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Kelly A. Spring

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THE BATTLE OF THE LAND AND THE KITCHEN FRONT

Twenty-First-Century Museum Representations of
Second World War British Food Rationing and Gender Roles

KELLY A. SPRING,
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

ABSTRACT: This article examines how Britain's Imperial War Museum (IWM) acts as a pivotal location in which links between the popular memory of Second World War food rationing and gender roles are projected to the British public in twenty-first-century contexts. An analysis of the IWM's 2010–2011 "Ministry of Food" Exhibition and the 2013–2015 "Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show" reveals that the multifaceted, gendered narratives present in the two representations of food rationing were not seamless histories. Rather, the article finds that factors of audiences' expectations and museum staff's thinking about wartime food and gender roles shaped the displays, which sometimes converged with and at other times diverged from wartime ideals and realities.

KEYWORDS: *British food rationing, gender roles, Second World War, museums, memory*

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, reality television has produced a steady stream of shows devoted to portraying people's interactions and activities in specific times and places. Historical re-creation series form part of this burgeoning type of entertainment. Viewers are invited to learn about and "experience" historical settings from the comfort of their own sofas as they watch people live out their daily lives in the simulated past. On British television, the Second World War has proven to be a popular and enduring time period to remember and reimagine. Within the last few decades, several of these docudramas have appeared on British television, including Channel 4's *The 1940s House* in 2001. In the series, viewers trace the thoughts, feelings, activities, and challenges faced by the Hymer family as they simulate living in London during the Blitz.¹

Representations of the war pervade not only television but also museum depictions of the conflict. The Imperial War Museum (IWM), Britain's most prominent institution connected with the legacy of national conflict, acts as a primary site in which to view the country's collective memory of the Second World War. Originally conceived of as a First World War memorial, the IWM now displays material from all twentieth- and twenty-first-century wars involving British troops.² Now with locations in London, Cambridgeshire, and Manchester, the IWM receives more than a million visitors each year.³ The national importance of the museum allows it to be an integral partner in the public's continuous negotiations between the past and the present, and to contribute to the ongoing formation of both popular memory and private remembrance.⁴ It is in this cultural climate that IWM exhibitions are shaped and produced, creating specific narratives about the war.

One of the key components of the Second World War in Britain was food rationing. As such, home front activities around the food controls form an essential part of the national memory of the war and hold a prominent place in museum displays. British food rationing began on January 8, 1940, and lasted until 1954. Home front rationing was all-encompassing, enveloping every man, woman, and child. The Ministry of Food set a basic adult ration for goods such as cheese, butter, and tea, which were rationed by weight, and meat, which was rationed by price. Ration amounts fluctuated during the war, according to supply. Children's rations varied by age group, and they were given extra amounts of milk, orange juice, and cod-liver oil to support their needs as they grew. From December 1941 onward, other foods such as canned goods, rice, and breakfast cereals, which were not part of the ration, were put on what was known as "personal points." Everyone was entitled to sixteen, and later twenty, points per month to spend on items covered under this system. The number of points required to obtain goods "on points" were raised or lowered depending on stocks.⁵

Government propaganda advised everyone to use food wisely and eat healthily to support the war effort. But officials ultimately placed responsibility for obtaining rations and sustaining the nutritional needs of families on women's shoulders.⁶ Such expectations fed into and were shaped by wartime gender roles, which envisioned women as ideal domestics, overseeing the health and wellness of those in their home through their cookery and other domestic activities. Men, on the other

hand, were idealized as the breadwinners who provided the financial means to support housewives' work in the home. Young, able-bodied men were prized, above all, for their ability to act as soldier-heroes, defending the home through their military service.⁷

Wartime realities necessitated the conscription of women between the ages of eighteen and forty into war work, if they were unmarried or did not have young children at home. Many men were not allowed to join the forces because their work was vital to the war effort. Other men were ill, infirm, or too old to fight, and could not join the military. Under these wartime conditions, more men and women were at work on the home front than serving in the military. By 1945, 6,283,000 women and 10,133,000 men were working in nonmilitary employment.⁸ These shifts in society affected women's and men's diverse activities with food rationing, which were more intricate and nuanced than a simple gendered division of labor with women in the home and men in the military.⁹ The nature of male and female engagement with the wartime food situation at home and through their war work was manifested in complex, modern-day representations in the Imperial War Museum.

This article examines the links made between depictions of the history of food rationing and wartime gender roles in central public institutions of the twenty-first century, namely, the IWM London and IWM North in Manchester. The article analyzes the "Ministry of Food" exhibition, which was held at the IWM London from 12 February 2010 to 3 January 2011, and the "Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show" held at IWM North from 18 May 2013 to 17 May 2015. Drawing on interviews with design staff, photographs from the exhibition, visitors' responses, and audio and video images from the film, this article accesses the relationship between food rationing and representations of wartime gendered identities.¹⁰ By exploring the public representations of Second World War food rationing in these locations, this study addresses several key questions: How did the Imperial War Museum represent the associations between food rationing and gender roles in Second World War? How did the museum's status and function in British society affect the narrative presented in the two branches of the museum? How did visitor demographics and expectations feed into gendered representations of food rationing at these sites of memory? In what ways did twenty-first-century issues shape the collective, national memory of food rationing in terms of gendered representations on display in the IWM?

By undertaking a comparative examination of the two museums' presentations, several key areas of the historical narratives in the exhibition and film are analyzed, namely, land use and food imports, cookery and shopping, and health. The article argues that museum representations of war are as much structured by depictions of people's activities in the past as they are influenced by twenty-first-century visitors' influences, expectations, and experiences. As a result, the Imperial War Museum projected a wide range of messages about wartime gendered identities in connection to food situation, which contributed to popular memory in sites of national importance.

MEMORY AND MUSEUMS

Memory in academic discourse, according to Kerwin Lee Klein, "bridges a wide array of physical objects, on the one hand, and the psychic acts of individuals on the other."¹¹ Institutions such as museums act as sites on which material objects and ephemera are brought together and interpreted, contributing particular perspectives about the past to popular memory. Museums also act as conduits between individual and public recall of historical events, linking people with their collective past. However, museums do not simply project a history of society back onto itself. Rather, as Randolph Starn reminds us, "while they collect and conserve, classify and display, research and educate, they also deliver messages and make arguments."¹² However, as a result of the connection between object, institution, and individual, museums need to tread a careful line between historical representation, memory, and audience expectation, to avoid dissonance between museum exhibitions and visitors' reactions.¹³

Such institutions play an important function in helping shape and reconfigure popular cultural representations of the past. Lucy Noakes points out, "Museums are extremely powerful sites of cultural transmission and public education. They are an embodiment of state knowledge and power."¹⁴ Museums constitute an authoritative view of how society is supposed to regard the past, and this includes gendered identities and relations. Joan Scott argues that institutions such as museums form a part of the political structure that feeds into these representations and constructions of gender roles in society.¹⁵ However, the subject of gender in historical narratives is not easily represented in modern-day muse-

ums. As Laura Brandon points out, there is often a “conundrum of reconciling the past with the present as it relates to gendered expectations and the subject of conflict” in museum exhibitions, necessitating compromises between modern realities and narratives of the past.¹⁶

Examinations of British popular culture and memory tell us much about Britain’s understanding and construction of its past.¹⁷ Numerous historians, including Mark Connelly and Jean R. Freedman, have shown that although the wartime spirit of those on the home front was not unified and changed throughout the duration of the conflict, the idea of British solidarity in “The People’s War” still permeates popular memory.¹⁸ Depictions of gender roles in wartime have often reinforced an ideal gendered division of labor.¹⁹ The cultural framework of wartime gendered identities set in contemporary Britain, according to Margaretta Jolly, has resulted in museum displays, such as the IWM’s 1993 exhibition “Forces Sweethearts,” which tend to portray men in the military and women on the home front, perpetuating a gendered division of history in public sites of memory.²⁰ The gender roles on display are often a simplified version of those enacted in accounts of the lived experience of war. As Lucy Noakes points out, museums like the IWM present issues such as gender in uncomplicated ways, disregarding wartime complexities, strains, and conflict that do not fit comfortably with the ideals of unity connected to “The People’s War.”²¹ However, twenty-first-century constructs of wartime gender roles are far from uncontested, or uniformly agreed-on narratives of the past. Corinna Peniston-Bird’s analysis of controversies and disagreements surrounding the 2015 installation of the memorial to the women of World War II in Whitehall demonstrates how complex and disputed gender constructions figure in public sites of memory.²²

Food rationing was an integral part of what constituted everyday life on the British home front, and it was directly and indirectly shaped by wartime gender roles. However, very little research has been carried out to investigate how depictions of rationing connect to the construction of gendered identities in public sites of memory. Rebecca Bramall has explored the Imperial War Museum’s “Ministry of Food” exhibition to understand the organization of the wartime food system and its relationship to modern-day British consumption habits, while exploring consumer discourses around food.²³ However, Bramall’s study does not consider how museum depictions of rationing are associated

with gender roles, leaving a gap in historical understanding about the links between presentations of food rationing and wartime gendered identities in contemporary settings. This article seeks to broaden the current historical research by analyzing the associations made between the history of British food rationing and gender roles in important sites of the British memory of war, the Imperial War Museum system.

Over the recent decades, the Imperial War Museum has created several temporary exhibitions to inform the public about the wartime food situation, including “We’ll Eat Again” (1985), “Wartime Kitchen and Garden” (1993), and “Dig for Victory” (2005). The latest exhibition held at IWM London was the “Ministry of Food” (MoF) exhibition. Its installation was intended to be short-term, and it was based in one of the museum’s upstairs galleries.²⁴ The exhibition’s aim was to provide an overview of the issues and events surrounding food rationing of the war and postwar years through a discussion of the controls at each stage of the food process, from growing and distributing goods to buying food and preparing meals. The majority of the pieces on display in the exhibition came from the IWM’s collections and consisted of government wartime posters and photographs, Ministry of Food “Food Flashes” films, and “The Kitchen Front” radio broadcasts. The exhibition also included life-size theatrical sets that allowed visitors to simulate wartime food activities in specific sites, including the kitchen, shop, and greenhouse. Such simulated scenarios, which are common in the IWM’s exhibitions, help create sensory experiences for visitors in replicated historical environments.²⁵

In addition to the many exhibitions about rationing created by the IWM staff, they also portrayed the history of the food controls through the medium of film. The “Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show” was a film designed by the IWM North in accordance with the Horrible Histories franchise that produces books and television programs for children. The film was projected on all walls within the main area of the museum to directly connect visitors with the history by engulfing them in a sensory experience, which played on their imaginations and feelings.²⁶ Forging these associations creates a powerful impression, suggesting that war is inescapable and encompasses everyone, living and dead, in the national history of conflict. A combination of materials was used in the film to present the history of rationing, including original posters, photographs, and

Table 1: MoF Visitor Percentages

<i>Age group of visitor</i>	<i>Percentage of total visitors</i>
0–4	2
5–11	8
12–15	8
16–17	-
16/18–24	8
25–34	8
35–44	15
45–54	26
55–59	7
60–64	8
65+	9

The figures and information came from the IWM London's marketing department and were obtained during the Rebecca Wakeford interview in 2013. Note that the percentages given for visitor numbers equal 99 percent, rather than 100 percent, most likely due to an error when staff were compiling the data.

sound clips from the war. Cartoon drawings of the main character of the Horrible Histories series, a male rat named Rattus Rattus, illustrated by Martin Brown, were also used.

AUDIENCE TARGETS AND EXPECTATIONS

The MoF exhibition and Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing film were geared toward two different types of audiences, namely, adults and children (respectively), and each sought to achieve divergent aims in their representations of the food controls. As a result, each presentation constructed different gendered narratives, which the museums projected to their intended audience. Above all, it was these audiences that formed the foundation on which the two displays were created and on which gendered identities were configured around the food rationing narratives.

IWM London cast a wide net in terms of the age groups it wished to target, and around which it designed the MoF exhibition. It sought to focus on “adults” whom they labeled “self-empathizers” (25–34, and 60+ years old), and “self-developers” (45 to 54 years of age).²⁷ As the table of

attendance figures demonstrates, the museum staff was able to accomplish their goal of drawing in these particular groups of people.

The data reveal that the variety of age groups the IWM was able to draw in included the age groups it set out to reach. The highest percentage of visitors that attended the show was the 45–54-year-olds or “self-developers.” The table also demonstrates that the museum reached a good percentage of the 35–44 age group. The range of ages the staff sought to draw into the show necessitated the construction of an exhibition that would appeal to a diverse set of interests, rather than to a particular gender. The exhibition endeavored to provide a balanced narrative that would connect with the lived memories of all 65+ visitors, who had experienced rationing, and the received memories of younger groups, who had not experienced rationing but had learned about it from family members or in school. Audiences carried with them and accessed these different forms of memory as they toured the exhibition.

The museum focuses on creating inclusive displays to involve and educate men and women about the wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²⁸ Collection of visitors’ details and feedback about the MoF exhibition reflected this goal and the data gathered from the show. As a result, the gender of visitors was not recorded as part of the feedback from attendees to the exhibition. However, as we will see in the next section, despite the focus on creating an all-encompassing experience for exhibition participants, the staff’s thinking around gender roles in wartime seeps into the narrative on display, creating specific messages about the connections between gender and food during the conflict.

The MoF exhibition was one of the most popular programs in the museum and had a total of 73,178 visitors.²⁹ In a general survey about the exhibition, the IWM staff asked 85 individuals who had attended the show, “How would you rate the Ministry of Food exhibition?” The results appear in table 2.

The “excellent” and “good” responses together equal a 96 percent approval rating, which indicates that the exhibition was positively received and overwhelmingly enjoyed by the public. This high percentage of satisfaction implies that the museum staff successfully designed and promoted a show that corresponded with the interests, desires, historical knowledge, and, at least to some extent, the memories (lived and received) of the audience. As Lucy Noakes suggests, the construction

Table 2: MoF Survey Responses, “How Would You Rate the Ministry of Food Exhibition?”

Excellent	43%
Good	53%
Fair/OK	4%
Poor	-
Very Poor	-
Don't Know	-
No Reply	5

Data gained from marketing material surrounding the exhibition during the Rebecca Wakeford interview in 2013.

of popular memory may simplify and give selective emphasis to personal memories of the past, but it cannot deviate too far from them or it is ignored.³⁰ Had there been a large disconnect between the museum's representations and personal recollections, survey feedback would have reflected more negative results, and visitor numbers would have been lower.

The “Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show,” a semi-animated film, was created to connect with children and was based on the Horrible Histories book series. The book series, first published in 1993, is written by Terry Deary and illustrated by Martin Brown. This collection of books caters to 9–11-year-old audiences to teach lessons of history using gore and the grotesque to pique readers' interest. Historical time periods covered by the books include the Middle Ages, the Victorian Era, and the Second World War. School-age children connect well with this series because, according to Jerome de Groot: “The books are mischievous, irreverent and iconoclastic, appealing to a child audience's desire for silly jokes, presenting history as something tactile and simple.”³¹ In other words, the books tap into a perspective on historical events that link with children's own interests and understandings. The attractiveness of the storylines to children is boosted by the narrator of the books, the rat named Rattus Rattus. The use of this type of narrator corresponds with the interest that children tend to have in animal characters and cartoons, providing a platform on which to educate young people about history. The popularity of the series has resulted in the

publication of more than sixty books, the production of a Horrible Histories children's television series on the Children's British Broadcasting Corporation (CBBC) channel, and a Horrible Histories website.³²

The IWM staff felt that utilizing the story structure from the Horrible Histories franchise to produce the film would allow the museum to broaden its purview so that it could better incorporate younger segments of the population into its educational objectives. The staff found it difficult to cater to this demographic because of the nature of the material presented in the museum. According to Victoria Howarth, the IWM North's formal learning coordinator, the show sought to bridge the divide between creating a family-focused learning experience that included young children and educating the entire viewing public about war:

Well, it's a hard balance to strike because we are here to represent the causes, course, and consequences of war and some of that is very unpalatable for a family audience. So, you know, it's finding the balance. We have lots of Big Picture Shows, and we only have one that is aimed at that age group. So it felt like there was a big gap and we needed to fill it.³³

The design of "Rotten Rationing" necessitated a particular version of the history to be told that fit with its inclusive, family-friendly objective, sat comfortably within the Horrible Histories format, and corresponded with the overarching narrative of war presented in this public site of memory.³⁴

The Imperial War Museum serves as an important institution for primary and secondary education. According to the museum's "formal learning numbers," it estimates that in 2019–2020, 140,000 visitors in formal education under eighteen will visit one of its sites.³⁵ At each of its locations, the IWM offers diverse "learning sessions" in which students learn about and often use primary source material to delve into the history of war. Sessions include "The Holocaust: People and Objects" and "Documentary Challenge: Second World War, including the Battle of Britain and Home Front." All of these lessons are designed around learning objectives for key stages in the national curriculum, enabling the IWM to successfully partner with schools to educate British children and teenagers.³⁶ The film was constructed as part of the museum's educational remit and focused on British school curriculum standards

for 10–11-year-olds. Part of these standards require students to learn about wartime food rationing in history class.³⁷ With this aim in mind, the IWM looked at ways to teach the topic that would appeal to students while fulfilling educational requirements at that level:

We were concerned, initially, if we needed to fully explain in the film how it worked with the points system and coupons and everything, and realized that that is actually quite dull. So we thought that was something that they could do back at school, and it was more important to get some juicy anecdotes in there, something that would inspire the imagination, you know. Get the kids interested in it, rather than just being very explanatory and dry and boring. We just wanted the good stories. And of course it links to *Horrible Histories*, it needed to be more about oh, you know, “it was horrible, we had to eat this horrible sheep’s head soup” or whatever it might be. So linking to *Horrible Histories*, it had to come from that perspective as well. So there wasn’t going to be loads of people going “oh, we like powdered egg” or anything because that wouldn’t really fit with *Horrible Histories*. Although some people did like powdered eggs.³⁸

The designers were less concerned with explaining the process of rationing and more focused on stressing the parts of rationing that were unusual or gross to interest and engage children and correspond with the audience’s expectations around the entertaining nature of the *Horrible Histories* series. These considerations affected the narrative style of the film, creating specific forms of historical education that upheld certain memories while modifying or simplifying other memories about rationing. The program, then, sat within the social milieu of war remembrance, but it was constructed for children, contributing to representations of war that were specifically juvenile-centric and would appeal to girls and boys equally.

Broadcast at 11:00 a.m. daily with an additional 2:00 p.m. showing on the weekends, the film times corresponded with school group and family visits to the museum. According to Howarth, the film had proven so attractive to children that school groups specifically inquired when it would be shown and were disappointed when they were unable to see it.³⁹ The popularity of the film indicates that IWM North produced a history of rationing in contemporary contexts that resonated

with younger audiences' interests and understandings. This version of the story of food rationing constituted the "popular memory" that the children would carry with them into adulthood.

History museum staff often seek to elicit feelings of nostalgia in visitors through their displays. "Nostalgia" is the positive feeling individuals associate with events of the past. The concept invokes a strong desire for a lost era. For people who have not experienced these events but learned about them from family members, in school, and in the media, their received "nostalgia" is for an idea rather than the memory of past occurrences. The MoF exhibition was intentionally structured to elicit real and received nostalgia, affecting the structure and historical content of the displays. According to Rebecca Wakeford, the designer:

Although I do think that if you are over seventy, this is something that you could wander around and remember from childhood. I also think that nostalgia is something that people buy into, that they are nostalgic for a time that has gone by even though they didn't necessarily experience it. I certainly feel that, and I wasn't alive during wartime. I think that this aspect of wartime does have an aspect of nostalgia about it. It's the feeling of the people pulling together as a community. The part about being part of a community does have nostalgia in it. That feeling was certainly something that we wanted to capture in the design.⁴⁰

Sentimentality along these lines linked a wide swath of the public to the issue of rationing, allowing them to feel a personal stake in the historical events, whether experienced or imagined, through a culturally sanctioned form of war representation at a national site of memory, while also tapping into ideas of community and unity surrounding "The People's War." Such emotional associations with the show were possible in part because of the topic. Food serves as a visible reminder of connections and disconnections between people in public and private, linking the past and the present.⁴¹ The museum sought to ensure that everyone who visited the exhibition felt personally invested in it and the history of Britain that it portrayed, allowing individuals to make multiple connections between themselves and food rationing both as a national historical event and one that was intimately connected to their familial past. The marketing brief for the show reflected this emphasis: "Adults of all ages looking to emotionally engage with the subject including

those with a personal experience or family history linked with the Second World War.”⁴² Individuals were encouraged to carry these associations to the past with them as they walked through the exhibition.

Contrary to the exhibition, the “Rotten Rationing” film had few instances of nostalgia connected to it. The film was not designed to elicit such feelings, in part because the museum’s goal was to conform to national curriculum standards associated with teaching the history of food rationing while at the same time entertaining children. The school groups who viewed the film also did not have the same received memories and nostalgic framework to draw on, which the adults who visited the MoF exhibition were able to access. Thus, there was a noticeable absence of nostalgic depictions in the Horrible Histories film.

Twenty-first-century concerns also influenced how the two IWM museums represented the past, allowing audience members, adults and children, to associate the food controls with their own lives. The exhibition was designed not only to educate the public about the history of wartime food but also to encourage viewers to actively relate their exhibition experience to their own understandings of the present. This strategy of connecting past and present was evident in newspaper articles publicizing the MoF exhibition. Press coverage in the *Daily Express*, *BBC News Magazine*, and the *Guardian* associated the food situation in twenty-first-century Britain with wartime rationing on the home front, suggesting that the exhibition contained useful information for modern living with regards to austerity measures, health issues, and growing one’s own food.⁴³ Such sentiments about the show were echoed in the IWM newsletter.⁴⁴

The Big Picture Show also made connections, like the MoF exhibition, between modern concerns and historical events, providing links between viewers’ lives and the lives of those living on the home front. According to Victoria Howarth:

We felt it had a modern relevance because the kind of make-do and mend aspect, you know, recycling and not wasting, food and clothing and stuff is very much a modern concern, so it was felt that although it is an old topic, Second World War rationing, we did feel it did have a modern relevance. Recycling is nothing new; it links to today as well. So I think that point wasn’t really labored, it just seemed obvious in a way.⁴⁵

The Horrible Histories program was not solely a lesson in the history of rationing, but rather the end product of the confluence of historical representations and contemporary cultural concerns. Howarth underlined this point by stating that the “Rotten Rationing” film contained “historic content with a modern twist.”⁴⁶

Situated between the past and the twenty-first century, the museums constructed displays on the history of rationing that also drew on the design teams’ conceptualizations of wartime gender roles. According to the designer of the MoF exhibition, Rebecca Wakeford:

It is very clear that there was quite a gender split at the time. I mean, I think probably something that we wouldn’t necessarily see today so much. But certainly the kitchen and the savings that you can make in the kitchen, and the use of food and recipes is all aimed at, often, women speaking to other women. And the Dig for Victory campaign is certainly, I would say, is skewed towards men. And people like Mr. Middleton, isn’t it, who is doing the wartime broadcasts and that’s clearly aimed at sort of gardeners, male gardeners.⁴⁷

This perspective, based on a set of assumptions about women’s primary role and men’s secondary role with wartime food on the home front, became embedded in the MoF exhibition, affecting the format of the displays:

It’s a topic that is, potentially is, was more appealing to women in terms of visitors. But also at the time, I think that it was very much showing housewives what they could do to do their bit really for the war effort. So I think inevitably it does get quite focused on women.⁴⁸

In essence, the show was thought to be about and mainly for women. As a result, a clear focus was given to women’s activities surrounding the limited food resources both within and in connection to the domestic sphere in the displays, while men’s activities with food were portrayed as more limited, occurring outside and often away from the home.

While the design of the exhibition was geared toward emphasizing women’s roles with rationing, the creators of the Horrible Histories film took a different approach by providing an inclusive gender narrative. According to Howarth, the producers of the show did not consider gendered representations an important element in the making of the program:



FIG. 1. “The Battle of the Land,” “Ministry of Food” Exhibition Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

I don’t think it was considered, in any, in any big way. I suppose if it had seemed to be all male stories or all female stories, then I suppose that that would have been obvious and addressed. But I think that that naturally balanced out. I don’t think it was a big issue.⁴⁹

The IWM North sought to portray an account of the food controls in which neither gender would be given prominence within the *Horrible Histories* film. This objective was consistent with the aim of the show to focus on the age of its audience and the need to appeal equally to boys and girls.

LAND USE AND FOOD IMPORTS

Land use became a crucial component to winning the war, requiring a large labor force of both men and women. At its peak in June 1945, the agricultural industry employed 887,000 individuals, of which approximately 77 percent were men (683,000) and 23 percent were women (204,000).⁵⁰ However, in the MoF exhibition, there was a striking prioritization of women in agriculture, while men were noticeably absent (figure 1).



FIG. 2. Women's Land Army, "Ministry of Food" Exhibition Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

The title of this scene, "The Battle of the Land," accompanied by a picture of women combine-harvester operators, sets up a gendered view of the wartime agricultural situation. It extends historical realities surrounding women's work on the land while largely discounting men's agricultural contributions to the war. The emphasis on women's work on the farm suggests IWM staff's thinking surrounding women's significant role with wartime food on the home front as well as their wish to appeal to women visitors to the exhibition. In wartime, men working on the home front were represented and perceived ambivalently by the government and society because they did not fulfill the idealized role of soldier-hero.⁵¹ The noted absence of positive presentations of men in the agricultural section perpetuates such messages.

The museum also focused on the Women's Land Army (WLA), a government-organized program that enlisted young women to support the agricultural needs of the country in wartime.⁵² Using WLA paraphernalia, the exhibition created positive and even nostalgic connections between women's identities and their work in helping feed the nation (figure 2).

Exhibition representations of wartime agriculture as an attractive occupation dominated by women may have been influenced by the 1998 film *The Land Girls*.⁵³ The movie, like the exhibition, depicts a romanti-



FIG. 3. Harvest Posters and Equipment, “Ministry of Food” Exhibition Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

cized version of wartime farming in which women worked in key roles to help the food economy while many young men were away fighting at the front. The ideal images of farm life preserved in the film and the MoF exhibition are, in many ways, opposed to the working realities of this wartime occupation, which often consisted of long hours and dirty and difficult conditions.⁵⁴ This is an example of modern popular culture influencing representations of the wartime food situation in a national site of memory. Subsequent staff interpretations of wartime British agriculture and audience expectations in conjunction with such popular cultural images of women on the land invariably fed into the gendered messages on display in this portion of the exhibition.

Men are largely absent from depictions of wartime agricultural activities in the museum exhibition, despite the wartime statistics showing that they made up the majority of the work force. The primary reference



FIG. 4. Greenhouse Set Exterior, “Ministry of Food” Exhibition Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

to men in this part of the exhibition is evident in a poster depicting what appears to be a soldier, wearing army battle dress of the time complete with anklet between trousers and ankle boots, trampling a field of wheat (figure 3).

The use of the boot in the poster, “Watch Your Step,” indicates that the warning was for male military personnel in agricultural areas. The negative connotations of destruction and waste attached to the poster are juxtaposed with the positive attributes associated with women’s efforts to cultivate the land for the war effort. Such presentations imply gender tensions in the exhibition and, as Margaretta Jolly suggests, a division between “male” military history and “female” domestic history, which the museum contributed to British popular memory.⁵⁵ However, depictions of gender history in the agricultural portion of the exhibition are not so clear-cut. While women in the WLA are presented as being on the home front, they are not in the domestic space. The representations of the WLA distance women from the home and the domestic framework associated with female domesticity in wartime, crossing the gender boundary and veering away from the domestic ideal.

Following the “Battle for the Land” segment of the show, the IWM staff created a “Dig for Victory” space to represent individuals’ growing activities in home gardens and allotments during the war.⁵⁶ This space included tools such as a hoe and spade, a seed bag, and a theatrical greenhouse (figure 4). This simulated building offered audiences



FIG. 5. Dig for Victory, “Ministry of Food” Exhibition
Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

the opportunity to step into the garden and imagine growing their own food as, no doubt, some of them did in their own gardens or allotments.

However, this portion of the exhibition is also not without gendered connotations. In an area opposite to the greenhouse, the posters placed in this space suggest men’s and women’s roles in connection to growing for the home. Here the designer’s thinking about gender roles creeps in through the selection and placement of the “Dig for Victory” posters (figure 5).

In one poster in the middle of the left-hand wall, a shovel and a male boot are seen in the process of digging up soil to plant food. This time the male boot is employed safely and productively in the production of food. While the boot in the “Watch Your Step” poster suggests the potential harm military men posed to the fields with their activities to defend the

nation, the depiction of the civilian male boot digging up soil to grow more consumables implies positive work for the home environment. This representation indicates that men on the home front were undertaking more productive activities than the men in the military in terms of helping feed families. It attests to actualities of the wartime situation in which many men who remained on the home front took part in growing food for their families and for the nation. This portrayal of men's work through the "Dig for Victory" program suggests men's connection to the domestic environment, rather than separation from it. The illustrations of the "Dig for Victory" campaign in the exhibition also imply a gendered division of labor between the central male figure in the garden and women in the home producing meals with the food from men's labor. Next to the poster of the man's boot is depicted a woman, most likely a housewife, holding cauliflower, the product of what can be assumed to be a man's labor, which is ready to be cooked by the woman. While these images imply different gendered tasks, they also suggest interconnected roles of men and women to feed families in wartime.

The "Rotten Rationing" film, contrasting sharply with the exhibition, implies that growing food was a dual-gendered concern. Images on the screen show men and women taking part in planting and growing food. An audio clip from the original 1941 British wartime film "Dig for Victory," which plays in the Horrible Histories film, underlines their shared responsibility: "There is a bit of ground waiting for you somewhere. And surely isn't an hour in the garden better than an hour in the queue?"⁵⁷ The implication is that women could better spend their time growing their own fruits and vegetables than queuing for food. The film's depiction of gardening as an activity that included men and women, rather than being strictly a man's task, allowed young audience members to relate the history to their own knowledge of and perhaps involvement in growing food. It also connects with the ways in which gardening is represented on twenty-first-century television. Popular gardening television programs in Britain, such as *The Big Allotment Challenge* and *Gardeners' World*, portray gardening as a dual-gendered activity.⁵⁸ The IWM North design team sought to draw on these popular cultural contexts in order to create a film that would sit comfortably with children's awareness of and even expectations about gender roles associated with cultivation activities.

In addition to domestic growing efforts on the farm and in the garden, food imports were vital to Britain in wartime. Even before the war



FIG. 6. Merchant Navy, “Ministry of Food” Exhibition
Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

began, Britain was dependent on its empire and dominions to supply the bulk of its food resources because its domestic agricultural output could not meet demand. In wartime, many of Britain’s international supply lines were curtailed or completely cut off by enemy action, making it vitally important for Britain to keep shipping lanes open to sustain its food imports.⁵⁹ The merchant navy played a pivotal role in bringing food to the country and feeding the nation. Shipments of food to Britain were under constant threat from German U-boat attacks, which posed great danger to the lives of the merchant navy.⁶⁰ Over the course of the war, 45,329 merchant navy sailors were wounded, missing in action, became prisoners of war, or were killed during the conflict.⁶¹ Despite the risks that these men undertook for Britain, their efforts have often been underrepresented, misrepresented, or undervalued in popular culture due to the nature of their actions and their ambiguous

connection to the military services.⁶² However, the museum staff in London and Manchester sought to call attention to the sacrifices these men made and the crucial work they undertook, creating a consistent message about the merchant navy across the MoF exhibition and *Horrible Histories* film. Painted in dark colors, the merchant navy section (figure 6) contrasts sharply with the light hues and soft tones prevalent throughout the rest of the exhibition.

Although the exhibition negatively depicted soldiers' activities in relation to women's agriculture work, it made a serious, positive, and important statement about the work of the merchant navy to bring food to Britain and to support women's domestic activities. This display reinforced the ideal of the breadwinner, extending its meaning to include the work of the men in the merchant navy.

The *Rotten Rationing* film portrays a similar solemn tone and message about the merchant navy. On screen, a cartoon of a boat is silhouetted in dark colors navigating through the water, sonar sounds are heard, and ominous music plays to introduce the audience to the issue of wartime food imports. As the cartoon progresses, the ship is blown up and food sinks to the bottom of the sea.

Just as in the exhibition, this part of the film centers on men's roles in the deadly serious business of international trade and national defense, while other portions of the film, in which women as well as men are involved, concern lighter and happier topics. The connection between imported food and wartime masculinity is concurrent with the MoF exhibition, perpetuating representations of war constructed around men's primary role in defending the country and, in this case, its food while providing for women on the home front.

COOKERY AND SHOPPING

Cookery formed the cornerstone of food rationing activities; however, the exhibition and film provide different narratives of the gender roles associated with these pursuits. The MoF exhibition presents a theatrical kitchen set in which women's centrality in matters of the home and in relation to the food controls is clearly manifest (figure 7).

The kitchen is an archetype room fitted with 1940s gas stove, sink, drying rack, and other necessary equipment to prepare meals for family members. The door at the far end of the space suggests the intimacy



FIG. 7. Kitchen, “Ministry of Food” Exhibition Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

of a cottage kitchen in which relatives could surround themselves with the calming comforts of home, providing a nostalgic glow to the set. The kitchen table invites visitors to sit down and imagine sharing a meal with their family, including an infant in a high chair. The decor and the photographs that surround the set emphasize the kitchen as a maternal, feminine space, but one to which men and children, dependent on women’s activities in the kitchen, could also relate. The gendered division of labor projected through the kitchen display is the result of the negotiations between events of the past and twenty-first-century interpretations of the past by the museum staff for an adult audience. However, the focus on women’s central role in the home contrasts with the exhibition’s emphasis on women’s war work away from the home in the Women’s Land Army. The women are portrayed as occupying primary positions inside and outside the home, covering two different types of activities connected to the food situation on the home front. These opposite depictions of women’s roles both support and disrupt the notion of ideal female domesticity in wartime, projecting contradictory messages to the public in a prominent site of memory. No explanation was given by the museum staff as to why these dual depictions of women’s roles with wartime food were employed, but they are concurrent with messages projected to the public through television and film, which were discussed earlier in this article, surrounding the popular memory of women’s multiple roles with food on the British home front. Mu-



FIG. 8. Imperial War Museum, "Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing" Big Picture Show, "The Wartime Grub Show," IWM Content Log Revised, 2013.

seum staff's constructions of a gendered narrative around women's diverse war-time food activities and audience's expectations in relation to the topic sit within this framework of popular memory.

Cookery roles presented in the "Rotten Rationing" film offer a view of war-time gendered identities that connects the modern and historical in ways divergent from the exhibition. In the film, a cartoon cooking program, "The Wartime Grub Show," is shown in which a male chef prepares dishes using wartime ingredients and recipes. The chef, described by the

film's content log as having a "broad Bolton accent," is pictured in the black-and-white still photograph shown in figure 8.⁶³

The program focuses on preparing things such as squirrel tail soup, sheep's head broth, whale meat, and mock banana flan. Completing this scene is an audience soundtrack that claps, laughs, and "oh" and "ahs" its way through the show while the chef makes witty commentary and offers cookery tips. Rotten Rationing's depiction of the cooking show exaggerates wartime realities with the intention of drawing in younger audiences. The film's depiction of a male chef also implies a connection to modern-day cookery programs shown in Britain such as *The Naked Chef*, *The Great British Bake Off*, and *Master Chef*.⁶⁴ The projection of wartime cooking, using this modern media format, was consistent with the IWM North's aim for the film:

It was devised to be popular to a modern audience. So, like [I] say, for example, the mock-up of the cooking show, that's obviously trying to appeal to people because they watch cooking shows, so something like a pretend cooking show. So it was making modern links like that.⁶⁵

Wanting children to associate the history with their own experiences, the designers produced a film that showcased men's cookery roles over women's activities. However, this depiction contradicted wartime realities in which women predominantly undertook the bulk of cooking in the wartime home. But it is likely that children who watched the film were familiar with both men and women participating in cooking activ-



FIG. 9. Shop Interior, Imperial War Museum, “Ministry of Food” Exhibition Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

ities to some degree, making the cookery scenario on the screen plausible and applicable to their own food situation at home. The simulated cooking program is also an indication of a gendered view of rationing that links with the present-day prevalence of male professional chefs in the culinary industry and on television such as Jamie Oliver and Michel Roux, Jr., thereby imposing contemporary cultural understandings on museum representations of rationing. Thus, different gendered identities that emerged in the exhibition and the film were dependent above all on the audience’s expectations and twenty-first-century experiences.

Food shopping was another area of wartime rationing, which was represented in dissimilar ways between the exhibition and the film. The exhibition offered visitors the opportunity to step into a wartime setting and imagine themselves among the shoppers of the day (figure



FIG. 10. Health, Imperial War Museum, “Ministry of Food Exhibition” Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

9). The ability for everyone to act out this wartime role in the museum suggested to the public that the issue of food procurement was something that involved all members of society, just as it does in modern-day Britain.

Seemingly, this theatrical stage presents a nongendered setting through which to provide an overview of the variety of goods that would have been available in most shops on the home front. However, the basket placed on the chair, a traditional device used by women to carry shopping goods, signals women’s central domestic role in the activity. The projection of this gendered message in the museum is the outcome of negotiations between cultural constructions of the past and present-day perceptions held by IWM staff surrounding the associations between gendered identities and food controls.

The theme of shopping is also depicted in the Horrible Histories film through still photographs. A cartoon clip depicts several women and one lone man walking on the street to procure food, suggesting that while the work of obtaining consumables for the family was mainly a woman's responsibility, men also took part in this activity. This portrayal of shopping also implies modern-day gendered practices in which both a child's mother and father are likely to participate, to some extent, in food shopping, perpetuating the connection between past and present gender roles to accord with viewers' experiences in twenty-first-century settings.

HEALTH

A great deal of government time, energy, and propaganda were devoted to promoting healthy eating on food rations. Both the exhibition and film portray the wartime government's emphasis on health; however, in doing so each presents divergent constructions about who was responsible for individuals' well-being during the conflict.

In the health portion of the exhibition (figure 10), silhouetted on one wall are a young, beautiful woman and a strong, attractive man who appear to be in perfect shape, suggesting ideal gender types in wartime. These figures are arranged behind the weights and measurements station to allow visitors to see what the perfect wartime body was supposed to look like and perhaps consider how modern-day health had strayed from these ideals. According to the designer, the exhibition was intentionally made interactive to link the issue of health between the past and the present:

We were trying to encourage visitors at that point to make direct connections between themselves now, I mean if you look at the general, the sort of weights of people, and the heights of people at the time, it's quite significantly different really from these days. And I think that that encouraged, we wanted to sort of encourage a bit of reflection about, actually of people's health.⁶⁶

The cutouts on the wall in conjunction with the invitation for the public to measure up suggest that the issue of health was and continues to be a dual-gendered matter. Photographs next to and adjacent to the silhouettes comprise a set of mixed, gendered images of people being checked for physical fitness in wartime, indicating the inclusive nature



FIG. 11. Health, Imperial War Museum, “Ministry of Food” Exhibition
Photograph, Imperial War Museum, 2011.

of the topic (figure 11). However, the design and prevalence of images of women, babies, and children in photographs and war posters included in this display suggest that it was women who oversaw this wartime concern as part of their domestic activities.

These representations indicate that the designer’s thinking about the centrality of women’s domestic roles in wartime had a direct impact on the gendered identities present in the exhibition, and subsequently the messages that the public would take away with them as part of the museum’s contribution to the popular memory of war.

Like the exhibition, the film suggests that rationing had a positive impact on the health of the population and connects the issue of wartime wellness to twenty-first-century lifestyles, perpetuating the positive popular memory associated with the benefits of food rationing. However, in contrast to the exhibition, the film’s narrator does not imply gendered connotations with the topic: “Rationing wasn’t all rotten. Puny portions meant everyone got their fair shares and people actually ate more healthy. Imagine if we brought it back?”⁶⁷ The film’s humorous lines advise audiences that it was everyone’s responsibility, then and now, to eat appropriate amounts of food in order to lead healthy lives.

However, in this case, the health of families does not rest on women's shoulders; rather, it is everyone's individual responsibility to eat nutritious foods to stay well.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that the Imperial War Museum acted as a pivotal location that shaped the popular memory of food rationing and its links with wartime gender roles projected to the British public in the twenty-first century. The multifaceted, gendered narratives presented by the museum in the "Ministry of Food" exhibition and the "Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show" were not unvarnished histories of food rationing. Neither did the IWM create seamless messages about people's roles with wartime food across the two presentations. Rather, contradictory gendered messages pervaded each portrayal of the history of rationing. The two depictions of wartime gendered identities related to food rationing activities sometimes converged with and sometimes diverged from each other as well as from wartime gendered ideals and realities.

The design teams selected specific parts of the history to relate to different groups of viewers in connection with the different memories, expectations, and life experiences of the group members. The staff also shaped the narratives on display around the institution's goals associated with audience demographics and understanding of gender roles in wartime to create lighthearted and entertaining presentations about rationing. In producing the two presentations on rationing, IWM staff sought to connect to visitors' schemas, relating the past and the present. As a result, the exhibition and the film were infused with the shifting social, cultural, political, and economic contexts of the present, linking issues such as waste, health, and consumer austerity between the present day and wartime. The feedback from audiences that attended the exhibition and the film was positive, suggesting that despite any discrepancies between the events of the past and the popular memory on display, they did not detract from visitors' experiences. Rather, the museum sought and was able to key into people's nostalgically charged memories (lived and received), connecting gender roles and food rationing in wartime in ways that fit with audiences' perceptions and expectations.

These representations of the past resulted in multilayered contribu-

tions to popular memory, which were at work in society at the same time. The authority that the museum carried and its importance as a site of national memory and remembrance ensured that these versions of history would continue to shape British popular memory surrounding food rationing and wartime gender roles into the future.

NOTES

1. *The 1940s House*, performed by Michael Hymer, Lyn Hymer, Kirstie Hymer, Ben Hymer, and Thomas Hymer (2001; London: Channel 4/Acorn Media UK, VHS release 22 January 2001), television. The Blitz was a period of heavy nighttime aerial bombardment by the Germans on the British home front during the Second World War. The Blitz occurred from September 1940 to May 1941.

2. See Gaynor Kavanagh, "Museum as Memorial: The Origins of the Imperial War Museum," *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 1 (1988): 77–97; see also Sue Malvern, "War, Memory and Museums: Art and Artefacts in the Imperial War Museum," *History Workshop Journal* 49, no. 1 (2000): 177–203.

3. Imperial War Museum, "Imperial War Museum Annual Account and Report," Imperial War Museum website, 14 July 2014, http://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/public-document/IWM_Annual_Report_2013-14.pdf. IWM's annual report for 2013–2014 was completed in July 2014. It estimates that more than 1.8 million people visited its five branch locations during the year.

4. See Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), 22–26, for a discussion of how public and private memories work on and shape each other.

5. See Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then: A History of Everyday Life in the Second World War* (London: Random House, 2002), 141–42, for a discussion of the points system and the foods included in it.

6. Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, 140–55, 167–79.

7. See S. O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 151–96.

8. Peter Howlett, *Fighting with Figures: A Statistical Digest of the Second World War* (London: HMSO, 1995), Table 3.3, "Distribution of Total Manpower," 38.

9. For examples of women's and men's diverse activities around the wartime food situation, see Kathleen Tipper, *A Woman in Wartime London: The Diary of Kathleen Tipper, 1941–1945*, eds. Patricia Malcolmson and Robert Malcolmson (London: London Record Society, 2006); C. F. Harriss, *Working at War: The Diary of C. F. Harriss*, ed. Paul Holden (Chichester: Phillimore, 2010).

10. I would like to thank the Imperial War Museum for granting me permission to use materials related to the exhibition and film and interviews conducted with

staff. For this project, I interviewed Rebecca Wakeford (IWM London designer) in 2011 and 2013, and Victoria Howarth (IWM North education team) in 2013.

11. Kerwin Lee Klein, "On Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 127–50.

12. Randolph Starn, "A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies," *Historical Review* 110, no. 1 (2005): 70–71.

13. See Richard H. Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibition," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995): 1036–63; David Thelen, "History after the Enola Gay Controversy: An Introduction," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995): 1029–35. These articles illustrate how an exhibition can create controversy between planners of the exhibition and public interest groups.

14. Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939–1991* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), 30.

15. Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1068.

16. Laura Brandon, "Looking For the 'Total' Woman in Wartime: A Museological Work in Progress," in Amy K. Levin, ed., *Gender, Sexuality, and Museums* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 115.

17. It should be noted that British history of World War II in most popular memory representations, including in the IWM, is still a history of white Britain. Representations of ethnic minorities are rarely evident, despite the importance of the empire in feeding Britain and the multiracial experience in wartime. This article will not consider the issue of race in its analysis, but this is an area of research that deserves much more attention in the historiography.

18. Mark Connelly, *We Can Take It! Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 2004); Jean R. Freedman, *Whistling in the Dark: Memory and Culture in Wartime London* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998).

19. Janet Watson, "Total War and Total Anniversary: The Material Culture of Second World War Commemoration in Britain," in Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson, eds., *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 176.

20. Margaretta M. Jolly, "Love Letters versus Letters Carved in Stone: Gender, Memory and the 'Forces Sweetheart' Exhibition," in Martin Evans and Ken Lunn, eds., *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 105–21.

21. See Lucy Noakes, "Making Histories: Experiencing the Blitz in London's Museums in the 1990s," in Evans and Lunn, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, 89–104.

22. Corinna M. Peniston-Bird, "The People's War in Personal Testimony and Bronze: Sorority and the Memorial to the Women of World War II," in Noakes and Pattinson, *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, 67–88.

23. Rebecca Bramall, "The Austerity Larder: Mapping Food Systems in a New Age of Austerity," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 15, no. 2 (2015): 1–19.

24. The museum was reopened in 2014 after extensive renovations. Its temporary exhibition space is now laid out differently than when it held the "Ministry of Food" exhibition.

25. See Noakes, "Making Histories," 94–96, for an overview of the IWM's Blitz experience as a sensory activity connected with popular memory.

26. Imperial War Museum, "Big Picture Show," 2019, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-north/big-picture-show>. This website discusses the general purposes and uses of this type of film in the museum.

27. The group labels are specific to the IWM and are used to determine audience statistics and marketing strategies to promote their programs.

28. Imperial War Museum, "IWM: Access and Inclusion Strategy 2018–2023," https://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/2019-08/Access%20and%20Inclusion%20Strategy_o.pdf.

29. Figures and information came from the IWM London's marketing department and were obtained during Wakeford interview, 2013.

30. Noakes, *War and the British*, 12, 25.

31. Jerome de Groot, *Consuming Histories: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2008), 39.

32. See CBBC, "Watch: Horrible Histories," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/by/show/horrible-histories>, for information about the Horrible Histories television program; see also Scholastic, "Horrible Histories," 2017, <http://horrible-histories.co.uk/>.

33. Howarth interview, 2013. In February 2015 there were seven Big Picture Shows on offer that told the history of war from the First World War to Iraq.

34. See Imperial War Museum, "Have a Horrible Half Term at IWM North," May 2013, http://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/press-release/Half_Term_IWM_North_May2013.pdf; see also Imperial War Museum, "Paltry Portions and Revolting Recipes—New Horrible Histories®: Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show at IWM North," May 2013, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/sites/default/files/press-release/HorribleHistoriesRottenRationing.pdf>. These press releases illustrate how the museum emphasized the connection between the history of rationing narrative and the Horrible Histories franchise.

35. Imperial War Museum, "Corporate Plan, 2018–21," file:///C:/Users/K%20Spring/Downloads/Corporate%20Plan%202018-21%20FINAL.pdf, IWM Performance Measures, "Audience Impact," 23. These numbers include both "facilitated and self-directed" visitors.

36. Imperial War Museum, "Schools: Visits and Learning Sessions," 2019, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/learning>.

37. Howarth interview, 2013.

38. Howarth interview, 2013.

39. Howarth interview, 2013.

40. Wakeford interview, 2011.

41. See for example, Warren Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 25–33; see also David E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), for a study of how food allows Greek individuals to connect the present and the past and associations with others through the consumption of food.

42. Wakeford interview, 2013. During the interview, she read off this description of the marketing targets from a document she had prepared for the discussion.

43. M. Palmer, "In the Second World War We Used Our Loaf," *Daily Express* (London), 5 February 2010, 13; Jane Perrone, "The Battle of the Land," *Guardian*, 12 February 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/gardening-blog/2010/feb/12/allotments-secondworldwar?INTCMP=SRCH>; Finlo Rohrer, "Should We Bring Back Rationing?" *BBC News Magazine*, 7 January 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8445824.stm>.

44. See Jane Fearnley-Whittingstall, "The Kitchen Front," *Despatches*, Winter 2009, 11–13. This author is the mother of food writer and television chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. The IWM commissioned her to write a book to accompany the exhibition, which was sold in the museum's gift shop during the time of the show. Jane Fearnley-Whittingstall, *The Ministry of Food: Thrifty Wartime Ways to Feed Your Family Today* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2010).

45. Howarth interview, 2013.

46. Howarth interview, 2013.

47. Wakeford interview, 2011.

48. Howarth interview, 2013.

49. Howarth interview, 2013.

50. Howlett, *Fighting with Figures*, Table 3.12, "Numbers Employed in Agriculture," 46.

51. For a discussion of wartime constructions and perceptions of men in war work, see Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 151–96.

52. See Cecilia Gowdy-Wygart, *Cultivating Victory: The Women's Land Army and the Victory Garden Movement* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013); see Vita Sackville-West, *The Women's Land Army* (London: Michael Joseph, 1944), for more information about the Women's Land Army.

53. *The Land Girls*, directed by David Leland, written by Angela Huth, Keith Dewhurst, and David Leland, featuring Catherine McCormack, Rachel Weisz, Anna

Friel, and Steven Mackintosh (London: Intermedia Films, 1998). It depicts the lives of three women working in the Women's Land Army on a farm in Dorset during the Second World War. The film was adapted from Angela Huth, *Land Girls* (London: Little, Brown, 1995).

54. See Edward Blishen, *A Cack-handed War* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1972). This is a diary of a conscientious objector who worked in agriculture during the war as part of his national service. He describes how difficult and physically demanding such work was.

55. Jolly, "Love Letters," 105–21.

56. The Ministry of Agriculture created the "Dig for Victory" campaign during the war to encourage British people to grow their own food at home or in community allotments to add to their restricted and rationed diet.

57. Imperial War Museum, "Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show," Imperial War Museum, 2014. See *Dig for Victory*, produced by the Minister of Information, presented by Roy Hay, Ministry of Agriculture, 1941, film.

58. *The Big Allotment Challenge*, performed by Fern Britton, Jim Butters, Jonathan Moseley, and Thane Prince (London: BBC, 2014–2015); *Gardeners' World*, presented by Monty Don (London: BBC, 1968–present).

59. See Fredrick Woolton, *The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Woolton* (London: Cassell, 1959), 210–11, for a map and figures showing what food and how much was imported to Britain from around the world in wartime. For information about the vital role that the British empire played in feeding Britain during the war, and in some cases the devastating consequences to the colonies that resulted from British policies regarding food imports, see Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War Two and the Battle for Food* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 120–54; see also James Vernon, *Hunger: A Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 118–58.

60. For wartime food tonnage loss, see Richard J. Hammond, *Food: Studies in Administration and Control*, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1951), Table VIII, "Losses at Sea of Food and Feeding-stuffs Destined for the United Kingdom (a)," 396. From January to March 1941, Britain sustained its highest food losses at sea with 254,000 tons sunk.

61. Howlett, *Fighting with Figures*, Table 3.8, "Casualties Suffered during the War by Armed Forces, Auxiliary Services and Merchant Navy," 43.

62. See Penny Summerfield, "Divisions at Sea: Class, Gender, Race, and Nation in Maritime Films of the Second World War, 1939–60," *Twentieth Century British History* 22, no. 3 (2011): 330–53, for a discussion of the ways in which the merchant navy has been represented in films during and after the Second World War.

63. Bolton is a town near the location of IWM North in the northwest of England, which was predominantly a working-class area during the war. The accent was most likely used to connect with northern audiences who watched the film.

64. *The Naked Chef*, performed by Jamie Oliver (London: BBC, 1999); *The Great British Bake Off*, performed by Mary Berry, Paul Hollywood, Mel Giedroyc, and Sue Perkins (London: BBC, 2010–2016); *Master Chef*, performed by John Torode and Gregg Wallace (London: BBC, 2005–present).

65. Howarth interview, 2013.

66. Wakeford interview, 2013.

67. Imperial War Museum, “Horrible Histories Rotten Rationing Big Picture Show.”