



Newsletter

Winter 2013/2014

Looking backwards,
looking forward...

The beginning of a new year is a good time to reflect on what has been achieved as well as on what the future may bring.

Together we made significant progress in developing Interpret Europe in 2013 and we can be proud of some great successes.

A great and inspiring meeting – with another on its way!

The Sigtuna conference, which we held with the huge help and involvement of our friends from SCNI in Sweden and NAI in the USA, was the highlight of the year. We have received many enthusiastic comments from delegates from many countries.

Planning for our 2014 conference in beautiful Primošten, in Croatia, is well on its way. Any proposals for papers from all around the world have already arrived and promise a really inspiring event. Make sure you don't miss the end-of-February deadline for early-bird registrations.

IE supported as an advocacy network by the EU's Culture Programme

Another milestone for IE's development was its recognition as an advocacy network by the EU's Culture Programme. This is an exciting achievement given that we had been in existence for little more than two years when we submitted our proposal. It also indicates that heritage interpretation fits well with the EU's priorities, and Brussels wants us to promote it widely.

This operational grant helped us to start our advocacy campaign (see the article in this issue) and to get IE's quality group up and running. Other organisations specialising in sustainable development of tourism destinations are already waiting for quality criteria on heritage interpretation supported by IE, the professional body in Europe. They are keen to integrate interpretation quality into their award schemes for quality tourism destinations. This is another exciting development as such collaboration provides us with the powerful means to raise the understanding of, and demand for, professional heritage interpretation.

Successful applications for EU projects

Another great achievement is the unexpected number of successful EU project proposals that were initiated by IE and our members.

- The proposal called InHerit, a Grundtvig multilateral project on developing European in-service training, has been initiated by IE. Competition was very strong and the success rate of proposals was only 14%. Alden Biesen, the Belgium lead partner, will organise the start-up meeting in January. We will also organise a one-day post-conference workshop in Croatia in May which

will give the opportunity of involving our members with a stake in training and education for heritage interpretation.

- During our Pisa conference in 2012, the University of Malta and the Friends of the Polish National Museum discussed the idea of a Grundtvig Learning Partnership focussing on Heritage Interpretation for Senior Audiences (HISA). IE served as lead applicant and coordinator and it was really good news that this project had also been approved. Since then, the first meeting of the partners took place in Bristol in December. We also want to involve our members, who have know-how and experience, in developing this project.
- Under the lead of one of our members, KOAN Consulting, a proposal for a Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project (Interpreting our European Heritage) was also successful. This project offers opportunities to integrate heritage interpretation in the competence profile of tourism professionals in the formal vocational education system of several countries. IE participates in this project as an Associated Partner representing the profession in its European and sectoral diversity.
- Another Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project (HeriQ) is going to develop training for 'interpretive agents' (see the article in this issue). The Bulgarian Centre for Heritage Interpretation is lead partner and several other IE members are taking part.

At the end of this year we feel that we have reached a new phase for Interpret Europe and that we have really begun to make an impact. This has only been possible with support from our members. Thank you!

We wish all of you a great 2014!

Patrick and Bettina Lehnes

A good idea *by Jane Beattie*

A great way of helping both, a young interpreter and Interpret Europe

Travelling through Norway this summer, I found myself constantly inspired by some of the incredible interpretive centres, exhibits and people – but one stood out above the rest. Looking for evening lodgings in the tiny Sami community of Olmmaivaggi (Manndalen), not only did we find a great sjøbuer (sea cabin) but also a young man who had just discovered interpretation through a course in Spitsbergen. He was excited to be able to communicate effectively to visitors the cultural and natural heritage that surrounded him.

He had not heard of Interpret Europe but was pleased about the thought of a large network where he could share ideas and grow his skills. He so inspired me with his enthusiasm that I offered to sponsor his membership in IE for a year.

I'm also thrilled that IE were able to create a 'sponsored membership' category (<http://www.interpret-europe.net/top/membership/sponsored-membership.html>) to make it easy for me and I hope many of you will pass on to the next generation the gift of our incredible interpretive network. In that way our passions for our cultural and natural heritage can continue to grow.

I challenge all of you to find someone you can sponsor this year too!

We count on you for our advocacy campaign

by Bettina and Patrick Lehnés

There are still some people and organisations out there on the European continent who practise, research or teach interpretation, but have never come across Interpret Europe. And there are even more who have never heard about 'heritage interpretation' at all, despite the fact that they work in similar fields and sometimes do great interpretation without knowing it.

We have just produced a new flyer that relates much better to those who haven't heard of interpretation yet, but might be interested in linking up with like-minded people. This flyer introduces the vocation of 'heritage interpreter'. It aims first to raise awareness of our profession, and then, if people are interested, to encourage them to join IE.

It's now up to you to distribute the flyer to those organisations and individuals in your personal and professional networks who would benefit from finding out about heritage interpretation. Please tell us how many printed copies you need from us: mail@interpret-europe.net

Comments and feedback for improvements in later versions are also welcome.

Promoting interpretation through good practice examples: Your vote counts!

by Bettina and Patrick Lehnés

We are happy with the many valuable contributions members sent us. They help us to build up a stock of examples which we can use to make our website more visual and more entertaining. We have also used images to illustrate the web page. The images are linked to the short explanation as you can already see on the contest page.

Please don't forget to vote by 31 January. During the voting period, the images are accessible only to our members through this direct link: <http://www.interpret-europe.net/index.php?id=250>

Voting is fun. The examples reveal a great variety of ways of interpreting natural and cultural heritage. And they demonstrate some great ways about how to take photographs that convey a message underpinned by a catchy caption.

Again, we also look forward to your feedback and comments to us (mail@interpret-europe.net), in order to learn whether this contest works well and what could be enhanced. We consider a follow up competition which could then be opened also for non-members.

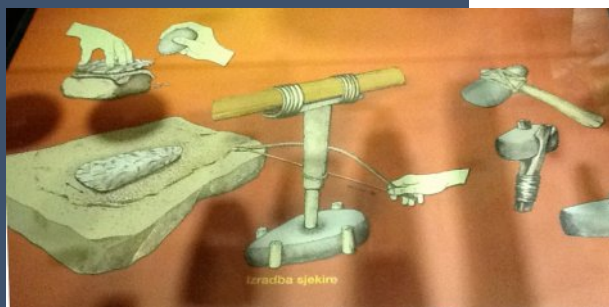
Reports from our members

Beyond words

By Susan Cross



A simple drawing powerfully translates an object from long ago and far away into a human story. (Museum of Archaeology, Zagreb)



A diagram can explain complex processes like axe manufacture more efficiently than words. (Museum of Archaeology, Zagreb)



Some objects speak loud and clear and do not need words. As a lover of jewelry, I recognized this as desirable - a statusni simbol, in Croatian or any other language. (Museum of Archaeology, Zagreb)

I love travelling, even when I do not speak the language. As someone who loves words, it can be challenging to leave them behind. But once I do, and start drawing, showing pictures, gesticulating and acting, it surprises me how well I can communicate.

It is important to remember that as an interpretive writer. Good writing is hugely important in interpretation. But the best interpretation goes beyond words.

I love travelling, even when I do not speak the language. As someone who loves words, it can be challenging to leave them behind. But once I do, and start drawing, showing pictures, gesticulating and acting, it surprises me how well I can communicate.

It is important to remember that as an interpretive writer. Good writing is hugely important in interpretation. But the best interpretation goes beyond words.

The principles of interpretive writing recognise that people at a heritage site are at a disadvantage when it comes to reading. They are standing up, they are probably distracted by the people they are with or by their surroundings. Most visitors will not want to read much. Leisure visits to heritage sites are complicated; they are not ideal for serious study. The written word can fail here.

Of course good interpretive writing tries to make the words easier to read. There are tricks that probably work in any language including: keep it short, structure it tightly, use simple sentences, avoid complicated grammar, use familiar, conversational words, and if technical words are required, explain them. That all helps.

Text written in this way is, happily, better for people who are reading in their second language. Working in Europe has made me very interested in Universal or International English and how very close it is to the type of English that works best for interpretation.

Visiting museums in non-English speaking counties shows how important the English texts are for international tourists. As many European countries are aiming to compete as cultural tourism destinations for overseas visitors, writing English that is easy to read is going to be important.

Nonetheless the most important question for any interpretive writer is, and will be, 'how much of this can I show, rather than tell?'. How much can we put into picture or models, demonstrations or activities, rather than words?

Nonetheless the most important question for any interpretive writer is, and will be, 'how much of this can I show, rather than tell?'. How much can we put into picture or models, demonstrations or activities, rather than words?

How much can we put into picture or models, demonstrations or activities, rather than words?

Susan Cross, England

e-mail: susan@telltale.eu, website: www.telltale.eu

Networking through projects



Kick-off meeting on 15-16 December 2013 in Bulgaria

by Thorsten Ludwig



HeriQ: In the very heart of Sofia

HeriQ's kick-off meeting on 15-16 December 2013 in Bulgaria

I had clearly misunderstood the first topic on our agenda as a sightseeing trip. But as soon as the bus doors closed, our Bulgarian partners pointed out sternly that we were not on holiday! We were heading for two destinations: Saint Sofia, a 6th century basilica which is the historic heart of Bulgaria's capital, and the venerable National Museum of Natural History. At both locations, guides were waiting for us because HeriQ is primarily about interpretive guiding. And the plan was for the guides to give us an idea of the state of the art in their country.

Saint Sofia was erected above a Roman necropolis – and that was the place that we were supposed to visit. After going below ground, we found ourselves exploring an amazing underworld of ancient walls and chambers. Every now and then our guide pointed to the magnificent icons of the recent church that could be seen through large glass panels above our heads. We heard the Orthodox choir, preparing to open a wedding ceremony, while we were standing beneath their feet, surrounded by Roman mosaics and discussing how to strengthen the aura of that unique place. Among the burial

chambers of Saint Sofia, HeriQ was born – and this, of course, had to be celebrated by a superb meal which we enjoyed later in a rustic Sofian restaurant.

The next day was characterised by efficiency. The Bulgarian team lead us through a splendidly-organised meeting, covering all work packages and deliverables within a few hours, and we finished with a press conference. A training session in Germany and a study visit in Italy will be our next steps. Until then, some research work has to be done. But, by courtesy of our Bulgarian colleagues, we went back home to Italy and Greece, France and Germany not only expressing a big thank you, but also with the urgent wish to cooperate in mastering 'the vast and endless sea'. And this is what kick-off meetings are really for.

HISA: Heritage Interpretation for Senior Audiences HISA

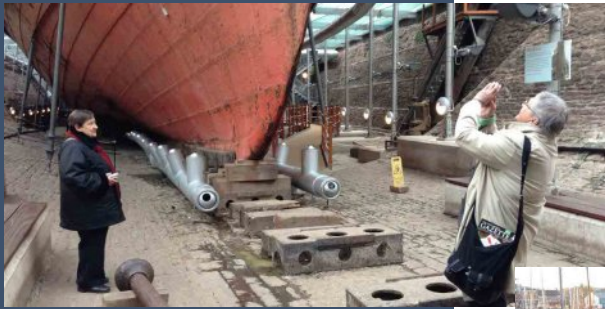
by Peter Seccombe

Representatives of organisations from five countries – Poland, Germany (Interpret Europe), Malta, Italy and the United Kingdom – gathered recently in Bristol at the SS Great Britain (a famous 19th ship) for the start up meeting of the HISA project. Funded by the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme, this two year project will explore how heritage interpretation can be provided more effectively to senior audiences, that is all those over 55.

Seniors are a growing market. They are fitter, healthier and live longer than ever before. Many have the freedom, time and money to travel and to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage around them.

They are also a powerful and influential group, able to express their needs and bring about change politically, and by volunteering and supporting conservation.

This exciting project will find out more about what museums, heritage attractions and protected areas are currently doing for heritage interpretation for seniors and how this could be improved in the future.



Danuta Szust (left) and Malgorzata Buyko from the Society of Friends of the National Museum of Krakow at SS Great Britain, one of Bristol's most exciting museums

The outputs of this project will be practical guidelines for better interpretation for senior audiences and a manual for heritage managers. If you can help, or know of research that could contribute, then please get in touch with Patrick Lehnes at Interpret Europe.



*The HISA group in Bristol Harbour:
l to r, Marie Avellino, Andrea Cenderello, George Cassar, Barbara Nowakowska, Lidia Koziel-Siudat, Danuta Szust, Patrick Lehnes, Malgorzata Buyko (missing Sarah Douglas and Peter Seccombe)*

Opportunities for EU projects on heritage interpretation

by Patrick Lehnes

Erasmus+ and Creative Europe programmes 2014-2020: Some observations and thoughts

The new multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020 will have just started when you read these words. This is always the moment for the EU to reconsider its programmes and to change the rules for funding. At the Culture Action Europe Conference and at two info-days I got some insights what this means for funding sources for heritage interpretation.

Under the pressures of the financial and economic crisis, the over-all priority for the seven coming years will be to increase growth and jobs in Europe. This aim has always been most important for the EU's structural and regional development funds (e.g. LEADER, INTERREG) but it will become more prominent also for the Creative Europe (Culture) programme and Erasmus+, the follow-on of the Lifelong Learning programme (e.g. Grundtvig).

Erasmus+

The new Erasmus+ programme will merge the former Erasmus (higher education), Leonardo (vocational education and training), Comenius (school education) and Grundtvig (non-formal and informal adult education). Under the motto 'changing lives, opening minds', the new programme will promote better skills and employability, but also soft skills such as personal empowerment, active citizenship, participation in democratic life, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion. Thus Erasmus+ will still provide opportunities for heritage interpretation.

The former boundaries between the different levels of formal education and non formal education will not exist any more and this will allow for new project partnerships.

For Instance, collaboration between universities and non-formal adult education providers in the context of professional development for heritage interpreters will become easier. The same should happen for projects dealing with interpretive programmes for children. A new way of per-unit funding is supposed to reduce the administrative work.

But there is a downside: The individual mobility grants which were a great help for a number of delegates to attend our conferences will not be available in the future.

Find out more: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

Creative Europe

'Culture' will become a strand within the new Creative Europe programme. The [introduction to the new programme](#) demonstrates the increased importance of economic thinking. One aim is to support capacity-building in order to increase the competitiveness of the creative sector. This opens possibilities for projects that aim to increase professionalism in heritage interpretation including small businesses such as interpretation consultancies, which are under-developed in many European countries.

Furthermore, within the heritage sector, interpretation frequently acts as the main interface with the visitors. 'Audience development' is among the key words in the new programme. That's what good interpretation planning and delivery is already doing for long. Better quality of interpretation can raise attractiveness of heritage sites for local visitors and for tourists which can cause direct and indirect economic effects.

The European cooperation projects call, in the Culture sub-programme, looks promising for collaboration among institutions active in heritage interpretation. Those who work with multimedia for heritage interpretation might also want to check the Media sub-programme for funding opportunities.

Find open calls for both, the Culture and the Media sub-programmes here: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/calls/index_en.htm

Conclusion

For most of us, heritage interpretation is not just a job but a passion. As we are usually driven by idealistic beliefs and values, the increased dominance of economic thinking might feel rather strange. However Anne Branch, the head of unit for Erasmus+, made a strong case for the desperate situation of millions who do not see any hope of finding a job – and a productive place in society. From this perspective, the stronger emphasis on job creation and employability is very understandable.

Despite this focus on economic development, the new programmes still offer opportunities for heritage interpreters to pursue what they feel is their mission. But those of us who want to apply for European funding will need to understand the rationale behind these programmes and to speak their language. We will need to show clearly how we can contribute through our projects to the priorities and goals of these programmes.

This does not stop interpretation following, at the same time, its mission to inspire people's thinking beyond the economic sphere – and to advocate sustainable development that respects Europe's natural and cultural heritage.

Equally, the new research and innovation framework programme will be more open to social and cultural dimensions (see the next article).

A new horizon for Europe

by Willem Derde

Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020, the new framework programme for research and innovation of the European Commission, is a good indication that the European Union is entering a new phase in its development: social and cultural issues are figuring more prominently in its new Horizon 2020 programme.

Too often, the European Union is seen as a political and economic project. While this is the case, it is much more than that. The EU was founded on the idea of creating peace and well being for all Europe's people. Economic development, stimulating scientific discoveries that help to create better products and solutions and the continuous adaptation of political structures, are still important driving forces that create the future of the EU. Much is happening in the world at large, as well as within Europe itself: the coming into being of new centres of power in Asia and South-America, the changing rules of competition in a constantly changing world and the never-ending process of internal adaptation to the extension of the EU as well as its growing in-depth impact on all its member states. However, because of this, social and cultural issues will continue to become ever more important.

The need to think through social and cultural issues at a European level, the need to come to terms with the internal richness and diversity within Europe, its weaknesses and strengths, the threats that it poses as well as the opportunity that it creates, and the need to come to terms with its own identity vis-à-vis the rest of the world, are no longer issues that are kept at the margins. With its chapter on Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies, the European Commission has given an important place to cultural issues within its ambitious Horizon 2020 programme.

As interpreters of cultural heritage, we are well placed to play a role in defining the future of Europe from a cultural and social perspective. Therefore, Interpret Europe will keep track of the bigger picture of what is happening in Europe and it will work towards a higher visibility amongst decision makers and political leaders in Europe in the years to come. However, we can only do so with your support. The more support we get from you by becoming involved in our activities, the more members we get, and the more visible we become, the more impact we can have on the future of Europe.

Find out more here: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020>

Events

Workshop supported by AHI

Let's Hear it for Audio

4 to 5 March 2014, Y Caban, Plas Newydd, Llangollen, Wales, UK

[More information](#)

NAI international conference

The NAI international conference will take place from 17 to 21 April 2014 at Suncheon Bay International Wetland Center, Suncheon, South Korea

[More information](#)

Two courses with John Veverka

Interpretive Master Planning

29 April – 2 May 2014

Creating New Audiences and keeping old ones coming back – Marketing for Interpretive/heritage sites and attractions.

3 - 5 September 2014

For course registration and materials contact the course manger at

Plas Tan y Bwlch: Beth.Cluer@eryri-npa.gov.uk

Course Instructor: jvainterp@aol.com

Interpret Europe conference

Heritage Interpretation and Tourism -

Enhancing the tourist's experience and benefitting host communities

Saturday 10 to Tuesday 13 May 2014 at Primošten, Croatia

[More information](#)



Culture

With the support of the Culture programme of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Do you want to share your projects, experiences, thoughts or adventures with other interpreters? Send us a short report and some photos to newsletter@interpret-europe.net and we'll put it in the next newsletter.

Deadline for contributions for our next newsletter:

Monday 17 March 2014

**Interpret Europe -
European Association for Heritage Interpretation e.V.**

In der Auwiese 1

79183 Waldkirch

Germany

+49-7681 4979034

mail@interpret-europe.net

www.interpret-europe.net