

A Patchwork of Internment: the women's perspective of internment in the Far East, 1941-1945.

**Dr Bernice Archer**

This paper focuses on the three embroidered quilts made by the women interned in Changi prison by the Japanese during the Second World War.

It is almost seventy years since the creation of the Japanese prison camps of the Second World War in the Far East. During that time much has been written about the terrible suffering of the interned military personnel, however, it is equally important to remember that over 130,000 Western civilians were also captured and interned in a variety of camps and locations by the Japanese in the Far East during that same period and that approximately 41,000 of these were women

Through an analysis of the iconography of the three quilts made by the women in Changi I will argue that they tell a multi-faceted story. They not only capture the realities of war, but the women's personal and internment identities and experiences are also bound up in them. They also affirm, record and communicate the victory of personal battles for survival; they are an unconventional but detailed, evocative and unique picture of life in the internment camp; they demonstrate the women's political and social awareness and they also indicate that although the British colonial rule, power and communities had been routed in the Far East, the dominant and far reaching voice of colonial culture, which had shaped lives and fashioned self images and imaginations, remained a stabilizing influence and a lifeline on which colonial men and women could cling.

'Know the Face of Thine Enemy: The Portrayal of German Prisoners of War by British Official War Artists, 1917-1919.'

**Dr. Jonathan Black**

This paper will draw upon unpublished research for my PhD Thesis in History of Art (UCL, 2003). It will explore over two dozen images of German prisoners of war produced by British official war artists between the summer of 1917 and the spring of 1919. Among the artists to be discussed will be: C.R.W. Nevinson; Charles Sargeant Jagger; Eric Kennington; Francis Dodd; Murihead Bone; Colin Unwin Gill and William Orpen. Ironically, given there were nearly two million British servicemen in France, on first arriving there in 1917 official war artists often found it much easier to initially gain access to German prisoners of war to draw than to British 'tommies.'

When drawing German subjects, either in makeshift POW holding areas a few miles behind the front line, or in more substantial camps in the vicinity of French ports such as Calais, Boulogne, Dunkirk and Le Havre, the official war artists were very much aware that they had to proceed with particular care. If they made German prisoners appear too caricaturally criminal, or degenerate in physiognomy, their imagery would readily provoke ridicule from the British press (especially from a left-Liberal perspective; H.G. Wells, for example, warned Nevinson not to reduce the Germans he depicted to the level of 'sub-human creatures'). On the other hand, too sympathetic a presentation would invite swift censorship from the Intelligence Dept. at BEF General Headquarters and from their employers at the Dept (later Ministry) of Information. Then again, if German soldiers were depicted as pathetic and feeble, questions at home would inevitably arise as to why the sturdy British Tommy was experiencing so much difficulty in sweeping aside such physically unimpressive opposition.

Comment will be offered, where available, as to the reactions artists expressed about their German subjects and the surroundings in which they sketched and drew them. Also reactions

to POW drawings when displayed – usually within officially sponsored exhibitions in London – from broadsheet art critics, more overtly populist opinion and from leading contemporary war poets/writers known to some of the individual artists: Kennington's war art, for example, was highly regarded by Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon and Laurence Binyon. If time permits, comment will also be offered on reactions to the appearance of German POWs within art imagery produced for the Imperial War Museum's unrealised grand Hall of Remembrance. The inclusion of the enemy within works commissioned to celebrate the recent triumph of British arms provoked lively press discussion on their exhibition in the 'Nations War Paintings and Other Records' show at Burlington House in November 1919.

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'God save the King! Creative modes of defiance, resistance and identity in Channel Islander internment camps in Germany, 1942-1945

**Dr Gilly Carr**

During the German Occupation of the Channel Islands during WWII, a total of 2,200 islanders were deported to civilian internment camps in Germany and further afield. Those targeted for deportation included the entire families of English-born islanders, former army officers, Freemasons, Jews, and 'undesirables' who had spent time in prison for minor acts of resistance against the occupying authorities.

Once settled in their camps, the islanders went about finding ways to creatively circumvent the strictures of their drab, interned life in order to remain true to their identity, their loyalty to the crown, and their support of Allied forces. While some of these creative expressions involved varying degrees of defiance and disobedience to camp rules and orders issued by their guards, other acts were more subtle.

Internees re-used and recycled the raw materials around them, usually their empty Red Cross food parcels, in order to retain some measure of control over their circumstances. The subversive material culture they produced eventually found its way back to the Channel Islands and UK in the luggage of the internees. It has provided a rich source of research material and has illuminated the methods of the internees in challenging the power relations of their internment.

This paper, then, explores the range of defiant action, insubordination, and counter-narratives practised by internees in all aspects of their creative output, ranging from theatre, art and craftwork, to poetry, music, gardening and menu composition. This material, as a whole, highlights a refusal to accept the uncomfortable circumstances in which they found themselves. It also shows an ability to poke fun at the poor food and living conditions - a mode of silent complaint which they frequently used.

Modes of resistance in the camps could be quiet (e.g. making embroideries dedicated to the King, wearing Union Jack badges, or hanging V-for-victory symbols on the wall), muffled (such as listening to illegal home-made radios), or loud (singing the national anthem or anti-German songs, or hammering subversive symbols into metalwork). Acts of defiance ranged from being highly visible (such as dressing as patriotic figures at a fancy dress carnival), to the more ambiguous (weaving a V-sign into the sole of a shoe). Whatever the nature of their resistance, internees were highly creative in their output, and it is this creativity which will be discussed in this paper.

Material Culture and Memory: Designing a virtual museum for Knockaloe Internment Camp  
**Claire Corkill (poster)**

Knockaloe internment camp, on the Isle of Man, was used by the British government throughout the First World War to detain almost 25,000 men classified as 'enemy aliens'. The individuals contained behind the barbed wire were brought together by their common ancestry but in many cases this was where the similarities ended. Differences in social status, religion, political beliefs, education and language resulted in the development of a unique society based on contrast and continuity. What began as a plan for containment became a pattern for a complex and dynamic community.

At the end of the war the camp buildings were sold and its inhabitants dispersed, leaving little physical evidence within the landscape and carrying the intangible heritage of Knockaloe far beyond the confines of the camp. A wealth of material culture, held by private individuals and public organisations, survives in the form of craftwork, personal effects, official documents and individual accounts and it is these objects that provide the easiest access to the camp's history and inhabitants. Not only do these objects provide their own individual narratives they also have the dual function of enabling individuals with no former relationship with Knockaloe to connect with the object, the landscape and the people while also allowing those who have an existing association with the camp to reconnect with memories and experiences. This paper aims to highlight the potential for the creation of an online museum and virtual archive which will reach beyond the general historical narrative of Knockaloe. By drawing together the material culture of the camp within a single platform the site is designed to create a multi-layered environment enabling a variety of users to connect with and add to its history while also functioning as a central archive of data from dispersed collections. This combination of material culture and memory aims to provide a medium for learning and participation, bridging the gap between communities today and communities of the past.

### Manx Cats and Triskeles: The Use of Manx Iconography in First World War Internment Camps on the Isle of Man'

**Yvonne Cresswell**

The Isle of Man was one of the main centres for civilian internment during the First World War and a significant proportion of all civilian internees would have spent at least part of their internment on the Island. A significant proportion of the surviving material culture also appears to have originated in the Manx camps. This can be determined not only by the use of the Manx camp names, Douglas and Knockaloe, but also by the frequent use of distinctly Manx iconography such as tailless Manx cats and the three legs *triskele*. As a result, otherwise anonymous views of huts, tents and barbed wires can be identified as being Manx.

The use of Manx iconography has been readily accepted for several decades on the Isle of Man but becomes increasingly incongruous when viewed in a wider cultural context. The obvious, but previously unasked, question is posed - why would a civilian internee use the iconography and symbols of the 'hated enemy' on their own art and craftwork at the height of the war? The question is particularly important / relevant because the First World War was the first global conflict to fully engage the civilian population and where orchestrated propaganda campaigns were instigated to 'demonise' the enemy, identified both as the military and civilian populations.

This paper seeks to identify the different ways in which Manx iconography was used by civilian internees on a variety of different types of art and craftwork. Although the 'popularity' of specific Manx iconography is indisputable, given the wealth of physical evidence, the reasons for its frequent use are far more speculative. At a basic / superficial

level, the 'enemy alien' internees may have adopted the Manx 3 legs and tailless cat as suitable symbols because of their popularity as symbols on pre-War tourist souvenirs and connotations with good luck. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the tailless cat and 3 legs are the two most identifiable Manx symbols to a British and broader international audience. Therefore is the use of Manx iconography no more than a response to the Island having a readily identifiable brand or logo, in contrast to other camps around the British Isles? There may though be deeper and more profound reasons for the use and more importantly the identification with the Manx iconography. Many of the internees were held on the Isle of Man for 4 or 5 years, often working alongside Manx civilian staff and in different parts of the Island. Therefore it may be possible that the Isle of Man became in a sense the internees' 'home' and that they (re)created their own sense and form of a Manx identity. In a wider contemporary political and cultural context, the Isle of Man was beginning to develop its own distinct Manx cultural identity, together with other 'Celtic Nations'. One may speculate whether the internees viewed the Island and its inhabitants as British (and therefore the 'enemy' or more specifically (and distinctly) as Manx.

Internment camps may be viewed potentially as liminal spaces, but it may be that in a wider context the whole Island and its population, civilian and internee, came to occupy their own shared liminal space and sense of identity represented by tailless cats and 3 legs.

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'The eye and the mouthpiece of our thoughts and ideas': Alva, Lomnitz, Meyer, Nonnenmacher, Schames, Solomonski -forgotten artist internees on the Isle of Man 1940-1945.

**Rachel Dickson**

On 6 September 1940, the Jewish Chronicle's art critic 'H K', published an article 'Forty Artists Interned'. Written in the early autumn following mass internment, 'H K' railed against the "unimaginative stupidity" of interning artists and declared their civilising influence as "the eye and the mouthpiece of our thoughts and ideas". The article identified a number by name – almost all Jewish - and alongside those of Johnny [sic] Heartfield, Fred Uhlmann, Martin Bloch and Ludwig Meidner, those of 'Alva' and 'Mr and Mrs Nonnenmacher', and a number of others, stand apart by the very fact that we do not immediately recognise their names today. More than 50 years later, the art historian and former Hutchinson internee, Klaus E Hinrichsen, in his chapter *Visual Art Behind the Wire* in Cesarini and Kushner's 'The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain' listed more than twenty male artists and three women whom he knew were interned in transit and / or internment camps elsewhere on the island. Once again, amongst the 29 names, we see Alva, Lomnitz, Schames, Meyer, and the Nonnenmachers; the majority are now represented in the Ben Uri Gallery's permanent collection.

This paper accordingly seeks to examine the influence and experience of internment on the work of a number of less well-known artists, detained in both Hutchinson in Douglas (the so-called 'artists' camp) and Onchan, on the coast north east of Douglas. Artists discussed are: Fritz (Frederick) Solomonski, one of the Hutchinson signatories to the now famous 'Art Cannot Live Behind Barbed Wire' letter published in *New Statesman and Nation*, who was to become the first salaried secretary / curator of the Ben Uri Art Society, the Jewish organisation which provided a valuable support mechanism for emigre artists through its programme of exhibitions and acquisition; Alfred Lomnitz, author of the internment memoir "Never Mind, Mr Lom", (1941); Klaus Meyer, printmaker; Erna and Hermann Nonnenmacher, husband and wife sculptor and ceramicist; Samson Schames, painter and mosaicist, who worked with found materials; and the painter 'Alva' (Solomon Siegfried

Weiss). A rich source of work is provided by illustrations from a variety of internment publications to which many of these figures contributed.

The paper will also consider the breadth of post-internment experience, ranging from London Fire Guard, AIA participant (Schames) to curator/religious minister (Solomonski), to demonstrate how artists, despite significant pre-war reputations in Europe were often unable to sustain these after the fracture of exile / emigration and internment.

'Necessity, the mother of invention': ingenuity behind barbed wire

**Professor Peter Doyle**

For the average prisoner of war ('kriegie'), life in Germany provided many contrasts. For those captured in the early part of the war, there were many hardships to endure, particularly at time of both ascent and descent of the Third Reich. In the ascendant, the authorities were bullish, with resources limited for what were seen as 'defeated' nations; with the decline in the fortunes of the Reich, so came real hardships for captors and captives alike, with similar stretching of resources – food, clothing, utensils, cooking facilities. Though, in the main, the German authorities abided by the principles of the Geneva Convention with non-Soviet captives, they did so at a low level of commitment. Food supplied was below standard, a starvation diet for the vast majority of prisoners, compelled to work under the articles of the Convention. Clothing was of poor quality, reclaimed from the defeated nations. Other issue materials were similarly substandard. The arrival of the Red Cross parcels in 1941 was to see a dramatic change, and with the supply of clothing, private parcels and other materials from home provided by charitable organisations, British and Commonwealth POWs were able to scratch out a regular existence for themselves.

'Kriegies' were to become adept at the harvesting and use of materials to improve their lot; and pre-eminent amongst the materials available were the by-products of the Red Cross parcels, consisting of both the wooden packing cases containing the parcels, and the tins that were supplied within them. Packing case wood was used to construct and repair furniture for rooms and dormitory buildings; in times of want in the depths of mid-European winter it was used for fuel. Tins were perhaps the most valuable parcel by-product, however; the majority of the goods supplied in the average parcel were contained in them. Though the Germans often opened these on issue as a reprisal, few were confiscated, and the Kriegies soon became adept at re-using these metal containers in a variety of ways. The size and form of the tins varied according to the parcel issued; for example, from Canada came parcels with dried milk ('Klim') and butter ('Maple Leaf Creamery Butter'), both prized for their nutritional and metal-working capabilities. Klim was particularly prized for its size, its close-fitting lid and smooth rim which made it suitable for a wide range of metal products. Inventions based on Klim tins and the like were many and varied: cookers known as 'blowers', a unique piece of Kriegie ingenuity; 'hooch' stills; tea pots and mugs; containers. The Red Cross itself promoted the use of tins as metal-working possibilities for the captives, and POW camps rang to the attentions of the 'tin-bashers'. Though these items supported the everyday life of the Kriegie, there was a clandestine side to 'tin-bashing'; the use of tins and other items in the development of escape aids. Though escape activities formed a fraction of the active time spent in POW camps in Germany, the ingenuity of the tin-bashers and other manufacturers contributed materially to escape attempts – and the general morale of the camp. This paper will explore both sides of the Kriegie inventor's work.

## 1 'The Legacies of Creativity: Japanese American Concentration Camp Art as Artifacts of Agency'

**Dr Jane Dusselier**

Agency has historically been a concept firmly associated with people. While many contemporary scholars remain comfortable with the notion that material culture reflects or mirrors history, many are hesitant to argue that artifacts exert agency in shaping culture and human behavior. "Legacies of Creativity" will work toward a new theory of agency for artifacts. This paper will not argue that artifactual agency is the same as human agency. Rather it is a call to create new theories of agency that relate to material culture and physical objects. Reworking this idea of human agency is aimed at aiding material culture scholars to better understand the power infused in artifacts. E. McClung Fleming pointed to these possibilities of artifactual agency in his 1974 essay titled, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model." While outlining an exhaustive blueprint for interpreting artifacts, Fleming wrote: "In some cases functional analysis will indicate the ways in which the artifact became an agent of major change within its culture."

Here Fleming introduces the idea that artifacts not only reflect but also shape history and culture. Few material culturalists have taken up this call to develop and think with theories of artifactual agency, possibly because of this concept's connection to humans, but it may represent a significant direction for future research. This paper will begin the process by first examining theories of human agency and then developing ideas that will move us toward a theory of artifactual agency. Japanese American concentration camp art, broadly defined, will serve as a compelling case study where these new ideas will be tested. By visually and materially enacting what was in their minds, imprisoned Japanese Americans revealed alternative and liberative practices for creating change that reached beyond immediate needs, locations, and seemingly isolated points of identity

## Wonder Bar: Theatre Performance as Survival Strategy

**Dr Sears Eldredge**

On the evening of May 19, 1944, a remarkable theatrical event was about to take place. The intensive rehearsals had gone on for weeks under the leadership of a dictatorial British director. The sets, including a splendid backdrop of snow-capped mountains, were ready on stage. The extensive array of costumes had been designed and made with expert care. Spotlights and footlights were lit. The orchestra was tuned up and waiting in the pit to take its cue for the overture. And the curtain was about to rise on a revival of the 1931 musical comedy, *Wonder Bar*.

But this wasn't London's West End. This was Chungkai Hospital POW Camp on the edge of the jungle in Thailand where a proscenium theatre made out of bamboo and *attap* (palm fronds) had been constructed with auditorium seating for two thousand sick and recovering POWs. The sets had been made from bamboo matting; ladies' dresses, from mosquito netting; their high-heel shoes, carved from wood. The lighting was a combination of borrowed pressure lanterns and homemade slush lamps. All of which required enormous imagination and ingenuity. And the participants were all men – Allied prisoners of the Japanese during WWII.

The performers and audience members were at Chungkai recovering from the starvation, brutality, and deadly diseases contracted while building the infamous Burma-Thai "Death" Railway that stretched two hundred and fifty-seven miles from Nong Pladuk in Thailand to Thanbyuzayat in Burma. For a few hours the show allowed them to forget the

rotten smell of gangrenous leg ulcers, the edematous effects of beriberi, the debilitating bouts of malaria and dysentery – and especially the growing mountain of crosses in the camp cemetery marking the graves of those who had not survived. *Wonder Bar* not only allowed the men to forget their past and present horrors, but with its music, laughter, and “beautiful girls,” it reawakened and sustained their memories of the home that was still waiting for their return.

But *Wonder Bar* was just one of an astonishing array of entertainment performed by the POWs in their camps along the Burma-Thai Railway. In this article, *Wonder Bar* will be used as a lens through which we examine how this entertainment was produced, who were the participants, and why entertainment was promoted as a strategy for survival.

### A lighter side of internment – Stanley Camp, Hong Kong 1942-1945

#### **Geoffrey Emerson**

When one researches, reads or hears about civilian internment in the Far East during World War II, it is easy to become depressed by the horrible experiences civilians had to endure – the shock of defeat, the lack of food and subsequent malnutrition, the lack of medical supplies and subsequent deaths, the separation from loved ones and subsequent sorrows, and the atrocities experienced in some camps, to mention some of the worst features. But there were other sides in most camps, though certainly not all, particularly in the Dutch East Indies. The “lighter side” referred to in the title of this paper refers to the entertainment organised by the internees and the artistic work undertaken by the internees.

Stanley Internment Camp in Hong Kong was certainly one of the ‘better’ camps in the Far East. The sexes and families were not separated. The camp was located on a healthy (most of the time) peninsula with open spaces and a wide variety of quarters, which although extremely crowded, were better than factory buildings in Shanghai, a prison in Singapore or bamboo huts in Borneo. In Stanley there was food – though some would not have called it that – every day, and there were many professional medical workers – though almost no medicines. Cruel physical treatment of Stanley internees was mercifully rare, especially compared to the D.E.I. The Stanley internees were stuck on this peninsula and largely left to their own devices, to form their own management teams and take care of their own problems. Soon after initial internment in January 1942, informal concerts and dances were organised, and later variety shows, piano recitals, and drama, ballet and dance performances took place. In March 1942, a Recreation and Entertainment Committee was formed. There was a school hall seating 700 as well as a bowling green used for entertainments. In addition to performances, the internees were able to display great skill and ingenuity in handicrafts as well as art.

The benefits of such activities to the nearly 3000 internees cannot be overestimated, though sometimes such activities are seemingly forgotten or overlooked by historians. Without such activities psychological problems and the death tolls would certainly have been greater.

With the aid of PowerPoint, I will be demonstrating how the Stanley internees kept up their morale by participating in entertainments and other activities.

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“Meine Liebe Hanneliese!” German prisoner of war letter writing and the case study of German POW Herbert Wermelskirchen (Ducks Cross Camp, Colmworth, Bedfordshire, July-December 1946).

**Dr. Claire M. Hall**

Scholarly works which focus on Britain during the Second World War pay particular attention to topics such as the influence of war on the British people, the wartime government of Winston Churchill, and the economy. However, a study of prisoner of war camps and POWs during the war years and after (until 1948), has largely been neglected by social historians. This lack of recognition has ensured the topic of German POWs in Britain during the period 1939-48, in particular, has remained permanently on the sidelines of Second World War studies. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore the importance of POW letters as historical sources, detailing through the case study of German POW Herbert Wermelskirchen, how POW letters can shed light on a topic which has largely remained 'hidden' from history.

The paper seeks to explore how POW letters can shed light on camp life, the various hardships experienced by German POWs such as physical, mental and emotional, during their period of incarceration in Britain. Through the case study of German POW Herbert Wermelskirchen and the letters he sent to his sweetheart Hanneliese, during the period July-December 1946, the paper will reveal how Herbert dealt with the repatriation process, shed light on the daily activities and private thoughts of other German POWs held in Ducks Cross Camp in Colmworth, Bedfordshire, alongside exploring issues such as censorship, lack of space on the officially produced POW postcards and letters, restrictions on the number of letters POWs could send, irregularity of mail from home, punishments imposed by camp personnel which included bans on letter writing, as well as the methods adopted by some POWs to send more letters back home.

Behind the barbed wire, many POWs turned to letter-writing with great enthusiasm, as this was for many, the only means of contacting loved ones back in Germany. However, even though the period, 1944-48, saw a massive wave in letter-writing, relatively few German POW letters have survived. In fact, both regional and local archives in Britain hold very little, if not any in most cases, with the remainder of surviving German POW letters being sold on eBay, being found in house clearances or in some cases have remained in family collections, leaving questions surrounding ownership and access.

The paper will conclude by reviewing issues such as ownership, copyright, alongside the problem of how to access surviving German POW letters. The contents of POW letters are personal and some would debate, should remain private and not be made available to the public. Others would argue that they should, but not enough time had lapsed from the end of the Second World War to the present day, with the possibility remaining that the letter writer could still be alive. This may account for the fact there are very few works which focus solely on POW letters as historical sources. But by taking these issues into consideration and adopting a 'history from below' approach, German POW letters can shed important and much needed light on a missing dimension of British social history, one which can adopt an all encompassing national, regional, and local perspective.

### 'Internment Re-imagined: The Weihsien Camp, 1943-45'

**Jonathan Henshaw**

From 1943 to 1945, approximately 1700 Western civilians were interned by the Japanese in Weihsien, China. The internees represented a cross-section of colonial society, with a particularly large number of missionaries and over 300 schoolchildren. Analyzing the documentary sources and the internees' creative output in tandem reveals the particular success that the internee community had in both determining the course of their own internment and in importing pre-war social organisations into camp life.

In this paper, I argue that the Weihsien internees reached an uneasy 'accommodation' with their captors, charting a course that calls into question the two extremes of "resistance" and

“collaboration” in the setting of an internment camp. A central aspect of this accommodation stems from the creative output of internment life, in the form of paintings, notebooks, posters and other materials. These creative efforts reflect how internees adjusted to the circumstances of their forced internment under the Japanese and acted to establish a functioning community within the camp confines.

The internees produced a vibrant visual record of an idealised Weihsien, filled with colour, open space and beauty that stood in sharp contrast to the bleak realities of overcrowding, poor sanitation and deprivation of life in the camp. In this respect, internees asserted a sense of ownership over Weihsien, both through mental acts of re-imagination and physical acts of improvement. But the Weihsien internees’ creative output also records the rich community life that formed during internment. From event posters to sketches to activity notebooks, internees recorded and illustrated the ways in which they navigated life within the internment camp setting, sometimes lampooning their captors but also occasionally presenting an image of internment fit for Japanese propaganda.

In short, Weihsien art represents the compromise reached by the internees as they found themselves in an environment determined by the Japanese. Neither constantly defiant nor entirely accepting of their circumstances, the Weihsien internees reached an accommodation with their guards that went beyond the false choice of collaboration or resistance and more fully reflects the complex relationship between captor and captive during wartime internment.

#### Civilian Internee embroidered cloths made in Changi.

**Alan Jeffreys.**

This case study examines four embroidered cloths (three tablecloths and one bed sheet) made in Changi and Sime Road Women’s Civilian Internment camps in Singapore, held within the collections of the Imperial War Museum. All four include a large number of the embroidered signatures of fellow civilian internees. My paper will show the problems but also the benefits of researching the provenance and story behind the exhibits within the Imperial War Museum’s archives and other archives. The research will mainly concentrate on the embroidery on the cloths themselves, depicting scenes of daily life, the different use of coloured thread and the names of the civilian internees themselves. I will be arguing that this will be more than ‘a flowering of creativity’ within the camp but also a record of their time in the camp and a memorial to those interned.

#### *KULTURKRIEG* and *FRONTGEIST* from behind the wire: World War I newspapers from Douglas Internment Camp.

**Dr Jennifer Kewley Draskau**

The internment camp newspapers offer not only a simple mirror of experience distinguished by its authenticity: like other war prose, the work is embedded in a mediated process of social signification and participates in the act of shared memory formation.

State-supported endeavour to present the war as a *Kulturkrieg* was unleashed in the Kaiserreich in 1914. This paper seeks to examine the content of several Internment Camp newspapers and to relate it to trends in publications in the homeland.

The textual presentation of the war in German Wilhelmine literature illustrates above all the effort to forge a sense of realized nationhood in which the particular is subsumed in an overarching national narrative, where each fragment has its own significance.

The cultural struggle to ‘align the lived experience’ with the prospect of an official national history was still ongoing, and internment literature expresses the desire not to be sidelined from that struggle but to identify with it.

### Introducing the Online Center for the Study of Japanese American Concentration Camp Art **Tobie Matava**

This paper premieres the Online Center for the Study of Japanese American Concentration Camp Art, a database that brings together a wide range of artifactual evidence not previously available in a single physical or online location. There are many online resources that deal with this period of history, however this site uniquely focuses on art activities and combines both primary and secondary sources. Digitization provides an ideal format for preserving fragile ephemera such as material cultures created in Japanese American concentration camps. By employing this technology, digital images and textual documents are brought together to compliment each other. Equally important, this platform both encourages material culture research and supports further scholarship on this topic. This site is offered as a tool to support researchers and teachers who seek to apply material culture as a method of understanding historical and contemporary subjects.

More critically, this paper also discusses the role digital sites can play in revealing how identities and differences are enacted through creative expressions. Wide exposure to material culture through online platforms offers unique lenses into the process of identifying and valuing differences. In this way, the reach of libraries and librarians are extended to the widest possible audiences. Through the creation of digital projects such as the Online Center for the Study of Japanese American Concentration Camp Art, librarians can contribute to the political project of creating a more just world. Libraries can have greater influence on preventing history from repeating itself by creating information resources that are digitized and deal with traumatic events.

### ‘A Vitalising Impulse’- Sculptors behind the wire: Ernst M Blensdorf, Siegfried Charoux, Georg Ehrlich, Paul Hamann, Margarete Klopfleisch and Pamina Liebert-Mahrenholz **Sarah MacDougall**

In June 1940, on the voyage from Norway to Scotland, fleeing the Nazis for the second time, the sculptor Ernst M Blensdorf used a penknife to carve a female nude, *Lilley Klotzelmeyer*, from Norwegian birch; when he arrived at Hutchinson camp on the Isle of Man accompanied by *Merz*-founder Kurt Schwitters, the art historian and fellow Hutchinson internee Klaus E Hinrichsen, who curated the internal camp exhibitions, noted how both artists were already shaping branches into works of art with their hands. ‘A vitalising impulse’ is how Blensdorf summed up his ideas about rhythm in sculptural composition. Yet this artistic compulsion, as well as a readiness to adapt to circumstances and material, was also to characterise communal sculptural practice ‘behind the wire’. Drawing on material in a number of public archives (including Tate, Manx National Heritage and Somerset museums), this paper examines the experience and legacy of internment on the work of six twentieth-century émigré sculptors of German and Austrian descent: Ernst M Blensdorf (1896-1976), Siegfried Charoux (1896-1967), Georg Ehrlich (1897-1966), Paul Hamann (1891-1973), Margarete Klopfleisch (1911-1982) and Pamina Liebert-Mahrenholz (1904-2004), all interned as ‘enemy aliens’ on the Isle of Man, c. 1940-42.

At Hutchinson, although all four men were among the signatories to the celebrated letter to the *New Statesman and Nation* (28 August 1940) stating that ‘Art cannot live behind barbed wire’, sculpture continued to be ‘a vitalising impulse’ for them all. They dug up clay for modelling on their walks (cleaning it afterwards in their studios) and plaster was ‘acquired’ from a local builder. Blensdorf memorably carved mahogany panels from a broken piano famously ‘cannibalised’ by the internees. All four men exhibited in the first exhibition at Hutchinson Camp (September 1940) representing between them a variety of styles encompassing Realism (Hamann), Expressionism (Blensdorf), Classicism (Ehrlich) and the Baroque (Charoux), while Blensdorf and Hamann also exhibited work in the second exhibition (November 1940), and all four sat for their portraits to Schwitters. Ehrlich and Hamann (who shared his with Fred Uhlman) both had studios on the boundary of the camp and taught modelling and plaster-casting to fellow internees.

Perhaps significantly, less has been documented of the women’s experiences: though both were interned first in Holloway (where Liebert-Mahrenholz sculpted in bread), then in Rushen camp, and both were separated from their husbands: Peter Klopfleisch was sent to Australia, the photographer Rolf Mahrenholz was interned elsewhere on the Isle of Man. Klopfleisch’s state of mind is reflected in her clay figurine *Woman in Despair* and in topographical watercolours dominated by barbed-wire, although she also exhibited work in the camp. However, no internment work by Liebert-Mahrenholz appears to have survived and she is not recorded as a camp exhibitor.

This paper discusses the practice, teaching and exhibition history (or lack of it) of these sculptors in the camps, and assesses what impact this had on their widely-varying post-internment careers, which, with the possible exception of Charoux (later a Royal Academician) and Ehrlich, who were both commissioned to produce public monuments, were mostly conducted outside the mainstream of Modern British sculpture. Finally, it also asks whether they sought to maintain (professionally, politically or socially) an émigré network and to what extent this also furthered or hampered their separate careers.

This is the second of two separate papers on émigré and interned artists arising from research undertaken for Ben Uri Gallery’s exhibition *Forced Journeys: Artists in exile in Britain, c. 1933-45* (2009) touring to Sayle Gallery, Isle of Man (2010), with a revised focus on artists in internment during 1940-42.

### Japanese prisoners' cultural activities behind barbed wire

**Euan McKay**

The cultural and educational activities of prisoners of war (POWs) in POW camps is well known and increasingly well documented. However, there is one group of prisoners that is hardly known at all, and consequently their cultural activities have also escaped notice. After the conclusion of the Second World War in Asia, about 80,000 Japanese Surrendered Personnel (JSP) were interned by the British in South East Asia until the end of 1947, 13,500 by the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies until May 1947, and 80,000 by the Americans in the Philippines until December 1946. They were used as labour on a range of works projects connected with food production, infrastructure rehabilitation and military construction and deconstruction. In contrast to POW camps under the Japanese during the war, the British camps were mostly open, although in some locations JSP were guarded for their own protection. Consequently, few or none of their activities were conducted in a clandestine fashion.

My research focuses on the JSP held by the British, who were mostly in Malaya and Burma, but also on those held by the Dutch, who were largely in Java. I have conducted interviews

with former JSP and examined both British and Japanese government and private documents, and some American and Australian documents as well. I also have a collection of materials including diaries, photos and film, and copies of newspapers and other publications produced by the JSP. During their two years under British and Dutch control, the JSP engaged in a wide range of cultural activities, many of which will be familiar to POW researchers. The main concerns of the JSP were food, clothing, lack of a fixed repatriation date, and desire for information about their families in Japan. Their activities were related to these concerns in various ways, although for many, they were not so much 'cultural' as a matter of improving their conditions and coming to terms with the post-war world. Some generated a small amount of income from their handicrafts and tool-making, a welcome addition as the JSP were not paid for their labour. The lack of clothing resulted in a lot of 'making and mending'. Those with agricultural experience worked to increase their own food production and supplement their camp diet. JSP with skills passed them on to others. The British refused to announce a return date for the JSP, despite a policy decision to repatriate them all by the end of 1947. As a result, many rumours circulated both in Japan and in South East Asia, and the circulation of news was a means for the JSP to maintain contact with conditions in Japan. Japan losing the war was unthinkable for most Japanese in general, and the military in particular, and their cultural activities demonstrate the attempts of the JSP to understand the new post-war world. Newspapers and magazines were produced and circulated information within and among the camps; translation projects gave JSP access to a wider world of ideas; JSP diaries, recollections, essays, haiku/poems and manga/cartoons, many of a satirical and emotional nature, were a forum for discussing the new post-war world; theatrical productions were staged, featuring makeshift props and costumes created entirely from what little they had to hand. Some JSP, particularly the 'student soldiers' with a university education, foresaw that English would be a valuable skill and used their time in South East Asia to acquire the language. The later careers of several of these former 'gakutohei' bear out the accuracy of their foresight, and are testament to their power to adapt and their creativity behind barbed wire.

#### Photographs at Douglas Camp: deciphering dynamics from static images

**Dr Harold Mytum**

The numerous photographs taken by Douglas photographers of the internees at Douglas Camp in the period 1915-1919 portray at first sight a series of standard static arrangements of figures and props. Detailed analysis, however, reveals evidence for many creative cultural practices that developed over the course of the war. These include theatre, music, gymnastics, crafts and gardening that are either explicitly or implicitly revealed in the images. Other sources also reveal tensions within camp members and between internees and the authorities that are hidden from the photographs, though some are shown in other creative media such as cartoons and the newspapers.

#### Menus of the imagination: Creativity against hunger in POW camp

**Professor Tomoyo Nakao**

Most Allied POWs and civilian internees of the Japanese experienced a severe lack of supplies, even in those POW camps with better conditions, which resulted in an obsession with food. This lack was brought about by a combination of factors, including cultural differences surrounding food, lack of understanding of the Geneva Conventions, poor

management of logistics and supplies by the Japanese military, the Japanese Army's distrust of Red Cross supplies, and a lack of sympathy from camp guards. The result for POWs and internees was constant hunger, malnutrition, and in severe cases, death.

One way that POWs and internees resisted hunger was to use their imagination to create imagined 'course' menus. In the course of my oral history research, I came across an imagined menu created by the British and American POWs in Zentsuji Camp in the Shikoku area of Japan. The daughters of a former officer POW found the menu in his diary, and helped them to understand his attitude towards them after the war. This information was corroborated by an interview with the son of a Japanese former camp guard, Mr. Yoshioka, whose wife collected materials from the camp. The late Mr. Yoshioka found the course menu and kept it. His son, who inherited the scrap books, wondered how the POWs could eat such wonderful food during the war, until the oral evidence of the daughters of the former POW clarified the situation. Differences in the imagined menus of NCOs and officers highlights class differences of the time.

Women showed more creativity regarding cooking skills and also in finding ingredients. The mother of a Frisian Dutch civilian internee sewed a cloth pocket inside her dress to pick up any nuts or grains she found on the ground, and also wrote three cookbooks detailing her imagined cooking methods and ingredients. Imagining food is generally believed to make internees hungrier; however, such mundane imagination was in fact an important creative tool for survival.

This paper analyses imagined cooking as a form of resistance in the fight against hunger, both in the camps, and as a way of attaining the future freedom where they might realise their dreams. It is now also known that such imaginary cooking can also act as a physical aid to help to survive hunger. It was a means not only to combat their hunger, but also a way to maintain their spirits as they waited for eventual victory. The menu/cookbook issue also highlights cultural differences concerning the concept of food, which was a fundamental problem in POW life. For most Japanese in the 1940s, many western foods including milk, butter, eggs and meats were regarded as luxurious and bourgeois, which should have been denied to the (ex-) Imperial peoples.

### Medical creativity in the Far East, 1942 – 1945

#### **Meg Parkes**

When the Japanese overran South East Asia in 1942 they captured over 130,000 Allied forces; approximately 50,000 were British, taken at the fall of Hong Kong, Singapore and the Netherlands East Indies. Through oral history interviews with some of the last surviving FEPOW (Far Eastern Prisoners of War) including doctors, medical orderlies, a plumber and medical artist, this paper examines examples of medical creativity in FEPOW camps, shedding light on one or two of the characters involved. A previously unpublished contemporaneous medical report plus a wide range of post-war medical papers, accounts and memoirs, have provided a vivid picture of the inventiveness and creativity of ordinary men trapped in extraordinary circumstances in wartime.

Initially, as neither captor nor captive had anticipated surrender on that scale, there was no provision made for the thousands of injured and defeated men. Most would become sick from tropical diseases such as dysentery and malaria, exacerbated by malnutrition and neglect. Soon large numbers of FEPOW were being transported around South East Asia as a slave labour force for Japanese construction projects in jungles, on coral islands or in steelworks, mines and dockyards.

FEPOW doctors and orderlies struggled to cope with the thousands of sick and dying men with no medical supplies or help from the Japanese. However, among these mainly conscripted men there was an “army” of skilled craftsmen and professionals – metal and woodworkers, engineers, scientists and academics – who quickly found they had a vital contribution to make.

They assisted medical staff by improvising the equipment and instruments needed – from bedpans, forceps and retractors to microscopes, needles and prosthetics. Any bits of scrap tin, glass, wood or wire, whether scrounged or stolen, had a use, as did the bones, skin and entrails from animals destined for the cookhouse. Thousands of operations and blood transfusions were performed, food supplements were manufactured and Heath Robinson-style physiotherapy equipment mobilised hundreds of amputees. This work was only possible thanks to the ingenuity and shared knowledge of these men.

### Radishes and excavations: excavating allotments and archaeological sites as an enemy alien in the Isle of Man'

**Megan Price**

In September 1941 Gerhard Bersu wrote from Southlands, Port St Mary to thank Christopher Hawkes for the tin of meat that he had sent with a letter containing archaeological news. Bersu had been growing radishes in his allotment which, combined with the contents of the tin, reminded him of continental dishes.

Bersu had been the Director of the Frankfurt Archaeological Institute in Frankfurt am Main until 1935 but as a Jew he was forced out of his post by the Nazis <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazism>> and fled to Britain with his wife, Maria.

At the invitation of various members of the Prehistoric Society <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prehistoric\\_Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prehistoric_Society)> he began excavations at Little Woodbury <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_Woodbury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Woodbury)>, a site in Wiltshire <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiltshire>> where he introduced novel continental methods. But when war broke out, Bersu as a German national was interned on the Isle of Man <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isle\\_of\\_Man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isle_of_Man)>. He was permitted to continue his work however and carried out several excavations on the island with the help of other internees. This paper examines his personal letters to Christopher Hawkes and others in which he describes the rewards and problems of archaeological excavation with the help of volunteer 'enemy aliens' from Hutchinson Camp.

### - Camp Domesticity: Shifting Gender Boundaries in World War I Internment Camps

**Dr Alon Rachaminov, Tel Aviv University**

During the First World War an estimated eight and a half million men became prisoners of war or civilian internees. Cut off from their prior civilian or military standings, these men strived during their years in captivity to create meaningful social and cultural practices and preserve a feeling of self worth. POW officers and civilian internees in particular—who in contrast to rank-and-file POWs were not forced to perform labor service for their captors— developed elaborate and highly interesting practices which attempted to uphold their sense of privileged male authority. However, this study seeks to show that contrary to the hopes and expectations of prisoners some of these practices challenged in fact gender roles and sexual norms. This paper will focus in particular on what I term "camp domesticity" i.e. the desire to establish a sense of "home and family" by various ways and means. I intend to show that the various usages of "home" -

discursive as well as performative—were often at odds with one another, subverting in many ways the very sense of comfort and gender order this concept was meant to convey.

### TURKISH PRISONER-OF-WAR BEADWORK SOUVENIRS FROM WORLD WAR I"

**Dr Adele Rogers Recklies**

Drawing on the rich tradition of textile crafts in the Ottoman Empire, Turkish soldiers incarcerated in British prison camps in the Middle East and civilians interned in Britain during World War I produced a variety of beadwork items to relieve boredom, sell as souvenirs, or barter for food and other amenities. Prisoners produced beadwork purses, belts, bookmarks, Muslim rosaries and other small items, but it is the bead crocheted snakes and lizards that have come to exemplify the Turkish POW souvenirs.

The presentation will include information on the World War I internment camps in Egypt and the Isle of Man; examples of Turkish beadwork souvenirs produced in those camps, examination of the design and construction of bead crochet snakes and lizards; why Turkish prisoners chose to make beadwork snakes; and the mechanism of souvenir sales, particularly in England.

### William Lawrence: POW Photographer 1942 - 1945

**Hilary Roberts**

Sgt William Lawrence, an air gunner serving with No 218 Squadron RAF, became a prisoner of war when his Stirling bomber was shot down over Denmark on 18 May 1942. During his subsequent years of captivity, he compiled a clandestine photographic record of life in his prison camp: Stalag VIIIb at Lamsdorf, Silesia. Lawrence donated this unique collection, numbering more than 200 negatives, to the Imperial War Museum Photograph Archive a few years before his death. This presentation will present an overview of the collection, examine the means by which it was created and evaluate its significance as a historical record.

### Uno specchio capovolto: the comparative POW experiences of a British and Italian POW.

**Fulceri Bruni Roccia and Simon Stoddart**

Prof. Giulio Bruni Roccia (1910-1994) and Mr. Kenneth Stoddart (1920-2009) were both captured in North Africa and hosted in British and Italian POW camps in India and Italy respectively. Superficially these experiences were mirror images of one another. They were both artillery officers, they both served in North Africa, they were both very patriotic, and POW life was clearly transformative. However, there were differences. Prof. Bruni Roccia's POW life was much more colourful since he expressed his fascist beliefs by constant resistance and escape, and laid the platform for his academic life, as a political scientist, whereas Mr. Stoddart's academic training in economics at Cambridge was interrupted by military service and he settled into a boarding school existence intent on survival, moving directly into applied economics (the Lloyds Insurance Market) immediately after the war. The paper will examine the notebooks, letters and oral records of these two officers to understand the contrasting inhabitation of two individuals who shared a different experience, which had a fundamental effect on their later lives. Ironically their sons have inversely chosen economics and academia as their careers.

## Prisoner of war material held by the British Red Cross Museum and Archives

### **Jenny Shaw**

The Red Cross movement plays an important role in maintaining the rights and protecting the well-being of prisoners of war. The most concentrated effort of activity was during the Second World War. During this conflict the Prisoner of War Department of the Joint War Organisation of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem (JWO) was the accredited authority in the UK for the dispatch of individual parcels to prisoners. This paper will look at the role that the JWO played in meeting the needs of prisoners of war and how it helped to facilitate creativity. It will also highlight archive material that might be exploited for further research.

The British Red Cross Museum and Archives holds the records of the JWO including administrative material, examples of creative output from prisoners and a complete set of the monthly journal published for next-of-kin, which is a particularly rich source of information on life in the camps including creativity. Material from former prisoners of war has also been deposited over the years supplementing the official record.

The JWO helped creativity to flourish in the camps through its distribution and provision of a wide variety of parcels to prisoners of war and civilian internees, including children. Nominated next-of-kin were allowed to include items such as coloured silks, plain fabric, knitting needles, wool and pencils in their quarterly parcels which were distributed by the JWO. Sections of the JWO also provided material and equipment to the camps beyond the basic nutritional needs contained in food parcels. The educational books section provided entire libraries and organised for prisoners to take recognised study courses and examinations in subjects such as journalism and languages. Fiction books, games and musical instruments were supplied by the indoor recreations section helping to facilitate theatrical and musical performances. The needs of the wounded or those recovering from operations were also catered for with occupational parcels containing materials for activities such as embroidery, tapestry or basket-work.

In addition to the primary use of the contents of parcels, the empty containers and wrappings were often used for practical purposes in creative ways. String was frequently used as a craft material in items such as decorative book marks and tins from food substances found new uses as clocks, pans and graters. Examples of these items can also be found in British Red Cross artefact collections.

## Lecture on the Lawn: Internment art from Hutchinson Camp

### **Ulrike Smalley**

During the 1930s a growing number of German and Austrian refugees arrived in Britain. This exodus was motivated both by adverse economic conditions and the progressive political and racial persecution under the Nazi regime.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, former German and Austrian citizens resident in Britain were declared 'enemy aliens'. After an initially cautious approach, the fear of invasion and resulting media agitation led to mass internment of all male 'enemy aliens' during the early summer of 1940. Most were interned in makeshift camps on the Isle of Man and near Liverpool. In the camps, internees organised lectures, art exhibitions, concerts and newspapers.

Hutchinson Camp, a square of boarding houses in Douglas on the Isle of Man, became home to an array of artists and intellectuals, ranging from Oxford and Cambridge professors, to renowned musicians and artists such as Dada co-founder Kurt Schwitters. The internees soon started to organise lectures, concerts and art exhibitions. The Imperial War Museum holds a collection of art works and supporting material by the artists Erich Kahn, Hellmuth Weissenborn, Fred Uhlman, which shed an interesting light on artistic and intellectual activities in the camp.

‘Spiritual Vitamins’: Musical Process and Product in WWII Internment  
**Suzanne Snizek.**

During the bombardment of Britain in World War II, the British government adopted the policy of mass internment of foreign nationals originating from "enemy" states (namely Germany, Austria and Italy). This paper depicts the musical culture that developed in the civilian internment camps of Huyton, Central and Hutchinson. Though diverse, the internee population of these camps was disproportionately composed of leading German and Austrian intellectuals, such as sociologist Norbert Elias, scientists Max Born and Hans Krebs, musicologist Otto Erich Deutsch and writer Rudolf Olden. Classical music had typically been a prominent feature of this generation's pre-war lives, and internment culture similarly reflected this importance. Particular attention will be given to two musical compositions which were written, as well as premiered, during internment: Gál's *Huyton Suite* and *What A Life*. Despite growing interest in this period there still remain many areas that are under researched. Richard Dove, in *'Totally Un-English': Britain's Internment of Enemy Aliens in Two World Wars*, described the creation of "What A Life" largely from the composer's vantage point, as illuminated by Gál's internment diary. This paper will discuss the hitherto unexamined experiences of some of the interned musicians who performed Gál's music, including Walter Bergmann, Fritz Ball, and Wolfgang Lesser. In this light, the genesis of the *Huyton Suite* will also be discussed. Through examination of historical documents, firsthand accounts and related diaries and memoirs, a vivid portrayal of musical life in these camps as it existed during the summer of 1940 will be presented.

Madonnas and Primadonnas: representations of women  
**Donato Somma**

During the Second World War, up to one hundred thousand Italian soldiers were held at the Zonderwater prisoner of war camp, a few kilometres from Pretoria, South Africa. Captured by South Africa's Union Defence Force after devastating defeats in North Africa, they enjoyed particularly good treatment at the hands of their captors, adhering, as they did, to both letter and spirit of the Geneva Conventions (*Captivi Italici in Sud Africa*, Part 2, 00:05). With nothing but time on their hands (some were imprisoned for six years), and a desire to recapture something of the lives they had as free men, the prisoners sought ways to actively combat boredom and depression. Their captors specifically encouraged their artistic endeavours, seeing the opportunity to maintain peace in the camp.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Though not the focus of the present work, the Foucauldian reading of the modern era (here referring to the last three hundred years) as one of conditioning 'docile bodies' (Gutting 2005, 47), has a potentially interesting application in the context of music at the camps. Foucault suggests that apparent in the structure of certain types of institution and particularly in the military and the penitentiary, the aim of punishment became, in the early part of the modern era, rehabilitation through discipline, as opposed to retribution through torture (Gutting 2005, 80). For the Union Defence Force, charged with the care of thousands of Italian POWs in this instance, finding ways to keep them under control was a mammoth task. As a self-regulating and normalising activity for those

For the Italian prisoners, the key to distinguishing themselves, and maintaining their pride in defeat, was to, as far as resources would allow, cultivate a rich and lavish artistic life in the camp, firmly believing that it was in the realms of art, and particularly music, that their uniqueness, sanity, and identity lay. The most cherished stories about Zonderwater remain those that relate to artistic endeavour, the creation of beautiful music or art under difficult circumstances (Albertini interviews 1 and 2, Solimeo interview, Tarantino interview). The evidence for this self-conceptualisation recurs time and again in the archival material. This was expressed even during the war in a special edition of the weekly publication (*Behind barbed wire*) produced by the prisoners.

This art that so diverts the Italian genius, cannot be disregarded. The natural tendency and innate love of our people for this talent of the human spirit has made Tendopoli a completely musical manifestation. (*Tra i reticolati*, p26).<sup>2</sup>

An excellent example of the myth-complex of this camp, I argue, is the particular combination of narratives and cultural productions that together address the absence of women, a central element in the constructed cosmology of the Zonderwater prisoners. Two figures, both strongly Italian in origin, dominated the symbolic addressing of this absence: one, the Catholic Madonna, answered the spiritual needs of the men; the other, the operetta primadonna, fuelled their fantasies. Both modes of representation articulate a way of viewing women that is strongly located within Italian society. In engaging them as symbols, the POW could create a sense of normalcy, a sense of complete community. Furthermore, I propose the prisoners not only reproduced the society they had lost, but re-negotiated their identity in relation to an alien environment, filled with new dangers: in this regard the construction of 'exotic' female characters, common in operetta, gave prisoners an 'other' onto which they could project all the anxieties, hopes and vulnerabilities that their misfortune engendered.

I ask how these two modes of representation differ, and how they are similar; I explore what they tell us about Italian identity, and POW identity. The discussion that follows focuses on traces gathered in the Museum at Zonderwater and the collection of Zonderwater material available at the Museum of Military History in Johannesburg.

#### 'Traces of Cultural Practices in war-time captivity (1939-1948)'

**Fabien Théofilakis (University of Paris Ouest Nanterre - University of Augsburg, Germany)**

In June 1940, French defeat meant that 2 million French prisoners of war (POWs), among them 30,000 officers, were in German hands for 5 years. By May 1945, German unconditional surrender provoked the entry of about 10 million German POWs into Allied custody; almost one million were in French hands until 1948. These mass captivities didn't just mean a collective collapse of entire societies, whose crisis of masculinity would perhaps be the most obvious sign. It also embodied a radical and long separation between the prisoner and his close relatives. It affected the individuality of the POW who was put in a *terra incognita* and subjected to the constant control and discipline of the enemy.

With this perspective, my paper will try to show how the many forms of cultural productivity in camp could be seen as a triple defence strategy against traumatic war-time captivity. To maintain a regular correspondence (or to try to do so), to participate in cultural or sporting events, to draw or write, or even to partake in political re-education programs behind barbed

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prisoners performing in the approved ensembles and those in the audience, music proved central to their endeavour.

<sup>2</sup> *Tra i reticolati. La seconda mostra generale arte e artigianato dei P.D.G. Sonderwater* [sic] 12-28 April 1943. Author's translation. Eds. Gattamelata and Salus. From the private collection of Emilio Coccia.

wire – all of these can be interpreted as responses of prisoners to make sense of their war experience and their new status. Each form of creativity shows the POWs’ ‘three bodies’, which are not necessarily separated: the POW as an individual, who tries to hold on; the POW as a member of the social structure/body which the camp constitutes; and the POW as a representative of the national community.

Based on the example of a French officer imprisoned in Germany and cases of some German POWs in France, my paper will discuss the extent to which cultural practices reflect the particular conditions of production, mediate the hard living conditions, and also construct continuity between time before and after captivity.

### Captivity in Print: Critical Readings of British POW Camp Magazines of the First World War **Oliver Wilkinson**

A number of camp magazines, written and edited by British prisoners within the camps of Germany during the First World War, have survived. These supposedly ephemeral publications provide considerable scope to enhance our understanding of captivity, especially if the agendas steering their content are recognised and they are read critically. In this paper I will demonstrate a three-fold way of reading the camp magazines based on a selection of thirty such publications. Censorship of content by German authorities is assessed, but the emphasis is placed on the inmates’ self-censorship in relation to three implicit aims; inward functions, outward functions, and functions of reminiscence.

First, analysis will show the inward efforts of the prisoners to insist on their autonomy and authority within an apparent ‘total institution’. POWs were being urged to participate in activities which were intended to maintain morale and to preserve military masculinity, and thereby to assist socio-psychological survival within the potentially unstable situation of captivity. However, these mechanisms can also be seen as social controls, albeit driven by the prisoners’ self-impositions rather than by the captors’ manipulations. Developing this, the paper will ask who, within the inmate community, held influence over the magazines to initiate such controls.

Second, as it was intended that copies of the magazines were to be sent home, a further objective of the magazines was to project a view of captivity for consumption in Britain. I will unveil what view was projected, revealing how POW society, as constructed within the magazines, was indexed to contemporary norms and practices, thereby reassuring home audiences of the stoicism and traditional ‘Tommy’ virtues of the captives.

Third, close examination of the magazines shows that they were also intended to serve as souvenirs and in particular as texts which would project a representation of camp life into the future upon which POWs could construct memory and indeed a history. This function denies the ephemeral nature of the magazines, recasting them from publications with only a momentary significance to publications with an intended lasting relevance. Content reveals that the editors and authors had certain memories in mind, and were selecting experiences for future recall. Magazine content thus had to manage the potential contradictions between these three overlapping agendas. In conclusion, I will offer evidence that readership reception and interpretation within the camps matched editorial intent driven by these agendas, thus allowing us to see how the magazines were used within the experience of captivity both at the time and indeed afterwards.

### Creativity and the Body: Civilian Internees in British Asia during the Second World War **Dr Felicia Yap**

Soon after Hong Kong, Malaya, Borneo and Singapore were wrenched from British hands by the Imperial Japanese Army in 1942, almost all Allied nationals in these territories were imprisoned by the conquering forces in civilian internment camps and forced to endure nearly four years of harsh incarceration. The key internment camps in these territories included the Stanley Camp in Hong Kong, the Changi Camp in Singapore and the Lintang Camp in Borneo. Very little was received from the Japanese occupying authorities by way of medical supplies and equipment during the war, and the internees were accordingly compelled to adopt a variety of creative strategies to preserve their physical health during the long years of captivity.

This paper will examine some of these ingenious methods and materials that were used by the internees in the camps. These included medicine substitutes made out of herbs, bark, palm oil, fish oil, rubber nuts, wood ash, kaolin clay and pulverized asbestos as well as drugs and local anesthetics derived from salt water and other solutions. The internees also developed a variety of inventive supplements for their meager diets, such as pine-needle vitamin teas, thiamine hydrochloride-infused wheat biscuits and yeast drinks containing necessary vitamins and proteins. The paper will also explore the resourcefulness of camp medical staff in constructing a variety of medical equipment (such as sterilizers, splints, stethoscopes and forceps) out of simple materials such as hot water boilers, copper wire and rubber tubing for their needs. In examining these products of internment, this paper will shed new light on the creative agency of prisoners of the Japanese during the Second World War, and the broader impact of these products of captivity on health levels and survival rates during this tumultuous period.