



Newsletter

September 2012

Pisa 2012



A colourful welcome
for the delegates



There was much
more to see than a
leaning tower...

Interpret Europe's second international conference – bringing research and practice together.

Spring showers and breezy evenings could not chill the elevated spirits of the participants at the second international conference of Interpret Europe which took place in Pisa, Italy, from 19 to 22 May this year.

In all, 73 participants from 21 countries of the world shared their experience and skills in using heritage interpretation as a management tool to enhance the care and management of natural and cultural heritage. Presentations and workshops allowed delegates to share and discuss lessons from their work. Site visits to natural and cultural sites in and around Pisa were an integral part of the conference and allowed us to exchange ideas on existing examples of heritage interpretation, and also to think of ways in which they could be improved to offer visitors better experiences of the various sites.

The three days of the conference were marked by inspiring keynote speeches from Patrick Lehnés (Executive Director of Interpret Europe), Willem Derde (Director of the Ename Center for Public Archaeology and Heritage Presentation in Belgium) and Maurilio Cipparone (Honorary President of Istituto Pangea in Italy). Each, in different ways, offered the participants considerable food for thought before the various parallel sessions and site visits.

Patrick Lehnés showed that the deep roots of heritage interpretation in the ideas and thought of Humanism and the Enlightenment and stressed that the importance of its educational role should not be forgotten even when one uses heritage interpretation as a management tool.

Willem Derde demonstrated differences in the preservation and communication of heritage sites in Europe and in Asia. The differences can lead to dramatic and irrevocable changes both in the fabric of heritage sites and the ways they are interpreted and presented to the public. He posed the question of 'what is heritage in a contemporary world?'

Maurilio Cipparone's contemplative address considered the role of heritage interpretation in the creation of sense of place and belonging, and its powerful role in addressing human emotions, widening horizons of visitors, provoking thought and creating connections between people, nature and culture.

The second international conference of Interpret Europe was another success for this young association for heritage interpretation.



The start of a long, slow, wet journey.....
while others were safe inside the mountains



Lari - a pitoresque village with
castle, pasta, theatre.....

Delegates, by their presence, their presentations and their many conversations testified that the art and science of heritage interpretation will slowly but surely win its rightful place in Europe. The annual event helps to spread knowledge and experience of best practice in heritage interpretation and, perhaps more importantly, creates strong professional connections and relations between heritage interpreters across Europe and beyond.

Iryna Shalaginova

Voices from delegates:

"Well done to all the organisers – an excellent and VERY international forum for networking and sharing ideas"

"Thanks for a great conference – hope to be back next year."

"Meeting people from 24 countries is an inspiration, sharing perspectives on culture and heritage and how we share them is a privilege and a joy. Doing all of that in the very special environments where we met surrounded by the loveliness of Tuscany and Italian warmth and hospitality made for a very special occasion."

"As with Freiburg, I have been amazed again at how quickly I have developed a rapport with people of all ages, cultures and nationalities that I now consider to be friends. I feel very lucky to have experienced some of the best aspects of human nature and interaction with people from nations and backgrounds that are not always able to share common interests."

Attending a conference like this can be quite costly for a small business like ours but when approached in the right frame of mind, the knowledge and insights that may be gained from the experience are arguably priceless."

"The Interpret Europe conference never fails to inspire me to greater heights in my career. I gain valuable insights, learn amazing new things and meet fascinating people! An extremely well organized conference in a beautiful location. Highly recommended for all interpreters!"

"Thank you for a very inspiring conference and all the knowledge and perspectives of interpretation shared in a rainy but very beautiful Tuscany! Hope to see you all in Stockholm next spring!"

More photos and some presentations are now online



Conference 2013

Sweden is waiting



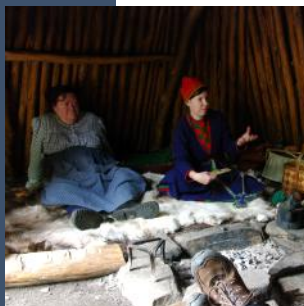
Looking forward to share this place with you next summer: Christina Svensson, Bill Taylor, Eva Sandberg, Michael Glen, Bettina Lehnés, Patrick Lehnés, Per Sonnvik (from left)

First for us...

Planning for the June 2013 Conference in Stockholm has begun in earnest. Members of the Conference Steering Group - Patrick and Bettina Lehnés, Michael Glen and Conference Chairman Bill Taylor visited the conference venue in August and also went to see several excellent sites around Stockholm for study visits. We were all impressed with what is available and by the welcoming and helpful attitude of the site

staff. Our hosts for Sweden 2013 are the Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation (Eva Sandberg, Per Sonnvik and Christina Svensson) have been actively involved in the preparation work that will make this event the biggest IE Conference ever. Our partners are SCNI and NAI (of the USA) and this will ensure a truly international event.

Now it's your job to make these days in June alive with debate and good fellowship.



Fascinating people and a phantastic warship are telling stories about Swedish history

...and now for you!

Fascinating landscapes, astonishing museums, hidden treasures and very welcoming Swedish people are the promising base for many new experiences and food for thought.

You will have the chance to follow in the footsteps of Vikings or the tracks of a baroque noble, learn about the world's first open-air museum at Skansen, visit the beautiful Tyresta National Park and be fascinated by the story of the 400year-old warship Vasa.



Sigtuna's Folkshögskola (an adult education college) is an ideal venue for a conference of interpreters: fine buildings set in beautiful surroundings, a variety of meeting rooms, bedrooms of various type and lots of spaces for socialising.

The delightful little town of Sigtuna has a long and proud history and provides a great place for our conference. You will discover the reason for their marketing slogan: "Sigtuna – where Sweden begins"



Sigtuna's main street

Call for papers:
Conference 2013

Sharing our natural and cultural heritage: interpretation can
make us citizens of the world



Mysterious stones



The conference will investigate how interpretation can deal with the complexities of multiple identities - local, regional, national, transnational and world-wide - and how it can help to overcome limited horizons and stereotypes while enhancing mutual understanding. We will also debate how we can involve local and wider society in interpretive planning in order to foster a sense of ownership. With this conference we want to raise the voice of interpretation by contributing to the European Year of Citizens 2013.

The **call for papers** is already online (www.interpret-europe.net) and registration will open end of October.

Membership fees

As most of you know, we had difficulties with the SEPA banking system last year. That's why we didn't collect the 2011 membership fees until early 2012.

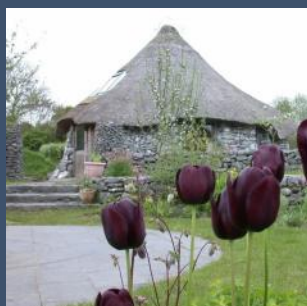
The system now works and we are collecting the 2012 fees within the next three weeks. Those of you who issued a SEPA direct debit mandate do not need to do anything. If you are hold individual membership, your fee will be debited with no further notice. For organisational and commercial memberships, we will send you an invoice for your fee.

Some members have already paid their 2012 fee and so we will charge only those who have not yet paid for 2012 membership. From 2013 onwards, we want to collect the annual fees in February.

Your membership fees help us maintain the work of Interpret Europe including the great effort that goes into conference organisation. We are trying to find a way of granting reductions for members at future conferences but they must comply with the EU's Grundtvig regulations. Grundtvig support is very important for many delegates.

Interpreters at work

Project in Ireland



Brigit's Garden, Co. Galway, Republic of Ireland

Interpretation is often, when we come down to it, about love, inspiration and sustained hard work. At Brigit's Garden all of these are evident; they come together to create a fascinating and unique visit.

The overall impression for the visitor is of wonder, beauty and harmony. Brigit's Garden was designed by leading Irish garden designer, Mary Reynolds and is tended by staff and volunteers. The whole project is the vision of Jenny Beale who manages the garden and has done from its creation (and before).

It is a multi-sensory delight, filled with places for visitors to explore, and things for them to talk about.

There is a message and a mission in this beauty – this is an interpretive garden. A walk through the gardens takes you through the Celtic cycle of the year and the great festivals of Samhain, Imbolc, Bealtaine and Lughnasa. Beautifully designed interpretive panels explain how this seasonal cycle mirrors the cycle of our lives from conception to old age and death. Well-informed and welcoming staff can answer deeper (or not so deep!) questions or will lead tours. There is an engaging children's trail to keep actively curious people interested.



There is a strong sense of place here. These are wildlife gardens, designed to reflect the West of Ireland landscape and managed to encourage biodiversity.

Behind and through it all, is Brigit. St. Brigit, otherwise known as Brigid or Brid, one of the most popular Irish saints who has strong links with an older pagan past, is the inspiration for this garden. The whole enterprise aims to reveal and encourage a more harmonious and celebratory way of living with the natural world. This objective is held central to all the activities. The interpretation is tight, clear and well-themed.



What I have said may make this sound like a solemn, reverential space but that is quite wrong. This is a reverence with gusto and joy, where everyone can connect with nature in ways that suit them. So there is a lively and popular programme of family activities, there is music and feasting, elves, fairies and Santa Claus. All of life, for all ages, is here.

Brigit's Garden celebrates the past and thrives in the 21st century. It has carved out a niche for itself as an attraction in an area that had few visitors. It has given local people a place to be proud of, to enjoy and be part of.

People come from around the world come here and want to stay in touch. Modern technology allows that to happen. Take a look at the website www.brigitsgarden.ie and you will see it describes and promotes the visit experience for tourists and day visitors as well as appealing to a local (and wider) community.



Nature, history, art, culture, religion, faith, community, past, present, relationships, meanings, stories – Brigit's Garden encompasses them all, in an interpretive experience that is so well planned that it appears effortless. I hugely recommend a visit to the garden as well as the website. There is much here that interpreters can learn from and be encouraged by.

This note is an extended version of a post from susancrosstelltale.wordpress.com. Visit to see more good examples of interpretation in the UK and Ireland.

Susan Cross, Telltale

From the work of Archnetwork, Scotland



Tallin



Maarika our Estonian host

In May this year (2012), 6 professional heritage practitioners in Scotland set out for Estonia to study Heritage Management and Tourism in this most Easterly part of the European Union. The trip was organised by Archnetwork in Scotland and funded by the Leonardo Da Vinci, Life Long Learning programme of the European Union. Libby Urquhart of Archnetwork, is a founding member of Interpret Europe.

The trip centred on the Rural Heritage and Craft Skills that Estonians hope to promote in the ever increasing market for cultural tourism. Here are two of the reports from the project entitled "Cultural Heritage Interpretation and Sustainable Tourism"

Immediately upon arrival in the country I was struck by its unhurried, calm atmosphere, its cleanliness, and the friendliness of the people. All of these elements, very visible in Tallinn, only became even more apparent when we had moved on to more rural areas. Other broad impressions I formed were of a country hard at work defining itself within its relatively new-found independence and, successfully it would seem, claiming its place within the European Union and international community, and of a country where cutting edge modernity and ancient practices and traditions are held to be equally important and are celebrated side by side.

From a heritage perspective, it is a very interesting country due to its newness. In many ways it feels like a blank canvas in terms of creating a heritage and tourism industry, or at least one that has only just started to be drawn on. It is also a fascinating place to compare with Scotland as many of the issues it faces are comparable, despite having different causes, such as the depopulation of its rural areas and its need and desire to preserve traditional ways of living and working.

Ellie Swinbank - Keeper at the National Mining Museum, Scotland

On day five of our trip, we set off early to walk through the forest of the Vilsandi National Park. Maarika (picture), our guide, explained traditional uses of the flora and the importance of the forest in the life of local people by providing food, medicines, material resources and space for recreation as well as being a part of personal and collective beliefs). The walk led us to the coast where a harbour has been built but the seashore is also important for a diversity of seabirds and waterfowl. We discussed how modern constructions can still respect and protect local wildlife. We also debated how to improve public access to leisure activities focusing on nature while in turn protecting the environment through sustainable tourism. We went on to learn how the local school of Lymanda, on the edge of Vilsandi National Park, exploits the rich local natural environment it is set in, by using a unique education programme geared towards understanding nature and the variety of the local native flora and fauna. The school portfolio includes a strong focus on traditional handicrafts and folklore, where the pupils' knowledge of nature can be turned into practical use. The workshop was followed by lunch where only fresh local produce is provided for the children so that they are aware how food can be accessible locally and seasonally.

Samira (right) showed us traditional Muhu Island embroidery through a two hour workshop, in which we learnt to embroider several typical and traditional motifs of Muhu embroidery, the strawberry, flower and stems. We also learnt about how this traditional craft started and was created using nature for inspiration, copying local native flowers and plants of the island, as well as the social values of this craft in terms of women gathering, wedding gifts, national pride and more. This visit showed us some of the many ways the heritage and traditional skills of Muhu are locally preserved and developed, from teaching these crafts to children at school to selling handcrafted items to local people and visitors at the community handicraft shop.



After a walk to the (almost) deserted coastal village of Atla, we learnt about the recent, painful political past of Estonia and its impact on the village people where, during Soviet times, most buildings became ruined after many people were deported. We learned how history affects the present, as the few remaining villagers try restore the village and preserve their heritage. We then headed to Loodetalu where a restored traditional farmhouse has been turned into a tourist farm with a sauna outside constructed using traditional methods.

We were told how the sauna featured was at the heart of daily family life as for healing activity where people care for each other. The main focus is on the human body and its wellbeing which take priority over social or moral

concepts in terms of attitude to nakedness, which is the norm inside the sauna, regardless of gender, age or social differences. We might have understood this without experiencing it ourselves! A nice meal using local produce was followed by gong therapy. Maarika explained that this allows for relaxation and meditation. It was one of many examples of how seeing

traditional activities helps tourists to develop a deeper understanding of how they contribute to the daily life of local people, past and present.

Samira Ben Mohamed, Project Officer for HARP
(Heritage and Archaeological Research Practice)
Heritage Consultancy

Events

AHI conference 2012
17 to 19 October 2012

Join AHI's for their Annual Conference 2012
Hawkstone Park, near Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Join AHI this year in Glorious Shropshire as we focus on the recent drive for 'creating experiences' and the rapid changes in visitor expectations and technology. Learning from leading practitioners, academics and attraction managers we will debate how we can ensure interpretation remains at the core of a successful experience.

Joining us will be renowned experts who will be sharing their experience from projects around the world and your conference package includes visits to award-winning visitor experiences, including Blists Hill Victorian Village and the Cold War Exhibition at RAF Cosford.

And during this momentous year, we couldn't miss the opportunity to visit Much Wenlock, the birthplace of the modern Olympics.

And during this momentous year, we couldn't miss the opportunity to visit Much Wenlock, the birthplace of the modern Olympics.

We'll be staying at the beautiful Hawkstone Park, a 400 acre estate nestled in the heart of the beautiful Shropshire hills, where you will be able to explore the 18th century Follies in the parkland - a Victorian fantasyland of cliffs, crags, caves, woods and extraordinary monuments. We even have a specially themed visit there during our stay. Plus conference dinners will be sourced from the locality, and there will be Shropshire-themed entertainment.

Discount and places are limited so we encourage you to book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

[More details on the AHI website](#)

E-FAITH
6th European contact weekend
26 to 28 October 2012
London

E-FAITH, the European Federation of Associations of Industrial and Technical Heritage is the European platform promoting contacts and co-operation between non profit volunteer associations, the place where those can meet, exchange experiences, learn from each other and support each other's activities and campaigns.

After previous succesfull meetings in Beringen, Kortrijk, Barcelona, Calais and Tilburg (each attended by representatives from a dozen countries) E-FAITH is now going to organize in London its sixth European contact weekend for volunteers and non profit organisations that are engaged in the research, the preservation, the interpretation and/or the presentation of the industrial and technical heritage.

Exchanging ideas is the very essence of these Industrial Heritage Weekends organised by the European Federation of Associations of Industrial and Technical Heritage (EFAITH).

The Weekend this October is being held in London and will provide enterprising volunteers and their associations with an excellent opportunity to promote their restoration project, whether work in progress or finished, to like-minded volunteers from all over Europe.

We hope to meet you in London, October 26-28 th
And please: spread the invitation for the weekend in your country

[More information](#)

What does heritage interpretation mean for you?

Lidia Koziel-Siudut, from the National Museum in Krakow, Poland, collected a very inspiring and colourful list of spontaneous answers to the question: "What does heritage interpretation mean for you?". We want to share them with you

Storytelling about heritage with a personal touch to the visitor **Explaining**
A way to achieve a good education The way we learn the language of the earth, culture and spirit
Interpretation is everything you can "feel yours" in your mind and in your heart and in your surroundings **Prevailing passions and sharing visions**
Broadening the horizon of interests in the world
To make people understand things they usually don't see
The message is in the story **Relate, provoke and reveal**
Mission based education *An advanced process of communication*
Heart and soul American word (Nobody in England understood)
Communicating with the informal audience
Meaningful communication **Empathy** Interpretation is a message with a meaning to you and to the listeners
A learning process Connecting people to a region through an emotional connection to the essence of the place
Inspiring emotions with intellectuality
Revealing beauty that otherwise would be missed **Educative tool** Bringing the essence of a place to life
Provoking the visitor to create his/her own meaning from the program
All about why How you help people to create their own meanings, responses and ideas when they come into contact with the past or the natural world: how you enrich that experience
Connecting people to the world's most special places, sites, people and wildlife **Education**
Business of communication and visitor experience
Communication to facilitate **Marketing with more emphasis for heritage**
A source of fun **Public benefit**
To enable people to have a meeting with the piece of art and to respond to it **Effective communication** **A way of life**
Making a meaning **A simple way to make people's lives better**
Something that comes from the heart
Sharing knowledge **Emotions** To spread knowledge of and arouse feelings for nature and cultural heritage
A social experience **Engagement, revelation and fun!**
Spreading the forgotten knowledge **Loving the world**
Telling the truth **Art** **Telling our interesting story**
Remarkable stories told by remarkable teachers **Inspiration and insight (What I do and what I gain from doing it)**

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

**Deadline for contributions for our next newsletter:
23 November 2012**

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