



July – August 2016

Tank Men

Exhibition Evaluation report



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Abstract

This report constitutes a summative assessment of the Tank Men exhibition which was launched in March 2016. The report addresses the results of a sample of a hundred questionnaires conducted by an intern in July and August 2016. The report is divided in three parts each one of them discusses a different aspect of the exhibition (visitor profile, marketing efficiency, learning outcome, overall visitors experience and future recommendations). The aim of this paper is to evaluate the extent to which the exhibition managed to accomplish its original aims.

Contents

Introduction	3
Part I	
Exhibition’s objectives.....	5
Visitor Profile.....	6
Part II	
Question 1.....	9
Question 2.....	10
Question 3.....	11
Part III	
Question 4.....	13
Question 5.....	14
Question 6.....	15
Question 7.....	15
Conclusions	17

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to outline the results of the evaluation for the *Tank Men* exhibition which was first opened in March 2016. This report constitutes the first attempt of the museum to evaluate the Tank Men exhibition four months after the exhibition's opening. Data for this report were collected using visitor questionnaires which were carried out throughout July and August 2016 by an intern.

The following pages will analyse and present the outcome of a hundred questionnaires conducted between late July and August. The report has the form of three parts. The first part will provide the visitor profile (age, gender) of the people questioned as well as the exhibition's objectives as they have been established by the curatorial team of the museum. The second part of the report will discuss the findings of the first three questions. Two of these questions provide some useful responses regarding the learning outcome of the exhibition, and they consist an important element for the exhibition's overall success. The third part of the report engages with the visitor's overall experience and also provides visitor recommendations for the future redisplay of the Second World War Hall.

Taking into evaluation the results of the questionnaires and the initial aims of the exhibition the conclusion will argue in regards to the overall exhibition's efficiency to deliver the objectives which have been set up in advance. Furthermore, the outcome of the report constitutes the formative evaluation of the Tank men exhibition and could be considered as a good guide for future exhibitions.

PART I

Exhibition's objectives

The report will take into consideration the level which the exhibition's objectives have been met based on the visitor's responses.

According to the interpretation plan of the curatorial team of the museum, the aim of the "Tank Men Exhibition" was *to transform the First World War gallery and upgrade the "Trench Experience" in order to connect visitors to the story of the first tank crews.*

In particular the exhibition aims to:

- Tell the story of the lives of the first men who served the Tank Corps and how they coped under the stress of operating a new weapon in the midst of war.
- Display more of the First World War object and archival collection currently in store – demonstrating the Museum is not only about tanks but the people who worked with and served in them.
- Build on the high regard of the current First World War displays with a use of interpretive media that is both imaginative and engaging whilst showing respect to an often distressing subject matter.
- Inspire visitors to discover information about their heritage and history they may be unaware of.
- Create displays that meet the needs of a wide range of audiences including families, older people, formal education groups, and subject enthusiasts.
- Ensure physical and intellectual accessibility as far as possible.
- Improve the building interior through cosmetic improvement to create a fitting environment to display the unique collection of First World War tanks.
- Ensure the exhibition project fits within the wider Tank 100 programme of events and media activity.

Visitor Profile

In total 345 people took part in the questionnaires including 110 children. What is interesting from the data below, is that the biggest share of the visitors belong to families and elderly couples. School holidays should be taken into account as a positive factor for the relatively high numbers of families visiting the exhibition.

Gender of the participants:

Table 1

Overall number	100
Male	57
Female	43

Age group of the participants:

Table 2

Under 12	0
13 – 18	8
19 – 30	13
31 – 45	28
46 – 60	34
60 plus	17

Age group of children in family groups:

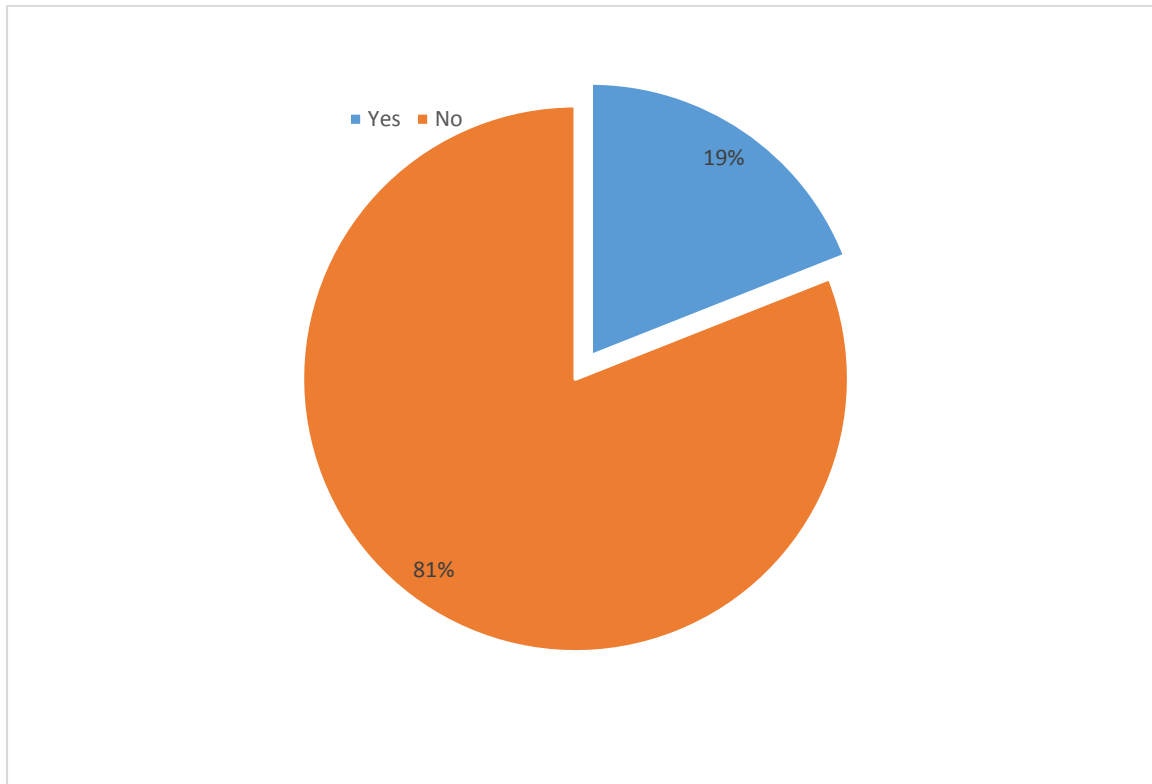
Table 3

Under 5	9
5 – 7	21
8 – 10	54
11 – 13	23
14 – 16	3

Table one indicates the number of both males and females who took part in the questionnaire. The number reveals that there is an equal representation between the genders who took part in the survey.

PART II

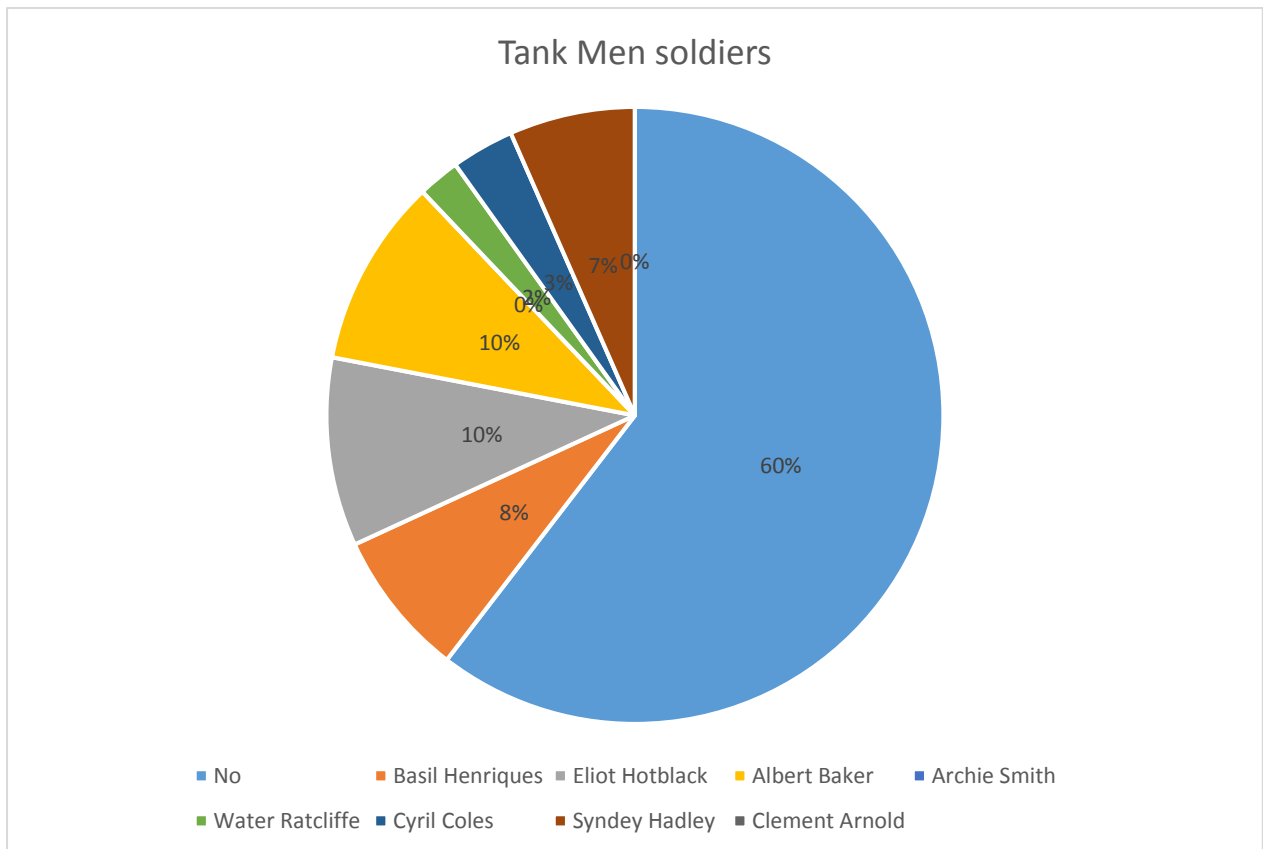
Question I: *Tank Men* is a new exhibition for 2016. Did you know about the exhibition before your visit?



The first question of the questionnaire sought to determine the awareness of people regarding the exhibition and the overall marketing success of the exhibition. It is interesting to note that the majority of the people questioned did not know about the Tank Men exhibition before their visit. Only the 19% of the participants were aware of this exhibition. Most of them they found out about the exhibition through the museum's website, some of them through the museum's YouTube channel and the less popular responses were, previous visit, word of mouth, leaflets and radio.

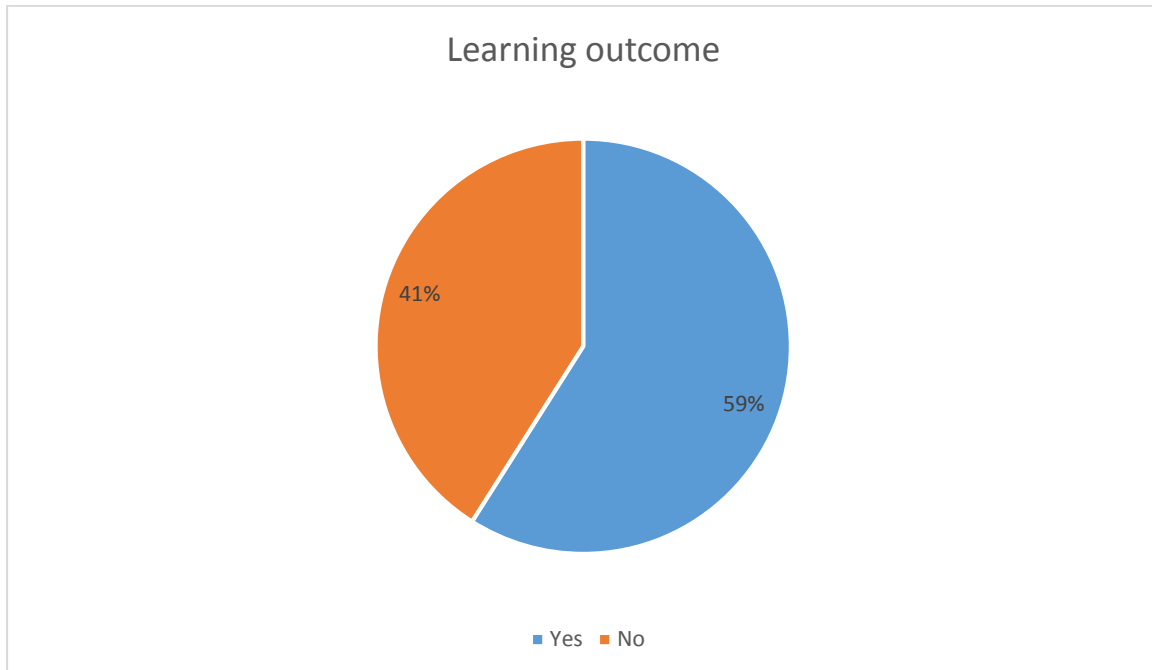
The following two questions are to assess the overall learning outcome of the exhibition.

Question 2: *Eight First World War tank soldiers are featured in the exhibition, can you name one?*



The most obvious finding to emerge from this question is that the overwhelmingly majority of the people questioned did not remember any of the names of the tank men stories displayed in the exhibition. Although they were able to describe the story that they most liked, they were not able to remember the name of the soldier featured. A possible explanation for this might be the people's tendency to forget names. Furthermore, considering that the majority of the people's age group were between 46 to 60 years old, it could be logically assumed the weakness of the individuals to name one of the soldiers.

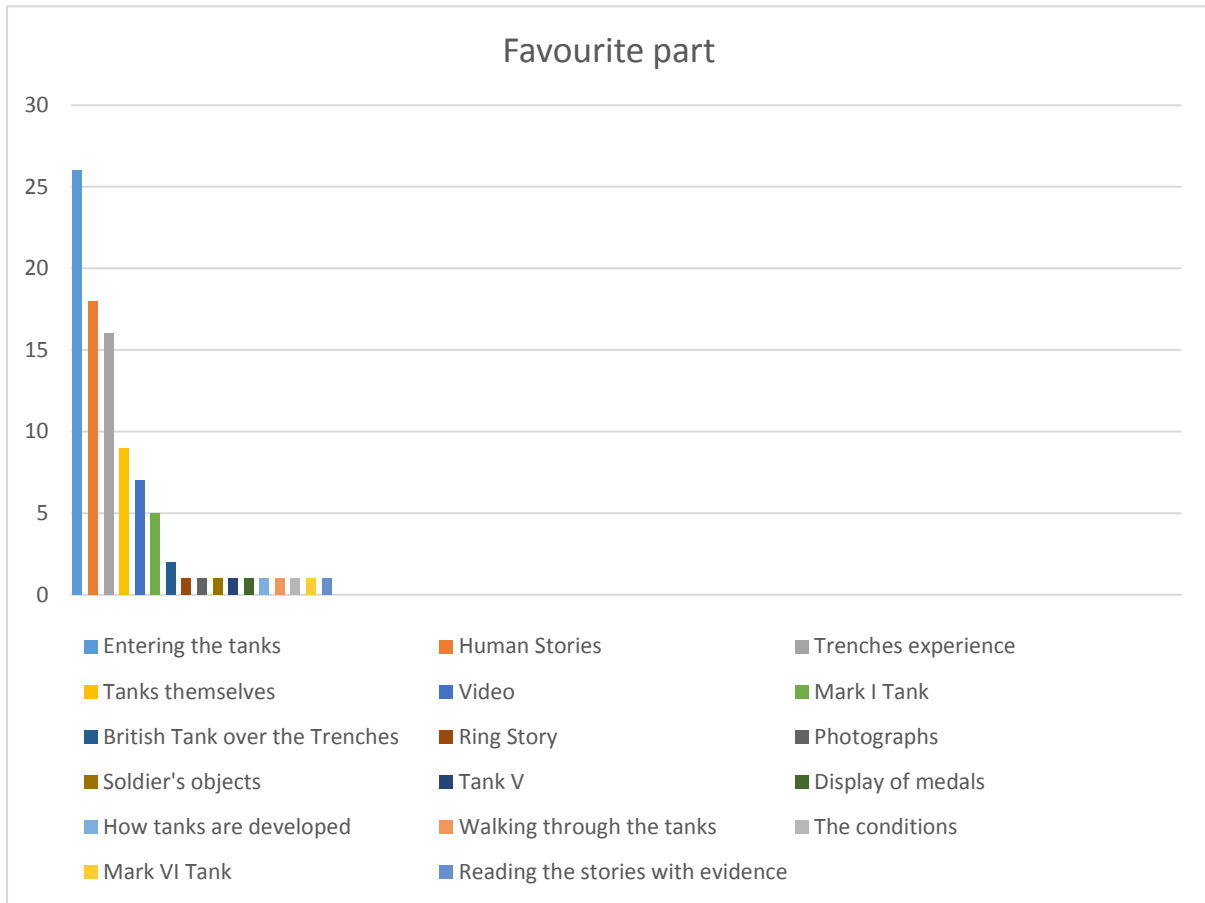
Question 3: *Have you learnt any new information about the First World War from the material on display? Please describe:*



Surprisingly, the third question found that a relatively big majority of the people who answered learnt something new about the First World War. However, there were noticed pretty diverse responses as if they could describe something that they learn. The majority of the answers to this question refer to general new information acquired such as the brutality of the war, the living conditions inside the tanks, and the great variety of the tanks. Moreover, some responses are related to the tanks themselves, as some people answered that they learnt about the existence of male and female tank, the operation of the tanks during the First World War and the different types of tanks (Mark I, Mark II etc.).

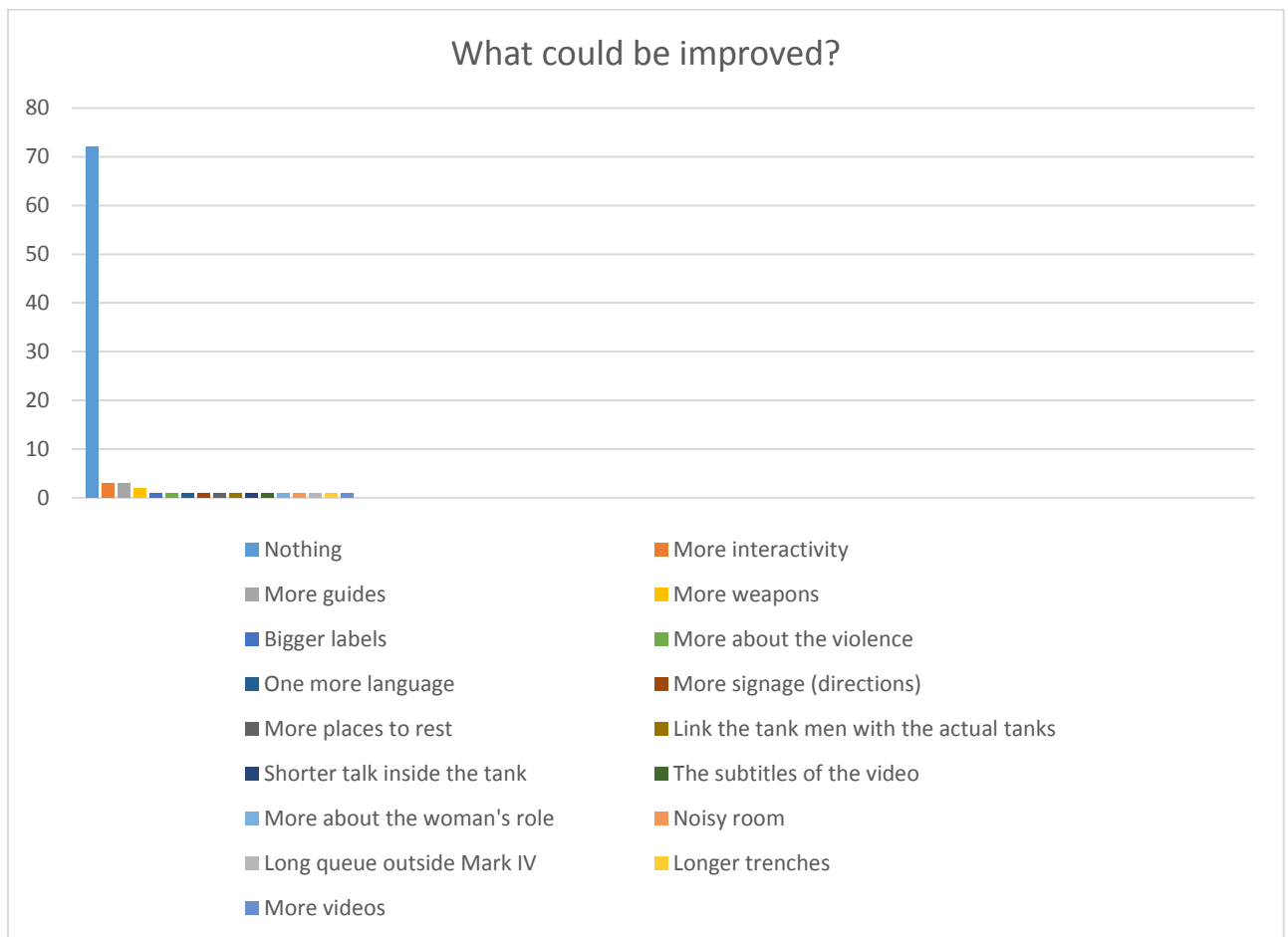
PART III

Question 4: *What was your favourite part of the exhibition?*



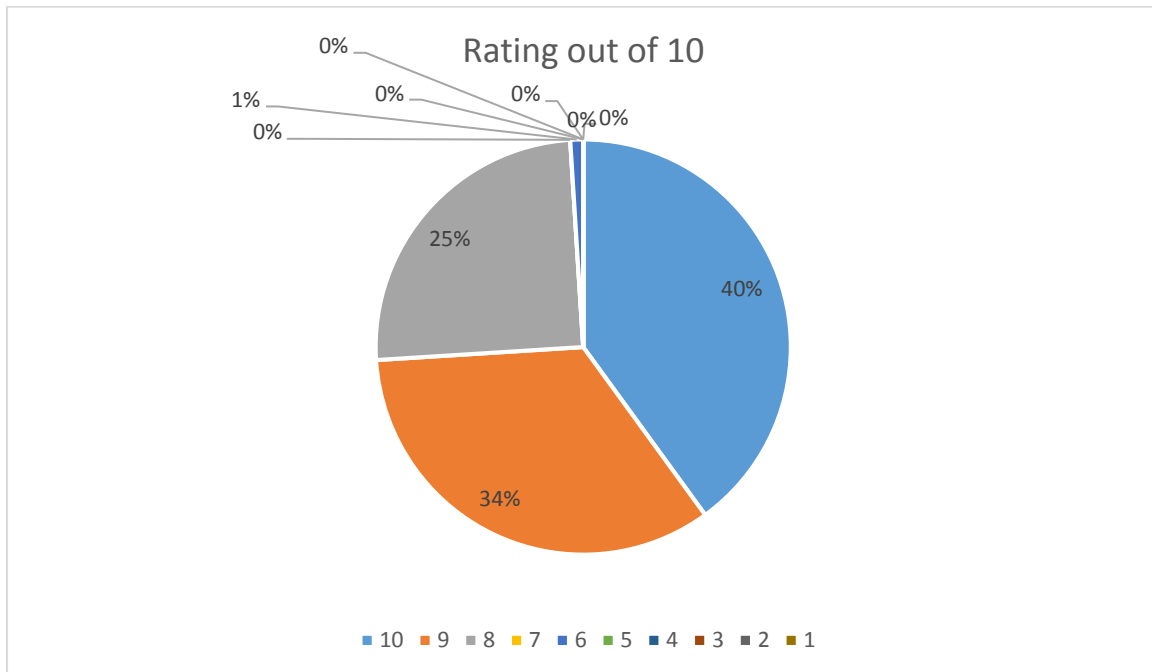
According to the results of this question it is apparent that there is a relatively difference between the responses of people. However, it remains obvious that the most popular answer is entering the tanks, followed by the human stories. Although it was not part of the Tank men exhibition, the trenches experience remain one of the most popular attractions for the visitors.

Question 5: *What could be improved?*



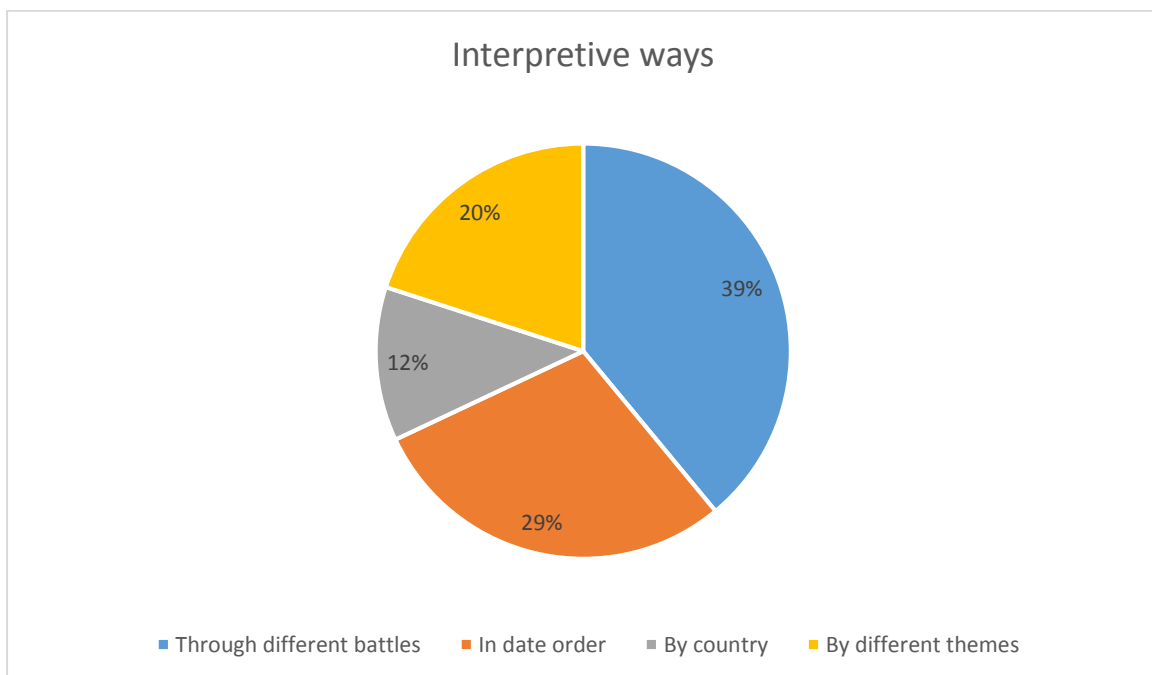
The vast majority of the responders (72%) argue that there is nothing that could be improved. Few participants of the survey asked for additional interactivity inside the exhibition and more guides (wardens) to explain the exhibition material. There are plenty of individual answers that most of them are related to subjective issues such more places to rest, more signage and slower video subtitles.

Question 6: *Please rate the exhibition out of 10 (with 10 rated highest)*



The average score of the people's rating is 9.12

Question 7: *Over the next five years, the museum will redisplay its large Second World War Hall. The story of the tanks in this conflict can be told in various ways. Which do you find most appealing?*



The last question engages with potential ways of interpreting the story of the Second World War Tanks. These findings may help us to understand the visitor's preferences in regards to the way the story of the tanks is deployed. The majority of the questionnaire participants argue that the best way to interpret the story of the tanks is through different battles followed by date order.

Conclusions

The main goal of the current report was to discuss the findings of a hundred questionnaires conducted between late July and early August. The first part of this report addresses the initial aims of the exhibition as these have been agreed by the curatorial team. The report has the form of three parts each one of them addressing a different element of the exhibition. The first part engaged with the visitor profile. According to the findings it is obvious that families with children consist the most popular visitors of the exhibition. The high number of family groups is explained by the school summer holidays which started when the evaluation began. The second part of the report discussed in which extent was the participants aware of the exhibition. Only the 19% of people who visited the exhibition knew about the exhibition before their visit. Most of them have found it out through the museum's website. The next couple of questions assessed the learning outcome of the Tank Men exhibition. According to the collected responses the majority of the visitors answered positive to the question if they learnt anything about the First World War. Taking into consideration this result it can be assumed that the aim of the museum to enhance the awareness of the people regarding the history and the heritage of the war was successful. However, the vast majority of the people were unable to name one of the tank men which are featured in the exhibition. As it has been signposted on the second part of the report, this could be explained by the age group of the people who visited the exhibition (46 to 60). Evaluating the visitors' responses as to what new they've learnt, the majority of them mentioned the hard conditions and the brutality of the war, the existence of the trenches and the big variety of different tank types. It can be assumed that in a way these responses agree with the original scope of the museum to present the lives of the first crew members.

Last but not least, the final part of the report addresses the most favourite part of the exhibition according to the people's responses. The vast majority of the people mentioned that entering the tanks is the most favourite part of the exhibition followed by the human stories. Although not directly connected with the tank men exhibition, the trench experience remains one of the most popular parts of the 1st World War exhibition. The analysis of those responses reveal some interesting for the overall evaluation results. One of them is that Tank Men exhibition managed to convey the human element behind the story of the tanks, as human stories consist of the second most popular response on the question of your favourite part. One of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that people do enjoy the interaction with

authentic objects (in this case tanks), therefore, the majority of the people questioned answered that entering the tanks is their favourite part of the exhibition.

The overall visitor's experience is represented through their positive rating (9.12 out of 10) and the overwhelmingly high response that there is nothing that can be improved. 72% of the questionnaire's participants seemed to be happy with the exhibition. Individual responses argue that minor improvements could be considered such as better labelling, more interactivity, more places to rest etc. These improvements refer to museographical element of the exhibition rather than the museological and can be taken into consideration for future exhibitions.

The last question engages with the future redisplay of the main tank story hall of the museum. Apparently the majority of the people questioned, argue that they would prefer to see the story of the tanks through different battles. Considerably more work will need to be done to determine which the preferable interpretive way is. Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings suggest a representative positive sample of the visitor's experience. In terms of directions for future research, further work could be done on formative evaluation for the redisplay of the story of the tanks display. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study suggests that the Tank Men exhibition accomplished the aims which have been set out from the beginning and laid out some initial considerations for future exhibitions.

