Public History and Contested Heritage: Archival Memories of the Bombing of Italy

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In recent years public historians have made concerted attempts to internationalise their practice.[1] The editors of a recent collection note that public history remains rooted in 'the local', although it may acquire regional or national significance.[2] The goal of internationalisation is therefore 'about applying universal methods locally',[3] even though applications have developed differently in different national settings. Digital public history has assisted the process of internationalisation.[4] The greater the spatial spread, however, the more likely it becomes that public historians must confront contested understandings of the past. In few localities, whether in actual or virtual environments, is there a single, accepted version of events and meanings.[5]

Little attention has as yet been paid to public history projects that function *at* the national level. This article addresses an example: the International Bomber Command Centre (IBCC) Digital Archive. It operates across national boundaries – in this case Italy and Britain – and attempts to embrace vastly different meanings associated with the bombing war in Europe, 1939-1945. It begins with an account of the development of public history in these two countries and of the ways in which the bombing war has been remembered. It then sets out the authors' understanding of the cultural and political sensitivities that have had to be considered, and the efforts of participants to develop and practice an inclusive approach to digital public history. Finally, it reflects on the limitations and achievements of the chosen approach.

Public History and Contested Heritage in Two Countries

In Britain, the public history movement grew out of popular radicalism from the late 1960s which stimulated a focus on gathering people's history, or history from below, largely through oral testimony. At its centre was Raphael Samuel and an MA program in public history at Ruskin College, Oxford, co-founded with Hilda Kean who was its director for almost twenty years. Ruskin's graduates spread its influence far and wide.[6] Mark Donnelly notes that it was some decades before public history was institutionalised in higher education, with its own courses, conferences and journals. There were two main stimuli. The first was the requirement of higher education funding bodies that researchers demonstrate the public impact of research as a condition of funding. The second was the prevailing national ethos of heritage as a public good, articulated by powerful organisations such as the National Trust and the

National Lottery Heritage Fund. There has been concern, however, that academic acceptance of these realities risks a reduction in public historians' capacity to contest contemporary power relations.[7]

In his overview of public history in Italy, Serge Noiret observes that, in common with Britain, public history has been named and given an identity relatively recently. For example, the Italian Association of Public History was only formed in 2016. He points out that institutions such as archives, libraries and museums have also adopted the term public history, suggesting that the base for shaping collective memory and identity is broader than universities. In line with this observation, Noiret argues that the institutionalisation of public history has been a response not only to crises within Italian universities, in particular the role of the humanities, but externally as well. At stake is 'the role and future of history in Italian society, in a country whose citizens constantly question their national path and identity at every level'.[8]

One important feature of this ongoing citizens' debate is the network of Italian historical institutes that function independently of universities and have no equivalent in Britain.[9] Examples include the *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, Istituto Luigi Sturzo, Fondazione Gramsci* and the *Istituto nazionale Ferruccio Parri: Rete degli istituti per la Storia della Resistenza e dell'età contemporanea.* Revealingly, the main reason behind the foundation of *Istituti* was the desire to keep control of the sources for the history of the resistance movement in Italy, at a juncture when state archives were deemed inadequate to value, promote and enhance them.[10]

If there are at least some overlaps in the development of public history in the two countries the same cannot be said of the legacy of the Second World War. In Britain – and to some extent in other Allied nations – a victor narrative has been so deeply embedded that scholars rarely make explicit the ways in which it has shaped post-war culture and politics. Commentator Simon Jenkins has argued that the victor narrative has acted as social glue through difficult phases of national life, such as the loss of empire and de-industrialisation. Moreover, it is a narrative that is constantly reinforced:

> **Britain's Remembrance Day is not fake history. The agonies it recalls were real enough, and there is no danger of them being ignored. But I sense we would not celebrate them were they defeats. We remain fixated on the German wars, with war histories, war biographies, was movies and war memorabilia … Every night is Nazi night somewhere on British television.[11]**

Memorials to the armed forces are important signifiers of victory in war – and far more prominent in the urban environment than those to civilians who lost their lives. The 'glorious dead', whose sacrifice was not in vain, have been commemorated in various monuments since the immediate post-war years. As the living link with veterans weakened perceptibly from the 1990s, a strong wave of memorialisation re-emerged, to pay tribute to what had become known as 'the greatest generation'.[12] This included, in London alone, the Royal Tank Regiment Memorial (2000), the Commonwealth Memorial Gates (2002), Australian War Memorial (2003), Animals in War Memorial (2004), Monument to the Women of World War II (2005), Battle of Britain Monument (2005), the New Zealand War Memorial (2006) and the Bomber Command Memorial (2012).

Even though it is now several generations since the war, and even though some scholars have pointed to the myths to which a victor narrative gave rise, such as 'the Blitz spirit',[13] the victor narrative continues to shape Britain's relations with the rest of Europe. A central

argument of Fintan O'Toole's recent study of the Brexit debacle is that Britain has never recovered from winning the Second World War,[14] one consequence of which is 'Continental Europe's longstanding mistrust of Britain's loyalty.[15]

The Allies' aerial bombing campaigns, however – in particular the deliberate targeting of civilians – have not fitted comfortably into the dominant victor narrative. While most Britons supported bombing at the time, sentiments changed in the years following. As Noble Frankland, one of the authors of the official history of Britain's bombing war, remarked, 'most people were very pleased with Bomber Command during the war and until it was virtually won; then they turned round and said it wasn't a very nice way to wage war'.[16] Veterans of RAF Bomber Command – in which over fifty nationalities were represented – had long been sensitive about the very high loss rate – over 56,000 of a total of 125,000 aircrew. From the mid 1980s, they established the Bomber Command Association to campaign for recognition in the face of what they considered official neglect of the dangerous and essential role they had played in the defeat of Nazi Germany. Their efforts, which divided opinion in Britain and attracted hostility from a reunited Germany, culminated in the unveiling of the large Bomber Command memorial in London in 2012.[17]

Italy was bombed by Allied air forces from immediately after the declaration of war until the last weeks of the conflict. Estimates put the civilian death toll in the region of 60,000. Figures pale in comparison with other Second World War theatres. But nonetheless the bombing war has profoundly affected collective memory.[18] Unlike other European countries, Italy was bombed as foe until the armistice in September 1943, then as friend. In the wake of the armistice, Allied bombing operations inflicted death and destruction on an unprecedented scale, while at the same time carrying the promise of liberation from German occupying forces and the Italian Social Republic puppet state.[19] The conflict lasted for almost two more years as the Allies slowly advanced along the peninsula, supported by resistance forces beyond the lines.[20]

This situation created a complex narrative, as De Bernardi explains:

> **Another Italy was forged in the resistance alongside the Allies, an Italy which in a paradox that historical research cannot help revealing, welcomed the winners enthusiastically and saw those who bombed its own cities, killing thousands of its own people, as 'liberators'.[21]**

The Allied forces presented bombing as necessary to hasten victory by targeting occupying forces, destroying the enemy's industrial capacity, disrupting communications and breaking morale. On the ground, the notion of being at the mercy of a brutal and impersonal force which could kill unpredictably merged with other apparently irreconcilable ideas: the desire for peace, the use of destructive technology as an instrument of change and deliverance from powers, either occupation forces or puppet state, which lacked legitimacy.

Propagandists immediately exploited the contradictions inherent in the word *liberatori* (liberators) mocking the problematic nature of the concept on posters and flyers, in graffiti on ruined buildings and in broadcasts.[22] Some later interpreted being bombed as a form of atonement for having entered the war on the side of the German aggressor and therefore a legitimate price to pay for living in a democracy. Yet the idea of being bombed has remained profoundly dissonant within the received liberation narrative. 'Why did they kill us?' is the angst-ridden question which regularly emerges from testimonies. The issue is eloquently summarised by Alessandro Portelli:

> From this contraction stems a problematic and internally divided memory: how is it possible to hold together gratitude for the liberators with the fact they destroyed your home and killed your relatives? Therefore, some memories had to be suppressed for being incompatible with others more acceptable and sanctioned. Then the question 'Who bombed' frequently clashes with unexpected aphasias, silences, and contradictions: many recollect 'the war' in abstract terms, as a fatality. In more than isolated cases, a surprising short circuit of memory ascribes the bombings to the absolute evil, the Nazis.[23]

In short, how to account for the victims of the bombing war has been highly problematic. Compounding this situation was the status accorded the liberation struggle as a cornerstone of the new republic: the 1948 constitution is widely understood as being inspired by and founded on its ideals.[24] The notion of a 'courageous mobilization of young and very young citizens who rebelled against foreign power'[25] became a defining moment of national identity, supplemented by the mythology of the 'good Italian'.[26] These means allowed a clean separation of Italians from Fascism and Nazism, offered a symbolic moment of national regeneration and stressed Italy's role in the Allied victory in Europe. Italy joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 and benefitted massively from $(US)1200 million of aid under the Marshall Plan, or European Recovery Programme.[27] Post-war recovery was rapid, ushering in the so-called economic miracle: strong and sustained economic growth, elevated standards of living and momentous social change. A sense of resentful victimhood was largely at odds with this new situation. The prevailing sentiment was to forget and move on.[28]

Large-scale bombing memorials are therefore conspicuously absent from a symbolic landscape dominated by prominent resistance figures, deeds of the liberation struggle and reprisal victims. Two imposing exceptions are the Gorla memorial in suburban Milan and the statue of Pope Pius XII in Rome. The Gorla memorial stands on the site of the former Francesco Crispi Elementary School where 184 children were killed by Allied bombs on 20 October 1944. Altogether, some 600 people were killed in this attack. Erected in 1952, the memorial was a local, privately funded initiative rather than an institutional one. Its monumental scale matches the enormity of the event and the lasting impression it made on the neighbourhood. The youthful victims are referred to as *martiri* (martyrs), instead of the more usual *vittime* or *caduti* (victims, fallen). In common with other smaller-scale inscriptions, artworks and plaques the wording on the memorial is devoid of agency. The bombs simply 'fell'.[29] The statue of Pope Pius XII comforting the victims of the San Lorenzo bombing celebrates the empathy and compassion a public figure. This contrasts with recurring allegations of public silence in the face of genocide and the objections to the Vatican's ambiguous policy towards Hitler and Mussolini.[30]

Since the end of the cold war the contentious nature of the bombing war has resurfaced. This has been fuelled in part by a re-emergence of right-wing nationalism and populism and, as Gabriella Gribaudi suggests, by the declining influence of the political parties associated with the ideals of the resistance.[31] The result is that unsettled memories mesh with contemporary divisions, 'unable to find either a context in which they can be revised or any reasons sufficiently shared by those who experienced them to make living together in mutual recognition possible'.[32]

These, then, are the contours of the difficult and contested heritage that the makers of the IBCC Digital Archive have had to negotiate. There is little in the public history literature indicating possible approaches. Na Li, who has been an important moving force behind the

consolidation of public history in China, acknowledges the challenges in crossing cultural and national borders:

> First, language barriers and cultural misunderstanding create confusion – even breakdowns – throughout the collaborative process. Second, different pedagogic philosophies make some basic assumptions in our field not so basic … Third, it is difficult to provide valid intellectual justification for training in public history if the field is attached to a strictly market-driven economy and services a commercial vision. Fourth, different sets of legal and ethical concerns sometimes complicate, if not stifle, genuine dialogue.[33]

Despite such potential obstacles, Li also holds that public history issues 'are often arrestingly similar across cultures' and stresses the importance of 'someone with a cross-cultural background to work as a gatekeeper, facilitator or negotiator'.[34]

These observations were made of a public history education project in which students physically crossed borders to learn together. Arguably such considerations become even more important in a digital environment which connects users across multiple borders wherever there is an internet service. The few general surveys of the field of digital public history are curiously silent on such matters. Sharon Leon's is the most sensitive about working cross-culturally, suggesting that the planning of a public history project ought to be 'equal measures technical and qualitative' and that digital public historians should honour the 'complexity and contingency of history'.[35]

The Establishment of the IBCC Digital Archive

The IBCC project is based in the city of Lincoln. It was initially established to commemorate RAF Bomber Command crew who had flown from the county of Lincolnshire where many bomber stations have been concentrated during the war. The University of Lincoln became involved in 2012. Historians with expertise in the interpretation of contested heritage helped to develop the project into an international, rather than a regional, one. It would contain a memorial as well as a visitor centre housing extensive interpretation of the bombing war in a way that took into account its legacy of divided memories.[36] The university took primary responsibility for a 'from scratch' digital archive and the content of the exhibition.[37] These and other heritage-related aspects of the project were supported by a £3.1 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2015.

The concept of an 'orchestra of voices' informed the project from the start. This inclusive approach was considered to be the most effective means of approaching contested heritage. It meant embracing the experiences of all those who were caught up in the bombing: the million or so personnel of Bomber Command – including the 125,000 aircrew – and other military personnel and civilians on both sides of the conflict. Uncountable millions whose experiences have been told or not told within such a framework.[38] These voices would not all sing in harmony. This was, after all, a total war that sucked every corner of the world into it, and involved intense and extreme differences of ideology, mass loss of life and large-scale destruction of property. Yet the intention of the Archive has always been to understand an array of shared experiences of service, suffering, loss and survival.

Reconciliation, along with remembrance and recognition, has also been an important theme, implying an acknowledgement that not everything done in the name of victory was necessarily justified or defensible in terms of the prevailing conditions at the time. This more

open approach reflects the ethos to which participants have been committed and has served also to complicate the victor/vanquished dichotomy of the UK victor narrative, particularly in view of the much-changed realities of identity and belonging across Europe today.[39] In these various ways we have asserted ourselves as a sort of conductor of the orchestra.

The Digital Archive is a collection of primary material consisting of two kinds of material. The first is born-digital eyewitness testimony. The policy has been to record life histories rather than episodic war memories. Not only does this contextualise war memories and act as a reminder that these memories have been refracted through seventy-odd years of life since the war. It also serves to humanise subjects instead of portraying them as 'heroes', 'villains' or 'victims'. The second type of material is digitised versions of memorabilia relating to bombing experiences including letters, diaries, logbooks, photographs and personal possessions. There are no paper or physical equivalents in the Archive's possession. The advantage of digital is that we are able to digitise and share items while the originals remain in the owners' possession.[40] The result has been an eclectic collection. The Archive team has depended to a great extent on individuals coming forward with items and information in response to requests published via multiple channels.

An important element of the IBCC Digital Archive voice is the way in which vocabulary is selected for retrieval purposes, descriptive language used and temporal and geographic information captured. Metadata are normally understood as governed by standards and guidelines that are procedural or technical in nature. What sits at the intersection of technical norms and the broader social and cultural landscape has received little attention.[41] A key element of our strategy was to compile a controlled vocabulary prescribing the use of authorised, warranted terms that would reflect our ethos as well as maximise user access. We discovered there was no existing controlled vocabulary that would suit our purposes so one was created.

The first part, the 'soft' vocabulary, is mainly cultural in nature and spells out how our commitment to inclusivity has been translated into general principles. It recommends terms for broad concepts such as people, ideologies, values, beliefs and other recurring cultural elements. And it stipulates avoidance of cultural clichés to do with the course of the war – 'they started it' – dramatic, overused statements which are also factually incorrect – 'Britain stood alone' – and slang terms such as 'Hun', 'Tommy' and 'Jap'. In the same vein acronyms and abbreviations are spelt out as far as possible to aid understanding of military parlance. The second part, or 'hard' vocabulary, is chiefly technical and consists of a list of descriptors and their deprecated variants for aircraft, pieces of equipment, places and specific military terms and concepts.

We have deliberately chosen to use the tag 'bombing' without further qualifiers so as to include both the act of dropping bombs and the situation of being at the receiving end. Civilians normally understand it as a passive experience whereas military personnel frame it as an active part of service life. Bringing together experiences of bombing and being bombed has many benefits: it demonstrates the Archive ethos more than a generic statement of intent would; suggests the existence of conflicting narratives rather than a single, unproblematic discourse; and reveals the bombing war as an experience of shared suffering rather than a 'us v them' matter. The purpose is to generate a critical mass of items likely to form spontaneous aggregations around nodes of dates, places and concepts.

The same approach has been used for other terms encapsulating wartime experiences such as 'fear', 'evacuation' and 'prisoner of war'. Again, we use 'resistance' for a wide range of

positions, practices and experiences within the overarching umbrella of asymmetrical warfare: non-cooperation, propaganda, hiding, supporting and spiriting away allied personnel and recapturing strongholds. This approach increases the chances of generating new, unexpected meanings, simply by juxtaposing items that were not intended to be seen together. An advanced search interface allows users to filter experiences according to place, force, context and to combine tags.

Unlike the United States Army Air Force that flew operations by day, most Bomber Command operations were conducted at night, thus straddling two consecutive calendar days. These are usually captured in the format '14/15 May 1944'. From the civilian perspective, the same event is likely to be logged (and remembered) as either 14 May 1944 or 15 May 1944, according to the exact time aircraft reached the target. Accordingly, dates are repeated and entered as two distinct items of metadata: 1944-05-14 and 1944-05-15. This increases the chances of different perspectives on the same event being brought together for visualisation and display.

Geographic information is normalised and entered according to the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) which contains controlled entries for inhabited places and salient geographical features. While some choices reveal a United States perspective, the opportunity for grouping items about the same place under the same spatial heading is a cornerstone of our inclusive strategy. This is especially relevant for places that have a well-established English form and a local one – such as Brunswick/Braunschweig, Livorno/Leghorn and Dunkerque/Dunkirk. It is also useful for places that were renamed following decolonisation – Salisbury/Harare – have been affected by shifting borders – Gdańsk/Danzig – or are regularly misspelled in archival sources – Düsseldorf/Dusseldorf. LCSH headings are accessed through the FAST interface developed by Online Computer Library Center.

In line with our commitment to inclusivity, geographic information is hospitable to variants. Authority control items have a heading corresponding to the normalised form used across the Archive with listed variants likely to found. Thus, even if someone uses an unconventional query the system takes them to an equivalence page and from there to all the associated resources. For instance, Die Baai – Afrikaans – and iBhayi – in Xhosa – return no direct hits in the Archive, but point to an authority control page which in turn is associated to South Africa – Port Elizabeth. This is the normalised form to describe all items about that place. This solution acknowledges the sensitivities surrounding some geographic names – perhaps politically laden or saturated with emotional connotations – while at the same time assisting users to avoid spending an inordinate amount of time searching for the right term or to miss locating items.

Oral testimony and some textual documents are transcribed. Even if the inherent limits of full text search are well known,[42] this approach has the advantage of restricting a cataloguer's subjectivity and perception of what is worth capturing in metadata. Since it is difficult to predict future users' needs, this also has the advantage of overcoming the risk that cataloguers may miss or downplay something which may be vital for those who will engage with Archive items from very different perspectives in years to come.

Both our collections policy and our design of mechanisms for categorising and retrieving information have, then, been carefully planned to support our 'orchestra of voices'. Equally important in supporting this approach has been our method of working. As leading public historian Hilda Kean suggests, the ways in which the evidence and documentation are created is vital to understanding the possibilities for interpreting that evidence.[43] In short,

we have attempted an inclusive approach to collecting and processing, as well as to content: a combination of crowdsourcing and professional oversight, of precisely the type indicated as desirable by Noiret and Cauvin.[44]

As Owens has noted, 'the most successful crowdsourcing projects in libraries, archives, and museums have not involved massive crowds and they have very little to do with outsourcing labour'.[45] This wry observation is true of our project. We have worked with around 200 volunteers, who scarcely constitute a crowd. In fact, although the term crowdsourcing now covers a range of practices, commons-based peer production would be a more accurate description of our Archive participants.[46] They have received individualised training for the tasks they have elected to fulfil, such as interviewing eyewitnesses, scanning or photographing documents, cropping and watermarking images, transcribing text and interviews and producing metadata. Varying levels of expertise have been accommodated.

All volunteer tasks have been closely integrated into Archive workflows. The small Archive team makes great efforts to include volunteers in all processes. Each completed task is reviewed, either by a member of staff or an experienced volunteer with subject expertise, before items are published. Moreover, we have been at pains to avoid accusations of outsourcing, which carries connotations of exploitation of labour and, further, can undermine the position of employed staff.[47] The vast majority of volunteers are retired and on a guaranteed income and looking for rewarding ways to occupy time. In addition, we have accommodated volunteers in search of a placement or archive task to meet the requirements of a course of study or who have been classified as unable to work owing to a disability.

Italian Memories in the IBCC Digital Archive

The result of the British referendum in June 2016 to withdraw from the European Union had the potential to undermine the entire project. The promotion of cross-cultural tolerance has more generally faced challenges from rising populist, exclusionary nationalism in many settings, from the United States to India. This phenomenon is at least in part symptomatic of a failure of liberal democracy and the emergence of a politics of 'unreasonableness'.[48]

One of the authors – Pesaro, who joined the project in early 2015 – had begun to explore ways in which the concepts of contested heritage and an orchestra of voices might be mobilised in Italy. He made contacts with interested parties. In other words, he acted precisely in the role of cultural broker, as described by Li. In the Archive's dealings with partners elsewhere in Europe, it has been made clear that the ideological underpinning of Brexit was – and remains – contrary to our ethos.

Two key partners in Italy have been Laboratorio Lapsus and Memoro. Lapsus is a non-profit organisation whose aims are to research and promote public understanding of contemporary history. Committed to exploring the relationship between historical evidence and commonly held belief, Lapsus members have taken on a number of challenging topics. These include *Chi è Stato? La strategia della tensione e le stragi impunite* – an exhibition on Italian neo-fascist terrorism between 1969 and 1974; *900 Criminale. Mafia, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta* – a multimedia exhibition based on the history of organized crime in Italy; and *Storia e memoria delle deportazioni nazifasciste* – an online course aimed at deconstructing common stereotypes of Italian involvement in political and racial deportation during the Second World War, including interviews with victims.[49]

In 2016, Lapsus members, including Fedele and Gaiaschi, agreed to undertake the training for IBCC oral history interviews. Over the next two years, they collected twenty-nine personal

stories of civilians who were at the receiving end of Allied bombing during the Second World War. Of these, ninteen were women and ten were men. Twenty-two were in Milan with the rest collected in Bologna, Varese, Como and Monza. With the exception of evacuees, interviews were recorded in the same place where the informant lived during the war. Lapsus has also been involved in transcribing these oral histories.

Memoro – Esperanto for 'I remember' – is an international non-profit project devoted to the preservation and sharing of life stories of people born before 1950. The project started in Turin in August 2007 and has since spread to other countries in Europe and further afield. Since September 2009, the project has been managed in Italy by Banca della Memoria Onlus, a cultural organization with charitable status. Memoro is underpinned by a public history ethos. Participants act as 'memory hunters', recording and sharing content on a dedicated publishing platform – www.memoro.org. Rather than full-length, unabridged oral history interviews, Memoro's standard practice is to upload short, recut snippets, each being about a specific memory or event: being bombed, evacuation, life in air raid shelters and the like.

Memoro Italy has generously shared sixty-eight items about civilian life under the bombs with the Archive, while a further eighteen were provided by Memoro Germany. These testimonies have significantly improved the coverage of underrepresented areas in Italy, especially south and mid-Italy. The thirty-one Memoro interviews with German subjects constitute more than half of the stories about that country currently in the Archive. Licencing previously recorded materials has thus allowed the Archive to overcome otherwise unsurmountable language and cultural barriers.

There are substantial differences between the national components of the Archive. Interviews recorded in English-speaking countries are routinely accompanied by photographs and memorabilia. These are normally deeply interwoven. This is largely to be explained by the high number of veteran interviews. They have normally taken great care of their evidence of wartime service. Civilian memorabilia differ very greatly from their military counterparts. Thus only one Italian interview came in with associated physical items, although in an indirect way. The informant donated a set of toy soldiers to a local collector who in turn permitted the Archive to publish digital copies. The link was re-established through descriptive metadata enabling a virtual recompositing.[50] Other informants offered photographs. But these could not be accepted as they were already under copyright in published sources.

Some remarkable items have nevertheless been added thanks to the willingness of Italian donors. These include a selection of the works of Alfonsino 'Angiolino' Filiputti (1924-1999). This self-taught painter depicted some of the most dramatic and controversial aspects of the Second World War as seen from the perspective of San Giorgio di Nogaro, a small town in the Friuli region.[51] Rationing cards, propaganda materials and toys are represented in the Maurizio Radacich collection. The highlight is a board game intended to teach children anti-aircraft precautions.[52] It and one of Angiolino's temperas are also featured in the IBCC exhibition.[53] Documents have also been licenced by members of the *Istituti della Resistenza* network which has also helped with translation and transcription.

In Britain and other English-speaking countries, recording oral history interviews has largely been a matter of matching veterans with trained interviewers. This process has been managed by a member of the Archive staff to optimise resource allocation. Nothing similar was possible in Italy. To begin with, being at the receiving end of the bombing affected a whole generation of Italians. No such thing as a list of survivors was ever feasible. Furthermore, the pool of interviewers was not only small but also limited to places where an existing

professional or personal network existed, or where successful professional relationships could be forged. The interviewee/interviewer match thus followed informal and multiple referrals and leads. Interviews were also delivered by university students, either working on their BA/MA dissertations or being temporarily attached to a local organisation as part of an internship program with an Italian university. In both cases, formal arrangements were in place to make sure the recording took place according to IBCC protocols and legal permission to publish was obtained. These collaborations were goal-oriented, bounded and time limited.

Attempts to build a network of informants outside the conditions described above were either short-lived or unsuccessful. As a result, interviewers quickly became proactive, requiring a very different interviewing technique to that anticipated in the IBCC training. They discovered that interviewees were likely to recall the most painful memories immediately – hunger, bombs, shelters, soldiers – rather than providing a lot of background first. In English-speaking countries, informants have tended to complete permission forms without question. In Italy a spoken form of permission had to be devised in the face of some informants' stiff opposition to forms. In short, trusting partners and resisting the temptation to micromanage have been key to success.[54]

There have been some moments of regret. In line with the policy not to edit spoken testimony collected by – as opposed to licenced to – the IBCC and its partners, it has not been possible to publish some interviews. An example serves to illustrate the dilemmas faced.[55] Maria survived a 1944 Allied bombing attack on a Northern Italian industrial city. She subsequently pursued a successful career in a major company and became a respected figure in her community. Lapsus interviewed her in early 2017. After preliminary explanations, the recorder was switched on and remained in her sight throughout the interview. Maria talked with gusto and fluency, recalling war-related stories which provided a fascinating insight into a young girl's view of the conflict. In one of these she found herself buried under rubble after a bombing attack, narrowly escaping death. When the debris was removed, Maria was horrified to realise that her father had been killed in an attempt to save her life. She dwelled on her survivor guilt and the hatred of the bomber crew who 'murdered my poor papa'. She was aware that bitter resentment was a means of coping with the trauma of loss.

After the end of the recording, Maria asked to listen to the interview before signing the permission form. She wished for the passage about her attitude to the bomber crew to be removed from the recording. This posed a severe dilemma. Had she avoided telling these stories the interviewers would never have known. However, the idea of tampering with a historical resource went against the Archive's ethics which are in line with those of the International Council on Archives (*Conseil international des archives*):

> The primary duty of archivists is to maintain *the integrity of the records in their care and custody*. In the accomplishment of this duty they must have regard to the legitimate, but sometimes conflicting, rights and interests of employers, owners, data subjects and users, past, present and future. The objectivity and impartiality of archivists is the measure of their professionalism. They should resist pressure from any source to *manipulate evidence so as to conceal or distort facts* [emphasis added].[56]

Maria refused to re-record the interview or to sign any paperwork. With extreme reluctance the Archive complied with her request to delete the recording. There were other, similar examples.

Amy C. Edmondson has outlined a continuum of failure management of exploratory testing on which these two examples might be placed. They are instances of 'unintended

consequences' which she describes as 'a lack of clarity about future events [that] causes people to take seemingly reasonable actions that produce undesired results'.[57] At the opposite end are 'completely preventable' instances, violating established principles. In the case outlined above, the action of the informant was perfectly rational at the time, although the consequences left the Archive poorer. As such, there is much for us to learn about the tormented memorialisation of the bombing war in Italy. Maria is an example of the insoluble duality of the Allied forces. Not only did the innocent suffer but altruistic behaviour caused intolerable loss. Conversely, as discussed earlier, American aid led to industrial recovery. 'American' was used in spoken informal Italian to indicate something fashionable, desirable, up-to-date and plentiful. Seeing the Allies as killers is profoundly dissonant with the received narrative of saviours who give their lives to bring freedom to others.

Finally, Maria and other informants shared a suspicion about formal arrangements in writing, while at the same time acknowledging the benefits of the interview. A dictum attributed to journalist, writer and publisher Leo Longanesi (1905-57) captures eloquently this mindset: '*Chi si firma è perduto*' ('Whoever signs their name is doomed'). The word play alludes to a deep-seated mistrust of authority, combined with reluctance to put in black and white what can backfire in the future.

In view of the above, we have devised the following possible solutions:

- Offer multiple alternatives, rather than following a prescribed protocol. Informants seem to be more at ease when offered multiple choices.
- Keep complexity to a minimum within given legal and ethical constrains.
- Avoid assumptions about transferring practices across cultures. Reasons for volunteering range from disinterested generosity to a pragmatic match between IBCC goals and volunteers' own agenda. The former appears to be prevalent in Britain while the latter captures better the sentiment in Italy.
- Use of the phone for oral history interviews is sometimes the only realistic way to capture a source that would be otherwise lost. But there are limitations where there are strongly emotional memories being recalled. Mutual trust elicited by physical proximity and non-verbal communication is largely missing. The resource implications for international projects are evident.

Experiences of Using the IBCC Digital Archive

The IBCC Digital Archive launched online in September 2018.[58] Because of the nature of the source material and the age of potential informants we made an early decision to collect as much as possible even though this resulted in a substantial queue of material to process. To date, over 10,000 items have been published, around one tenth of digitised content.

Over the first eighteen months, the Archive has had 259,165 unique pageviews, defined as the number of sessions during which the specified page was viewed at least once.[59] The following table breaks down traffic for countries.

Table 1   Unique pageviews, September 2018 to March 2020

Rank	Country	Traffic share
1	United Kingdom	65.22%
2	Italy	6.98%

Table 1   continued

Rank	Country	Traffic share
3	United States	6.58%
4	Australia	4.94%
5	Canada	3.47%
6	France	1.79%
7	Netherlands	1.45%
8	Germany	1.14%
9	New Zealand	0.86%
10	Poland	0.72%

Table 2   Top Ten Languages, March 2020

Rank	Items	Language
1	7679	English
2	606	Italian
3	127	German
4	70	French
5	48	Polish
6	23	Latin
7	19	Dutch
8	3	Danish
9	3	Hungarian
10	3	Russian

The figures in Table 1 reveal a clear pattern. Positions in the table match major national contributions to Bomber Command (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Poland), wartime alliances (United States), and recurring targets: France, Netherlands and Germany. The position of Italy at number two (mirrored in Table 2) is justified by a pull factor – the large number of items in Italian or items about Italy.

Table 3   Top ten spatial coverage descriptors, March 2020

Rank	Items	Spatial coverage
1	5328	Great Britain
2	1338	England-Lincolnshire
3	1336	Germany
4	811	Italy
5	770	France

Table 3   continued

Rank	Items	Spatial coverage
6	690	Poland
7	543	Poland-Żagań
8	897	England-London
9	364	Canada
10	323	England-Yorkshire

The prominence of 'Great Britain' and 'England-Lincolnshire' in Table 3 reflects the fact that Lincolnshire had the highest concentration of Bomber Command stations. That 'Germany', 'Italy' and 'France' are in the top five demonstrates the Archive's commitment to a more balanced coverage of the bombing war. The substantial number of items about Żagań reflects a considerable collection of letters sent from a prisoner of war camp. This kind of material – unlike official documents about wartime actions – opens new ways of researching the human dimension of the bombing war.

These figures, however, are meaningful only in a broad sense. There are, for instance, items about places in Italy which are written in English. Furthermore, an artwork or a photograph can be matched accurately to a specific place despite having no textual content to be formally captured as language. And some Archive items such as logbooks may contain plentiful references to a great number of places, while others subsume various different experiences into a generic designation. Some of the many examples include 'the Ruhr', 'Germany' and 'occupied Europe'.

It is also worth noting that the traffic generated by the Archive is extremely scattered. Unlike other platforms where there may be a core collection attracting constant and widespread interest, the whole platform has just eleven pages totalling more than 0.5% of overall traffic. Moreover, some of those are not content but rather service pages, such as the main landing page, maps, user guides, tutorials and legal disclaimers. The most viewed content is the 'Interview with John Whitworth' which accounts for a meagre 0.38% of traffic, at position thirteen. The most viewed Italian item is the 'Interview with Alessandra Rivalta' – 0.05%, 232 position.

The reason for this imbalance can be traced to a self-reinforcing cycle. Having an Italian team member significantly reduced cultural and language barriers which led to the rapid establishment of a network of volunteers, researchers and organisations. This factor greatly facilitated presentations, seminars, lectures and other related events, which in turn generated more traffic and interest. Having Italian items available online to demonstrate that the Archive was hospitable to non-British sources also acted as a pull factor and prompted further contributions. It is worth pointing out that nothing comparable has been achieved so far in Germany. Despite the valuable contribution of native-speaking German volunteers, contributions have been intermittent and sparse. In mitigation, it should be noted that this is still a work in progress.

Since going live we have received a fair amount of feedback from users in Italy. Sources consist of feedback in writing, social media interactions, email exchanges and Q&A sessions following presentations and lectures. We have no way to analyse and compare such disparate

sources in a quantitative way although it seems possible to cluster opinions around some recurring themes.

- Unique content not available elsewhere. Users have applauded the decision of making available sources kept in private hands, especially documents about the human dimension of service life which tends to be neglected by major national archives.
- The opportunity to see the same event from multiple perspectives. This is either framed as a novel perspective incorporating multiple voices, in a way which is conducive to sound historical research methodology, or a means to bring about a shift in perception, especially when events have been mainly interpreted by using Italian sources.
- Technical architecture. Extensive full-text search capabilities of oral and written sources, description at item level, virtual aggregation of discrete collections in a bigger meta-archive and direct access to geolocated items have attracted considerable interest.

Tellingly, no feedback has ever framed the Archive as evidence of sacrifice, atonement, suffering or an attempt to bring to the fore the complex nature of the bombing war in Italy.

A specific stream of inquiries has come from aviation archaeology groups. In this case, the drive has been to look for documentary evidence to help pinpoint the specific location of a crash usually with a degree of confidence high enough to allow for an excavation. Unfortunately, very little in the Archive can be used to this end. Users seem to expect 'hard' data. Some dismiss oral testimony as mere stories.[60]

Some users express frustration that they are unable to obtain quick, reliable and immediately actionable answers to a specific question, rather than being prepared to undertake a detailed and frequently painstaking process of evaluating documents to obtain knowledge. The shift in perception may be related to the evolution of the world wide web and major search engines which promote unfettered access to highly relevant, accurate, personalised and up-to-date information in an unmediated way.[61]

Users are also sometimes bewildered by the non-systematic nature of the Archive and its frequent gaps notwithstanding an explanation about derivation of content. There is clearly an expectation that all information about events in the past must exist somewhere in an officially sanctioned and authoritative form. Scholarly literature has established the socially constructed and provisional nature of even the most apparently 'complete' archive.[62] We need to do more to explain the different configurations of power, not to mention the fragile nature of holdings, that are characteristic of any archive, digital or not.

Finally, some users have expected to find heroic stories and compelling tales or instances of extreme exemplar behaviour fully conforming to recognised cultural models. An Italian user even requested via email how to filter for '*immagini sfiziose*', *sfiziose* meaning something like 'tasty', with additional connotations of being fanciful, desirable and rare.

Conclusion

In design and construction, the intention of the IBCC Digital Archive has been to tell the story of the bombing war in a new way, bringing together multiple perspectives. To a very great extent, the Archive has been at the mercy of what material has been made available by donors in order to tell such a story from a distance of eight decades. Being a UK-based and UK-funded project there has been a perhaps inevitable imbalance in the holdings. Most support has come from those with family connections to Bomber Command veterans. Conversely, coverage where most bombs were dropped – or for opposing armed forces – remains patchy.[63]

Yet it is these contributions from Italy and to a lesser extent other areas of mainland Europe that have at least enabled veterans' role to be treated in a different way: to examine the effects of bombing operations rather than to treat operations as ends in themselves. This provides a perspective almost entirely absent from the Bomber Command memoir, now a considerable genre in its own right, as well as most histories on the subject.[64] Anecdotal evidence suggests that users of the Archive are intrigued by the resulting insights.

A complex project such as this must of necessity be framed as a work in progress. It will change and grow as the Archive attracts more users and finds new opportunities for partnerships and as the socio-political context evolves. As such, it is important to maintain a willingness to adapt to a range of cross-cultural circumstances without relinquishing the core values of the project.[65]

Endnotes

1.   Serge Noiret and Thomas Cauvin, 'Internationalizing Public History', in James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public History,* Oxford University Press Online, 2017, pp1-22, https://10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199766024.013.1, (accessed 18 October 2019); Thomas Cauvin, 'The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective', in *Historia Crítica*, vol 68, 2018, pp3-26, https://doi.org/10.7440/histcrit68.2018.01; Paul Ashton and Alex Trapeznik (eds), *What is Public History Globally?*, London, Bloomsbury, 2019.

2.   Ashton and Trapeznik, ibid, p6.

3.   Noiret and Cauvin, op cit, p2.

4.   Roy Rozenzweig, 'Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era', *American Historical Review,* vol 108, no 3, 2002, pp735-762. https://doi.org/10.1086/529596

5.   For an account of the sensitivities involved, see John Peterson, 'Though This Be Madness: Heritage Methods for Working in Culturally Diverse Communities', *Public History Review,* vol 17, 2010, pp34-51. https://doi.org/10.5130/phrj.v17i0.1802

6.   Samuels's most influential work is *Theatres of Memory. Past and Present in Contemporary Culture,* London, Verso, 2012 (first published 1994). An example of Ruskin's reach was the trade union-supported Workers' College movement in South Africa in the 1990s, founded by Ruskin graduate June-Rose Nala. One of the current authors (Hughes) acted as academic director of the Durban Workers' College which adopted its approach to people's history and whose qualifications were validated by Ruskin.

7.   Mark Donnelly, 'Public History in Britain: Repossessing the Past', in Ashton and Trapeznik, op cit, pp23-35.

8.   Serge Noiret, 'An Overview of Public History in Italy: No Longer a Field Without a Name', *International Public History*, vol 2, no 1, 2019, p2. https://doi.org/10.1515/iph-2019-0009

9.   The Institute for Historical Research and the Victoria County History, for example, are an integral part of the higher education establishment in the UK.

10.   Elisabetta Arioti, 'Cenni Storici: Le Origini del Sistema Archivistico degli Istituti della Resistenza', in *Storia e Memoria*, vol 11, no 1, 2002, pp107-124.

11.   Simon Jenkins, 'No more Remembrance Days – Let's Consign the 20th Century to History', in The Guardian Online, 9 November 2017 available from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/09/no-more-remembrance-days-consign-20th-century-history (accessed 20 August 2019).

12.   Erika Doss, 'War, Memory and the Public Mediation of Affect: The National World War II Memorial and American Imperialism', in *Memory Studies*, vol 1, no 2, 2008, pp227-250. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698007088388

13.   Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*, London, Pimlico, 1991.

14.   Fintan O'Toole, *Heroic Failure: Brexit and the Politics of Pain,* London, Apollo Books, 2018.

15.   Nicoletta Pireddu, 'Europe at the End of the Chunnel: Malcolm Bradbury's and Tim Parks's Eurosceptic Albion', *English Studies*, vol 98, no 6, 2017, p627. https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838x.2016.1254471

16.   Noble Frankland, 'Some Thoughts about and Experience of Official Military History', in *Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal*, vol 17, 1996, p20. For an overview, see Andrew Knapp, 'The Horror and the Glory: Bomber Command in British Memories Since 1945', Mass Violence and Resistance Research Network, 2016, available at http://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/horror-and-glory-bomber-command-british-memories-1945 (accessed 20 August 2019).

17. Damien Williams, 'Once More, With Feeling: Commemorating Royal Air Force Bomber Command in Late Modern Britain', in Keir Reeves et al (eds), *Battlefield Events: Landscape, Commemoration and Heritage,* London, Routledge, 2015, pp121-143.

18. Andrew Knapp, Claudia Baldoli and Richard Overy, *Bombing, States and Peoples in Western Europe, 1940-1945*, London, Continuum, 2011.

19. Claudia Baldoli and Marco Fincardi, 'Italian Society under Anglo-American Bombs: Propaganda, Experience, and Legend, 1940–1945', in *The Historical Journal*, vol 52, no 4, 2009, pp1017-1038. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x09990380

20. The liberation struggle is variously understood as a national liberation war, in which German forces and their allies were the foes; a civil war, with fascist forces opposed to partisans; and a class war in which fighting the regime was treated as a working-class struggle against its oppressors. Claudio Pavone, *Una Guerra Civile. Saggio Storico sulla Moralità della Resistenza*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2001.

21. Alberto De Bernardi, 'The World Wars and the History of Italy: Public Shared and Disputed Memories', in Elena Lamberti and Vita Fortunati (eds), *Memories and Representations of War: The Case of World War I and World War II,* Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2009, p76.

22. Giovanni Sciola, 'L'Immagine dei Nemici. L'America e gli Americani nella Propaganda Italiana della Seconda Guerra Mondiale', *Italie et Etats-Unis – Interférences Culturelles*, vol 5, 2001, pp115–134. Tellingly, 'Liberator' is also the name of the Consolidated B-24, a mass-produced USAAF bomber.

23. Alessandro Portelli and Ron J. Grele, *Storie Orali. Racconto, Immaginazione, Dialogo*, Roma, Donzelli, 2017, pp200-201. Original in Italian.

24. Piero Calamandrei, 'Discorso sulla Costituzione', Società Umanitaria, Milano, 16 January 1955. The speech has been widely reproduced: a transcription is available from http://www.napoliassise.it/costituzione/discorsosullacostituzione.pdf (accessed 3 March 2020).

25. Giorgio Napolitano, 'Address', Rome, 25 April 2014. Società Umanitaria, Rome, 25 April 2014, available from https://www.ilmessaggero.it/roma/cronaca/festa_liberazione_roma_vittoriano_napolitano_renzi-385467.html (accessed 3 March 2020).

26. Filippo Focardi, *Il cattivo tedesco e il bravo italiano. La rimozione delle colpe della Seconda guerra mondiale*, Bari, Laterza, 2013.

27. Martin Schain, *The Marshall Plan Fifty Years After*, New York, Palgrave, 2001, p137.

28. Oral historians have frequently noted how the 'Allies as liberators' frequently cancel out the 'Allies as killers', often in the same story; bombings are explained away as errors or misidentifications of legitimate military targets. Gabriella Gribaudi, 'Le Memorie Plurali e il Racconto Pubblico della Guerra. Il Ruolo delle Fonti Orali nella Riflessione Storiografica sul Secondo Conflitto Mondiale', in *Italia Contemporanea*, 2014, pp217-249.

29. John Foot, *Italy's Divided Memory,* New York, Palgrave Macmilllan, 2009, pp108-109. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230101838

30. Frank Coppa, 'Pope Pius XII: From the Diplomacy of Impartiality to the Silence of the Holocaust', in *Journal of Church and State,* vol 55, no 2, 2013, pp286-306. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csr120

31. Gabriella Gribaudi, 'Guerra, Catastrofi e Memorie dal Territorio', In Mariuccia Salvati and Loredana Sciolla (eds), *L'Italia e le Sue Regioni*, vol 3, Rome, Treccani, pp251–273.

32. De Bernardi, op cit, p88.

33. Na Li, 'Going Public, Going Global: Teaching Public History Through International Collaborations' in *Public History Review*, vol 22, 2015, p2. https://doi.org/10.5130/phrj.v22i0.4754

34. ibid, p6.

35. Sharon Leon, 'Complexity and Collaboration: Doing Public History in Digital Environments', in James B. Gardner and Pula Hamilton (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Public History,* Oxford University Press Online, 2017, pp4 and 6, https://10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199766024.013.2, (accessed 18 October 2019).

36. One author was part of this consultation and remains involved as head of the IBCC Digital Archive. Her experience of participating in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a researcher was useful in understanding the nature of reconciliation in this project. Also involved in the early planning phase from the University's side was Dr Dan Ellin who continues his involvement in the Archive as its subject specialist.

37. The IBCC site, including the visitor centre, opened in January 2018. This article of necessity excludes the exhibition content for which the Archive team was responsible.

38. Dan Ellin and Heather Hughes, 'IBCC Interpretation Plan', 19 June 2015, IBCC Digital Archive document IBCC-TS-01, available on request.

39. For debates about social cohesion in the UK, see Chris Weedon, 'Identity, Difference and Social Cohesion in Contemporary Britain', in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol 32, no 3, 2011, pp209-227. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2011.565733

40. This arrangement has had implications for copyright as well as maintenance and backup.

41. For an exception, see Joanne Evans and Jacqueline Z. Wilson, 'Inclusive Archives and Recordkeeping: Towards a Critical Manifesto', in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol 24, no 8, 2018, pp857-860. Martinez-Avila and Budd have recently introduced the notion of an 'ethical' warrant for controlled vocabularies which implies cultural sensitivity. See Daniel Martinez-Avila and John Budd, 'Epistemic Warrant for Categorizational Activities and the Development of Controlled Vocabularies', in *Journal of Documentation*, vol 73, no 4, 2017, pp700-715.

42. David C. Blair and M. E. Maron, 'An Evaluation of Retrieval Effectiveness for a Full-Text Document-Retrieval System', in *Communications of the ACM*, vol 28, no 3, 1985, pp289-229; Robert Moskovitch et al, 'A Comparative Evaluation of Full-Text, Concept-Based and Context-Sensitive Search', in *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, vol 14, no 2, 2007, pp164-174.

43. Hilda Kean, 'Public History as a Social Form of Knowledge', in James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public History,* Oxford University Press Online, 2017, pp1-23, https://10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199766024.013.22 (accessed 18 October 2019).

44. Serge Noiret and Thomas Cauvin, op cit, especially p8.

45. Trevor Owens, 'Digital Cultural Heritage and the Crowd', in *Curator: The Museum Journal,* vol 56, no 1, 2013, p21. https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12012

46. Victoria Van Hyning, 'Harnessing Crowdsourcing for Scholarly and GLAM Purposes', in *Literature Compass*, 2019; 16:e12507, pp1-11, https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12507 (accessed 4 October 2019).

47. For a critique, see L. Harald Fredheim, 'Endangerment-Driven Heritage Volunteering: Democratisation or "Changeless Change"', in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol 24, no 6, 2018, pp619-633.

48. Gabriele Badano and Alasia Nuti, 'Under Pressure: Political Liberalism, the Rise of Unreasonableness and the Complexity of Containment', in *The Journal of Political Philosophy,* vol 26, no 2, 2018, pp145-168. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12134

49. Further information about the projects is available on the website: http://www.laboratoriolapsus.it/.

50. 'Toy Soldiers' at https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/273.

51. 'Filiputti, Angiolino' at https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/show/27.

52. 'Radacich, Maurizio' at https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/show/38.

53. 'British prisoners of war escaping from the Torviscosa camp are helped by civilians' at https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/133.

54. Capezzuto recently provided a reflection on success and failure in three Italian digital public history projects. Among his recommendations for avoiding failure are to allow participants to be 'designers' rather than mere 'implementers'. Stefano Capezzuto, 'Digital Public History e Design della Partecipazione. Riflessioni e Proposte a Partire dalla Società Storica Spezzina', in *Umanistica Digitale*, no 3, 2018, pp69-84, http://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2532-8816/8189 (accessed 30 October 2019).

55. Because of the circumstances, names and other details have been changed to protect anonymity of informants.

56. International Council on Archives, *Code of Ethics*. *Adopted by the General Assembly in its XIIIth session in Beijing (China) on 6 September 1996*, available at https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA_1996-09-06_code%20of%20ethics_EN.pdf.

57. Amy C. Edmondson, 'Strategies for Learning from Failure' in *Harvard Business Review*, vol 89, no 4, 2011, pp48-55, available from https://hbr.org/2011/04/strategies-for-learning-from-failure (accessed 3 March 2020).

58. The home page is at https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk.

59. This figure has been filtered to exclude users internal to the University of Lincoln.

60. Monica Emmanuelli and Alessandro Pesaro, 'La Guerra di Bombardamento in Friuli nelle Fonti dell'International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive. Temi di Ricerca e Problemi Aperti', in *Storia Contemporanea in Friuli*, no 48, 2018, pp223–232.

61. Archive patrons tend to use Internet-like, name-driven search strategies while the standard description is based on provenance which they can struggle to grasp. Wendy Duff and Catherine Johnson, 'Where Is the List With All the Names? Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists', in *The American Archivist*, vol 66, no 1, 2003, pp79-95.

62. See for example Antoinette Burton (ed), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 2005.

63. This may hamper attempts to use Archive items for non-scholarly purposes, for example for pinpointing unexploded bombs before the start of engineering projects. Alessandro Pesaro, 'Fonti Inedite da un Archivio Digitale Britannico. 1939-1945, i bombardamenti in Friuli Venezia Giulia', in *Rassegna Tecnica del Friuli Venezia Giulia,* vol 70, no 372, 2019, pp20-23.

64. For a study of the Bomber Command memoir, see Frances Houghton, 'The "Missing Chapter": Bomber Command Aircrew Memoirs in the 1990s and 2000s', in Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (eds), *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War,* London, Bloomsbury, 2014, pp155-174.

65. The world is now in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic which has already overwhelmed the region of Italy where our most important partners are based. Such a profound event has widely been likened to a wartime condition. As such, it is likely to affect the public historians' perspectives and contributions to collective knowledge at every level including 'the national'.