

UK Army Museum Resilience
National Scoping Project Report
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Army Museums into the Future



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Executive Summary

The UK army museums scoping project has made contact with a wide and diverse selection of army museums, and the results have returned some very useful, positive information. Of the 142 known collections there were 80 returns, representing 57% of the sector from all regions. Support for the survey has been excellent, with all those partaking identifying with the real need for the information collected, and the potential outcomes.

The Army Museums Ogily Trust (AMOT) website has an entry for all of the 142 individual museums and collections surveyed. As a result of this project the individual museum pages are now fully up-to-date from January 2018. Changes to the layout for the pages were recommended and completed, with further recommendations to include images from their collections.

The survey has highlighted some very positive trends, and some truly amazing numbers, for example:

- 60% of those surveyed are attached to a larger museum or organisation
- Volunteers give over 10,500 hours per month to army museums
- 79% report healthy visitor growth

Naturally there were some areas of concern, including collections at risk and volunteers in need of desperate moral and specialist support:

- 9 museums or collections are at immediate financial risk
- 20 expect to be at financial risk within 5 years
- There is a significant skills deficit within the sector
- 63 museums or collections have significant documentation and cataloguing backlogs

This report makes a series of **19 recommendations (page19)**, separated into thematic elements, and combines the strengths found within the sector with the areas in need of support. The recommendations are listed in priority order within each theme.

A concise series of 'toolkits' has also been designed, providing refence support to museums staff and volunteers in the areas found to be most at need. These toolkits are to be published on the AMOT website for general use.

Introduction

With the “*development opportunities across the sector, recognising that excellence and the potential for excellence can be found in museums of all sizes*” being a core principle for the Museum Resilience Fund, AMOT has the opportunity to make a significant impact on the Army Museums network across the UK.

The aim of the Collections Scoping Project was to focus on Objective 4 of the Museum Resilience Fund programme – “to better understand and develop army museum collections and archives”.

Phase 1: Scope and audit the UK’s army museum collections and archives and establish:

- the extent to which army collections and archives are at risk, why and how
- establish which collections and archives exist across the UK – the breadth of these collections and sample content
- where they are held and how access is given (if at all)
- supporting images made available from the owners (not just of collections in and on themselves but the use of collections) with full consent and release given to AMOT to use the images both off and online
- where relevant, the five – ten stand out objects of each collection / archive

It was important to ensure that the information gathered supported the existing database of army museum collections and archives, which is currently held in WordPress, a content management system with each institution having their own dedicated page.

Phase 2: Establish potential areas of support for at risk and orphaned collections and archives

The expectations of this element of the project was to provide:

- Options for assessing significance of collections and archives and what is held in collections, possibly using the Australian *Significance model* to support the case for preservation
- Provide a menu of options which can be used by at risk, imminent orphans or orphaned collections
- Work with organisations such as the National Army Museum, the Royal Armories, and the National Archives to establish key mechanisms which can support key at risk collections, objects or archives
- Create a toolkit to support organisations working with at risk or orphaned collections and archives available for use from our website

Understanding the Brief

With contacts already made to over 140 army museums, collections and archives, it was planned that this project would enable the production of a conclusive database which would inform and enrich the knowledge of all the collections held across the UK. It was also intended to promote the highlights within the collections and identify any risks, missing skills and support needed which may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

With such invaluable information drawn directly from the institutions themselves, it would then be possible to make recommendations and offer the right advice and guidance to those in need. Resulting in the awareness and preservation of the army museum collections and archives for future generations.

It is intended that subsequent outcomes of the project will be:

- The raising of awareness to each of these collections, not only to the visiting public (both online and to the collections themselves where possible) but also to researchers and academics alike
- Making contacts with a wide range of people and organisations to enhance the knowledge of the collections and go on to improve documentation and provenance of the objects and archives held
- To increase the number of people wanting to volunteer, whether it be for front of house activities or collection management tasks
- To encourage and support the more established collections to apply for Accreditation
- To give institutions the confidence and guidance to apply for funding to improve core activities such as conservation, documentation, digitisation and storage
- To develop a much wider and broader network of communication between institutions as they become aware of each other via the AMOT website

A priority of the project was to highlight the collections where little or no information was held and to make sure that this became available for both AMOT to develop its knowledge base and for the public to gain a better understanding of what was out there to enjoy.

It was clear that the only way AMOT could help and support these collections was to know they existed in the first place and what risks (both potential and actual) they were facing at present and/or prohibiting them from developing and moving forward.

It was obvious that a concise audit of these museums and archives would achieve this goal and lay the foundations for a better understanding and a more informed database which in turn, would become a valuable asset for all stakeholders and interested parties to use to direct a more sustainable future.

Methodology

The Approach to the Brief, Phase 1:

The first stage of the project was to interrogate the existing database of information managed by AMOT, identify gaps and to determine the priority areas to focus on.

It became clear quite early on that the WordPress file did not hold, or would have the capacity to hold, the necessary information to help determine the risks faced by the institutions. So, a new Excel spreadsheet was devised to capture the following:

- Museum / Archive name
- Location, to include publicly accessible and/or stored collection location
- Key contact within the organisation; Director/Curator, Collections Manager
- A summary of the collection to include type of objects, the timeframe and key events covered by the collection along with its focus and remit according to an existing collecting policy or business/forward plan
- A maximum of 10 x 'Star' objects from the collection deemed to be of historical and/or research significance
- Images of the 'Star' objects plus further images of the Museum / Archive showing exteriors, interiors, exhibitions and public engagement events (permission to be granted to AMOT for use both off and online)
- Procedures and any restrictions for access to the collection: opening times, by appointment, online access only, admission charges and costs for events and workshops
- Annual visitor figures, to include both actual and virtual visits plus demographic breakdowns

Much of the information listed above, could populate the publicly accessible website, with sensitive information having restricted access. These two fields along with the following list, would then form part of the database focussing on the staff resources and collection management standards; which would expose any potential risks, the areas of concern and vital skills missing from the organisations:

- How is the governing body made up?
- Where does the financial support come from?
- How is the financial situation described at present and into the future: Sustainable? Adequate? At risk?

- What is the current staffing structure, will it change in the future and what are the roles and responsibilities?
- Type and conditions of storage: where is it located (on-site, off-site, commercial storage unit)? Is it environmentally controlled? Is it secure? What is its capacity?
- Is there an Emergency Plan? Have other organisations been approached regarding storage, environment and emergency procedures?
- Is there a documentation backlog; if so, what is it and is there a policy which commits to its improvement? Does it involve objects and/or collections deemed orphans, with no known provenance or documentation of transfer?
- How much of the collection is digitised? Is the collection online and if so, what is the percentage of the overall collection and how many are complete with images?
- Is there a Collection Care and Conservation Policy and Plan in place or a list of priority objects and their needs?

See Appendix 1 for the ***AMOT Museums Spreadsheet Final Version (Digital)***

It was decided that the best way to obtain the information above was to send a bespoke questionnaire to every army museum listed on the AMOT website and to follow up with telephone and email correspondence where necessary.

See Appendix 2 for the ***Army Museums into the Future Questionnaire***.

The AMOT website: Individual Museum Pages

From some of the early returns, and by researching how to collate the information it became clear that many of the individual museum pages held on the AMOT website were either out-of-date/incorrect, not optimised for the user, or both. Contact details, opening times and facilities were commonly wrong, and often key information such as a collection being held within a larger local authority museum.

The result was that the Land and Heritage team checked and updated every single page entry with the latest information, and suggested a design edit to the web-team (Mantra Media) which was actioned, providing a better layout of the information held.

Survey Results

Questionnaire – The Returns:

The questionnaire was first launched at AMOT's Army Museum Festival in October 2017 as part of a presentation to introduce the Collections Scoping Project and summarise its aims and objectives. The initial deadline for its submission was the 15th December 2017 but due to receiving less than 50% returns, the deadline was extended until the 11th February 2018.

The following results are based on 80 returns out of a possible 142 institutions, received and added to the excel spreadsheet by 25th February 2018. The returns have been received from the subsequent regions:

- East: 8 out of 12 returns
- East Midlands: 6 out of 9 returns
- London: 7 out of 19 returns
- North East: 4 out of 6 returns
- North West: 8 out of 11 returns
- Northern Ireland: 3 out of 5 returns
- Scotland: 8 out of 11 returns
- South East: 12 out of 15 returns
- South West: 9 out of 22 returns
- Wales: 2 out of 8 returns
- West Midlands: 6 out of 10 returns
- Yorkshire: 7 out of 11 returns

See Appendix 3 for the ***Outstanding Returns, February 25th 2018*** which shows that 62 institutions have yet to submit a questionnaire.

Questionnaire – Positive Findings:



Part A: Governance and Administration

- 50 institutions stated that they were linked through administration, governance or location to another museum or organisation; with 30 institutions either not linked or not answering the question
 - Key benefits include: joint management, shared administration, curatorial advice, support with displays and storage and rent-free accommodation
 - Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regimental Museum benefit from rent-free accommodation and occasional curatorial advice from Luton Cultural Services Trust
 - The archives of the Durham Light Infantry are cared for by the local authority's County Archivist, which is a statutory service within Durham County Council
 - The Winchester Military Museums Group (WMM) is a fine example of how linked museums can benefit from working together. Each of the 6 museums has its own board of trustees and remains entirely responsible for its own decisions, but membership of WMM allows a forum for common (and mainly local) interests to be aired, discussed and agreed collectively. They also share administration where it relates to the MoD owned/funded buildings, the security of the buildings and collections and any dealings with Winchester City and County Council authorities and have joint on-site signage and entrance ticketing.
- It was reported that there is in excess of 10,499 hours a month of dedicated support given by volunteers to the sector

- If an average day consists of 7 hours work, then this total accounts for 75 people working 5 days a week
- Activities undertaken by the volunteers are varied but can be defined under the following headings:
 - Board/management
 - In-house administration
 - Finance
 - Reception/tours
 - Research/cataloguing
 - Conservation
- Key projects which have been identified are focussed on digitisation, collection cataloguing, gathering visitor demographics, general site maintenance and housekeeping, preventative conservation
- It was reported that there is in excess of 10,220 hours a month of work carried out by contracted staff
 - If the question was understood correctly and not confused with either full or part time staff, there are plenty of benefits from working with contractors:
 - You can get the best person(s) for the job as they are often appointed for one very specific project, so it is possible to search for someone highly skilled in that specific area
 - There is more flexibility as they are only brought in when required so don't require a salary for just being in the office
 - In addition to the fact that they are not receiving consistent salaries, another advantage is that there is no need to pay benefits and provide office space and equipment

Part B: Your Facilities and Service

- Of the 29 institutions that supplied their visitor figures, only 6 of them showed a drop in the number of visitors between April 2015 – March 2016 and April 2016 – March 2017
 - 9th/12th Royal Lancers Regimental Museum shows a sharp increase from 51,056 to 61,500 visitors; unfortunately, no reason has been given for this increase in visitors, but the collection is housed within Derby Museum and Art Gallery, so it could relate to popular themed exhibition

- Fusilier Museum in Bury shows a sharp increase from 25, 000 to 33,000 visitors; again, no reason is given but they state that “Since opening in 2009 we have grown each year from 10,000 to 33,000. Although this year is not looking as good”
- King's Own Royal Regiment Museum shows a sharp increase from 45,731 to 60,797 visitors. It is possible that their reason could hold true for the majority of the collections held within another museum and/or art gallery: *“The 2016/17 year was very successful with many more visitors because of the really popular summer exhibition, ‘141 Days the Battle of the Somme’. The 2014 summer exhibition had covered the start of the war, and the summer 2015 exhibition was on agriculture history and far less popular”*

Part C: The Collection(s)

- The majority of the 80 returns supplied an outstanding summary of their collection; describing its context, the timeframe it covers, key periods and events and the type of objects it contains
 - The summaries supplied by each of the returning institutions can be used to populate their dedicated page on the AMOT website
 - A sense of pride, passion and knowledge is overwhelmingly revealed when reading the summaries and all tell of outstanding and unique collections which need to be cared for and preserved for future generations
 - A fine example from Airborne Assault reads: *“The Museum of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces (AAM) exists to represent the history of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces; by collecting, preserving and presenting a collection of objects to accurately record the history of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces, from inception in 1940 through to ongoing and future operations, for the benefit of the Ministry of Defence, veterans, serving soldiers, their families and members of the public”*
- Again, the majority of the returns have supplied a complete list of their 10 ‘Star’ objects from /areas represented within the collection and have been able to say why they have highlighted them
 - Images have also been supplied of the objects and in some instances, of the museum, with the knowledge that they could be used on the AMOT website
 - Every single object highlighted which came with a reason for its inclusion, is unique to the museum due to the story it tells and the significance it has to the regiment; noteworthy objects include:

- Adolf Hitler's toilet door key from the Reichstag; as liberated by an airborne AFPU cameraman in 1945 (Airborne Assault)
 - Sgt Arthur Saunders' VC; the only VC in the collection and one of only two won by the Regiment (Suffolk Regiment Museum)
 - Model of Zeppelin and bomb fragments; Loughborough was attacked by a Zeppelin in WW1 so a great story with local interest (Loughborough Carillon Tower and War Memorial Museum)
 - "Secret" radio receiver built by a Gunner of the Regiment in a POW camp in Germany; a very rare object (Museum of the Manx Regiment)
 - A child's teddy bear picked up by a member of the South Wales Borderers during the evacuation of Gallipoli in 1916 (Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh)
 - Brandy Bottle from the Trench Truce, New Year 1916; a little-known fact that there was a truce on New Year's Eve where an officer of the Fusiliers was given a bottle of brandy from a German officer (Royal Irish Fusiliers Regimental Museum)
- 57 out of the 80 returns have said that they have their collections recorded on a 'standalone database' with 41 of these naming MODES as their Collections Management System (CMS) of choice
 - MODES is an industry standard CMS for the heritage sector
 - It is SPECTRUM compliant and one of the Collections Trust 'Spectrum Partners'
 - 70 returning institutions thankfully have an Emergency Plan in place with the majority stating that they have approached another museum/organisation regarding their storage, environment and emergency procedures. This includes:
 - The local Fire and Rescue Service
 - Neighbouring museums and heritage centres
 - Professional organisations such as Harwell Document Restoration Services

Questionnaire – Areas for Concern:



Part A: Governance and Administration

- 21 institutions would describe their current financial situation as adequate (usually breaks even) and for it to remain the same, with no improvement within the next 5 years
 - The Royal Hospital Museum, conscious of its responsibility, states: “there is a continual concern to ensure the long-term financing of the whole organisation. The Heritage Assets including the Museum are inextricably linked to the sustainability of the Royal Hospital in its core mission of caring for veteran soldiers”
 - Fuseliers Museum of Northumberland benefits from its location within Alnwick Castle: “we recognise that we are in an extremely fortunate position and the proportion of ticket sales we receive from Northumberland Estates covers most of our running costs. Any surplus has to be carefully managed. Necessary purchases, for example to meet accreditation standards or simply to help us function in the office day to day, are mainly funded through grants”
 - Museum of the Royal Regiment of Scotland appear to be in a good financial situation, so it is interesting they deem themselves to be merely adequate now and into the future: “MOD provides grant in aid money that pays for staff salaries and we have free use of MOD property for our museum and office. We have a small income stream, and this is mostly generated by donations from visitors. The limited funds we have in the bank are carefully budgeted and generally only cover small purchases and day to day running costs. If we wish to purchase expensive objects or equipment for the museum, then we rely on grants and other funding”
- 20 institutions would describe their current financial situation as adequate (usually breaks even) and for it to become at risk within the next 5 years

- Northamptonshire Regiment and Yeomanry Collection is housed within Northampton Museum and Art Gallery and operated by the local authority; they have said that “Local Authorities continue to face austerity and further cuts are predicted; we are dependent on the interests of the local politicians therefore our position is currently uncertain”
- The Household Cavalry Museum, who receives MOD funding and GiA via AMOT, relies heavily on admission ticket income: “the steady loss of this in the last few years raises concerns for a continued future trend which will result in other areas needing to perform such as retail, catered events and out of hours private tours
- The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) Collection which is held within Low Parks Museum is also feeling the pinch due to local authority cuts: “Our financial position is based on the Trust’s overall position. This is dependent upon continuing local government budgetary constraints and continued cuts to the Scottish Government budget by UK Government which in turn impacts upon our local authority”
- More alarmingly, 9 institutions have declared their current financial situation as at risk (failing to make profit or cover costs) and for it to remain at risk within the next 5 years; these institutions are:
 - North Irish Horse, Northern Ireland
 - Ayrshire Yeomanry Museum, Scotland
 - Redoubt Fortress Military Museum, South East
 - Surrey Infantry Museum, South East
 - Sussex and Surrey Yeomanry Museum, South East
 - Sussex Yeomanry Museum Trust, South East
 - The Keep, Cornwall’s Regimental Museum, South West
 - Regimental Museum of the Royal Welsh, Wales
 - Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (Royal Warwickshire) Museum, West Midlands
- There are similarities between all 9 with the majority being charitable trusts, none having either full or part time members of staff and all relying on grants and sponsorships and public donations
- With the volunteer hours of 10,499 plus being listed as a positive finding, nearly all of the 80 returning institutions believe that their staffing/volunteer numbers will not remain stable over the next 5 years
 - This is predominately due to the aging of the existing pool of volunteers; the Museum of Manx Regiment stated: “The advanced age of some of our volunteers

gives grounds for concern as we are not recruiting sufficient younger people to replace them”

- Institutions are finding it difficult to attract new volunteers to the workforce, especially if there is no guidance and support from professional paid staff
- There is a noticeable lack of interest from retired members of various regiments which is a sad realisation and needs to be turned around to make existing regiments proud of their associated museum
- It was stated in approximately 90% of the returns that they deemed themselves to be missing vital skills and knowledge for the successful running of their organisation. The following list includes every area that was mentioned and could be used to guide any future training programme for members of AMOT to attend and develop their skills:
 - Digitisation and social media
 - Documentation and cataloguing
 - Collections management
 - Marketing
 - Fundraising
 - Curation
 - Preventative and remedial conservation
 - Collections care and improved storage
 - Education and outreach
 - Business leadership
 - Project management
 - Health and safety
 - Finance
 - IT administration
 - GDPR and Freedom of Information

Part C: The Collection(s)

- The 80 returned questionnaires have highlighted that these is a significant low percentage of digitised collections.
 - Only 17 institutions are showing that they have an image for over 50% of their collection
 - Only 5 institutions have stated that they have “no documentation backlog”, although 2 of which are counted within the 17 above
 - Those with a documentation backlog have said that it is associated with:
 - Areas of collection that are not accessioned/catalogued
 - Out of date locations / lack of locations
 - Archive collections that are not documented
 - Photographic collections that are not documented
 - Accession Registers only existing in handwritten format and not in an electronic version
- Although the standard of the storage facilities used by the majority of the returning institutions appears good, a large number are filled to and beyond capacity, preventing:
 - Further acquisitions and collections development
 - Military Intelligence Museum states: “Capacity is adequate for current collection but little space to expand”
 - Suitable conditions for the objects stored within the area
 - Fuseliers Museum of Northumberland states: “In our framed picture store the metal picture racking is not fit for purpose and pictures are at risk of being damaged”
 - The ability to access the objects for display and research enquiries
 - Northampton Museum and Art Gallery states: “The stores are currently at full capacity which makes access problematic”
 - Appropriate environmental and pest control and management
 - Lancashire Infantry Museum states: “We cannot control the temperature or relative humidity in either room as we do not control the heating. Both rooms are monitored for pests and natural light is limited”

See Appendix 4 for the ***Army Museums into the Future Questionnaire – Results*** which supplies a breakdown of the answers given by the institutions.

The Approach to the Brief, Phase 2:

Research was undertaken to determine the kind of support and guidance which was missing specifically for the army museum sector. The result was to create 3 advisory toolkits:

There are already widely used and well-respected resources available online, such as those supplied by the Collections Trust, Museums Association, Association of Independent Museums and the Arts Council. So, it was decided that the first toolkit would point institutions to these tried and tested resources for guidance and advice on all their collection management processes and assessing object/collection significance.

The toolkit was based on the Museums Association's definition of a museum: "an institution that collects, safeguards and makes accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society".

See Appendix 5 for the ***Advice and Guidance; Museum Collections Toolkit*** which also includes a template for an ***Object Entry Form***.

Throughout the research, it became obvious that there was a serious absence and need for information to help army museums with collections at risk, those about to become orphaned and the collections which had already suffered that fate. So, a toolkit was devised that provided the following key information:

- what to do if you are offered an "orphaned" collection
- what to do if your museum's collection becomes endangered
- what to do if you want to prevent a collection from becoming orphaned
- what to do if you must deaccession an orphaned collection

The advice given within the toolkit also pointed to established sites such as the Collections Trust and the UK Government for relevant legislations to the sector.

See Appendix 6 for the ***Advice and Guidance; Endangered and Orphaned Collections Toolkit*** which also includes a template for a ***Transfer of Title Form***.

A further toolkit which is an extension to the one listed above is the one dedicated to collections with Firearms. Again, a clear gap within the existing resources available so an area focussed on specifically for the army museum sector.

See Appendix 7 for the ***Advice and Guidance; Firearms within Collections Toolkit***.

Further information and templates which have been included as part of this report are an ***Object Exit Form***, a ***Due Diligence Checklist*** and a guide entitled ***Orphaned Collections: Thinking about Disposal?***

The Collections at Risk

The following list is purely based on the 80 returns and the strength and honesty of their responses to the questionnaire. To give a clearer picture of the collections at risk, it will be necessary to obtain the same information from the remaining 59 institutions and so a follow up to the project will be to approach the outstanding institutions to help them complete their return.

Liverpool Scottish Regimental Museum, Liverpool Scottish Regiment, North West:

A large collection of archival material dating from 1860 to the present day with strong representation of the First World War and volunteer and reserve forces.

The collection is currently in storage due to moving location into Liverpool Museum within the next 4 years. There is potential that the awareness of the collection and museum will disappear between now and its move, so it is paramount to keep its name and significance prominent within the community and the regiment. There are plans to develop an online presence with a catalogue of 30,000 images so the fruition of this is key.

Museum of the Manchester Regiment, Manchester Regiment, North West:

The collection is predominantly made up of medals totalling 2,500 which have all been researched as part of a project entitled “Men Behind the Medals”, putting them into context with their beneficiaries and their time spent home and abroad.

The Museum has been closed since May 2015 with the collections being held in storage. The Town Hall within which the Museum sits, is due to be refurbished and this will see the relocation of the Museum to the ground floor. An HLF bid is being submitted to improve interpretation and include an art gallery and café; with the outcome becoming known in June 2018. It will be important to keep an eye on the result of the application as if it is not successful then the future of the Museum and its collection could be at significant risk.

North Irish Horse, Northern Ireland

A collection of uniforms, medals, archival material which is a registered charitable trust at risk and facing the same financial situation within the next 5 years. With no paid members of staff and only half an hour a month given by a volunteer, the collection is not digitised and only exists in a handwritten format. Having no personnel also affects the financial situation as the Museum is completely reliant on grants and sponsorships. There are no safeguards in place for the care of the collection with everything in cardboard boxes, bags and on coat rails; and no emergency plan or relationships with local services to help if there was an incident.

A plea from the Museum states: “We may be able to turn it around if we become well managed. We are so short staffed that we really struggle; help is needed everywhere”.

Ayrshire Yeomanry Museum, Ayrshire (Earl of Carrick's Own) Yeomanry, Scotland:

The collection started out from attic clearances and contains memorabilia from the early days of the Regiment right through to present day with objects associated with Kosovo and Afghanistan.

With no financial support, plans to modernise the dated displays lack the necessary funds to implement them. There is only 1 part-time member of staff (Hon. Curator) who works with the standard AMOT Accession List Book to catalogue the collection, which exists only in this format. There are no emergency or conservation plans and more alarmingly, no governing body. The large proportion of the collection which is not on display has been dispersed to a number of locations due to poor storage conditions and the loss of services such as the Local Archives. The latter has resulted in the Hon. Curator having to take the archival material home for safe-keeping.

Surrey Infantry Museum, Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment and Surrey Infantry, South East:

A sad story indeed, which tells of 100% of the combustible items within the collection being lost in the Clandon Park fire of April 2015. Approximately 50% of items with a degree of fire resistance survived but with extensive damage, objects made from materials with a melting point <700C were largely destroyed whilst further objects just rusted as they lay in the debris. A significant number of medals, badges, helmet plates and regimental silverware which survived the fire, are currently undergoing professional restoration.

The level of documentation, which is recorded on MODES, is not mentioned but it is stated that less than 10% is digitised complete with an image. With a collection that is predominantly lost forever, this is an upsetting fact and highlights the need for thorough documentation and collections management.

An encouraging future plan is that the collection will be relocated to the local authority run Guildford Museum as part of its re-development project, with funds allowing a sustainable future for approximately 10 years.

Sussex Yeomanry Museum Trust, South East:

The collection consists of uniforms, memorabilia and fine art and has been catalogued, with images for internal use only. There is no paid personnel and their financial situation has been declared as at risk and with no improvement for the next 5 years. There are no safeguards in place for the care of the collection, including no emergency or conservation plan and no links with neighbouring institutions or services. It is stated that the Curator no longer supports the Museum and its

existence is merely being kept alive through a few hours being given by a group of “old comrades” trying to keep the Museum in a reasonably good order.

The Museum was established in the early seventies and following the disbandment of the Sussex Yeomanry in 1999, funds gradually dried up and interest in the collection fell away. Lewes District Council gave notice to the Museum to close approximately 4 years ago, but no further action was taken so they are currently on a ‘Tenancy at Will’ contract.

Project Recommendations

The survey returns from the 80 museums and collections gave some very clear indications as to the trends within the sector, along with some useful and very powerful statistics. We are able to determine a focused series of recommendations, broken down into thematic disciplines, and prioritised within each theme.

The picture would be far better to have the remaining 62 museums and collections represented. It may well be that the silence is due to simple problems such as changed contact data or overworked staff, but it may also suggest more alarming issues such as collapse of collection governance and support.

Collections Management

1. Improve storage conditions, by bringing together those collections currently in storage, into one location. The report highlights that two museums within the South East region could benefit by sharing a storage location, so there is potential to reduce risks and costs by doing the same across all regions supported by AMOT.
2. Focus on digitisation projects and documentation backlog; there are grants specifically for these kinds of projects and involve volunteers, students, interns and freelancers to bring them to fruition.
3. There is a potential to roll out MODES to every single member of AMOT and to host it on a server, accessible by all, so that each and every institution can view (only) all the objects ‘supported’ by AMOT. This would help with the increasing of knowledge and provenance associated with similar objects, to inspire loan requests for temporary exhibitions and to realise duplications within collections. A ‘shared’ database will offer a ‘one stop shop’ to all objects held within the army museum sector and could form part of the AMOT website to increase visitor access to all objects and archives, whether local to them or not. An example of this in operation is the MODES database hosted by Hampshire Cultural Trust which contains over 2.5 million objects belonging to 25 institutions throughout Hampshire.
4. Offer advice and help run rationalisation projects across the regions to make sure that institutions are not unnecessarily duplicating each other’s collections. This will result in

better storage conditions and improved care for the core objects supported by their Collections Development Policy.

5. Work with local schools, colleges and universities to recruit work experience/interns to help with documentation, digitisation and cataloguing projects. 3D imagery and virtual reality is a key way to engage students with the objects and to advance with digitisation projects.
6. Run table top and actual live action salvage courses within each of the regions to train and prepare institutions for any incident that could happen to their site and/or their objects. Regular training helps people to retain the information and be prepared in the unlikelyhood of anything happening to their site or their objects.

Training

7. Expand training in the areas mentioned within the report and to increase the availability of bursaries to aide personnel to attend relevant courses supplied by leading organisations within the sector. These areas include; digitisation and social media, documentation and cataloguing, collections management, marketing, fundraising, curation, preventative and remedial conservation, collections care and storage, education and outreach, business leadership and project management, health and safety, finance, GDPR and freedom of information
8. Establish a network of training mentors and ‘work shadowing’ opportunities within the sector, aimed at sharing best practice and relevant skills in the form of ‘shared training’.

Sharing Resources

9. Establish systems for sharing staff, volunteers and governing bodies within neighbouring institutions to increase skill sets, knowledge of the collections and in turn, this will also decrease outgoing costs.
10. Increase links and partnerships within neighbouring institutions and heritage organisations which will lead to improvements in collections care, collections knowledge, access to a wider visiting audience, the sharing of ideas and to take part in joint funding applications.

Engagement

11. Undertake an urgent data gathering exercise to ensure that the ‘contact list’ for museums and key personnel is up-to-date, and maintained so.
12. Incorporate the images supplied by each of the institutions of their ‘star’ objects onto the AMOT website to showcase the amazing and unique collections which are spread across the regions.
13. Provide access to museums for their individual pages on the AMOT website. Ensure that they have training specific to this, and the best use of media, language and content.

14. Publicise, fund and support improvements to permanent displays and interpretation which have increasingly become dated and static. Visitors will more than likely return to an institution if there is a change in an exhibition or a new feature to be seen.
15. Touring exhibitions are one way to highlight objects across regions and raise awareness to those institutions who have loaned them.

Volunteer Support

16. Organise and run volunteer recruitment days within the regiments, any retirement groups and the community to build a pool of volunteers who can support the institutions with all their day to day operations and any specific projects which will help them move forward and achieve their goals.
17. Commission a liaison role aimed at identifying high yield volunteer areas, and forming recruitment connections. This role would focus on specific resources like Help for Heroes and Breaking Ground, where ex-military personnel can find a connection and offer willing support.

Long Term

18. The report makes a case that collections held within a large organisation, such as a local authority or a national museum, appear to be more financially stable. With this proof, there is grounds to consolidate smaller institutions into a larger organisation, whether it be an existing one or to form a new alliance. The report has also proved that Institutions with support from local records offices, local archives, non-military museums/art galleries are also in a better financial and administrative position. It is a very firm recommendation that the model for 'regional army museums' is carefully considered, and that a feasibility study is commissioned to report on this.
19. Survey the remaining 62 museums and collections by way of direct contact and physical visits. There may also be published data on the charities commission website providing further information.

Communicating

Whilst beyond the scope of this report, two simple but important suggestions are made below, following lessons learned and observations made during the project:

- For important, stand out communications do not rely on including them in the AMOT 'newsletter'. Our survey was missed by at least 75% of those that needed to see it. A newsletter is a luxury read if you have time and can be put to one side 'for later'. Direct communications lead to a far greater response
- Use related, interesting images for social media posts. Throughout the project they were all suited officials at conferences, and not evocative. This project had yielded a vast supply of images from collections, many emotional.

Appendices

1. AMOT Museums Spreadsheet Final Version (Digital)
2. Army Museums into the Future Questionnaire
3. Outstanding Returns February 25th 2018
4. Army Museums into the Future Questionnaire Results
5. Toolkit – Museums & Collections
6. Toolkit – Orphaned Collections
7. Toolkit – Firearms
8. Due Diligence Checklist Template
9. Object entry form template
10. Object exit form template
11. Transfer of title form template