archive

[Francis 'Frank' Walter Falla - Frank Falla Archive](https://www.frankfallaarchive.org)

[The Channel Islands' victims and survivors of Nazi persecution \(cam.ac.uk\)](https://www.cam.ac.uk)

Section 2:

War Captives under British Authority (geographic areas: UK, Dominions, Africa, Middle East)

Prisoners of War

At its peak, the German POW population in Britain stood at 402,200, while some 162,000 Italian POWs were in Britain by June 1945.

In total, 487 POW Camps were built across Britain, in the early part of the war the majority housed Italians captured in North Africa. Most were put to work, but their working conditions were consistent with a British labourer: they worked 6 days per week, and a working day was normally 9-5. The Geneva Convention did also permit the use of POWs for certain types of employment, this included in areas such as agriculture. These workers made a major contribution to the British war economy, replacing British workers in essential areas.

Strong evidence to suggest a difference in treatment of Italians compared to Germans. Italians were often left unattended in many situations.

German POWs, by the end of the war, were categorised, based on an interview process which assessed their political sympathies. They were segregated into three groups: white (anti-Nazi), grey (in-between), and black (ardent Nazi) and re-education was introduced before their repatriation. Large numbers of German POWs were also transported to Canada, and also to other Dominions and India, and then the USA.

Possible example of a Prisoner of War under British authority: Heinz Fellbrich

Escape experience: Falling in love



Heinz was a German soldier who was a Prisoner of War in the UK, and fell in love with and married a British woman, June, to the disapproval of many members of her community. "There was a lot of hostility towards us," recalls June. "I could understand it because people had lost loved ones in the war, but all that mattered to me was that I loved Heinz. However, it wasn't easy. We tried to go to quiet places when we were together so people wouldn't see us." "My father Frank was all right about it, but my mother was against the relationship. She worried about what people would think."

Three months pregnant, June married Heinz on August 14, 1947, at the Civic Centre in Southampton. At the reception at the Labour Hall, there was a German Oompah band - made up of other PoWs - and guests ate a simple buffet prepared the night before by June and a girlfriend, after her mother refused to help. At 10pm sharp, Heinz was back behind the barbed wire at the PoW camp - having been given permission to marry by the camp commandant.

[A Man Called H \(Full\) – YouTube](#)

Section 2:

War Captives under British Authority (geographic areas: UK, Dominions, Africa, Middle East)

Civilian Internees

Upon the declaration of war on 3 September 1939, some 70,000 UK resident Germans and Austrians became classed as enemy aliens. By 28 September, the Aliens Department of the Home Office had set up internment tribunals throughout the country headed by government officials and local representatives, to examine every UK registered enemy alien over the age of 16. The majority (66,000) were initially not interned but by May 1940, with the risk of German invasion high, a further 8,000 Germans and Austrians resident in the Southern strip of England, found themselves interned. The increase in numbers of those interned led to a serious space problem within the UK and following offers from the Canadian and Australian governments, more than 7,500 internees were shipped overseas on 24 June and 1, 2, 4 and 10 July 1940. Tragically, on Tuesday 2 July 1940, one of the ships, the Arandora Star, was torpedoed and sunk on route to Canada.

Camps were set up across the UK, the largest settlement of which were on the Isle of Man though others were set up in and around Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Bury, Huyton, Sutton Coldfield, London, Kempton Park, Lingfield, Seaton and Paignton.

Possible example of a Civilian Internee under British authority: Dwojra Dymant (Dora Diamant) / Lask

Escape experience: Literary performances



Dwojra Dymant (Dora Diamant) was the German Jewish lover of Franz Kafka (novelist and short-story writer, widely regarded as one of the major figures of 20th-century literature). Dora was arrested in London along with her 6 year old daughter Marianne. They were held at Holloway prison before being transferred to the Isle of Man where she organised theatre and poetry readings for internees. Dora was one of several hundred German Jewish individuals seeking refuge in Britain who were then interned.



Japanese camps, often holding both military Prisoners as well as civilian internees, were located across the Far East, including in Japan, the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, and Burma, with 378 camps in total. As the Japanese denied the possibility of surrender to its own troops, it also viewed the effort spent on POWs 'as a one way burden', and rations were often low and if required to work, treatment was often harsh.

Possible example of a Prisoner of War under Japanese authority: Ronald Searle

Escape experience: creating artworks to document his life in captivity



Ronald William Fordham Searle, CBE, RDI (3 March 1920 – 30 December 2011) was an English artist and satirical cartoonist, comics artist, sculptor, medal designer and illustrator. He is perhaps best remembered as the creator of St Trinian's School and for his collaboration with Geoffrey Willans on the Molesworth series. His professional career really began with his documentation of the brutal camp conditions as a Japanese Prisoner of war. Searle was liberated in late 1945, having managed to preserve around 300 of his drawings,



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Section 3:

War Captives under Japanese Authority (geographic areas: Far East)

Civilian Internees

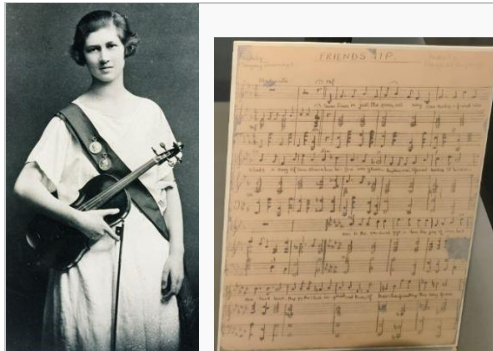
Over 130,000 Allied civilians - 50,000 men, 42,000 women and 40,000 children - were interned in the Far East during the Second World War. The majority of them were Dutch nationals from the Netherlands East Indies.

Internees included colonial officials and their families, employees of European companies and the families of servicemen. More than 14,000 civilian internees were to die as a result of their internment.

Internees were held in more than 350 camps across the Far East including in Japan, the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, and Burma. In the internment camps conditions were severe. Food and clothing were generally in short supply and facilities were basic. Conditions varied according to the location of the camps. The Geneva Convention was not applied in the same way (Japan had signed it in 1929, but never ratified it), and one of the significant differences to Europe is that Japanese authorities were reluctant to pass on Red Cross supplies to those in need. As the Japanese denied the possibility of surrender to its own troops, it also viewed the effort spent on POWs 'as a one way burden', and rations were often low and if required to work, treatment was often harsh.

Possible example of a Civilian Internee under Japanese authority: Nora Chambers

Escape experience: setting up a choir



During captivity British internee, Norah Chambers, nee Hope, a music scholar, suggested forming a vocal orchestra. Thirty women formed the orchestra. Rehearsals had to be held clandestinely in small groups as the Japanese forbade social gatherings. Eventually, in a blatant act of defiance, on 27 December 1943 the women gave the first concert. As the first chords floated across the squalid Palembang camp compound, the Japanese guards were ordered to break up the gathering. But awe-struck and captivated by the music coming from the shelter they stopped in their tracks. The concert continued to its finale. More concerts followed. But by April 1944 many of the members were too weak to perform and others had died and so the vocal orchestra ceased. Out of the 600 women in the camp only 300 survived. Some of those who had performed in the vocal orchestra carried their musical scores with them to freedom and eventually into archives around the world.

Area 3: End of the Second World War and captivity/ Legacy

Although the end of the Second World War brought peace, much had changed. Many people were displaced, people tried to return home and families were reunited after long periods of separation.

Appendix: Updated Findings – POW Survey, 26th September 2022

Please note Behind the Wire is now Great Escapes

Overall

Total respondents: 464

Which exhibition would you be most likely to visit?

Behind the Wire – 79%

The Great Escape – 21%

- There were no major differences by age or gender.
- **Previous event / exhibition attendees** were more likely to prefer Behind the Wire – 90% said they would be most likely to visit Behind the Wire. Respondents who have **never attended a TNA event / exhibition** before remained close to the average – 76% said they would be most likely to attend Behind the Wire, 24% The Great Escape.
- Although Behind the Wire was still the preferred option, a much lower proportion of the 25 people who have **never engaged with TNA before** (either online or on site) selected it – 64% compared to 79% of the total sample, a drop of 15 percentage points from the average and 12 percentage points lower than those who **have** engaged with TNA in the past, but **not** attended an event or exhibition. However, it is important to caveat that the number of respondents who had not engaged at all is quite small – 25, so this finding should be interpreted with caution.
- In contrast, **readers** were the group who most often chose Behind the Wire – 85%.

How interested are you in an exhibition on this topic?

Behind the Wire – 90% are interested

The Great Escape – 56% are interested

In ‘Behind the Wire’ we would briefly explore the different experiences of different types of Prisoners and internees in different camps. In ‘The Great Escape’ we would explore in more depth the experiences of one group of men in one camp and their escape attempt. Which approach do you prefer?

Multiple stories about different people’s different experiences – 90%

A more focused, in-depth exploration of one story of escape in one camp – 10%

An exhibition on Prisoners of War and internees will naturally encompass tragic stories of ill-treatment, struggle, and death. To what extent are you concerned about visiting this exhibition due to the subject?

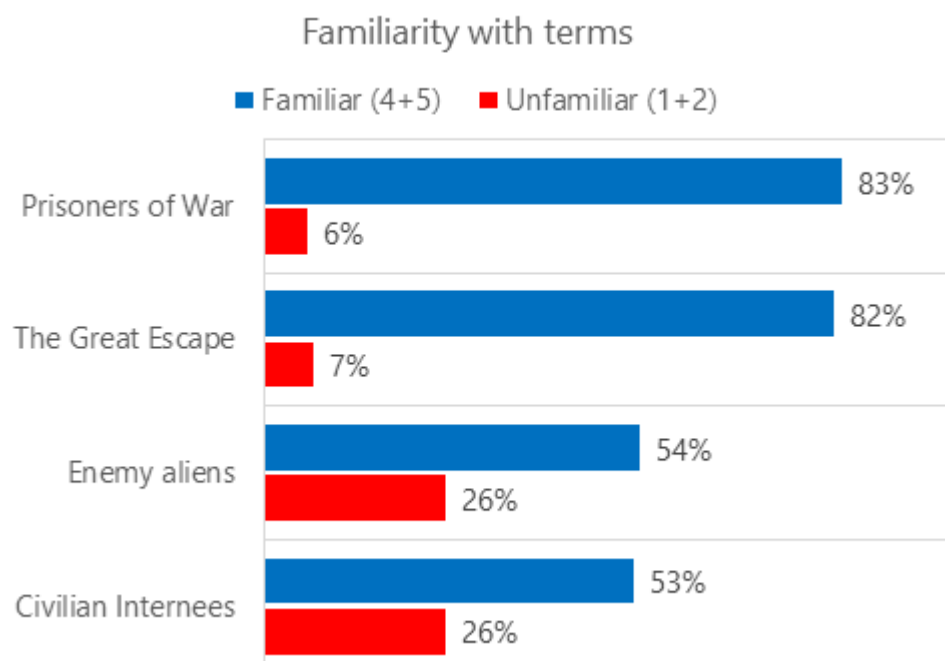
Overall, 11% of respondents are concerned, and 76% are unconcerned (the remaining 13% of respondents lie somewhere in the middle).

Respondents who are more likely to visit The Great Escape exhibition are **more concerned** about the tragic subject matter – 20% say they are concerned, compared to 9% of those who would be more likely to visit Behind the Wire.

- There are few differences by gender or age.
- Readers show less concern than non-readers; whilst only 8% of readers say they are concerned, 13% of non-readers say they are concerned.

Familiarity with terms

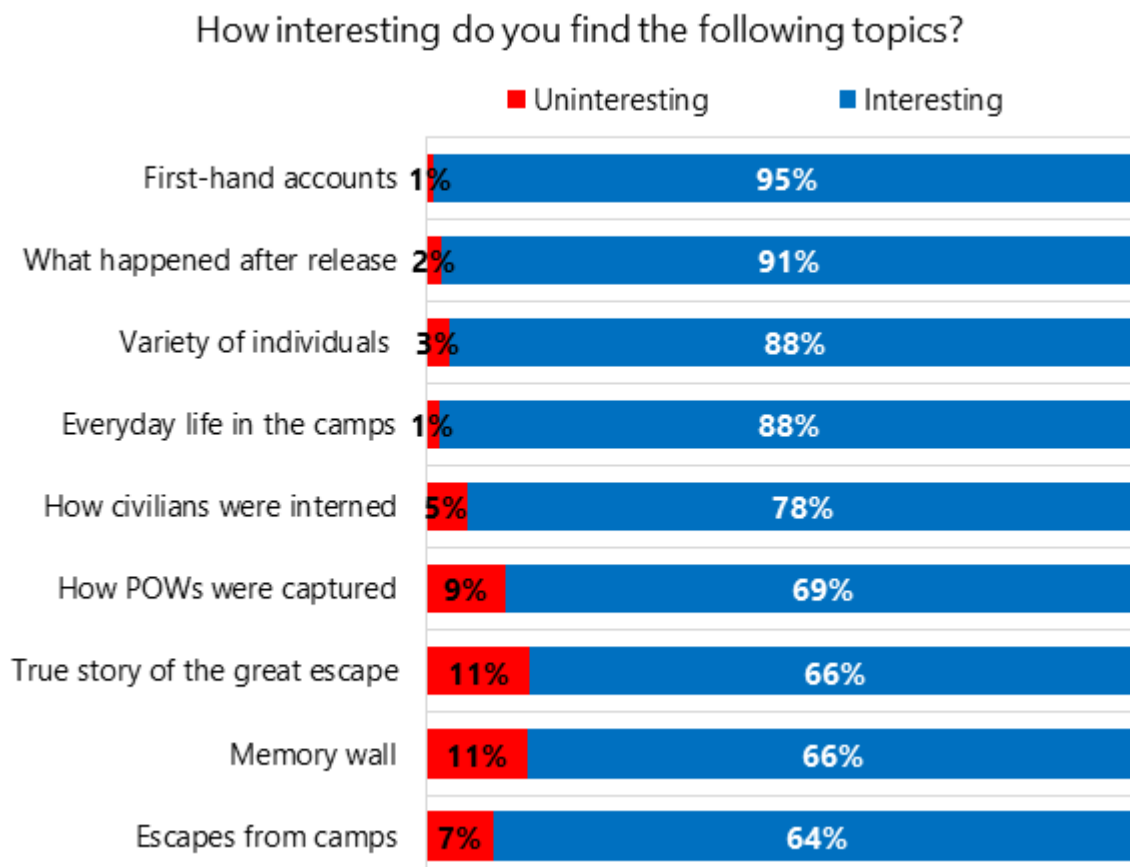
A **strong majority** of respondents are familiar with two terms: 'Prisoners of War' and 'The Great Escape' (83% and 82% respectively). Smaller proportions are familiar with the terms 'Enemy aliens' and 'Civilian Internees' (54% and 53%). Over a quarter of respondents are **unfamiliar** with 'Enemy aliens' and 'Civilian Internees' (26% for both).



How interesting do you find the following topics?

Although interest in all topics is strong, there are some noticeable distinctions. An overwhelming majority of respondents say they find **first-hand accounts** interesting (95%). This interest is 31 percentage points higher than for the topic with the lowest interest – **escapes from camps** with 64%. It should be noted, however, that even the topic with the lowest interest does show a majority are interested.

The proportion of respondents rating topics as uninteresting varies – the topics with the largest proportion of ‘uninterested’ ratings are the true story of **The Great Escape**, and a **memory wall** (both 11%). Again, it is notable that these are relatively small numbers, particularly considering that two thirds of respondents do find these topics interesting.



Behind the Wire

What do you like about the Behind the Wire idea?

Theme	% of 299 comments
Focus on wide-ranging individual experiences The focus on internees and POWs from across the world, in different places – not just one camp.	44%
Opportunity to hear untold stories Hear stories from people who have not been focused on in the past; such as ordinary people and less 'heroic' events.	31%
Learning about the reality of war Everyday life in the camps, the wider picture of the impact war has on different populations.	21%
Personal connection to the topic Respondents have a personal link to the topic – an ancestor was a POW, or they have a personal interest.	16%
Civilian experiences are just as important Similar to untold stories – respondents are interested in hearing about civilian experiences of camps, not just military stories.	12%
Other Generally like this topic idea, like both ideas, and unique comments / suggestions.	9%



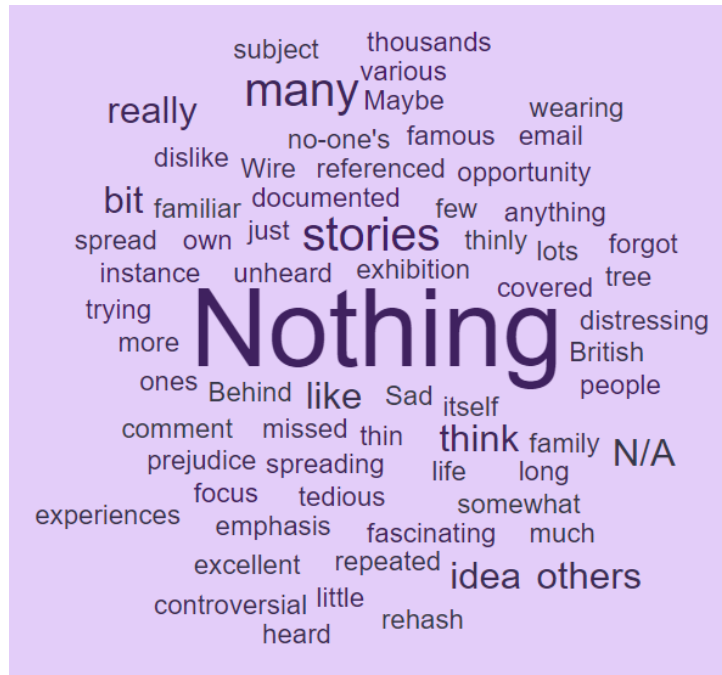
Example comments: What do you like about the Behind the Wire idea?

<i>"Telling the unknown stories of people who haven't been in the spotlight previously."</i>
<i>"Bringing in different stories and voices of different people, lots more to identify with"</i>
<i>"The range of experiences covered - I would be particularly interested to learn more about female Prisoners, for example the women imprisoned by the Japanese in WWII."</i>
<i>"Excellent as too little in general written and known about compared to more spectacular war stories"</i>
<i>"Goes beyond the trope of "heroic men" - more about the everyday, include women, more challenging"</i>
<i>"It is a chance to explore wider themes and experiences. I view it as a more "serious" approach to war, particularly as many of the themes you have mentioned are still resonating with us today. Prisoners are an inherent part of war and it will be refreshing to concentrate on their perspective, rather than the "heroics" of a prison camp escape."</i>
<i>"We tend to focus on the "war" and not the people who kept the country running, or suffered at home. My mother lived in South Shields and told me stories of how she would run to the Anderson shelter with my older brother when the sirens began. Better to die among family, she told me."</i>
<i>"It is varied and unlike The Great Escape which is largely known about."</i>

What do you NOT like about the Behind the Wire idea?

Theme	% of 237 comments
Nothing Respondents say they do not dislike any element of the 'Behind the Wire' exhibition idea. A small proportion of these respondents say they like both exhibition ideas.	64%
Concern stories will be too disparate A small set of respondents say they are concerned the exhibition will contain stories that are too disparate, too broad and that will subsequently lack cohesion.	12%
Need to ensure stories are compelling, untold, and inclusive Some respondents were concerned that stories would be repeating stories they have heard before; or would be bland or uninteresting.	11%
Potentially saddening due to tragic nature of subject A small proportion of respondents say they are concerned about viewing an exhibition that may upset them due to the subject.	8%

Other Some respondents had unique comments offering their concerns – such as that an exhibition on this topic has not been done before; that some viewers may place contemporary judgements on extraordinary and un-relatable circumstances; or want to be able to view the exhibition online or from overseas.	15%
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Example comments: What do you NOT like about the Behind the Wire idea?

<i>"I don't think there is anything I would not like as long as the various experiences are covered."</i>
<i>"It might be a bit tedious - lots of little life stories of people no-one's heard of. Many of us have just as fascinating stories in our own family tree. (mine, for instance!) The repeated emphasis on British prejudice to others is a bit wearing."</i>
<i>"We have so much doom and gloom at present"</i>
<i>"That it could be difficult to strike a balance between telling enough varied stories and not fatiguing the visitor."</i>
<i>"Sounds a bit depressing, could be too wide a topic."</i>
<i>"I would hope that you would treat POWs and civilian internees equally by showing those held in Germany and places like Burma, as well as the civilians and also show that we too held Germans Prisoner."</i>
<i>"It is missing Italian detention and it would be nice to see some Empire information as well."</i>
<i>"Nothing. I think it will be very interesting."</i>

What do you like about The Great Escape idea?

What do you like about The Great Escape idea?



Example comments: What do you like about The Great Escape idea?

<i>"Formal retelling of a story made famous (and distorted) by a film."</i>
<i>"Very specific, able to know something of individual people not just a mass. Although a friend of mine wouldn't like the fact it was a solely male experience...."</i>
<i>"Telling the true story as I know films often glamourize events."</i>
<i>"If done well, it could be a thrilling story to tell through an exhibition with elements people didn't know before or challenging why they thought they knew."</i>
<i>"It will represent an opportunity to learn more about it, wider than that of 'general' awareness largely spun to the mainstream by the 60s movie."</i>
<i>"The human desire to be free, to be able to fight for their freedom. The planning, construction of the three tunnels and the discipline required to successfully complete the process. There hasn't been a lot of education or programs on the actual affects of this event."</i>
<i>"It's a great story of ingenuity, and drive."</i>
<i>"Interesting story of very brave people"</i>

What do you NOT like about The Great Escape idea?

Theme	% of 250 comments
Has been done before The largest group of respondents say they do not like that The Great Escape has been covered extensively in the past, by documentaries and film.	40%
Nothing Around a quarter of respondents have no specific dislike of the idea.	26%
The focus is too narrow Over a fifth of respondents think The Great Escape exhibition may be too narrow, and focused on a very specific group of people and one event.	22%
Does not reflect reality Some commented that the story of The Great Escape is only reflective of one particular group's experience, and that an exhibition would need to be wider in scope. They went further to comment that not many escapes were successful, and that the story has been distorted enough by Hollywood.	15%
Other A small proportion of respondents had specific and unique concerns, such as a general disinterest or that they simply prefer the Behind the Wire exhibition idea.	10%

Appendix: Audience Strategy

Our new (public) audience engagement strategy sets out seven distinct segments, or audience groups. Produced using a combination of research into existing and potential new audiences, the segmentation provides us with a clearer picture of audience expectations and behaviours than we've ever had before, and is already helping us target our public audience with programming and promotional activities more effectively.

1. Invested Loyals

'Archives are who I am' /volunteers /advocates

This segment views archives as 'part of who they are'. One in six already volunteers for us, and use our services frequently (in last 12 months). They have a high online usage and deep engagement with a range of things that we do. They are not particularly 'cultural', and if they attend anywhere it is likely to be British Library or British Museum. They are not yet heavy users or advocates of our public programme, but have potential to become so. They have an appetite for personal research more than any other segment.

2. Head Down Kew Researcher

Self-directed/onsite not online /not cultural

This segment makes up a large portion of our current users. They mainly use the reading rooms or self-directed research, with a very specific purpose for their visit. They have the lowest online usage and the lowest interest in the public programme. They are not cultural but will go to cultural events if they are on their radar. Their interaction with the public programme is mainly via daytime events. There are more males in this segment than others. Their main motivation is to learn for academic or professional reasons.

3. Curious Minds

Multi-platform /debaters /thirst for knowledge

This segment is intellectually curious, interacting with our brand for a range of services – online and offline. They are the 2nd highest-ranking segment to be introduced to our offer by using online services first. They actively seek out

cultural experiences, and regularly attend cultural events, and they visit other archives more than any other segment. There are more females in this segment than others.

4. Online Only

Online not onsite/UK-wide/single-use

This segment only uses our online facilities. They are less frequent users and are likely to only use one service sporadically. They are most likely to use the site for family history. They are spread throughout the UK, and have a broad demographic. There is a limited knowledge of the site in Kew – but when asked, would want to know more about touring, online learning and family events. They are currently not demonstrating high cultural attendance, although their preference for rock & pop is a trend. They were the biggest segment whose activities were limited due to disability.

5. Cultural Devotees

Social, enthusiastic for change, event-orientated

This segment represents a smaller group within our current visitors, but they have used a wide variety of our services. Likely to have attended an event by way of introduction to our brand, they are very likely to attend an event or exhibition in the future. They are very high users of arts and heritage sites, and look for entertainment and socialising from their visit. They were the segment that were most enthusiastic about our new programme plans, indicating that five or more of the options outlined in our research appealed to them. They also indicated the café and shop offer was important to them. They are slightly younger and more female than male.

6. Family For Me

Motivated by family event/family history/learning

This segment has children or grandchildren, and is motivated by child-orientated events. Over half cite learning as their motivation and high expectation that we will deliver a family learning experience. Their main interaction is family history online, with many in this segment only selecting this option. They are likely to be super-local – but they don't currently visit the Kew site.

7. Community Concept

Strong community tie, long-time residents, broad demographic

This segment is new to our brand, not demonstrated in our data, but more in the bigger picture of where we might draw audiences from. They have a strong tie to either their community or area – with many likely to be supporters or members of community clubs, religious institutions or involved in local activity. They are interested in local history and the social connection they get from mixing with other residents or groups. They are diverse in age and ethnicity. They reside in the harder to reach boroughs of London, many of which are quite local to us.

Appendix: Second World War Timeline relating to POWs and internees

3 September 1939: Britain declares war on Germany

September 1939: UK Internment tribunals

May/June 1940: retreat to Dunkirk and surrender of thousands of BEF soldiers

10 June 1940: declaration of war by Italy on Britain and France

10 June 1940: Italian declaration of war results in larger scale internment of those born in Italy

12 June 1940: 10,000 British soldiers of 51st (Highland) Division captured

30 June 1940: German invasion and occupation of the Channel Islands

2 July 1940: Loss of the SS Arandora Star transporting internees from the UK
July/August 1940: Battle of Britain

August 1940: Osbert Peake's White Paper, Civilian Internees of Enemy Nationality

7 September 1940: start of the Blitz

October/November 1940: heavy shipping losses as convoys are attacked by U-boats

6-9 December 1940: launch of Operation Compass by British and Indian troops, an attack on Italian forces in Egypt (loss or capture of 39,000 Italians)

5 January 1941: 45,000 Italian Prisoners taken in Egypt during Operation Compass

7 February 1941: British forces accept the surrender of 130,000 Italians at Benghazi in North Africa

23 June 1941: Operation Barbarossa, German invasion of Soviet Union

7/8 December 1941: Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, also declaring war on the United Kingdom, invading Thailand, Malaya, and Hong Kong

25 December 1941: Hong Kong surrenders to Japanese forces

15 February 1942: British surrender of Singapore resulting in the capture of c.80,000 British, Indian and Australian soldiers

20 May 1942: Japanese conquest of Burma is complete

30 May 1942: The "Thousand Bomber Raid" on Cologne

21 June 1942: Axis forces capture Tobruk in North Africa, capturing 35,000 Allied personnel

23 June 1942: arrival of first British POWs for beginning of construction of the Thai-Burma Railway

1 July 1942: First Battle of El Alamein begins

19 August 1942: Allied landing at Dieppe ends in disaster and the capture of many Allied personnel (especially Canadians)

23 October 1942: Second Battle of El Alamein begins

22 February 1943: Riot by Japanese POWs at Featherston Camp, New Zealand after Prisoners refuse to work

13 May 1943: Remaining Axis forces in North Africa surrender. The Allies take over 250,000 Prisoners

10 July 1943: Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily, begins

15 February 1944: second Battle of Monte Cassino begins in Italy

24/25 March 1944: The Great Escape from Stalag Luft III

6 June 1944: D-Day

25 September 1944: British troops pull out of Arnhem with the failure of Operation Market Garden, over 6,000 paratroopers are captured

Jan-April 1945: The Long March of POWs from Eastern Europe

13/14 February 1945: Firebombing of Dresden takes place

15 April 1945: Bergen-Belsen concentration camp is liberated by British forces
May 1945: Liberation of POW camps in Europe

7 May 1945: Germany surrenders unconditionally ending the war in Europe

6 August 1945: first atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima

9 August 1945: second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki

15 August 1945: surrender of Japan

5 September 1945: Singapore is officially liberated by British and Indian troops

20 November 1945: start of the Nuremberg War Crimes tribunal