

Thanks to those who have contributed this month!

Memory 12 sheet

From **Richard (Ash)**:

The Great Escape

A film of highs and lows, of humour and tragedy but, most of all, of immense courage and bravery - and that film score by Elmer Bernstein, as unmistakable as the National Anthem but infinitely more catchy. It raises the spirits and gets you in the right frame of mind for the film right from the start.

I think it's pointless recanting the storyline of the film as I would think there isn't anyone in the western world (of our age) who has not seen it - and been inspired by it. Even more so when it is remembered that it was based on actual events, the inspiration for John Sturges to make the film was provided by Paul Brickhill's book *The Great Escape*, (Paul Brickhill also wrote 'The Dam Busters' and 'Reach for the Sky' – about Douglas Bader; I have read these two books many years ago and can thoroughly recommend them).

The characters are all 'fleshed out' with so many sub plots augmenting the main theme of escape but ultimately of recapture and, for many, execution. The scenes of Steve McQueen (The Cooler King) throwing his baseball at the cell wall will remain with me for the rest of my life, even more so than the motorbike sequence which is in itself a classic, and Charles Bronson's Danny, 'The Tunnel King's', claustrophobia in the tunnel makes you want to gasp for air. There are far too many other great actors to mention, all contributing their own stories, each adding so many layers to the storyline. In fact, I can think of no other film with a cast of so many actors who were at the pinnacle of their profession.

Another aspect of the film I find rewarding is the use of German actors playing the German parts, it adds an authenticity to the characters that just would not have been there with any other people playing them.

Finally, some facts courtesy of the National Archives, the escape took place on the night of 24th March 1944 and, although the film sites over 200 men broke out, it was in fact, only 76 airmen who escaped from Stalag Luft 111; of those 76 men 73 were recaptured and of those, 50 were executed by the Gestapo. It is estimated that over 80 (yes eighty) escape tunnels were located by the Germans and shut down. Now some information courtesy of Google, there were just three prisoners who made good their escape and were portrayed in the film as British, Polish and Australian, however in reality they were two Norwegians (Jens Müller and Per Bergsland) and a Dutchman (Bram van der Stock). Further reading can be found at: - <https://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/the-great-escape-youve-seenthe-film-now-hear-the-truth/>

From Pippa and David:

The Chicago Seven

Mark Rylance, Eddied Redmayne and Sasha Baren Cohen

Netflix

This film is as relevant today as it was depicting the bloody riots of 1968. The themes of racial injustice and bureaucratic corruption are ones only too recently debated in the American Senate.

For me, the film was compelling, suspenseful and at times very funny. Pot smoking street lawyers, belligerent judges, motivated and hapless students, are among a fine cast of characters all caught up in the events of the Chicago riots.

Memorable line: "Give me a moment, would you, friend? I've never been on trial for my thoughts before"