



Photo: Kranz

Newsletter

Winter 2015/16

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There are times when things are more contemplative, and times when things slip into motion. At present, the latter certainly seems to be the case. In Paris, world leaders recently paved the way for transition and in terms of heritage interpretation the idea of change is reflected in this newsletter in several reports from conferences attended by our members.

When reading through some of these reports, you will notice that considerations are no longer about adapting interpretation to values that might not really support our beliefs, i.e. by proving our ability to meet the market's requirements. In fact, the deliberations are now more about emphasising values that are much closer to the heart of our profession. They are about further developing and communicating interpretation as an approach to enable people to learn from their natural and cultural heritage to shape our common future in a more sustainable way.

We live in changing times and this is plainly true for Interpret Europe. Our first 5-year Strategic Plan 2011-2015 is ending and we are embarking on a new stage. 2016 will be an important year for our association. If we claim that heritage interpretation is critical for non-formal learning and that Interpret Europe is ready to advocate for that, we now have to deliver. Winter is a good time to think about this.

However, this newsletter is not just about stimulating thought, it is also full of activity showing that we are on the best path to take action.

In preparing our next conference, "Heritage interpretation – for the future of Europe", we are stepping out of the box. We are engaging with stakeholders adjoining the fields of heritage and interpretation. We are emphasising that we are ready to serve all who want to give European heritage a deeper meaning by encouraging people to get in direct touch with it.

We have also launched our training and certification programme to foster the quality of our work and to become more recognisable in many European countries than is possible through our annual conference. As a first step, courses for guides are taking place in Greece and in Spain and a first training course for guide trainers will start next summer in the Czech Republic.

You can read about this and about much more in the following pages.

We will use this winter to structure our thinking on different fields of activity, to make sure we will start the new year with clear visions and lots of energy – and this is what we wish to all of you.

Willem Derde and Thorsten Ludwig
Managing Directors

Changing times for interpretation

Recently the world of international interpretation has undergone a seismic change. Under the leadership of the revitalised Interpret Europe and other organisations, key questions are being asked about the economic, social, political and cultural roles of interpretation.

For a long time, I have been concerned at the lack of critical thinking in interpretation. There has been a reluctance to turn the spotlight on ourselves and our professional practice in ways that many other disciplines, such as history and architecture, have embraced. For instance, historians have wrestled for many years over issues of representation, who owns the past and conflicted narratives. However these issues have not made their way into interpretive thinking until quite recently. Interpretation has instead been based on theories that date from the 1950s and is skewed towards presentation, communication and marketing over an understanding of the complexity of the material being presented. There has also been a highly romantic view of our activities, where interpretation is seen as a 'gift' that you either have or you don't (without the gift or the passion, you can't communicate effectively about sites). Unfortunately, these ways of seeing interpretation have positioned interpretation at the end of a project, rather than at the beginning, and have acted against the wider interests of the profession as a whole.

Interpret Europe is at the forefront of the challenge to this paradigm. IE has recently undertaken an analysis of trends and developments affecting interpretation in Europe in order to position interpretation clearly within policy frameworks. From this basis, new roles for interpretation will be identified and hopefully also new jobs for interpreters. Organisations such as the Asian Development Bank are also doing interesting work to present interpretation as a key to revitalising towns, cities, states and communities.

Are we, as interpreters, ready to step into the spotlight? This will be quite demanding.

- First, we will need to embrace a more nuanced view of our profession, which has traditionally been based in government-funded areas such as national parks and tourism agencies and has had a fairly restricted scope (thematic interpretation/heritage trails/visitor centres/face-to-face tours/education). Organisations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and UNESCO can all benefit from our services, but they will expect sound economic and policy-based arguments and an understanding of complex, multilayered, non-linear sites.

- Secondly, we will need to explain the relevance of interpretation in the complex socio-political world of the 21st century. Our profession can make a key contribution to work on climate change, the displacement of people due to conflict, and assessing if or how lost heritage, such as the built heritage of Yemen and Syria, can be



reconstructed. There will be a need for non-traditional training in a range of areas and for many conversations with experts outside our traditional fields of expertise.

But the world is looking for solutions, and I think interpretation is poised to take on a new role and a new identity in these challenging times. So, are we ready? Recent trends in interpretation around the world tell me that indeed we are.

Sue Hodges, Managing Director, SHP (Sue Hodges Productions Pty Ltd), Melbourne, Australia, sue@shp.net.au



Thorsten Ludwig
(Germany) and
Willem Derde
(Belgium)

A report from an Interpret Europe strategy meeting

The IE Management and Supervisory Committee recently met in Antwerp to discuss the keystones of Interpret Europe's Strategic Management Plan 2016-2020. A good deal of research on trends and stakeholders in the field of heritage and interpretation had been done with many members involved while the current membership and the development during the past five years had been analysed. The main anticipated outcome of the meeting was to establish what the research findings suggest for the future development of Interpret Europe.

It was clear that there was no lack of goals that Interpret Europe should cover. However, the onus was on prioritising them to achieve a strong impact by fostering leverage and synergies.

The two most prominent fields which we introduced at our last General Assembly were membership development and embedding the association in European decision-making. But, would these be supported by the findings recently presented by our members? Which other aims and expectations for Interpret Europe might link to these fields and which might not?

We chose three steps to begin to address these questions:

1. An individual exercise in which each participant thought about their vision of where Interpret Europe should be in 2020. These notes were simply be left on the desks to be observed later.

2. Management presented its conclusions on the findings while Supervisory Committee members put remarks on facilitation cards. These cards were arranged in clusters and each cluster prioritised.

3. A mind map was created with the highest priority cluster in the centre with all other topics arranged around it while the individual visions of the members of the Supervisory Committee were then compared to the result.

The main subject around which all other topics were arranged on the mind map signified the benefits of Interpret Europe. The central question was: Why is Interpret Europe needed?

Two key areas were identified – one focused more on external heritage and interpretation stakeholders while the other dealt more with the internal structure and members.



*Interpret Europe's Supervisory Committee in Antwerp
Photo: Ludwig*



Negotiating the most prominent goals
Photo: Ludwig

The individual visions of the participants contributed to these two fields.

It was enlightening to find that the result of the process was largely in tune with the two aforementioned fields. As such, it was subsequently agreed to transform the two following goals for Interpret Europe's key strategic objectives for the five next years.

- To grow a membership that supports and that is supported by the association
- To anchor heritage interpretation at European and national levels

All participants agreed that the profile of Interpret Europe now needs to echo these two goals.

The next question was, how could these goals actually be achieved? The group split into two teams to provide some initial recommendations, each checking the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats that foster or hinder achieving these two goals. Each group also suggested initiatives that (1) must, (2) should or (3) can be taken in the short and medium-term. The results were presented and discussed and overall, there were no objections.

However, one issue posed at the very beginning of the meeting could not be sufficiently resolved by the end. This was the question of funding. Addressing this question is crucial as all management activities of Interpret Europe over the last months had to be carried out on a volunteer basis or are supported in kind by Herita: Flanders Heritage Association. The Management and Supervisory Committee agreed that this cannot continue. While the Management will transform the results of the meeting into realistic planning and implementation documents to be endorsed by the Supervisory Committee and presented to our members, the Supervisory Committee took major responsibility to raise funds for Interpret Europe.

The meeting lasted from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon and the time was used very productively. Interpret Europe extends special thanks to Herita for providing the facilities and the technical equipment and for raising team spirit by the just-in-time delivery of a homemade cake. Face-to-face meetings are costly in time and effort but everyone agreed that they are vital not just to affirm that we are pulling together but also to ensure that our efforts are worthwhile – and pulling together for Interpret Europe really makes sense.



Peter Seccombe
(UK)

Get another member!

One of IE's priorities over the next year is to get more members. We need to build the membership so we can provide a better service and promote heritage interpretation to a wider audience. We have just 200 members and we would like to have double that number – and we need your help!

If every member can get another member, we would double the membership in a very short time. So, we are asking you to talk to your colleagues, to the people you know in other organisations and try to get one person (or more!) to join IE. We always introduce new members in the newsletter, and if you get another member we will credit you for your help.

IE is here for its members, so you can share your experiences in interpretation and help to improve standards. If you can get another member we can share our experiences more widely and everyone will benefit. And the subscriptions would be useful too!

So, can we ask you to get out, get talking and get another member now – please!

Michael Glen
(UK)

Forging a global alliance

In the last newsletter, we reported on the progress that has been made, under the leadership of Chuck Lennox (National Association for Interpretation – NAI), in considering some form of international federation of heritage interpretation associations.

The group, which includes Lisa Keys (Association for Heritage Interpretation), Chris Mathieson (Interpretation Canada) and Michael Glen (Interpret Europe), has recently prepared a short statement that sets out three key purposes for what it now prefers to call an ‘alliance’ rather than the more formal-sounding ‘federation’.

These purposes are:

1. Raising awareness of interpretation
2. Acting as advocate for the profession
3. Supporting organisations of interpreters or representative individuals

The group is conscious of those countries where there is currently no association or even network of interpreters, but where there are individuals who would like to develop such internal links but need guidance and help. The group has also opened the possibility of non-member organisations being members of such an alliance – they might be NGOs, for example, with similar objectives to membership associations.

The draft paper also includes a draft memorandum of understanding that draws together the work of the Banff Conference in 1985, the later one in Honolulu, the IE Freiburg Declaration and the similarly-named document produced by IE in 2012 and agreed by partner membership associations.

The group’s paper has begun a process of consultation, beginning with those organisations that debated the question of an international, or global, alliance in Montréal and in Kraków. Thereafter, depending upon the response from those consulted initially, the paper will be issued for wider consultation.

Things may have moved on since this contribution was written!



Michael Glen
(UK)

Guidelines for good interpretation

At the IE conference in Kraków, a draft paper setting out guidelines to achieving excellence in interpretation was presented for initial discussion. Following that meeting a small group was formed to take the project forward. It now includes IE members Tim Carey (Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Ireland), Nicole Deufel (Jura Consultants, Scotland), Zeljka Miklosević (University of Zagreb, Croatia), Tom Nevejan (Herita, Belgium), and Roger White (Ironbridge International Institute, England), under the con-venorship of Michael Glen (Touchstone, Scotland), who drew up the original draft.

The intended audiences for the guidelines are those who are unfamiliar with the role and practice of heritage interpretation but may wish, or should consider, using interpretation techniques and media for their sites. The paper uses a sequence of simple questions. These lead the user through the whole interpretation, planning and implementation process, from project conception to operation and evaluation. It embraces interpretation facilities at all levels, from major installations to printed leaflets and includes references to personal interpretation and interpretive aspects of visitor management. It does not set out detailed methods and training régimes but refers users to those already widely available.

In the last few months, the group has met by Skype on several occasions to redraft the paper in a form that is suitable for consultation and this has now been sent, on an infor-

mal basis only, to a selection of contacts for their comment and advice. A Survey Monkey questionnaire has also been prepared, for the formal consultation phase, to make responses easier to compile and to analyse comments.

At the invitation of Herita, the Flanders Heritage Association, the revised draft will be 'tested' on its members in the early months of 2016 with a view to a final draft being prepared in time for the IE conference in Mechelen, Belgium, in May. Delegates will have time thereafter to submit any additional comments before the document is made widely available.

Michael H Glen
December 2015



Michal Medek
(Czech Republic)

Heritage interpretation in the Czech Republic

The article explores how the field of heritage interpretation has developed in the Czech Republic in the new millennium and what are the current topics, issues and plans. The first strong impetus for heritage interpretation methodology development in the Czech Republic came in 2001 when James Carter provided a series of training sessions followed by the translation of 'A Sense of Place' into Czech by Ladislav Ptáček.



The first meeting of SIMID
Photo: Medek

The Partnerství Foundation was behind the training in an effort to improve the quality of heritage interpretation on which its grant money was spent. Special focus was given to the involvement of communities in the interpretive planning process. This unfortunately led to the impression that interpretation was mainly about community planning and lessened its role in visitor and heritage management. A narrowed field of sight is always a challenge in small countries with individual languages and a limited community of experts.

The EU structural funds provided an opportunity for boosting heritage interpretation. Thousands of information panels were erected, myriads of folders and brochures published. The most costly interpretation projects were the constructions of visitor centres in national parks and protected landscape areas. The Czech Agency for Conservation and Landscape Protection (responsible for nature conservation on most of the country's territory) formed in 2009 a special workgroup on visitor centres that included two non-agency representatives – Michal Medek and Tomáš Růžička. They managed to turn the initial shock that millions of Euros are assigned to projects without any criteria guaranteeing quality interpretation delivery into their own EU funded project.

Three training sessions for visitor centre managers took place in 2010/11, visitor research was conducted at sites where visitor centres were planned and methodology on

heritage interpretation was published. Its texts were turned into the first comprehensive Czech handbook on heritage interpretation in 2012. A lot of inspiration came from the Scottish University of the Highlands and Islands' postgraduate course on Interpretation: Management and Practice. Since 2014, Michal Medek has taught a one-semester, three-euro-credit course on Heritage Interpretation at Masaryk University in Brno.

Meanwhile the Czech Association for Heritage Interpretation was established in 2011 by handful of enthusiasts. Its members meet once a year to exchange ideas on news in the field of interpretation, do a field study trip and vote for the interpretive deed of the year. At the moment



Training visitor centre staff
Photo: Medek

there are about 20 members. The association received funding for further development of the field in the Czech Republic. Nine days of training sessions for visitor centres staff took place in October and November 2015. For 2016 we plan the establishment of a web portal with reviews of books, peer-reviewed articles, examples of good practice and links to valuable online interpretive resources. Model interpretive planning processes will take place leading to methodology that could be used by the Czech Ministry of the Environment in development of heritage interpretation.

In August 2016 we plan a summer school of interpretation in partnership with Interpret Europe. This will be great opportunity to meet some of you in the diverse landscape of the Moravian karst.

Michal Medek, Czech Association for Heritage Interpretation, michal@medek.us



Valeria Klitsounova
(Belarus)



New project in Belarus

The project 'Ecotourism in Beresinsky: innovative approaches, partnership models, green awareness' is based on nature interpretation principles and supported by EU and UNDP. It will be realized in 2016-2017 in Beresinsky Reserve in Belarus. The Beresinsky Reserve is the oldest and the only natural area of protection of the highest rank in Belarus. This state reserve was established in 1925.

The Biosphere Reserve is located some 100 km north-east of Minsk on the edge of the watersheds between the Black and the Baltic Seas. It is a patchwork of boreal coniferous and broad-leaved forests, lakes, watercourses, marshlands and flood plains and represents one of the largest undrained peat bogs in Eastern Europe. It extends to

11,000 hectares. Its wolves, bears and bison populations, as well as the rich bird life, attract many scientists. There is a network of permanent plots, and profiles for monitoring forest, marshland, and meadow vegetation. The area is also known for its historic sites, such as Slavic tombs, ancient trade ways and waterworks and the site of a battle between the Russians and French in 1812.

Some 2,200 people live within the biosphere reserve boundaries and use the transition area and specially designated sites for gathering berries and mushrooms, cattle pastures and non-commercial fishing. Some economic benefit derives from tourism. An environmental education centre and a nature museum provide information for visitors. Since 1994, cooperation between the twinned biosphere reserve of Berezinsky and Vosges du Nord

(in France) has included exchanges of specialists and study visits in such fields as wolf ecology, ornithology and forest management as well as fostering ecotourism.

More information about Beresinsky Reserve is included in:

- The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)
- The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme (1979)
- The European network of biogenetic reserves (1994)
- The Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance (2010)

It was awarded a European Diploma of Protected Areas (1995).

It's also:

- a member of the international programme 'Wetland Link International' (2011)
- a Wilderness Partner of the international network 'European Wilderness Society' (2014)
- an International Plant Area (2004)
- an International Bird Area (2005)
- a monitoring point of the National environmental monitoring system (NEMS).



The main idea of the project 'Ecotourism in Beresinsky: innovative approaches, partnership models, green awareness' is the implementation of ideas of nature interpretation in our country.

We are planning:

- to create a Centre of Mythology connected with different biotypes and ecotrails based on these mythological characters
- to conduct training based on the 'Training and Certification Plan for Interpretive Guides' from the HeriQ Project with assistance from Thorsten Ludwig, IE Managing Director, for 16 local nature guides
- to organize schools of guides and animators for Biosphere Reserve
- to organize summer schools for local craftsmen
- to hold open-air sessions among designers to create 10 wooden sculptures of different mythological characters for the ecotrails
- to run a PR-campaign for raising awareness about new ecotourism products based on interpretation principles.

We will keep you informed about progress towards the project's realization.

Valeria Klitsounova is Chair of the Board of the Belarusian Association 'Country Escape'.



Ulf Zimmermann
(Switzerland)

Heritage interpretation used for regional development

A project of the Swiss-Czech Cooperation Programme in the Geopark Ralsko (CZ)

The history of Geopark Ralsko

The NGO Geopark Ralsko was founded in March 2013 with the mission of developing a geopark in the territory of the former military training area Ralsko, to make the geological, natural, historical and cultural values of the area accessible to the public and to strengthen the economic and social situation of the region through sustainable development.



The Geopark Ralsko covers approximately 294 square km and it is situated in the Liberec region, in the northeast part of the Czech Republic. Photo: Ulf Zimmermann

Because it was a former military training area, the territory was relatively untouched by direct human activity over the last 60 years. Many of the localities are protected by law and some of them are listed on the biogenetic reservations of the European Council for

their exceptional value.

The historical character of the cultural landscape has been disrupted

- by displacement of the German inhabitants from the area after the end of the Second World War (that in fact meant evacuation of the whole area)
- by the existence of the former military training area Ralsko
- by the existence of remnants of past uranium mining (including contamination of groundwater and soil).

All these aspects significantly affect the attitude of the inhabitants to the area. The quality of life, cooperation and commonality were disrupted by the historical events.

The present situation

The project team is now in the process of developing the management plan and of implementing different projects and actions. One main goal is to create a Heritage Interpretation Strategy and other measures which they can use for the further development process. Thanks to the Swiss-Czech Cooperation Programme this project was able to start. Knowledge transfer and training workshops should help us to learn more about heritage interpretation; what are its benefits and challenges. Working together with the Geopark Sarganserland / UNESCO Tektonikarena Sardona and the Institute of Landscape and Open Space of the University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland (HSR) practical experiences can be exchanged and related to an international frame of the Alpine Area, and similarly to other eastern European countries such as Bulgaria or Slovakia.

A first workshop in heritage interpretation at the beginning of December 2015, guided by Thorsten Ludwig (Bildungswerk interpretation) and Ulf Zimmermann (HSR), enabled the team to gain initial experience with this interesting method. The participants learned about anchoring phenomena, meaningful theme statements, the difference between information and interpretation etc. Although it was pretty cold outside and everybody would have preferred a heated classroom, everyone was impressed by the professional but also simple examples provided by the trainers. The outside training, the presentations and the good practice examples of other areas motivated the Geoparkteam to set off in that direction.



Heritage interpretation training in the area of Geopark Ralsko. Photo: Ulf Zimmermann

Nevertheless, it will be a challenge to convince the different stakeholders in the region to support the process, but we hope this tiny seed provides a much greater opportunity.

Further information about the project:

Geopark Ralsko o.p.s. Mgr. Lenka Mrázová - ředitelka, Sídlo: Kuřívody 701, 471 24 Ralsko, E-mail: info@geoparkralsko.cz, Tel.: +420 739 354 701, www.geoparkralsko.cz

Ulf Zimmermann, Institute of Landscape and Open Space, Switzerland (ulf.zimmermann@biosfera.ch)

Accessibility of cultural heritage to vulnerable groups

In 2013-2015, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum (SEM) implemented the project 'Accessibility of Cultural Heritage to Vulnerable Groups', which was partly financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Culture. The main objective of the project was training of nine members of vulnerable groups who will be able to work in the museum. In addition to training at SEM, the trainees have been trained at the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia, the Slovenian National Museum, the National Gallery, the Natural History Museum of Slovenia, the Slovenian Theatre Institute and the Technical Museum of Slovenia.



Photo: Urša Valič

The project will increase the availability of technical museum premises. SEM was augmented by installing induction loops, which can help impaired people to follow the direction of the exhibitions with tactile maps for orientation of blind and partially-sighted people in the museum. They have produced replicas of some museum objects that are placed in the permanent exhibition 'Between Nature and Culture', and the visitors enjoy approaching and touching them. Replicas are of different sizes, structures and materials (wood, metal or a combination of materials), representing the characteristics of particular historical periods, manufacturing techniques and ways of life; they make the visitors aware of the material and non-material heritage of Slovenes and some non-European cultures. In the exhibition, which we have called 'A Touch of the Past', visitors can use

the audio guides in several languages, access a tablet in Slovenian sign language for the hearing-impaired and the accompanying publication. At the same time, the museum upgraded its website in accordance to web-content accessibility guidelines.

Several training courses were prepared within the project:

- physical and communication accessibility
- inclusive museum and programme preparation
- integration of vulnerable social groups and employment possibilities
- preparation and management of culture and cultural heritage projects
- preparation of audio description.



Photo: Fuchs

Training courses were aimed at museum staff, other professionals and the general public; their objective was to improve qualifications, knowledge, skills and competence for working with vulnerable groups.

The project employees and their mentors – consultants – developed and implemented educational programmes in order to increase the accessibility of heritage to all visitors in a way that includes the representatives of the identified target groups as active participants. One of the project objectives was to include relevant students, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups.

The following activities were carried out:

- guided tours with tactile elements based on a multi-sensory experience
- musical guided tours
- guided tours/programmes for the deaf and hard of hearing
- collaboration with Roma communities
- programmes with immigrants and minority members
- travelling programmes (for those that cannot visit museum because of their im



Photo: Jenko

Árpád Böczén,
Béla Kuslits
(Hungary)

pairment

Exhibitions including:

- Photographic Images from the Life of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Ljubljana
- Nino: Human Optimism; Look at Me and You'll See
- Birth: Experiences of Roma Women
- Images of Emona 2015

In addition, students, belonging to vulnerable groups participated in individual exhibition projects.

This project is one of the examples of good practice of integrating vulnerable social groups into the field of cultural heritage. Two years of work by staff is presented in the study Accessibility of Cultural Heritage to Vulnerable Groups: Study on the Availability and Provision of Technical Conditions to

Provide Vulnerable Groups with Access to Cultural Heritage, which is available in Slovenian and English.

Sustainability, heritage management and interpretation

KÖME is working on the development of a new education and training centre in Pomáz, Hungary



Photo: Böczén

The Association of Cultural Heritage Managers (KÖME) in co-operation with the Cultural Heritage Studies Programme at the Central European University (CEU) and the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate (DINPI), started to develop a new education and training centre at an organic farm close to Budapest, the capital of Hungary. One of the most important values of this project is that natural and cultural heritage are going to be managed and interpreted together in a holistic way leaving behind the traditional split between culture and nature.

Even the location of the project is remarkable in itself. Nowadays the farm focuses, amongst other things, on goat cheese production, with a fully organic procedure. In addition, several forms of archaeological activities (e.g. environmental and landscape archeology) are carried out here, as the area spatially coincides with a medieval Cistercian manor. Ruins of glass production workshops, burials, traces of a complex water management system, and a little church are the main visible remains of this period. The farm lies in the middle of the Pilis Biosphere Reserve, one of the biggest boreal forest areas in Europe. The unique quality of the area is a consequence of an exceptional history: it was the hunting area of kings for centuries.

Our goal is to interpret the complex interactions among the forces of nature and the people living in the area. The different forms of land-use, the rare management schemes such as forest grazing, production of traditional local fruits, organic cheese making, and sustainable building are among our topics.

We target not only the tourists and the locals with our messages and services, but also academics, heritage professionals and students. Both CEU and KÖME are using the centre as a permanent professional field study site of learning management and interpretation.

KÖME's goal is the establishment of an autonomous education centre, which is the first example of a holistically-planned interpretive heritage site in Hungary. Currently our consortium, together with the German KON-TIKI office, is working on the interpretive master plan.

Part of our ambition is to build a network of professionals who share this approach to interpretation in Hungary and in the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC). We are constantly looking for institutions and companies who can be partners for realizing our programmes and goals.

The project is supported by Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU – www.dbu.de). More info will be available on our website (www.heritagemanager.hu) and on the project website (<http://glasshill.eu>) soon.



Jiří Kulich
(Czech Republic)

Questing – a contemporary interpretive approach?

Questing is a method of natural and cultural heritage interpretation which is low cost, low-tech and closely connected with community-based and place-based learning. It resembles the children's game 'treasure hunt' when one seeks a 'treasure' following different messages and hints on an unknown route.



Children in Hradec Kralove enjoying the 'first Hradec quest' during Earth Day 2014
Photo: Vesela

The method was developed twenty years ago in north-east USA and it has become more and more popular in last few years in the Czech Republic too. There are already several tens of quests all around the country. There is a special website introducing the method and particular quests in different parts of the country (<http://questing.cz/>). There are proved workshops introducing the method to those who want to create their local quest and recently a book on questing was published. The group of people interested in creating a quest and using questing routes in different areas of the country have started to become a community similar to the community of "cachers" in the geocache world.

In the age of multimedia, maybe the nicest aspect of 'questing' is that everything you need to develop 'quest' is just simple equipment (like paper, PC, printer, copier...) and a group of motivated people willing to work for a few days on it, understanding the principles of the method and having (and gathering and sharing) knowledge of the place.

The typical process is that the product 'quest' is developed by a community of local people in about three days (it might be a workshop or series of meetings). There are also some 'quests' developed just by single person or agency (with the main purpose to attract the clients/visitors to some place) but the community-based creation of a quest gives much more joy, a feeling of ownership and most substantially increases the quality and attractiveness of the product. Most of the 'quests' are for long-term use, but there are also quests developed for some special event.

As it helps to have some frame for your ideas and as it is important to have fun both creating and using the quest, it seems to be helpful to phrase the quest as a small poem – in verses. Again, not all the quests are in verses, but it is typical and it helps. Besides the text it can include a map, drawings, photographs etc.

The process can be divided into two phases – in the first one the quest is created as described above; the second one includes the publication (on web, in local visitor centre, tourist information centre, library etc.) and care for practical running – i.e. periodic checking of the route (accessibility, possible changes influencing the description) and check of a 'treasure'.



Students from a secondary school creating a quest at a nature reserve
Photo: Vesela

The final product is a sheet of paper (and/or electronic form available from web through computer or cell phone) guiding the quester through a certain local story and describing the route to take, along the way they are encouraged to find and explore some interesting features connected with the story on the route's stops. There will also be some hints which helps the quester to solve the riddle or puzzle at the end of the route and finally to find a 'treasure' (mostly visitor book where you can sign, a rubber stamp you can stamp into your travel diary and a small gift). Of course the real main aim is not 'to hunt a treasure' but in terms of saying 'the journey is the destination' it is the discovery of local natural and cultural heritage, the local distinctiveness...

As the method is playful, it might be also used with children – both in term of creation and using the product.

Few examples from Czech Republic:

SEVER – Centre for Environmental Education and Ethics, in Rýchory, deals with questing both as a tool of soft tourism and of adult and children's education. Besides organising several 'questing' workshops and publishing a booklet introducing questing as one of the most effective interpretation approaches, SEVER directly created, with local people in 2014 and 2015, two quests for visitors to Krkonoše National Park and with the assistance of school children created a quest in the city of Hradec Králové .

In Krkonoše the first quest named 'About the strength of spirit and weakness of matter' is based on the story of 20th century nobleman and maecenas (a patron of art and literature), Berthold Aichelburg, who substantially contributed to the care for the heritage of the area. On the second quest you can travel the route with former local photographer, Wenzel Lahmer, who documented the countryside one hundred years ago and thus you can compare it with today's development and change of place.

The special feature of the quest in Hradec Králové, is that it was created by school children as a student project and it is also used for school education. It guides the visitors through a unique 'island' of biodiversity and wilderness located in the big city. Paradoxically biodiversity here was increased and kept in the past thanks to disturbance by army vehicles (it was used as a military exercise site in the late 19th century) and today is still kept in a state of good of the conservation management using borrowed tanks and transporters (which of course needs explanation and interpretation to the visitors).

Jiří Kulich, SEVER – Centre for Environmental Education and Ethics Rýchory, Czech Republic

“Meet the Neighbours” – a new interpretation project at Conisbrough Castle, South Yorkshire

If you ever find yourself on a train from Doncaster to Sheffield you will be in for a real treat. Not only will the line take you through ‘green and pleasant’ Yorkshire hills and dramatic rocky gorges, but a few minutes into your journey you will discover one of this country’s best landmarks – Conisbrough Castle. Made of local golden limestone, the castle’s great tower rises unexpectedly on a high promontory glowing in the sun like a space rocket.



Conisbrough Castle
Great Tower
Photo: English Heritage

Now a quiet, ex-mining community, Conisbrough was once one of the most important religious and economic centres of the Anglo-Saxon north. The church of St Peter still preserves stones of the structure regarded as the earliest religious building in the area. After William the Conqueror had subdued the region in 1070, he gave the ‘honour’ of Conisbrough to a trusty follower, William de Warenne. The de Warennes became one of the most powerful and wealthy medieval English families and owned Conisbrough for nearly 300 years. The story of Isabel de Warenne, an only child who inherited a fabled fortune, married a half-brother to King Henry II, and built what is one of the most unusual and intriguing medieval great towers in England, still fascinates historians. After the de

Warenne line died out, the castle passed to the Crown and, due to indifferent management by a series of absentee landlords, fell into decline. But since the 18th century the picturesque ruin has served as a leisure amenity for the local people, and the castle became a symbol of a glorious medieval past when a Romantic novelist, Sir Walter Scott featured it in his famous novel, *Ivanhoe*.

In 2014 English Heritage, in partnership with Doncaster Borough Council, and supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, completed the project whose aim was to transform the site and re-connect it with the local community. As part of the ‘Meet the Neighbours’ project, the old and unloved visitor’s centre was demolished and the gate lodge extended to provide for a new exhibition and education room. New interpretation panels were installed in the grounds and interpretation in the great tower refreshed and enlivened with AV projections.

Great Hall interpretive
panel
Photo: English Heritage





*Isabel de Warenne
projection
Photo: English Heritage*

The exhibition space is small but its interpretation lively and colourful. From the richly illustrated timeline visitors learn about events that shaped the castle and the main panels focus not only on the aristocratic owners of the castle but also on those 'ordinary' people who worked there. For the first time the exhibition also reveals the stories of the women of the castle while the young audience is engaged through humorous, comic strip panels portraying fictional events relating to the well-known and carefully researched episodes from the castle's history. An impressive model of the great tower incorporates a digital reconstruction of the interior showing the medieval occupants moving around the rooms performing their daily tasks. Archaeological finds sit in standard glass cases but the display is far removed from the old-fashioned, dry labelling. Instead it connects the objects to the local crafts tradition and explains how they were used by those who lived in the castle. The case, whose content was put together thanks to the generosity of the community and includes, amongst others, photographs lent by Conisbrough families and a pizza box proudly bearing the image of the great tower, has proven a real block buster.

The local community played an important part in the creation of the new interpretation – they lent their faces to become the site guides. Two pupils from the local de Warenne Academy are now Robert and Alice, a fictional medieval squire and a lady-in-waiting; the narrators to the stories featured in the graphic-novel style site panels. They invite you to witness Lord de Warenne passing judgement on a thief in the Great Hall; watch preparations for a 14th-century feast in the castle kitchen or eavesdrop on ladies in waiting gossiping in their chamber. In the great tower, visitors encounter 'the ghosts of the castle's past', AV projections representing historical figures also bear the faces of local people. In the entrance chamber, Chief Steward Otes de Tilly reveals his anxiety in preparation for the impending visit of the Lord and Lady. In the upper chambers Lady Isabel de Warenne and her husband Hamelin, who built the great tower in c.1170s, muse about its architectural uniqueness, their business and leisurely pursuits while staying at the castle, as well as the kingdom's and family's affairs. Interpretive tables, with inlaid text and images, introduce the function and use of the rooms. The panels on the roof, where visitors can admire the panoramic views, explain what impact a castle such as Conisbrough would have had on the surrounding landscape.

The Conisbrough castle project was one of the first in which English Heritage engaged local people to play a part in the re-development of one of their major sites. This work continues as volunteers help with archaeological digs within the grounds and Community Curators carry out their own research and prepare small exhibitions in the Education Room. I eagerly await the new one which will tell the story of medieval festivals.

The new interpretation at Conisbrough has, by and large, adopted a traditional approach: a timeline, illustrated panels, display cases - even the digital element in the great tower model or the AV projections are hardly cutting edge. But the readable text, good use of images and witty comic strip panels make for an engaging experience both for an adult and a young audience. The shift in the content focus – away from generic medieval themes and focusing on the castle's history, showcasing the importance of Conisbrough as a cultural landmark – has been greatly welcomed. Most of all, it is the community's contribution that has injected new life into the site. The involvement of local volunteers, in the production of permanent interpretation and temporary exhibitions, organising workshops and leading activities during the open days, is what makes the site truly special. Conisbrough Castle is now a genuinely loved local landmark and has become an increasingly popular tourist attraction whose visitors pledge to return and



*Display case of modern objects
Photo: Kevin Booth*

recommend it to their friends and family. And so if you ever find yourself on a train from Doncaster to Sheffield, do get off at Conisbrough –you will be in for a real treat.

Check out Conisbrough Castle on:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/conisbrough-castle/>

You can also follow Conisbrough Castle on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/conisbroughcastle/?ref=ts&fref=ts>



Jürgen Heinritz
(Germany)

A Colleague from the Past



The author as 'the man with the lyre'

Photo: Jürgen Heinritz

In the winter of 2001/2002 in Trossingen between Stuttgart and the Lake Constance, a tomb from the 6th century CE was discovered. The grave was exceptionally furnished with many wooden objects including a very well preserved lyre. The lyre was so well conserved because the clay does not let the water flow through. In these wet surrounding organic remains are well preserved. So Trossingen tomb 58 with its lyre and wooden furniture is a very great co-incidence with beautiful organic materials stored in precisely the right conditions for preservation.

In 2010 I started to develop an interpretation of warrior of the Alamannic people as he would have been towards the end of the 6th century (Merovingian period) to bring life at that time to visitors. Trossingen tomb 58 offered itself as a base for the interpretation. As a compliment a tomb from Kleppsau was also used. There, like in most other graves, metal artwork was preserved but organic objects have gone. The combination of these two tombs gives a snapshot of the life situation of a member of the upper class towards the end of the 6th century in an area that was called at that time "Alamannia".

Since 2011 I have also been trying to reconstruct the equipment of the man with the lyre. The detailed work has been done by experienced and qualified craftsmen, who have had to reinvent the old techniques and meld them with new. It is often not enough to base reconstructions purely on published pictures and text and we have had to study other comparable original objects from museums and speak to archaeologists and conservators who were involved in these finds. Studying comparable finds helps to close the gaps that are always left in such a project. However without the deep knowledge and feedback from skilled craftsmen about what works in practice a good reconstruction is not possible

At the same time as the material equipment was being created, a question about intangible heritage was being asked: which songs and stories the "singer" might have performed. Unfortunately none of them have been passed through the ages. Notes were first taken in the 8th and 9th century (2-300 years later) and most of them only remain as fragments. Possibilities include The Thidreks Saga, that was written down in Norway, and is originally set in what is now Southern Germany, Switzerland and Northern Italy. The origin of the Wayland Saga can also be located in the time and area of the "singer". But the question of whether the man with the lyre actually knew and performed these stories will have to be unanswered. My task is to find appropriate stories and songs he could have executed and prepare them for an audience.



Alamannenmuseum Weingarten
Photo: Sarah Oppold

I am a storyteller. I try to bring a piece of the Trossinger singer's world, in which no TV or internet existed, to life for the visitors at an event at a museum. Visitors can handle the reconstructions, they can sit on his chair but still it is the stories that bring him most to life. When I perform I tell very different tales. I am astonished myself, how closely young and old listen to my stories. I have only my voice to catch their attention. There is always an opportunity to ask questions and often in the following discussions we can deepen understanding of special aspects and dispel misunderstandings.

Although it can only be an attempt to bring his world to life, I am deeply attached to my colleague from the past.



Jan Činčera
(Czech Republic)

A new interpretive trail in the Czech Republic

This spring, a new interpretive trail was opened in Jizera Mountains (Czech Republic). This may sound a bit trivial, but there are a few reasons why this event is remarkable. Most interpretive trails in our country lack any clear theme and overwhelm visitors with an unmanageable flood of information, written in difficult, scientific language. The new trail has a clear theme that organizes its structure. As it is focused on a natural forest in protected area, its main message is that "a natural forest is not a common forest", and it further clarifies why (...because it is richer in colours and sounds; because it provides a home for many species; because it manages itself according to its own rules but still needs protection). There are no more than sixty words at each of the stops written in a simple, "7th grade pupil" language.

There are no panels. All the stops have been crafted by a regional artist. You can find a big wooden skull with a small sapling inside evoking the concept of natural cycles in the forest; the idea is further clarified in a few words carved on the wooden bench nearby. You can look through the blind eyes of wild animals that were exterminated by hunters a hundred years ago and realize that even this "natural forest" is not completely "natural" as "the strongest have already disappeared".

Last but not least, even the process of developing the trail was unusual. It was designed as an outcome of a three day social learning, interpretive workshop for students of the Technical University of Liberec (Part-time education), educators, and rangers. As a result, the trail merges educational, scientific, and artistic perspectives.

Although the trail still misses some important elements (English version, QR, etc.) it is well worth visiting. It is located near the small village Oldrichov v Hajich (Liberec region, Czech Republic).

A different style of panel
Photos: Jan Činčera



EXARC – networking for archaeological open-air museums and more

EXARC is an international network, started off in 2001 with archaeological open-air museums but by now counting 250 members in 30 countries around the world. We work with four themes:

- Archaeological Open-Air Museums
- Experimental Archaeology
- Ancient Technology
- Interpretation.

Our affiliation with the world museum community, ICOM, leads to interesting professional partnerships. However, our members are not just museums or universities, over 100 individual professionals use EXARC to exchange knowledge, experience and best practice. Want to check out our members? <http://members.exarc.net>

Membership costs between €35 for students and €125 for the largest museums. Besides the Journal and other benefits, members also receive free entry to the museums linked to EXARC.

EXARC publishes the EXARC Journal, featuring the latest developments in fieldwork, academic research, museum studies, live interpretation & living history, as well as ancient technology. The Journal is published four times annually online with the best articles printed twice per year in hard copy in the EXARC Journal Digest. Much of our Journal is open access at <http://journal.exarc.net>. Our international board of editors would welcome publishing your article.

EXARC supports its membership by organising small-scale collaborations and international partnerships, often with the help of significant European Union grants. Our projects raise the profile of the participants and allow other members to benefit from their experience. One such project was OpenArch, a 2.5 million Euro large culture project with 11 partners. Thanks to that, we have published several handbooks, created films and collected a lot of knowhow. Many of these partners continue in new international cooperation projects. More on OpenArch can be found at <http://openarch.eu>.

EXARC has a strong online presence, not only at www.exarc.net but also through www.openarchaeology.info, delivered thanks to OpenArch. OpenArchaeology is an online resource for those seriously interested in the EXARC themes:

- Presentations in English of over 600 archaeological open-air museums world wide
- A bibliography with 11,000+ titles covering everything from experimental archaeology, reconstruction to museum guide books and interpretation.

You will find EXARC as well on social media, not only with simple profiles on Twitter for example, but also as the largest groups on experimental archaeology and archaeological open-air museums on both Facebook and LinkedIn. We publish our films on Vimeo and our PowerPoints at Slideshare.

In 2016 we will organise a smaller round table conference in the Netherlands about EXARC and what we do for our members, followed in spring 2017 by a large convention on experimental archaeology. More information will follow online at www.exarc.net.

If you like to know more about EXARC, please contact us at info@exarc.net.



AFLUNEO – a new approach to the cultural heritage

AFLUNEO is the acronym of 'Apud flumina nascitur Europae ordo' which means: 'At rivers the European civilization was born'.

It's time to connect European cultural heritage together, considering it under the perspective of its link with rivers, understanding how, in the end, they provided different answers to common problems: the defence of borders, tax collection, relationship between landowners and peasants and so on. It is a means, most of all, to illustrate cultural assets of a city to outside tourists (both European and Asian) enhancing all commonalities and differences related to their cultural heritage under the river's key of comprehension, comparing their history and how the different shape of their rivers influenced them. From this start it should be possible to widen the range to all activities (tourism, enterprises, cultural associations and institutions, public authorities, etc.) related to the single territory crossed or surrounded by a river. This is a move towards redeveloping the identity of a community and pushing it to meet people (their economy, culture, traditions, etc.) following the key of the river.

Corrado Fontaneto is searching for private and public partners to develop AFLUNEO. You find more more information at <https://sites.google.com/site/afluneo/home>.

Experiencing why
life is concentrating
along rivers
Photo: Ludwig



Sue Hodges
(Australia) and
Nicole Deufel
(UK)

ICIP NEWS!

ICIP (the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites) has recently had elections and now has a new board. This comes at a time when ICOMOS is increasingly focused on the role of interpretation in cultural heritage sites and in resolving issues such as the destruction of built heritage in Yemen and Syria.



*At the ICOMOS General
Assembly
Photo: Sue Hodges*

Some of the main work of ICIP has been to draft the ICOMOS Ename Charter (the ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites). The Ename Charter sets out the vision, rationale, terminology and principles for heritage interpretation in a global context and responds to the dramatic change in interpretation due to digital media. The Charter was ratified by ICOMOS in 2008 and ICIP is now thinking about a suite of practice notes that will clarify key parts of the Charter and provide further guidance where necessary. These would be similar to the Practice Notes for the Burra Charter that have been

developed by Australia ICOMOS and the operational guidelines that are issued regularly for UNESCO Conventions such as the World Heritage Convention. For this reason, Nicole Deufel, who is Vice-President for Policy in ICIP, designed the short survey on the Ename Charter that Interpret Europe recently sent to its members.

As an advisory committee to UNESCO, ICOMOS has high visibility. At the recent ICOMOS Annual General Assembly and Advisory Committee Meeting in Fukuoka, Japan, interpretation was identified by other ICOMOS Scientific Committees as a key tool for addressing a range of social, economic, political and management issues with cultural heritage sites. ICIP clearly has a key role to play in increasing the visibility of interpretation through ICOMOS within the context of a globalized, intercultural world.

The current survey of the Charter is only the beginning of a range of activities that ICIP is planning. We are keen to work closely with Interpret Europe, the AHI, the NAI and other national, regional, local and cross-border organizations with shared interests to investigate how to further the cause of interpretation globally. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to join ICIP or if you have any questions, ideas or suggestions about how ICIP can benefit you or your organization. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@ICOMOS_ICIP), or join our LinkedIn group.

Sue Hodges is president and Nicole Deufel is vice-president of ICIP



*Shinto shrine, Fukuoka, Japan
Photo: Sue Hodges*



Conferences and Meetings

Lisa Keys
(UK)

AHI Conference 2015 and the Discover Heritage Awards

The Association for Heritage Interpretation conference took place in Wiltshire and Berkshire this October. From 21 to 23 October delegates arrived from all over the UK to hear about innovative projects and discuss current issues. It was also a chance for AHI to look back at 40 years of AHI and look forward to the challenges of the future.

The conference began with two pre-conference workshops. One was on digital interpretation and the other on a workshop that explored AHI members' experiences of working on Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) projects. HLF are one of the main funders of heritage interpretation projects in the UK.

The pre-conference workshops were followed by a range of presentations, including a keynote delivered by Eric Langham. He spoke about his international work and highlighted how cultural differences affect the development of interpretation.

On the first evening of the conference AHI was delighted to announce the winners of the AHI 2015 Discover Heritage Awards – for excellence in natural and cultural heritage interpretation in Britain and Ireland – sponsored by Geosho.

During an exciting AHI Awards ceremony, AHI Patron Loyd Grossman announced the seven winners in front of a large audience of heritage interpreters from across the UK and Ireland.

Loyd said "This year's award winners showed a wide range of exciting and innovative interpretation all aimed at helping the public to get more enjoyment, more education and more benefit from our outstanding natural and cultural heritage."

The winning projects were

- The Battle of Bannockburn Visitor Centre
- English Heritage's presentation of the 1930's rooms at Eltham Palace



Chris White and Carolyn Loyd-Brown of the Battle of Bannockburn interpretation team receive the AHI 2015 Award for Excellence in Interpretation from AHI Patron Loyd Grossman.

Photo: Association for Heritage Interpretation.

- a First World War memorial in Walkley Community Centre
- Big Heritage's Roman Medicine Roadshow
- a mobile phone app in Brecon Beacons National Park to help visitors 'walk' with Romans.

Bannockburn then won the award for overall best project because it innovatively blends digital technology and human guides to create a visitor experience like no other. It successfully explains a complicated medieval battle in an engaging and fully immersive way that has learning at the heart of the experience.

AHI Fellow James Carter received the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award for his thirty-year career commitment to the development of interpretation across all key areas of the discipline.

Bill Bevan, AHI Vice-Chair, said "The winners represent the best examples of how to communicate the heritage of Britain and Ireland, whether an important national event, a grand moment of history or a locally significant place. They demonstrate how interpreters can capture the imagination of visitors and communities to bring the past or the natural world alive."

The AHI Discover Heritage Awards are the only UK and Irish awards to recognise excellence in all types and scales of heritage interpretation whether held in museums, historic buildings, visitor centres or any type of outdoor location. Any form of media is suitable including exhibition, print, digital, art or live. An eligible project can be small or large. Whether it is a new leaflet or a million-pound visitor centre (or anything in between), the awards celebrate projects that best meet their interpretive aims and successfully communicate their key messages to their audiences.

The full list of winners, runners up and commended entries can be found at <http://www.ahi.org.uk/www/awards/categories>.

The second day of the conference saw delegates visiting the Museum of Wiltshire in Devizes. The museum houses and interprets an impressive collection of gold and other significant artefacts from Bronze Age sites (including Stonehenge) in the area. Delegates were treated to a talk by the museum's director, David Dawson, and Rob Campbell from English Heritage who explained how they worked at strategic level to develop complementary interpretive experiences at the museum and at the Stonehenge site.

Delegates then paid a visit to Stonehenge site itself, to see how the site and its interpre-



Conference delegate tries out the 'move a sarsen stone' interactive at the Stonehenge visitor centre.

Photo: Lisa Keys

tation have been developed to create a world class visitor attraction.

The final day of the conference saw a host of quality presentations and thought provoking papers, from the Heritage Alliance (an organisation in England that promotes and advocates the value and contribution of heritage), Tower Bridge, Jurassic and many more.

We will be in Belfast for our 2016 Conference so look out for details early next year on our exciting return to Northern Ireland.

Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI), 54 Balmoral Road, Gillingham Kent, ME7 4PG, United Kingdom, www.ahi.org.uk



Eva Sandberg
(Sweden)

Revisionists, visionaries and facilitators – impressions from the NAI conference in November 2015

In middle of November the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) in USA held their annual national conference. More than 600 interpreters gathered in Virginia Beach during five intense days to share experiences and discuss development of interpretation.

- An impressive conference both in size and content,
- Interpretation of climate change, changing learning styles, new techniques (social media etc), children's lack of contact with nature, and citizen science were some of many trends and perspectives on interpretation brought up in discussions and seminars.

The balance between "visitor experiences" – understood as infotainment – and "mission-based making a difference-oriented" interpretation was mentioned as a challenge for the profession. Visitor experiences as concept seem to be more in focus than interpretation. Is a re-branding of interpretation needed to strengthen its legitimacy? The expert interpreter has to be aware of, and be ready to prove skills in, creating great experiences, but must also be a facilitator who can lead discussions among participants to strengthen civic engagement.

- A trend answering to this is shown in the National Park Service's training programmes in facilitated dialogue – a theme for several of the sessions – as a means to open up value based questions and discussions related to the parks with its visitors.

Christy S. Coleman, gave a keynote speech on how she and her colleagues decided to merge two museums with very different perspectives on the same story – the American Civil War Center merging with the Museum of the Confederacy creating the new American Civil War Museum. In her effort to do this she had to challenge key audiences in both. Christy's message, was that interpreters sometimes have to be brave. As "public historians and visionaries", we have a special responsibility to develop the narratives for our sites – and to be ready to reveal and discuss different perspectives.

*What does freedom mean?
Discussions under "the
emancipation oak" in Fort
Monroe during
workshop on
facilitated
dialogue.
Photo: Eva
Sandberg*



Conserving living urban heritage: the challenges of India

For the first time in its history the annual meeting of the ICOMOS (International Scientific Committee for Theory and Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration) was organised in India. The event took place in Bangalore from 26-28 November 2015, in joint collaboration with the International Scientific Committee (ISC) on Historic Towns and Villages. With its focus on the issue of conserving living urban heritage, the audience got involved in a timely debate that has determined the international heritage agenda for quite some time now. Based on what the authors presented, one can be sure that the discussion is far from over, but has rather just begun.

What is at stake is the future of heritage preservation, as it has been defined and practiced since the founding of ICOMOS, at the International Council on Monuments and Sites, in 1965. The founding document of this organisation is the so-called Venice Charter of 1964 that lies down the basic principles of heritage conservation that ever since have guided the international heritage community and that is still regarded as an important source of inspiration throughout the world. However, at the time when ICOMOS is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, a fundamental debate is taking place about the universal validity of the generally accepted standards.



Hard to get hold of -
heritage in India
Photo: Derde

The question is this: how well do the preservation practices that are rooted in the Western European experience, capture the reality of dealing with heritage elsewhere in the world? To deal with this question India is indeed a good place to start. How indeed, should one go about with the nomination of the ancient parts of Delhi as UNESCO World Heritage, if we know that fixing the old houses as monuments is almost impossible? How to respond to the request of a respected guru, who in a dream is given the task by the god to finish a temple, when this temple happens to be listed as an ancient 17th century monument that should be protected as it is? What to do with the many, sometimes conflicting memories, about a city such as Amritsar, when these memories and stories that are key to navigating oneself through the city and making connections, tend to get lost? These and other examples, make clear that an approach based on the preservation of the historical fabric of a monument hardly makes sense. What is needed is a fundamental rethinking of heritage that allows us to understand these phenomena as well.

Despite the many intriguing examples that were presented at the conference, more will be needed if we really want to understand what is going on in a country such as India or indeed in Asia at large. What this conference made very clear is that, in fact, the current theoretical framework fails to even point out the problems we are facing. Despite the many attempts, such as the Nara Document of 1994, that tried to extend the concept of authenticity to cultural beliefs, rather than the material fabric.; or the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape of 2011, that emphasised the dynamic aspects of the city but, by so doing, lost the significance of heritage itself; even the Kyoto Vision of 2012 that advocated the role of the community in the preservation of World Heritage, failed to address the cultural rootedness of such a concept in the West. None of them even make a start with the theoretical understanding of what happens in the East.

Just starting to realise that this is the predicament we are dealing with, would be a great beginning. The ISC Theory Conference on Conserving Living Urban Heritage was just the kind of event to make this beginning happen.

More info: <http://icomos2015.sustainurban.org/>



ICOM-ICTOP 2015 annual conference: Winds of Transformation

ICOM-ICTOP held its annual conference in Bridgetown Barbados from 14th to 17th October this year. For those who are not familiar with the acronyms, ICOM stands for the International Council of Museums and is an NGO/OCS based in Paris, working very closely with UNESCO. ICOM has more than 35 000 members, museum professionals or museum associated workers, coming from all five continents, the majority from Europe. ICTOP, on the other hand, is one of ICOM's international committees (there are 30 such IC's within the organisation, each devoted to a different research topic/theme). Accordingly, ICTOP is the acronym for the International Committee for Training of Personnel. ICTOP was formally established in 1968, when museum professional's needs for further (museum work related) skills, were recognised. Over time ICTOP developed, but didn't change its name, thus the word "training" here must be seen in the sense of any life-long learning activity as well as including academic study programmes in museum studies (museology) and similar. ICTOP's primary aim is to promote training and professional development and to establish standards/guidelines for (museum) professionals throughout their careers.

The Committee studies and provides information on museum/heritage professional education offerings, organises an annual meeting and workshops, acts as an advisor for the establishment of syllabi and curriculum for museums/heritage studies and other training, and works closely with other ICOM Committees (and other international organisations) to achieve its goals. It is important to mention here that as far as skills and competencies are concerned, over the last decade (and especially over the last 6-7 years), ICTOP has addressed both museum and heritage professionals equally, due to convergence in the broader heritage field.

The Conference in Bridgetown, Barbados was organised in partnership with the ICOM National Committee of Barbados, the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, and the University of West Indies, Barbados. The conference theme was "Winds of Transformation", pointing toward the convergence outlined above, and was subtitled "International and Caribbean Futures for Teaching Holistic, Inclusive, Tangible and Intangible Culture and Heritage". One of ICTOP's goals is to assist advancement of the profession all around the world, so this conference took place in the Caribbean, while the previous one (in 2014) was in South-East Asia (Hanoi, Vietnam); in 2013 it was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; in 2012 in Amsterdam, Netherlands etc. Emphasis on a holistic and inclusive approach as far as heritage is concerned has a high priority within ICTOP actions. In Bridgetown around 50 international participants gathered (with many additional local students), attracted by the conference topic. Among them a significant number addressed heritage interpretation (as museum related interpretation or indeed beyond), directly or indirectly. Issues stretched from slavery e.g. the planning and development of interpreting a trans-Caribbean slavery route, to issues of interpreting identity in post-colonial museological practices. Topics also addressed an idea of universal heritage, on a global/international level.

The location of the conference in the Caribbean led to the majority of the participants coming from the Americas, but it was interesting that many among them were already aware of the activities of Interpret Europe and indeed some expressed interest in attending the conference in Mechelen, Belgium next year.

As well as usual/regular contributions i.e. delivered conference papers, the conference included three workshops. Especially interesting, as far as heritage interpretation is concerned, was the one delivered by Dennis Brennan, Roslyn Russell, Denise Young-Browne, Alissandra Cummins and Kevin Farmer on their experience of developing a local exhibition. This was entitled: "Becoming Bajan: Museum Design and Development in Post-independent/21st Century Barbados". While seemingly locally based, the workshop perfectly pointed toward goals that Interpret Europe is arguing for too: that the narrative (story = interpretation) is the key element behind any successful exhibition. In other words any exhibition/interpretation, if it wants to be successful, must have a strong story as the base, which later on will be illustrated by museum objects or other phenomena, including natural ones.

Finally, and very importantly, the conference included two days of practice benchmarking with study tour visits and a post conference tour to some important Barbadian sites.

Taking into account all the visited sites, we could easily conclude that the level/understanding of heritage interpretation on Barbados is pretty high, perhaps due to a tradition of cooperation with British/Commonwealth experts. Especially impressive was a first-hand interpretation delivered by a member of a staff of the Mount Gay Visitor Centre (a rum distillery branded as the very first such in the world).



Story of production of rum (very first in the world) has so many underlying stories, if adequately 'interpreted' it will catch interests not only of those interested in alcoholic beverages.

Photo: Darko Babić

All in all the ICOM-ICTOP Barbados conference demonstrated that there is a desperate need for further exploration of the relevance of heritage interpretation. This should be connected with diverse training needed for museum/heritage professionals. ICOM-ICTOP is closely cooperating with ICOMOS-ICIP over possible (hopeful) ideas for a joint meeting in an attempt to bridge one gap of the many still existing, among museum/heritage professionals addressing heritage interpretation.

Darko Babić, Assistant Professor of Heritage Studies at the University of Zagreb, Croatia



Nicole Deufel
(UK)

Empowering people through interpretation? EAA conference 2015

In September, the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) held its annual conference in Glasgow, Scotland. The scientific programme of sessions was extensive and organised under six themes, of which two included sessions of particular relevance to interpretation:

- Reconfiguring Identities' and
- Communicating Archaeology

Under the latter theme, John Jameson and Nicole Deufel hosted a round-table on 'Refocusing Interpretation: From expert to individual and community values'.

Community engagement in interpretation has been around for a while, but questions remain about the effectiveness of existing practices when it comes to giving non-expert values the same weight as expert values. Acknowledging that most formal management structures, including interpretation, still favour experts and their opinions, we wanted to explore, with participants, what the challenges are of moving away from expert identification and expert management of heritage, toward recognition of the reasons for which individuals and communities value heritage.

There were several key points that arose during the conversation: one was the acknowledgement that whenever heritage 'professionals' enter the debate, even with good intentions, the danger is that they take over the process. Another point concerned the fact that some 'non-expert' practices do not at all match our 'expert' best practices, and yet they can work perfectly. The balance between expert support and expert intervention therefore emerged as a delicate matter. Building on-going relationships with communities was seen as a necessary element of sharing power, although this can be difficult with high staff turnover in the sector. Skills such as facilitation and team working were considered crucial in being able to honour communal values in professional contexts. Perhaps most interestingly though it also became clear that a 'community' is not at all homogenous, and conflict is part of heritage.

This is an on-going conversation that we will continue at other conferences and hopefully online and in print.

John Jameson recently retired from the U.S. National Park Service and is now an assistant editor of the Journal of Community Heritage and Archaeology.

Nicole Deufel is a Senior Heritage Consultant in the United Kingdom.

You can read more about the round-table on Nicole's blog www.nicoledaufel.com (search: EAA).



Karla Oder and
Verena Perko
(Slovenia)

Second international symposium on iron and culture: Innovations in metallurgy and cultural heritage

Ravne na Koroškem, a little town near the Slovenian-Austrian border, was in the last century one of the most important Yugoslavian steel-making centres. From 5 - 6 November 2015 The second international symposium, Iron and culture: innovations in metallurgy and cultural heritage, was held in Ravne. The aim of the symposium was to emphasize the importance of the traditional knowledge that enabled the development of the metallurgical industry, and to draw attention to the rich Slovenian iron and steel industrial heritage. The event was organized in cooperation with the Association of the Slovenian Trail of Iron Culture together with various institutions and Slovenian steel companies.

The first part of the symposium offered insights into the historical development of iron-



works from the Iron Age to the 19th century. It refreshed memories of many technological innovations and economic and political events, especially in the time of former Yugoslavia.

Austrian metallurgists referred to the Austrian Mining Academy in Leoben, which this year celebrated its 175th anniversary. Many generations of Austrian, Slovenian and Czech ironworkers were educated and trained there and new technologies in nearby Leoben-Donawitz ironworks were developed.

Historical researches of the Slovenian iron and steel industry have brought new insights into the inventions of Knight Lambert von Pantz, developed at the ironworks at Jesenice and in Ravne na Koroškem.

The representation of technological developments and innovations in Slovenian steel production after the Second World War created some nostalgia among participants. Invited contributors were former directors and heads of departments for development. Their presentations were illuminated with wonderful information and anecdotes that are rapidly disappearing from collective memory. Of special interest was the report on the pioneering workshop for young innovators from the Štore ironworks. It was based on research and active learning from the rich Slovenian industrial heritage. The innovations relating to smelting furnaces from the Idrija mercury mine and on the furnaces from Mežica lead mine were also included.

At the end of the last conference day the role of museums in the work of industrial heritage was discussed. The participants stressed particularly the importance of preserving knowledge and practices relating to industrial heritage and ways of life in the industrial age. The conference concluded with the European guidelines on heritage protection and preservation.

The conference was held in a new secondary school for metallurgy in Ravne na Koroškem. The event brought fresh perspectives on Slovenia's steel and ironwork industrial heritage and the importance of innovation for the continued existence and development of the Slovenian steel industry was highlighted. The conference brought together experts and knowledge from different fields and enabled many young people to learn from the past.



Heritage interpretation and European narratives: A contribution to the conference on European narratives at Kraków University

‘People are not disturbed by things but by the views they take’ (Epictetus).

Jacek Kołodziej used this quotation when he opened the conference ‘European Narratives – Europe and the EU in the 21st Century as Political, Social and Cultural Constructions’. It took place from 24 to 26 September at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. I had been invited to introduce the concept of ‘heritage interpretation’ and to discuss some results of the InHerit project with scholars who are doing research and teaching in the field of European studies.

Among other questions, the InHerit project investigates how the discipline of heritage interpretation is connected to the ‘European dimension’. It is obvious that heritage interpreters, besides politicians, civil society organisations and mass media, are certainly contributing to the construction of collective historical memories. But what does this mean for heritage interpreters with regard to Europe and its current crisis? In order to find answers we need to re-examine the most important definitions of heritage interpretation.

‘Educational activity’ versus ‘mission-based communication process’

According to his original definition by Freeman Tilden in 1957, he defines ‘heritage interpretation’ as:

Patrick Lehnés
(Germany)



‘an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information’

Another influential definition was formulated more recently in 2007 by NAI, the USA based National Association for Interpretation. They define ‘interpretation’ as:

‘a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.’

In the context of the construction of European narratives it makes a significant difference whether heritage interpretation is understood as a mission-based communication process or as an educational activity. Any heritage can be interpreted under various different perspectives. But whose perspectives should be taken?

According to NAI's definition, interpretation is based on the mission of the organisation which owns the site or collection. This mission statement, if well formulated, provides immediate guidance for the interpretive plan (Brochu 2003, 68). Thus according to NAI's definition, interpretation can be seen as a mere communication tool for the achievement of the missions and goals of the site owner. The interpreter is, more or less, executing a top-down approach.

But if interpretation is understood as an educational activity, then the interpreter should also look for other sources of guidance. Other views may be taken than those which are already implied by an organisation's mission and goals. The interpreters' directions can also be based on wider philosophical and ethical foundations. The following example from Nowa Huta demonstrates that this is not merely an academic question, but has implications for the practice of our profession.

Interpretation of Nova Huta

The Historical Museum of Kraków runs a branch at Nowa Huta, a city quarter which was built as a new socialist town under the Polish communist government in the 1950s and 60s. I had the opportunity to enjoy different interpretations of the place.

One guide interpreted the area from an architectural point of view as a significant ex-

*Solidarity in Nova Huta
Photo: Patrick Lehnés*



ample of a socialist city. And a temporary exhibition interpreted the city quarter under the perspective of resistance against the régime which led to street battles in the 1960s and a strike in the late 1980s under the lead of the Solidarność workers' union. Both interpretations framed the narrations in the Polish national context, but they did not connect the place with the European dimension. This would be very straightforward – if we assume that the interpreters subscribed to NAI's understanding of professional interpretation, and if the interpretation was guided by a city museum's mission which does not refer to Europe.

But Nova Huta can also be interpreted under a European perspective. The Solidarność strikes of spring 1989 did not only contribute to Poland's liberation from communism; they were also a crucial step towards the fall of the Iron Curtain which had divided Europe for decades.

An interpreter who understands heritage interpretation as an educational activity is more free to employ perspectives which are not covered by the museum's mission and goals. And if such an interpreter considers life-long learning related to European fundamental values as an important educational goal, then he or she probably realises other interpretive opportunities.

Responsibilities towards Europe?

The political construction of the EU treaty of Lisbon bases the European Union on fundamental values and goals (see article 2) which evolved from lessons learnt from European history. In the current crisis of Europe, values such as pluralism, non discrimination or respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, are threatened while nationalistic populists are gaining momentum. In this situation European heritage interpreters can become aware of their educational responsibilities towards the European dimension and European values when constructing narrations of heritage.

Interpreters – who understand themselves as educators, or rather facilitators of life-long learning – have more freedom to disturb people, by taking views which provoke visitors to think and to challenge stereotypes and prejudice.



*Nova Huta
Photo: Patrick Lehnies*

Barbara Struys
(Belgium)

From interpretation zero to hero?

The InHerit pilot course: bathing in heritage interpretation

What is heritage interpretation? How is it different from interactive guiding? And what could it mean for the way we work at our monuments in Flanders? With these and more questions in our backpack, my colleague Inge De Geyter and I joined the second session of the InHerit pilot course in heritage interpretation at the Circeo National Park in Sabaudia (Italy). We were very fortunate to have the Italian sun by our side and we received a warm welcome from the employees of the Pangea Institute for environmental education and training. They were our hosts from 15 to 18 November.

The focus for this pilot course was heritage interpretation of natural monuments and archaeological sites. We met up with guides, experts in heritage education and other passionate employees of various heritage organisations and national parks from all over Europe. We set off on a journey with people from Holland, Sweden, Italy, Poland, England, Greece, Belgium and Wales.

The course turned out to be an immersive bath of heritage interpretation and interpretation methods. A little theory set us on our way to explore what heritage interpretation could mean for us. In particular, the field trips, the informal conversations with participants and teachers, and the exercises that allowed us to try out some methods ourselves offered a lot of learning possibilities.

On day one, we traveled to the Ninfa Garden Natural Monument. At first we explored this beautiful site as if we had been blind until that moment. Individually we strolled through the garden allowing all our senses to take in the place. This was an almost magic experience: the site is enchanting of course, but this way of looking at the place greatly enhanced that atmosphere. After this discovery, we explored some theory about heritage and heritage interpretation and shared our experiences. There was also a classic guided tour, which offered us the chance to reflect on what a guided tour is and how it might differ from real interpretation.

On day two, we went along with two interpreters to the Emperor Domiziano's estate. We

*Enchanting Ninfa
gardens
Photo: de Geyter*



Maurilio Cipparone introducing
heritage interpretation
Photo: de Geyter



explored the site and discovered the real differences between guiding and interpreting. And then, it was our turn: could we deliver an interpretive talk? In pairs we gave it a try and discovered how complex it is to prepare a good interpretive session.

On the last day, the focus was on interpretive planning, interpretive media and interpretive writing. The visitor centre of the Circeo National Park gave us inspiration about interpretive media. After more than three days of exploring how heritage interpretation can make the difference, our heads were full of ideas. There were so many things to look into once we got back home!

So did we get our questions answered in the pilot course? Yes, maybe not all explicitly, but sharing with the other participants and reflecting on our own work had been a great learning opportunity that we took back to Flanders. We will certainly try to give interpretation a place in our organisation and in our future projects. The course also offered a wonderful chance to connect with colleagues from all over Europe. And it made us hungry to learn even more about interpretation and the way it opens opportunities for creating new meaning for the audiences of tomorrow!



Valya Stergioti
(Greece)

A trio of tweets from Papigo

An interview with Paris Zografos, Milton Gletsos and Elissavet Tzovani

After the HeriQ guide courses were endorsed by IE, more courses took place in Spain and in Greece. The following comments result from a course in Papigo (Greece), organized by the Mediterranean Centre of Environment, where, after six days of training, 14 new interpretive guides returned back home as new members of our network, full of new ideas and with a new found perspective on their jobs.

Paris Zografos is the owner of Tsouka Rossa, an outdoor recreation company and an interpretive guide himself.

Miltos Gletsos works as a guide for the tour company "Somewhere we Know". He was one of the participants of the course.

Elissavet Tzovani is an experienced interpretive guide. She came at the course as an evaluator of the participants' final interpretive talk.

Miltos, as a participant, did you find the interpretive guide course useful for your work and why?

Yes, very useful, absolutely. This worked in two ways: reviewing the past, and planning for the future. I realized in retrospect how many things I could have done differently or better in the past. For example, recently I accompanied a group to a remote Greek island which was off-the-beaten-track; furthermore, we visited off-season, so the weather was not guaranteed to be stable. I now realize how many tools from this course I could have used in my presentations and handling of those visitors, to make the tour more interesting, joyful, experiential, stress-free and participatory. And I'm sure that this would have taken their attention away from the big thunderstorm which threatened to spoil our trip. At the end of the day we didn't get soaked, although we spent a few hours in the hotel lobby waiting for the storm to abate. But I'm sure that some heritage interpretation in the lobby would have made things even better!

Secondly, the interpretive guide course is very useful for my present and future work. I

now have the tools, the experiences, the interaction with my class-mates on the course, and even the inspiration if you like, to help me design better presentations and place them in the trips I plan. Sometimes I realize that I often alter the trip-plan to accommodate a new idea or a presentation.



Each participant had at least two chances to deliver an interpretive talk at the course
Photo: M Gletsos

Paris, this time you were part of the organising team. But, as an ex-trainee you also had a critical eye on it. Do you have any suggestions for the future?

Some ideas came to me, while watching this course: for example, people have many opportunities to watch and evaluate others' presentations, but none to watch themselves. Using a video camera would have assisted them to improve their "performances". Furthermore, to my opinion even more emphasis should be given to the importance of each presentation having a clear theme, which was not always the case. Also, during the "exercises" maybe more emphasis could be given in the importance of the methodology.

Finally, it would be quite helpful to have a "follow up" procedure after a certain period of time to assess the results of the course.

Elissavet, how does a strong sense of place help when organising an interpretive guide course?

Papigo offered the ideal setting for the course! Objects, phenomena and props were abundant. Themes awaited us in every corner, from change of land use over time to a tourism industry that thrives on traditional and impressively sustainable architecture and culture. I am really happy that I had the opportunity to meet a group of committed professionals from all over Greece, have a taste of their abilities and work with them in fine-tuning these skills. To watch how they incorporated the new ideas into their own style and approach was training in itself for me, too.

Miltos, how would you describe this interpretive guide course to another interpretation professional or guide?



Live interpretation as delivered by one of the course's participants
Photo: A Tsekoura

During the course, we, the participants, developed and evolved and changed. After seven days we were not the same people. We all shifted a bit in different directions. Something which is, I believe, rare, and which I hadn't anticipated before the course. How did this happen? Well, we had to work together with very different people, and that was difficult as most of us are professionals who usually work alone or with only one or two colleagues whom we have chosen. It wasn't easy all the time. But our trainer did an excellent job in this respect. She helped us communicate, try harder, think about ourselves, listen to the evaluations, and finally make all the small changes needed in order to work harmoniously with our classmates.

But does the effect this course has on participants last? Paris, as an ex-trainee, what did you keep from it?

In general, I realized that the most important issue an interpretive guide is dealing with is sustainability, which means that the guide's mission is to protect the natural and cultural heritage thus increasing visitors' awareness and as a result transforming them to "ambassadors" of our heritage. This assisted me to focus on inspiring rather than to "educating". At a more practical level the importance of having a "lighthouse" during my guidance and narration, enhances my message and assists me to alter objects to experiences. Furthermore the use of the open questions is also a vehicle which I very often use as it helps my audience to participate and enjoy the session while at the same time offers me the opportunity to learn from their knowledge and experiences

Elissavet, you have been working as an interpretive guide for a long time. What can, in your opinion, this training offer to Greek guides?

Greek guides are dedicated to their jobs and enthusiastic about their areas, yet they sometimes lack the techniques to transmit their enthusiasm to their audiences. Interpretive guiding can transform an accurate but otherwise blunt listing of facts into a memorable and inspiring experience. Such training will give a guide the ability to single out the right little things that can act as ambassadors to the bigger issues one would like to address and the tools to take their audience far from the passive listening to a talk and into an engaging, interactive discovery that is quite fulfilling to both audience and guide.



Second certification course for guides in Catalonia

A new guide course for interpreting the natural heritage has just ended in Gerona, in the del Montseny Nature Park and Biosphere Reserve. This is the second Catalan version of a one-week course following the HeriQ quality criteria, and this time participants came from very different parts of Spain. The increasing diversity of attendees was noteworthy – they included established professionals in guiding and interpretation, managers of travel agencies and landscape areas, environmental educators, writers and even newcomers to the world of nature guiding.

This second course was very enriching, considering the different professional perspectives of the attendees. Many of them are already putting their projects into practice in various nature reserves and areas, not only in offering interpretive walks but also in using their interpretive skills to improve their publications.

The courses in Catalonia took place in spring and in autumn and they therefore allowed the use of a great diversity of natural phenomena at outstanding natural heritage sites including rivers, meadows, natural forests and exotic plantations. We enjoyed the best of weather with unbroken sunshine and comfortable temperatures, and this contributed not only to the enjoyment of the landscape and the changing vegetation but also to the focus on the various exercises and the reflection which are essential for the HeriQ approach.

We will go back to that place for another course in May.

Photo: Evarist March



Sandy Colvine
(France)

IE guide training criteria inspire evaluation in Dublin

Networking between IE members really does lead to some exciting developments! A simple chat over lunch at the 2015 Kraków Conference led to the newly adopted IE interpretive guide training criteria being put to good use in Dublin this summer.

Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown Council (DLR) commissioned APARE, from France, to conduct an evaluation exercise on its 'Summer of Heritage' guided walks programme using the interpretive approach developed and tested by the recent HeriQ Project.

The Summer of Heritage programme is very popular and has now reached a peak of 25 walks and over 8,000 visitors. The focus is now on improving consistency in terms of quality standards and content by analysing the visitor experience and guide performance.

Guide and actor Paul
O'Hanrahan interprets
Samuel Beckett
Photo: Sandy Colvine



APARE assessed 16 of the guided walks in historic houses, castles, churchyards, parks and town centres (and in true Irish tradition, in all weathers too!) on the basis of the guide's performance, appreciation of the site / feature, audience integration and use of a theme.

Local heritage is often subtle and its stories need to be teased out in alternative and inventive ways to make it shine. So, the final report offered DLR hands-on ways of developing themes to spark audience interest and imagination and eliminate instructive approaches to favour inspiration. Turning the tables with shifts of perspective (you're not one of those O'Toole's, are you?!), provocation, greater audience involvement, building interest and unveiling surprises (like the peeling green paint of independent Ireland's post boxes giving a sneak peek of their red-hued past under British rule) and the use of universal

concepts that everyone can identify with in their own lives.

The guides showed many qualities, sometimes using heritage interpretation techniques without even knowing they were doing it! The key now is to build these capacities with the guides and offer them a sound method for consistent quality-based interpretive performance for future years.

APARE hopes to run an IE interpretive guide training course in spring 2016 to equip DLR's guides with all those valuable tips and tricks to really make their heritage come to life and help the Summer of Heritage programme become a reference for connecting local communities to their local heritage.

If you'd like to run this exercise for your heritage visitor programmes, please contact IE at: training@interpret-europe.net.



Visit at Dalkey Castle with live interpretation
Photo: Sandy Colvine



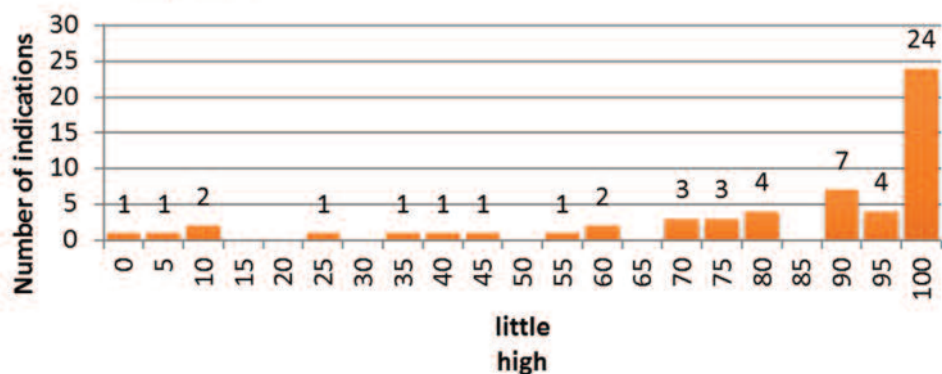
Julia Wimmer
(Germany)

Survey on interpretive training demand in Europe

My Master's thesis examines whether and how the IE course for guides and guide trainers can be implemented across Europe. The course was field tested in Bulgaria, Greece and France during the EU project 'HeriQ – Quality in heritage interpretation'. As part of that, an online-survey was distributed to all IE participants. I would like to cordially thank all participants for their additional input and critical comments. I am pleased to receive a response rate of 34%.

What is your opinion of the current need for common European education and training in Heritage Interpretation?

Participants: 57



In the opinion of the participants, the current need for common European education and training in heritage interpretation is quite high with an average of 80%. As you can see the opinion is widely spread from very little (one person's opinion) up to very high (24 people's opinions). This statement supports the justification of my thesis.

75% of all the participants have already heard about the Certified Interpretive Guide training course based on the principles of heritage interpretation. 30% would consider participating in the HeriQ certification course for the training of interpretive guides. They believe a training course in this area would be worthwhile or that it would be good to obtain a certificate in this area. An even higher number, that is 55%, would consider being trained as a trainer of interpretive guides to be able to run the HeriQ course (7-day-course for trainers).

In August 2016, a trainer's course will take place in the Czech Republic and you can find the announcement elsewhere in the following article. Further information is available at www.interpret-europe.net/training. Furthermore, there is a significant number of institutions, national associations or EU funding streams that promote the implementation of interpretation at an European level. A couple of examples here may be useful in helping to provide interpretive training in Europe:

- Creative Europe is the European Commission's framework programme to support culture.
- European Social Fund is an instrument for encouraging employment.
- Erasmus+ aims to improve the quality of vocational education and training as well as adult learning across Europe.



Valya Stergioti
(Greece) and
Thorsten Ludwig
(Germany)

The IE training programme is taking off: Ready to jump on board?

IE's first international certification courses will take place from 12-20 August 2016. Application forms and more information are available at www.interpret-europe.net/training.

SIMID, the Czech Association for Heritage Interpretation, has invited IE to run Certified Interpretive Guides and Certified Interpretive Guide Trainers courses at SIMID's Summer School on Heritage Interpretation at Kapráluv Mlýn, South Moravia. This event is supported by the Swiss government, which means that participants from the following countries can take part for greatly discounted fees:

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

However, IE wants to run the courses for people from all over Europe too, so this offer applies to self-funded participants as well.



Facilitating a peer reviewing process
Photo: Thorsten Ludwig

Course content

Five-day course for guides

The course teaches the skills to perform interpretive talks and walks through practical exercises at different heritage sites. During the course, all participants will have the opportunity to perform their skills as well as giving and receiving feedback through intense peer reviewing processes. The courses come with tried-and-tested work materials and a 40-page illustrated course manual describing the background, exercises and assessment criteria. Participants who deliver a brief homework assignment and sit the final tests become Certified Interpretive Guides.

Upon completing the course, participants will have the opportunity to stay for two more days at Kapráluv Mlýn and take part in a two-day study visit programme to learn more about heritage interpretation and the Moravian karst scenery. Please note that this part of the programme is optional and at an extra cost.

Seven-day guide trainer course

This course is an extended version of the five-day guide course. Besides the complete guide course, it also includes teaching exercises and material as well as training practice. Candidates must show that they are able to teach and the video-taped sessions will be assessed by an external committee after the course. Once guide trainer participants have proved that they know what they are teaching, they will be authorised by IE, as newly Certified Interpretive Guide Trainers, to run IE guide courses in their countries on their own.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Morning	Guide course					Optional study visits (only for guides)	
Afternoon							
Evening	Guide trainer course (including the guide course)						

- The guide and guide trainer courses will run as one for the first five days, thus giving the opportunity for all trainer candidates to become familiar with the specific exercises.
- The extended guide trainer version of the course includes an extra two days of training plus additional sessions during the five first days focused on experiential learning methods.
- Every evening, all 12 guide trainer candidates will take part in group sessions to consolidate and expand on key trainer-related skills.

Course venue

Our training facility is at Kapráluv Mlýn (Kapral's Mill) in the Czech Republic, 150 km north of Vienna and just 15-minutes' drive from the centre of Brno. Situated in the beautiful and inspiring Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area, Kapráluv Mlýn won an award as a modern and eco-friendly learning centre. It lies near a small river in a se-

cluded forest valley with several karst caves and a variety of habitats within easy walking distance. Nearby, is the city of Brno with its rich cultural heritage as well as the battlefield of Austerlitz.

Participants will be able to explore the area during the course as well as use the nearby natural and cultural heritage features as part of their training exercises.

Course team

The course will be run in two groups facilitated by Valya Stergioti (Greece) and Thorsten Ludwig (Germany), assisted by Sandy Colvine (France). On-site arrangements will be managed by Michal Medek (Czech Republic). In addition, local guest speakers will introduce us in the surrounding area, during the optional two-day site visit.

Course dates and costs

All prices include food and accommodation, all course materials and everything required for the certification process. There will be no additional payment on site.

The five-day Certified Interpretive Guide course runs from 12-18 August and costs € 760. The discounted course fee for participants from countries mentioned above will be € 160. Participants who want to stay on for the two-day site visit programme after the course must pay an additional € 120.

The seven-day Certified Interpretive Guide Trainer course runs from 12-20 August and

Playing with group formations
Photo: Thorsten Ludwig



costs € 980. The discounted course fee for participants from countries mentioned above is € 260.

There are 25 subsidised and 15 self-funded places available. The number of guide trainers to be trained in the courses will be limited to 12 (6 subsidised and 6 self-funded). All participants need to apply and will be accepted on a first-come-first-serve base if they fulfil all requirements.

Important Note:

If you wish to apply for this course, please read the next article about the possibility of decreasing your course fee using Erasmus+ funding – available until early February 2016.

Requirements for application

Participants must be IE members and be able to communicate and give presentations in English. Applicants for the guide certificate need to prove their experience as guides, while applicants for the guide trainer certificate need to prove their experience as contemporary trainers regardless of the context in which this experience was gained.

We are really looking forward to this first step into the IE training and certification programme. To get more information and apply, go to www.interpret-europe.net/training.



Kapráľův Mlýn learning centre

Photo: Michal Medek



Funding available

If you are interested in taking part at the IE Interpretive Guide or Guide Trainer Course in the Czech Republic in August 2016, you may apply for a support for your incurred transportation costs, training course costs and accommodation expenses.

Funding is available through Erasmus+. Erasmus+ supports transnational partnerships among EU countries in the fields of education, training, youth institutions and organisations. The aim is to bring the world of education closer to the world of work in order to close the gaps in skills we are facing in Europe.

One part of Erasmus+ aims to improve the quality of adult learning across Europe. It provides opportunities for professionals in the field of adult learning to develop strategic partnerships and to learn from each other. It focuses on common challenges, such as the recognition of skills learnt outside the formal education system. Erasmus+ helps make adult learning more accessible and improve the knowledge and skills of citizens across Europe. Everyone from countries of the European Union as well as Island, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and former Yugoslavia can participate in Erasmus+.

Make sure that you do not miss the dates for application! For example, the deadline for the Mobility programme is 2 February 2016.

Any further Information about Erasmus+ is available on http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/vocational/index_en.htm

Julia Wimmer
(Germany)

Dorothea
Papathanasiou-
Zuhrt
(Greece)

ADRION 2014-2020

ADRION 2014-2020 is a new cooperation programme, which brings together five countries. Four are EU member states (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia), three are candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia) along with one potential candidate country (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The total budget of the programme, including national contribution, is € 117,917,379. For the overall cooperation area, a co-financing rate of 85% is applied. The official language of the programme is English.

The programme consists of 4 priority axes:

- Innovative and smart region;
- Sustainable region;
- Connected region;
- Towards a better governance of EUSAIR*

*EU Macroregional Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region

Website:

<http://www.finisterrae.it/index.php/home/>

Programme documents

- Citizen summary
- Programme manual
- EU Macroregional Strategy EUSAIR
- Programme Document Section

Tip for IE members:

ADRION addresses heritage and tourism as an eco-systemic approach. Project targets are:

Investment priority 1b targets the development of a regional innovation system for Adriatic-Ionian area tourism, nature and cultural heritage. This includes product and process innovations, sustainable tourist flow management, applications for potential and current visitors, creative industries, social innovation, traditional knowledge in skills.

Investment priority 1b addresses the sustainable valorisation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as growth assets in the ADRION area.

Investment priority 6c addresses directly the conservation, protection and promotion of natural and cultural heritage.

Investment priority 6d addresses protection and restoration of biodiversity and soil and promotion of ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000 sites, and green infrastructure.

The 1st Call is expected in early 2016. Ceilings for project budgets will be declared then.



Balkan-Mediterranean 2014-2020

Balkan-Mediterranean 2014-2020 is a new cooperation programme, which brings together five countries. Three EU member states (Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece) and two candidate countries (Albania and the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia). The total budget of the programme, including national contribution, is € 39,727,654.00. For the overall cooperation area, a co-financing rate of 85% is applied. The official language of the programme is English.

Dorothea
Papathanasiou-
Zuhrt
(Greece)

The Programme consists of:

- Priority Axis 1: Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Priority Axis 2: Environment

Website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/interregbalkanmed/>

Programme documents

Citizen summary
1st Call for Proposals
Programme Manual
Project Selection Criteria

Tips for IE members:

Priority Axis Environment hosts the project with a ceiling of € 1.5 million.

Project targets are:

- Sustainable transnational tourist offers and packages linked to the natural and cultural heritage where a combination of alternative types of tourism can be developed e.g. archaeological/cultural tourism combined with tourism in natural sites
- Coherent and joined up approaches in order to enhance the level of sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage, across the whole Balkan-Mediterranean transnational territory.
- Promotion of a sustainable cultural-tourism approach towards Balkan Mediterranean cultural and natural heritage linked to corresponding monuments.
- Transferring systems for the labeling and funding of green, blue and fair trade products respecting and promoting the programme area cultural and natural heritage.
- Transnational cooperation activities in the fields of multiculturalism, cultural exchange and connections with creative industries in order to increase cultural diversity.

The 1st Call is expected early 2016.



*Primosten in Croatia.
Destination of IE
conference 2014
Photo: Ludwig*



Laila De Bruyne
(Belgium)

Promote the Interpret Europe Conference 2016 in your country!

When searching for study visit sites for our conference in May, I recently came to a very special place: the Institute of Ursulinen, an international school for girls, founded by nuns in 1841. These nuns had their own idea of education. By teaching girls Greek and Latin, they clearly acted against their catholic superiors. When I discovered this hidden place, I could imagine the delight this close community felt, sharing future dreams in their fantastic art nouveau winter garden... this is so worth seeing!



While it first seemed difficult to me to connect abstract topics from the European agenda, like lifelong learning, to the heritage sites around, I suddenly felt that this really works. To share this experience with others and to discuss where more such sites could be found all over Europe will be one important part of our conference – and there are some more secret places waiting for you at different sites in Flanders.

Do you want to excite more heritage professionals about the interpretive approach? Then you can support the promotion of the conference.

Please download

- our promotion text
- our conference logo
- our hints for promotion

from www.interpreteuropeconference.net and set up your own national recruiting campaign to announce the conference in your country.

- Use the conference logo and the promotion text to place the conference on your website.
- If your organisation has a Facebook page, you can promote the conference on that with a personal message about why people should come and include a link to the conference website.
- Ask your network of national (and international) partners to announce the con-



Photo: Art nouveau winter garden.
Photo: De Bruyne

ference on their websites, in their newsletters or on social media. Send them the text and the logo to use.

Let us form a dedicated community of professionals who show that heritage interpretation is key to approach our visitors, to give a deeper meaning to heritage sites and to connect our common European past and future.

Join us in Mechelen from 21-24 May 2016 and experience Belgium like you never did before.

Important dates.

4 January: 1st round abstract submitters will be informed of approval (feedback for re-submission has been given)

5 January: registrations open

31 January: 2nd deadline submission call for papers

31 January: deadline applications scholarships

8 February: 2nd round submitters will be informed of approval of their abstracts

15 February: scholarship submitters are being informed of their application

29 February: last day of early bird fee

1 March: deadline full papers (not mandatory)



Call for Papers – the second round

Are you aware that what you do to inspire people at your local site could contribute to the future of Europe?

Cultural and natural heritage sites are considered to be the core assets that define Europe's richness of identity and its place in the world. What really matters though is that these assets are accessible to Europe's citizens and visitors alike as sources of inspiration, innovation and of well-being. This is what heritage interpretation is all about. This is also what Interpret Europe wants to emphasise with its upcoming conference in Mechelen from 21 to 24 May 2016.

After receiving many impressive proposals which show that our message has been heard, we now launch the second round of our Call for Papers. The new deadline is 31 January 2016.

- Do you have an approach that can inspire other sites in Europe or beyond?
- Do you have an idea that you want to discuss with interpretation professionals and enthusiasts?
- Do you want to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of Europe's heritage to cope with the challenges of today?
- Are you convinced that your methodology of heritage interpretation is worth following?

Do not hesitate to visit our conference website www.interpreteuropeconference.net and to submit your paper abstract or workshop proposal before the end of January 2016. The final decision for those who submit in the second round will be announced by 8 February 2016.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Mechelen next year for an event that will be truly inspiring.



Willem Derde
(Belgium) and
Thorsten Ludwig
(Germany)

Sites and subjects

Interpret Europe's conferences stand out because of their combination of paper presentations, active workshops and site visits. The excursions are chosen to provoke and to inspire but also to get participants actively involved. For the upcoming conference in Belgium 2016, sites have been selected to illustrate how heritage interpretation is essential for turning Europe into a 'laboratory for heritage-based innovation' as was recently proclaimed by the European Commission. Though more are announced on www.interpreteuropeconference.net, I'd like to introduce three of these sites here to give you an idea in what direction we are going.

An innovative approach to active citizenship at the city museum of Mechelen

You'll be inspired by the methodology of the international think tank 'participative models in museums'. The new city museum of Mechelen (opening in 2018) has developed an innovative pilot project that has the potential to change fundamentally our ideas and ways of how to involve local citizens, visitors and heritage experts as well as political stakeholders. To do this, it addresses a fundamental aspect of heritage interpretation: how to transform a participative approach into the foundation of a long term museum project. You'll learn more about this project, get into debate with the key players, and discover how you can use different forms of participation in your own museum.

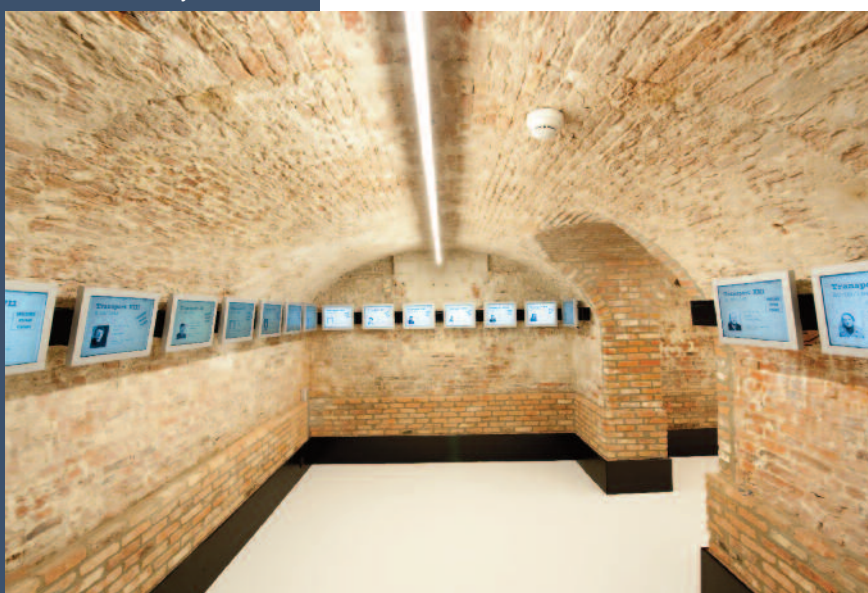
Hoge Kempen National
Park moor
Photo: National Park



Rethinking the basis of sustainability at the Hoge Kempen National Park

You will be surprised to learn that the most beautiful panoramic view of Flanders has been transformed from a former coal mining area into a nature park. On this study visit, we will discuss the relationship between human well-being, culture and nature: where do these meet, how could nature and culture support each other, how could we cooperate more and how could heritage interpretation support people in developing ideas to shape their own environment. At 'Connecterra' – the main gate – nature, people, culture and tourism receive a new meaning. Explore this unique 'mixed continuous landscape' of Europe (a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage status) and be inspired.

Kazerne Dossin. Memorial,
Museum and Documenta-
tion Centre on Holocaust
and Human Rights
Photo: Laila de Bruyne



Safeguarding Europe's fundamental freedom: Human rights at Kazerne Dossin

In Kazerne Dossin, over 25,000 Jews and Romá were imprisoned, put on to trains and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. A visit will move, dismay and invite you to reflect. How-

ever, this modern museum is not limited to what happened in the past. It encourages you to ask questions about the role and power of the people and to reflect on mass violence which is so often present in the news today. In this study visit, we will reflect together on the potentials and pitfalls of museums that address sensitive heritage: how far can we go in confrontation? How and when can you insert contemporary news items in your heritage exhibition? What is the role of heritage interpretation in bridging sensitive themes like human rights from a past context into today's reality?

For those who have the chance to arrive one day in advance, the pre-conference tour will take you to Flanders Fields

where the memory of World War One is kept alive and where the need for a united Europe first emerged. Visit www.interpreteuropeconference.net to find out.

Court of Busleyden
Photo: Court of
Busleyden



Peter Seccombe
(UK)

Conference scholarships

Every year at the Interpret Europe conference we have an auction to raise money for a scholarships fund. We use this money to help people on low incomes come to the next conference. We usually make enough money to offer up to five scholarships. The scholarships pay for some of the conference and accommodation fees.

If you want to apply for a scholarship and you are on a low income, this is what you need to do.

- Write a short letter explaining your interest in heritage interpretation, how the conference would help you in your career, and what you could contribute to the conference.
- Tell us about your experience in interpretation.
- Tell us why we should choose you.
- Attach your Curriculum Vitae.
- Email it to scholarships@interpreteuropeconference.net by 31 January 2016

That's it!

We especially encourage people from eastern European countries to apply but if you are just starting your career in interpretation in any country then please make an application.

We will consider all the applications and let you know by 15 February 2016.

Announcements

Welcome to our new members

SIMID – Czech Association for Heritage Interpretation (Czech Republic)
University of the Highlands and Islands – Perth College (UK)

Despina Alexiou (Greece)
Markus Blank (Austria)
Jan Činčera (Czech Republic)
David Fornés Mas (Spain)
Penelope Gkini (Greece)
Dijana Pita da Costa (Slovenia)
Annemarie de Regt (Netherlands)
Alicja Subel (Poland)
Rhiannon Thomas (UK)
Lefteris Trikiriotis (Greece)
Triantafyllia Tsiataltziali (Greece)
Elissavet Tzovani (Greece)
Marieke Zeeman (Netherlands)



Interpret Europe Call for Pictures 2016

Is it true that there are no more interpretive images around?

We cannot believe it – and so we are starting our Call for Pictures.

All of you who like to share strong images are invited to enter a maximum of 10 pictures (photos, drawings, computer visualisations etc.) illustrating heritage or heritage interpretation. Images with close-up details are preferable.

We are looking for images that are interpretive; this means: they do not just have a good quality and composition but they embrace a deeper meaning and give the sense of a strong story behind them – with little need for words.

We need such pictures to explain our profession, especially in the announcements we address to our European representatives in Brussels during the next months. Your entries might therefore be included in websites, banners, posters, brochures, flyers, PowerPoint and other presentations of Interpret Europe. In most cases we would use your name at least in an imprint. If not, we would ask you in advance. You will retain the copyright.

Requirements

Send us your pictures as photos, drawings, computer visualisations, etc.

- They need to be in high resolution – at least 180 dpi and 3.000 pixels on the longer side.
- They should be in a .jpeg or .jpg file format.
- The file name of each photo should include the name of its author and a brief caption.
- Any description should not exceed 60 words.
- Don't forget to include your full name, email address and a phone number.

All pictures should be send to communication@interpret-europe.net. If the size of your entry is larger than 10MB, please use WeTransfer, Dropbox or a similar file transfer tool.

All entries must be received by 31 January 2016.

Kaja Antlej
(Slovenia) and
Thorsten Ludwig
(Germany)

Assessment

A committee consisting of Goran Antley (Slovenia), Martin Hartmann (Austria) and Adriaan Linters (Belgium), three dedicated photographers, will assess the images that have been sent in. Images can be rejected if they do not follow legal requirements. The committee will choose the ten best images.

Prizes

These ten images will be published in our next newsletter and presented at our conference in Mechelen. Conference participants will then decide which three of them will win. The winners will be announced and will receive special prizes during the conference.

If you have any questions, send us an email at communication@interpret-europe.net.

Let's do our best to convince others of the impact of the interpretive approach. We look forward to your contributions.



Thorsten Ludwig
(Germany) and
Willem Derde
(Belgium)

Promoting IE is our key challenge for 2016 – and yours?

In terms of communication, 2016 will be a challenging year for Interpret Europe. We need to grow and during our recent strategy meeting it was clear that communication is the key to achieving that.

Last summer we asked for your support in order to run our IE newsletter by a dedicated team of members. The result is what you are looking at now. Encouraged by that overwhelming work which Kaja Antlej, Abby McSherry, Verena Perko and Kev Theaker are doing for all of us, we issue you with this call to reorganize our communication. We feel that IE will be strong enough to extend its outreach much further than it does so far – if enthusiastic members form a lively communication team.

We are looking for members who feel they could contribute in:

- public relations and marketing
- language, translation and writing
- design
- digital and social media
- photographing and illustrating
- working with programmes like Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign, etc.

Apart from this, we are always looking for proofreaders who can check that texts in English are well developed but nevertheless easy for non-native speakers to understand.

Please come back to us if you feel you could play a part in the team by contributing through one or more of these fields – or perhaps in one we've not included? And don't feel shy if you would like to contribute but feel you are not really qualified. We are talk-

ing about a team, and we are quite sure we will find a place for everyone who is dedicated and reliable enough to join our big enterprise.

We will set up our communication team this winter and we intend to come up with our first results in spring. If you like to be part of it, send us a signal at: communication@interpret-europe.net.



Upcoming events in Europe

26.04 - 29.04.2016: Training course, Interpretive Master Planning
Plas Tan y Bwlch, (UK)

21.05.- 24.05.2016: IE Annual Conference
Mechelen, (Belgium)

12.08.- 20.08.2016: IE certification courses for guides and guide trainers
Kaprálův mlýn, (Czech Republic)

29.08.- 02.09.2016: Eurorural Conference – European Countryside and its Perception
Brno, (Czech Republic)

05.09 - 09.09.2016: IMTAL European Regional Conference
Micheldorf, (Austria)

Upcoming events outside Europe

31.03.-04.04.2016: Inheriting the city, conference of the University of Birmingham and the National Taiwan University
Taipei (Taiwan)

03.04.-07.04.2016: NAI and INNZ international conference.
Wellington (New Zealand)



On behalf of Interpret Europe, this newsletter has been produced by Kaja Antlej (Slovenia), Verena Perko (Slovenia), Abby McSherry (Ireland) and Kev Theaker (UK). The newsletter team owes thanks for their support to Sandy Colvine (France) and to Michael Glen (UK).

Any news, projects, invitations, thoughts or adventures in interpretation that you want to share? Send us a report and some photos for the next newsletter.

Please make sure that photos have the name of the person or institution having the rights and a suggested caption in their file name, e.g. `kasparov_children_experiencing_an_old_schoolyard.jpg`

**Deadline for contributions:
Friday 19 February 2016**

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