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EUROPEAN

Insights

Spring 2012

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM THEATRE ALLIANCE - EUROPE

European Affiliate

of the International Museum Theatre Alliance



**A UNIQUE AND
EXCITING
CONFERENCE IN
SWEDEN WITH
OPENARCH AND
IMTAL-EUROPE**

**OPEN
ARCH**

Also in this issue...
QR codes &
Curzon Memories App
"What could the
Romans ever do
for us?"



Education and Culture DG

Culture Programme

ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH PERFORMANCE

News from the Chair

2012 is going to be a challenging time for many IMTAL members. Our friends in Greece are facing great austerity, and the impact of the financial crisis on the culture and heritage sector across the rest of Europe is beginning to be felt in budget cuts and staff reductions. At such times creativity, let alone 'Live Interpretation', can be regarded as a luxury. All of us within IMTAL need to be vigilant, and remind institutions that creativity and inventiveness in interpretation can be economical and effective, especially for refreshing exhibitions and uncovering new angles on existing sites. This edition of 'Insights' certainly represents a wide range of approaches, all of which have proven greater responsiveness, better longevity and broader interest than the average faded text panel.

Many of the articles in this edition expand upon work first presented at IMTAL conferences. Dr Charlotte Crofts' dramatised App' interpreting the Clevedon Curzon cinema was presented at the most recent IMTAL AGM in Bristol. The fabulous court fooling of Peet Cooper and The Misfits Theatre Company was first introduced to IMTAL members at a previous AGM at Hampton Court Palace. It is delightful to be able to track the progress of this brave and innovative project and recognise the diversity of our membership. During the last IMTAL Global conference hosted by IMTAL-Europe, many of us will have had the pleasure of seeing Ruth Turkington's work at The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and it is good to catch up with what is happening there now. These articles and the others in this edition enable those who cannot attend our gatherings to stay in touch with work as it develops, and to make contact with IMTAL members that they may not yet have met.

However, nothing beats sharing time, space, experiences and sustenance with fellow members. Owing to pressures on time and resources, the IMTAL Europe board have decided not to host the next IMTAL Global conference in 2013. Instead, our partners and friends over the Atlantic, IMTAL-Americas have just announced that they will be hosting the 2013 Global IMTAL Conference in Washington, DC where there are many active IMTAL members doing some very innovative and exciting work with museum theatre. This will be held in October and we will be letting you know more details in the coming months.

We also have a bumper conference and AGM coming up this September 2012 in Sweden that promises to provide many opportunities for international exchange in conjunction with colleagues from EXARC and the EU-funded project Open ARCH. The conference is being heavily subsidised and offers fantastic value for money, as well as the opportunity to discover new approaches and new friends among the magnificent sights at the Fotevikens reconstructed Viking village. More details follow, but I would advise early booking to get the best deals on flights.

I will be standing down as Chair of the Board at this next AGM, so I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible for a grand send off. Don't worry, there'll be no burning of boats either metaphorically or literally! The IMTAL board will steer a steady course after my departure. But if anyone would like to consider joining the board, they are welcome to get in touch to find out more.

Wishing you a warm and wonderful Spring

Anna Farthing

We are listening & welcome members ideas, especially if they come with offers of help to get them off the ground!

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Labyrintheme

An EU-funded project exploring the use of participatory theatre to widen participation and engagement in museums.

The Manchester Museum is one of a number of cultural and heritage organisations across Europe involved in a fascinating new project called 'Labyrintheme'. The project aims to develop and explore innovative models for engaging lifelong learners using the methods and techniques of the participatory arts, and in particular participatory theatre.

'Labyrintheme' has been developed by a partnership including two universities (University of Bucharest, Romania; University of Balikesir, Turkey), three adult education providers ('BIVEDA', Bulgaria; 'ONAGEB.SPAIN', Spain; 'Epsilon III Association', Romania) and The Manchester Museum, with support from the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme/Grundtvig.

To achieve its aim, Labyrintheme partners have developed a series of training courses and workshops that support the use of participatory theatre approaches, methods and techniques in institutions managing and exhibiting heritage across Europe. The training courses will take place in Romania and Bulgaria in summer 2012, in Spain in September 2012 and probably in another location later in the year (details to be announced). The Manchester Museum is hosting a pilot training course in April 2012, in which several IMTAL-Europe members are taking part.

Those interested in the course in Spain in September 2012 may be able to apply for a grant from Grundtvig which would fund their involvement in the full six-day course. This grant would cover all costs including travel, accommodation and subsistence. During the course individuals will acquire the relevant skills and knowledge to develop Labyrinth performances, or appropriate adaptations, within their own cultural and heritage organisations. Course dates for Spain (Zaragoza): **9-14 September 2012.**

Who can attend the training courses?

Individuals based in or working for institutions dedicated to preserving and communicating heritage and who have an interest in exploring innovative methods and techniques as a way of engaging the audiences of their organisation. This can include museum staff, volunteers, adult educators, post graduate students and professional heritage performers.

What is 'Labyrinth' and what will the course involve?

Participants will have the opportunity to gain an insight into this unique practice and will explore the benefits of using participatory arts, methods and techniques within the cultural and heritage sectors. Experienced trainers will deliver a 6 day workshop which will include theory modules (on interactive performance and labyrinth theatre, heritage interpretation, narratives and storytelling) but will prioritise practice and its applicability to a variety of cultural institutions. As part of the process, participants

TRAINING

take over a space and effectively develop a performative journey based on the stories, objects and people interacting within it. They will do this by using the integrative framework of an approach called *labyrinth theatre*.

Labyrinth theatre is an interactive, site-specific and context-oriented type of participatory theatre, involving participants who are *not* necessarily actors or performing arts professionals. In labyrinth theatre an itinerary is developed through the use of 'found' spaces - indoors, outdoors or a combination of the two, and is constructed through a series of experiences assembled into a 'story'. Emphasis is placed upon enhancing the ways we experience the world around us through our senses. Participants will, by the end of the course, have designed and created a labyrinth which will be experienced by volunteer audience members one by one or in small groups, interacting with the participants of the labyrinth, intervening in the 'story', and ultimately discovering new ways of engaging with and making meaning from the place and objects encountered.

Labyrinth is collaborative work, interactive, and at the same time it brings out individual creativity in each and every step of the story. Just as importantly, it is fun and has been successfully used to enhance learning about and engagement with heritage in such countries as Austria, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain.

Why bring participatory practices into museums?

During the past two decades, learning in museums has been increasingly developed through interactive and participative practices. The aim, in many of the most innovative museums, has been to discourage mere receptive postures, and instead to inspire audiences to: engage with the objects, stories and ideas they encounter; to collaborate with each other and with the museum in the making of meanings; to contribute to and influence the museum's educational mission; and to develop a sense of ownership of the collections and significant places they visit. Labyrinth theatre is designed to advance learning and engagement of this kind through its emphasis upon all five senses and upon the role of the imagination. Participants are involved in an activity which promotes a more personalised connection with knowledge. Its ultimate aim is to turn the activity into a quest for a deeper meaning, for an experience that changes our perspective; in contrast with the passive observation and the accumulation of facts and data, or the submersion in virtual worlds offered by the multimedia. Activating the senses separately, together with individual choice and gesture, is the pathway to a personal story which unfolds in real time and space, and as in any adventure can be a bit unpredictable.

How do I apply to take part in the course?

For further information please visit: <http://labyrintheme.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/Labyrintheme>.

Note: for the course in Spain, the closing date for applications for funding from Grundtvig is **30th April 2012.**

Tony Jackson

THE CURZON MEMORIES APP

Bringing screen heritage to life

by Charlotte Crofts



The Curzon project is based at the Curzon Community Cinema in Clevedon which, as well as being a fully operational cinema with a state-of-the art digital projector, also houses the Curzon Collection of Cinema Heritage Technology. Part of this is on display throughout the cinema building while the main collection is accessible to the public throughout the year. The project, which was funded by the University of the West of England and the Digital Cultures Research Centre, aimed to explore how new media could be used to enhance visitors' understanding of the cinema's heritage. There are two main outcomes of the project, the *Curzon Memories App* which will be

launched on App Store and Android Market in March, and the *Projection Hero* installation – a miniature cinema which you can manipulate with your smartphone.

The *Curzon Memories App* is a mobile phone application which enables visitors to find out more about the cinema's history by exploring the interior and exterior of the building, triggering memories via QR Codes and GPS respectively. These are oral histories recorded in collaboration with Education Officer, Cathy Poole, as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded Curzon Memories Project. Along the way they also encounter the voices of Victor Cox and his stepmother, Blanche Cox. Victor and his father James Newton Cox were originally stonemasons who initially projected pictures in the town hall. They built the first cinema in 1912, and it was so successful that they built a larger one right on top of it in 1921/2, without missing a single screening. Victor was a young lad when his father married the then Blanche Harwood, who had been an operatic diva gracing the stages of Europe.

In the app we hear these two characters' reactions to the cinema as it is now. Victor represents the hard-nosed businessman whose main concern is "bums on seats", whilst Blanche represents the magic of cinema: "Look at them with their shopping bags, we should have built a supermarket the amount they spend in a week", remarks Victor in relation to the Lidl and Morrisons stores that have sprung up behind the cinema; "No, no, no, darling, the magic of the moving pictures, Clevedon needed a cinema," retorts Blanche, dismissively.

One of the dilemmas in the development of the app was getting the balance right between memory and dramatisation – in the feedback on the first iteration the dramatisations went down really well, but in the second evaluation there were problems with the way in which the dramatisations were presented for some users. They felt confused about whether they were hearing oral testimony or fiction. In the final iteration – which is due to be tested in February – I've addressed this by more explicitly introducing the characters as historical figures, and revoicing them with professional actors.



The wedding of James Newton Cox and Blanche Harwood, with the young Victor Cox on the right

Ian Lavender plays Victor Cox, who was described as the "meanest man in Clevedon, he was tighter than the wallpaper on the wall" by George Dimond, a button boy who worked in the cinema in the 1930s. Yet Cox is also known to have been a great benefactor to Clevedon and paid for two charabancs to drive all the builders of the 1922 cinema to a picnic to Cheddar Gorge. One of George's roles was to plug in the hearing aid for the deaf patrons, so I imagine Victor Cox, on over hearing George's memory of him, barking at him "Dimond! You stupid boy, go and wire Mr Calderwell up for sound" – I couldn't resist the reference to Ian's role as "stupid boy" Pike in *Dad's Army*. Indeed, Ian plays Cox as a mixture of the officious Captain Mainwaring and Pike, living in the shadow of his over-protective stepmother, played by Anna Farthing, who's interpretation of Blanche Cox was informed by the RP accent of Marguerite Patten.

You are guided through the app by Mrs Green, based on a real usherette who worked in the cinema and was referred to as "Torchy" Green by one contributor, Susan Sikora, because of the way she used to flash her torch to discourage patrons from cuddling in the back row. Mrs Green is voiced by Jacqui Bressington, who works as a guide at the Curzon, following the lead of Calvium's *Escape From the Tower* app in which they used the image of a real life Beefeater within the app, although he was voiced with an actor. Jo Reid, Creative Director of Calvium (the company who make AppFurnace the app development tool used in the project) mentions how using a person associated with the venue can bring a great deal of pleasure and surprise to the visitor when they encounter them in person. The hope is that the same frisson will occur should users bump in to Jacqui at the Curzon. Unlike *Escape From the Tower*, however, I decided to



Jacqui Bressington, as "Torchy" Green

use Jacqui's real voice, rather than that of an actor, as I felt that it gave more authenticity to the app.

QR codes are used to trigger memories inside the building. A number of technologies were considered, including motion and pressure sensors and RFID codes, but QR codes were selected due to their user-friendliness, minimal infrastructure and low cost. In the evaluation of the second iteration QR codes were received positively in terms of their ease of use and the level of user-satisfaction of knowing that context-specific media had been activated by scanning the QR code (in contrast to the uncertainties of GPS). Users commented on their sense not only of space, but also of time whilst listening to memories in the places in which they actually happened: "That was the thing that grabbed me most as I sat down actually looking at the stage as that 'Rock Around the Clock' was playing. And I thought, 'Wow! I just got this feel for the beginning of the English rock & roll scene in these small cinemas.'"

Memories are triggered by GPS as you explore the outside of the building. However, given the vacillations and inaccuracy of the GPS signal in the region, after testing several iterations an additional "No GPS" interface was designed to enable the user to explore manually should the GPS signal be too weak. The character of the Usherette was also introduced to better orient the user in relation to where they should be standing and what they should be looking at. The iterative design process (which is endorsed by Jo Reid) enables rapid prototyping and ability to respond to real-time testing in the field. Indeed, it is important to emphasise that this is a location-based project and the memories are most resonant when experienced on-site in the actual locations where they originally occurred, like the Muriel Williams' recollection of being in the cinema on the night that a bomb went off immediately outside the front door in 1941. Listening to this memory whilst standing beneath the shrapnel pitted entrance can be quite moving.

The Projection Hero installation is designed work as part of the Curzon Memories App – it's just one of the QR codes you encounter as you explore the building – but it also operates as a stand-alone exhibit that can be activated by any smartphone using a QR Reader. Once you scan

the QR code on the little cinema screen, an interface pops up on your phone which allows you to operate the cinema, open the curtains, dim the lights and start the movie, which you watch through the tiny projection booth windows. The programme starts with the iconic 'Asteroid' theme tune from Pearl and Dean, followed by films about the dying art of cinema projection, including interviews with Maurice Thornton, Curator of the Curzon Collection and author of *The Everlasting Picture House*, a book about the cinema. The project is programmed by Tarim from Media Playgrounds, using Arduino circuits connected to the internet to control the cinema. The hand-carved seats and frame were made by Simon Dorgan at Urbi et Orbi and the curtains fashioned by yours truly.

Maurice recalls being trained by the chief at the Granada at Kettering: "He said 'Look, you're the most important person you are. There's hundreds of people that have made this film,' he said, 'but you're the icing on the cake because you are going to show it to an audience, so you're an artist and you've got to behave like as if you're on the stage, instead of being on the stage you're in the projection room, but you are showing, you are giving a performance' and I've never forgotten that. That's the difference between showing a film and pressing a button." In contrast we then hear Pete Stamp talking about how the Curzon's new digital projector will eventually make his job obsolete because it can be programmed to dim the lights remotely. By asking the user to "perform" as the Projection Hero, the installation seeks to enhance their understanding of the highly important, but invisible, role of projectionist, which is coming under threat in the digital age. The irony being that I'm using new media to get the point across.

The use of mobile technologies in a heritage context is becoming increasingly prevalent. There are a growing number of heritage apps and digital humanities is a focal point for much UK research funding, as evidenced by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Digital Transformations strand and the 2012 AHRC Creative Economy/UWE REACT Hub, Heritage Sandbox theme (www.react-hub.org.uk)

The very nature of locative media seems to afford an ideal platform through which to enhance visitors' experiences of physical heritage sites. However, there is always the danger of mobile technologies detracting from the experience of actually "being there". The key findings of the Curzon Memories App are the importance of an iterative design process, user evaluation and sensitivity to context in the development of compelling locative heritage experiences.

The cinema celebrates its centenary on 20 April 2012.

For more information about the Curzon please see <http://www.curzon.org.uk>

For more information about the Curzon Memories App see <http://curzonproject.wordpress.com>

Charlotte Crofts



The Curzon's shrapnel pitted entrance

ALL THE KING'S FOOLS

by Peet Cooper and Penny Lepisz,
Foolscap Productions & The Misfits Theatre Company

In February and October 2011, Hampton Court Palace staged a ground-breaking interpretive event called *All The King's Fools*. A unique piece of work, the production featured actors with learning difficulties performing the roles of natural fools in the very rooms in which they would have performed for the Tudor monarchs in the sixteenth century. Director Peet Cooper and actor Penny Lepisz talk here about the project.

All The King's Fools was a co-production between Foolscap Productions (a Bristol based company specialising in historic fool performances), The Misfits Theatre Company (a professional company of actors with learning difficulties – also from Bristol) Historic Royal Palaces and Past Pleasures Limited. Its mix of ribald slapstick, music, rhyming and dance, all devised by the actors themselves, delighted and enthralled busy half term audiences in February and more large crowds in October last year.

An earlier *Insight* article (November 2009) detailed the background to this event and the early pre-production period. Following its publication, Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust Peoples Awards agreed to support the staging of two public events at the Palace. The actors worked with director Peet Cooper to devise their presentations based on original research done in collaboration with them by then HRP curatorial historian Dr Suzannah Lipscomb.

Actor Penny Lepisz, who performed as Mistress Bessie Peach ("flirty, with curvaceous buxom curves, seductive figure beneath that gown, with my bottom made out of carved marble"), already knew much background information about fools in the sixteenth century:

"For many years I have had an interest in Henry VIII and his court. I noticed that fools had that talent for making people laugh, especially the King. Henry VIII was a grouchy old man and a wrong word could send you to the Tower, but he needed somebody to amuse him and Will Somer (Henry's most famous fool) was very close to the King. Some of the queens like Ann Boleyn and Katherine Parr had a female fool or jester called Jane the Fool, I think she also served under Queen Mary as well." (Both Will Somer and Jane the fool are believed to be included in the famous 'dynasty portrait' depicting the Tudor succession as it stood in 1545)

The actors worked with Dr Lipscomb to find out as much as they could about natural fools and other people with learning difficulties in the sixteenth century.



HRP/Newsteam

"We presented her a list of questions about how people with learning difficulties were treated in Henry VIII's time and she gave us some fascinating answers. We found out what fools were dressed as, how they lived and the respect with which they were treated. They were treated well but other people with learning difficulties might have been treated much, much worse. Some people believed that fools had divine powers and they could prophecy things which would be useful to the monarchs."

Penny has a firm background in Tudor History since a project in school sparked her interest, however this surprised her as very little has been published about natural fools:

"I read mainly about court life and the monarch himself, but I knew nothing of the ways of the (natural) fool until this project came up."

Suzannah answered the questions the actors had had about how natural fools were treated at court:

"Some people thought they were silly and stupid but to the King and the court they were very special people. They could amuse and entertain. Where any-one else with a learning difficulty might have been treated worse, they were clothed and fed and they had a special position. They didn't eat scraps. That was called *bouche of court*."

The actors met with Suzannah on a number of occasions, in Bristol and elsewhere, to discuss her findings.

"In December 2009 we went up to the British Library for a research visit and we looked at the Psalter of Henry VIII. It showed Henry and his fool Will Somer at his side. He was playing a harp. That was the purpose of our visit to the British Library, to learn more about that Psalter and what it was all about."

The 2011 performances were devised by the company together with Peet Cooper over two intensive periods in January and September. Towards the end of these periods, they were joined by musician Sarah Moody to add a score to the performances. Penny explains some of the process:

"We went for a trip up to Hampton Court to see where we were going to perform – The Great Hall and all the places in the promenade performance. We organised the rehearsal room into parts of the Palace, and we did the devising of the pieces we were going to perform. We also had Charles (Neville – who played Sir Thomas Carwarden, master of the revels) and Richard (Evans – who played the King) come down to work with us. On top of that was the music: I composed some rhymes, which I knew the King would like and set them to music."

Penny wrote the rhymes inspired by verses attributed to Will Somer – Henry's most famous fool. Catching just the right balance between ribald humour and good taste, they suited the piece perfectly:

*'Twas in the midst of summer
A fair maiden I did see,
All dressed in ruby and Saffron,
And perched on a high low tree.*

*Oh fair maid, oh buxom one –
She is a bonny, bonny lass,
But falling from a leafy branch
She bared her rotund ass.*

With the help of musical director Sarah Moody Penny set these to music:

"Some of the music came from a DVD I have of Henry VIII and his wives, and some I heard before from CDs of Tudor music."

In the February event there were scenes in the Great Hall where two of the fools incurred the King's displeasure. The scenes, based on an account from the Imperial Ambassador Eustace Chapuys, showed the fools so enraging the King that they were forcibly taken from his presence.

Two of the fools Mary Edwards (played by Marsail Edwardes) and Penny's character, Bessie Peach...

"...talked about a couple of the King's wives which dare not be mentioned, and that so enraged the King that we had to be taken away in fear of our life, because in those days such words were treason."

Subsequent work by the historians suggested that Chapuys' account might not be reliable so in the second season of performances these scenes did not appear.

The second set of performances in October 2011 was funded by a Wellcome Trust People's Award and focussed on the role of natural fools in the treatment of the aging King's illnesses. 'Mirth' – which in the sixteenth century had a wider meaning, encompassing wellbeing, music and right living as well as comedy and laughter – was seen as vital in keeping the four humours in balance. In order to restore the King's health, therefore, the performances showed his doctors prescribe natural fools. Penny explains:

"In the second version, the King was ailing, he was sick. Mirth was part of medicine because, if you said a quip – a witty quip – and got the King to say 'I like that'

that would heal him. Those rhymes, jokes, short sketches and dances, they were all forms of entertainment to make the King better. That was part of one of his medications. The King needed much humour as well as someone to tend to his bodily needs. Because of our natural talents, we were medicine to cure the king's ills."

Natural Fools were also seen by some to be closer to God and, since they were unencumbered by wit, it was even believed that they might be capable of speaking divine truth. Thus people would write down their words and send them to astrologers and seers for interpretation. This was interpreted in *All The King's Fools* in front of the giant clock in Clock Court:

"It turned up in the research that another way of curing the King was to have prophecies and if I could be one of the holy fools, I could get to know the King's mind and be a medicine for all his ills. That's where the piece in front of the astrological clock came from."



Foolscap Productions

In speaking of the performances, Penny reflects on the excitement with which she and the other actors approached the performances:

"Doing our own performance in the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace and the grounds of the palace itself felt like we were transformed back into sixteenth century England and we were actually back in Tudor times. It was the experience of a lifetime and I felt like I wasn't myself, I was a member of the Tudor court. A lot of people might know about Henry VIII but some might not, and the performance we did was a brilliant way of putting over what life was like in the sixteenth century."

For more information and background as well as pictures and video visit www.allthekingsfools.co.uk

Peet Cooper and Penny Lepisz

IMTAL-EUROPE CONFERENCE & AGM IN SWEDEN

Monday 24th - 26th September 2012

Fotevikens Viking Museum,
near Malmö in SW Sweden



Education and Culture DG



Culture Programme

This year's IMTAL-Europe Conference and AGM will be a unique and exciting event. Open ARCH (a European Union-funded project on open-air archaeological museums) and IMTAL-Europe have joined forces to offer a unique conference event in southern Sweden in September.

The 2012 IMTAL-Europe conference will take place in Fotevikens, at a reconstructed Viking village alongside a museum and educational centre. It will coincide with a larger project meeting on the management of open-air archaeological museums, involving EXARC and the EU-funded project Open ARCH. Delegates from both organisations will gain from the extraordinary range of expertise, events, discussions and excursions on offer.

(Please see the websites listed opposite or IMTAL-Europe's conference page for more detail about these organisations.)

The over-arching conference theme will be...

The challenges of interpreting and engaging public interest in open air museums and archaeological/historic sites

The linked themes across the two main days will be...

How can performance contribute to and extend the work of such museums and sites? (IMTAL focus)

This includes 1st and 3rd person interpretation, theatre presentations & events and drama workshops

Management & communication strategies at open air/archaeological museums and Working with volunteers (Open Arch focus)



Fotevikens Museum

The provisional timetable is:

Sun. 23rd Sept. Arrivals

Mon. 24th CONFERENCE DAY 1 Led by Open ARCH with IMTAL-Europe "interventions" (performance/workshop extracts)

Presentations by: Roeland Pardekooper, General Secretary of EXARC and Manager of the Open ARCH project; Lars Amréus, Executive Director of the Swedish National Heritage Board "How to make cultural heritage alive"; Peter Aronsson, Linköping University "Why, when and how does the past become an engaging heritage site?"; Per Karsten & Jerry Rosengren, The Historical Museum of Lund "From traditional museum to the museum for the future"; Peter Lindbom, The Fullero Park project in Sweden "The planned large theme park about Vikings"; Henrik Zipsane & Jamtli Historieland "Cooperation all levels from a management point of view -working with staff & volunteers"; Anders Ödman, Lunds University "Archeology and volunteers"; Kaare Johannessen, Middelaldercentret, Denmark "About working with volunteers"; Catharina Oksen, Middelaldercentret, Denmark "The opportunities that volunteers provide for the Archaeological Open Air museums"

Evening dinner on board "The Cog" in the channel of Falsterbo.

Tue. 25th CONFERENCE DAY 2 Led by IMTAL-Europe

To include presentations by: Björn M Buttler Jakobsen Director, Fotevikens Museum; Dr Anna Farthing, IMTAL-Europe Chair; Prof. Tony Jackson, Manchester University, Editor of *Performing Heritage*, 2011; Mark Wallis, Director, Past Pleasures "What is live interpretation, where did it come from and why does it matter?" and Chris Gidlow, Manager of Live Interpretation, Historic Royal Palaces, "Emotional engagement through live interpretation, with the accent on intangible cultural heritage"

The day will include breakaway workshops, panel presentations and discussion groups led by IMTAL members.

In the evening we will have the Grand Viking Feast in the Long Hall



Fotevikens Museum

Wed. 26th CONFERENCE DAY 3

IMTAL-Europe AGM (am) (IMTAL members only)

Optional excursion (to nearby historic & cultural landscapes)

Thurs. 27th Departures

Useful websites:

IMTAL-Europe www.imtal-europe.org

Open Arch www.openarch.eu

EXARC www.exarc.eu

Fotevikens Viking Museum www.fotevikensmuseum.se/engelsk/index_e.htm

Swedish Heritage (Svenskt Kulturarv)

www.svensktkulturarv.se

NOOAM (Scandinavian Network for Archeological Open Air Museums) www.nooam.se

How much will it cost?

For IMTAL members: Delegate fee incl all meals from Monday to Wednesday breakfast a remarkable €80 (c.£70.00) ('Early Bird' rate)

For non-IMTAL members: Delegate fee incl all meals from Monday to Wednesday breakfast €95 (c.£85.00) (Early Bird)

If you are a member of IMTAL and have had a proposal for a full workshop accepted, the cost of delegate fee incl. meals will be €70 (c. £62).

Early bird registration must be made by 14th May 2012.

Registration after that date will be: IMTAL members: €90 (c.£80); non-IMTAL members: €105 (c.£95).

Recommended hotels (Cost of accommodation is extra)

Fotevikens Stugby next to the museum: <http://www.fotevikensstugby.se>

Falsterbo Kursgård, 1 km from the museum: <http://www.falsterbokursgard.com>.

Or, if these are full, 6km away there is Norregård "<http://www.norregard.com/index.asp/lang/1033>."

You must book and pay (online) for accommodation direct with the hotel (places have already been reserved).

If you are willing to share a cabin on site with up to three others of same sex or as a family room € 18 per person per night. (Cabins have 2 sets of bunk beds + WC/shower + kitchenette.) www.reenact.se/openarch2012/imtal

Travel

Arrangements are being made for a minibus to make frequent trips between hotels and conference venue throughout each of the conference days. EasyJet flies to Copenhagen from London and Manchester at reasonable rates. RyanAir now fly from Stansted to Malmo. The train to Malmo departs frequently from the airport station (via the Øresund Bridge) and takes just 12 minutes to Hyllie, the closest stop to Foteviken. Train fare: appx. £18 return.

Booking your place

You can register online at www.reenact.se/openarch2012/imtal To qualify for early bird rates, you must register by Monday 14th May and pay the full delegate fee (to IMTAL-Europe) by Monday 4th June 2012.

PLEASE NOTE: if for any reason the conference has to be cancelled (extremely unlikely), we cannot reimburse accommodation or flight costs, so we strongly advise that you take out appropriate travel insurance at the time of booking.

If you have questions, please contact one of the following: Björn M Buttler Jakobsen bmj@foteviken.se +46 707620612 or Tony Jackson tony.jackson@manchester.ac.uk.



"Another bit of Britain has been lost forever"

Felicity Loudon, Cadbury's heiress

The controversial takeover of Cadbury's by Kraft, and the subsequent closure of the Somerdale plant at Keynsham near Bristol, has been presented in the media as a simple tale. But beneath the headlines lurks a more challenging history: a history of radical change and beloved heritage, innovation and identity, philanthropy and slavery.

"You can create a factory...but how do you create comradeship? How do you create family spirit? How do you create team work? How do you create - what's the word?" *Former Somerdale employee.*

Playwright Bea Roberts and Dr Anna Farthing of Harvest Heritage Arts and Media are working together with a diverse mix of cultural, heritage and academic partners to create *The Chocolate Plant*, an immersive, live drama documentary performance to be performed in museums, arts centres, and former factory buildings. We are at the early stages, but our extensive research has revealed a mass of information and thrown up many themes that invite pursuit.

Some themes are generic. Chocolate appears at all life's emotional moments: it is given as a gift to celebrate and consumed to commiserate. Chocolate consumption is recession proof. Brand loyalty is developed in childhood, and taste preferences are embedded in our personal and national identity. However, the history of Chocolate is uniquely Bristolian. Eating chocolate, chocolate with a fondant creme filling and the Easter egg were all created by Fry's, once one of the largest employers in the city. Fry's led innovations that were soon emulated by the other Quaker confectionary manufacturing companies, Cadbury's, Rowntree's and Terry's. The material evidence to illustrate this story resides in the collections of Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives and the Bristol Records Office. What we, as the creative team, are grappling with is how to make it relevant and engaging.

The Chocolate Plant is about more than the history confectionary. From the 'principled capitalism' of the Quaker pioneers to the recent Select Committee row over the 'Cadbury Law', it illustrates

The Chocolate Plant

Report on a work in progress by Dr Anna Farthing

the economic complexities and ethical dilemmas at the heart of entrepreneurialism and global business. As academics and economists try to imagine a post capitalist society, this is a subject of much contemporary concern. All of the Quaker confectionary companies struggled to maintain fairness in their trading relations and ethics in their business dealings through periods that are more often remembered for the worst excesses of the Industrial Revolution and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. They did not always succeed, but their dilemmas, revealed in the archives, are the stuff of good drama.

The Chocolate Plant will explore untold stories and dramatically reimagine the age-old dance of employers and employees from 1728 to 2011. Melting interviews with factory workers, union leaders, politicians, descendants of the Cadbury and Fry families with archive footage, animation, music, storytelling and even the odd graph, *The Chocolate Plant* intends to hold up to scrutiny the mechanics of global capitalism over the past 250 years.

Chocolate also provides a conduit for the examination of health and well-being, then and now. The young women who worked in the factory from the age of 14 until their wedding days, known as Fry's Angels, were provided with continuation schools and exercise classes. Fry's working men won national accolades for football, rugby and cricket on the famous sports grounds that were built alongside the new 'garden factory' at Somerdale.

Although perhaps seen as a 'naughty but nice' treat nowadays, drinking chocolate was initially promoted as an alternative to gin to improve nutrition and raise the spirits of the downtrodden masses. Scientists have since learnt that the trace nutrients and chemical compounds



Fry's Angels having fun

present in chocolate can make people feel good but, as we also all now know, too much of a good thing can lead to diabetes and obesity.

When the firm moved out of the city in the 1920's, it was to improve working conditions for all their employees, as well as raise production efficiency. Like the Cadbury's at Bournville, the directors of the family firm strived to serve a higher God. As Quakers they saw the light in everyone, and by remaining as private companies they were not beholden to shareholders or investment banks. However, the characters in this story were not perfect, and their human flaws are proving very interesting to represent. We hope that this project will be of interest to Bristolians, but we also want to highlight a local story of international significance. Through acknowledging the involvement of other British cities such as York, Birmingham and Liverpool, African suppliers such as Ghana and Nigeria, and new European production sites in Poland, it is anticipated that many new partnerships and collaborations can be made.

As part of our process we are having regular outings to test the material and our approaches with audiences. We tested some of the material at a 'scratch night' in Exeter in November, and feedback was positive. Further outings include a presentation at The Challenging Histories conference in February, and a 'prototype' performance night at The Tobacco Factory Theatre. We hope the piece will finally be ready to tour in January 2013.

Until then, you can follow our progress on our project blog. www.theplantplay.blogspot.com

Dr Anna Farthing

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"WHAT COULD THE ROMANS EVER DO FOR US?"

The development of Roman soldier costumed tours at MOSI

by Gareth Redston, Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester

Background

The Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester (MOSI) is a museum specialising in the interpretation of Manchester's industrial heritage and situated on the site of the world's oldest existing passenger railway station.

Due to the nature of the collections, MOSI might not be the first place you would expect to come face to face with a Roman soldier however, due to a quirk of geography, the site currently occupied by MOSI is also the site which around two thousand years ago was occupied by the first "Mancunians" – the residents of Roman Manchester or Mamucium as it was known. Mamucium was made up of a Roman Auxiliary Fort, home to around 500

soldiers and an accompanying village or "vicus" which, at its height around the year 200AD, was home to around two thousand civilians.

In the 1990's a replica of the Roman fort was built and for many years this replica fort and surrounding area have been the subject of an extremely popular costumed tour for school children. Although booked through MOSI these costumed tours were performed by an external group of re-enactors. In 2011 the decision was made to bring the Roman soldier tours "in-house" and to develop the tours so that they could be performed by members of MOSI's Public Programmes Team.

Reasons for Change

The primary reason for bringing the tours in-house was a financial one. In a continually challenging economic climate there is an increasing importance for museums to maximise existing income streams. With this in mind we began to explore the possibility of performing the Roman soldier tours ourselves rather than paying an external contractor to lead the session. We also hoped that bringing the tours in-house would give us greater control over the content and enable us to link the tour more closely with the Romans classroom session taught by the Museum's Education Officers as the majority of schools booking the tour do so in conjunction with this session.



Challenges

The challenges which we faced during development of the tours will be familiar to anyone who has ever been involved with a similar project: time and money!

The first challenge was unavoidable as we felt it was vital that the members of staff who would be leading the tours were as knowledgeable as possible. This was particularly challenging as the subject matter is so far removed from the usual themes of the museum. We were very clear from the outset that the development of the Roman tours would be extremely time consuming and this was something which we had to factor in to the work

Editor's Note

Although I will be continuing on the board of IMTAL-Europe, I have decided to concentrate on other areas of the organisation's work and to relinquish the role of Insights Editor. As this will be my last Insights magazine, I would like to thank all the individuals and groups who have shared their ideas, experiences and challenges over the last three years. I appreciate the time that it takes to compose your thoughts and words, particularly when you are not expressing yourself in your first language. I have found it inspiring to read about the rich and varied creative work that is going on across Europe and I hope everyone "out there" has too.

If you are interested in being involved with the production of the Insights magazine then please do get in touch board@imtal-europe.com. Or if you would like to be more involved then we would love to hear from you.

Best wishes and I hope to catch up with everyone in Sweden this September. **Emily**

"What could the Romans ever do for us?" cont.

load of the Public Programmes Team during the six months or so that we were developing the tour.

The second challenge was a major hurdle for us to overcome as there was a need for a considerable investment in equipment in order to get the tours off the ground. We were able to justify an initial outlay of around £2500 by calculating that this expenditure (plus staffing costs) would be clawed back within around 18 months of bringing the tours in-house. After this initial 18 month period the museum would then be making a significant profit from the tours.

In actual fact the significant financial challenge which we feared we would face has been greatly lessened by the fact that we were able to successfully apply for a number of grants. This has meant that we have been able to cover the costs of the initial outlay far more quickly than predicted and are now earning a profit from each tour booking received.

The final challenge we faced was ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of our content and props. We were helped in the first instance by Greater Manchester County Archaeologist Norman Redhead who gave us a tour of the site which proved vital in getting a sense of what Mamucium in 200AD would have been like. In terms of the accuracy of our clothing and props we are extremely grateful to Adrian Wink and his company *Armamentaria* who provided us with everything we needed and also a good deal of advice.

Outcomes

At the time of writing we have been performing the Roman soldier tours for just over six months, and having overcome the challenges outlined above, I am pleased to say that we feel the project has been a resounding success.

As mentioned above, the tours are now returning a clear profit, which is vital for the continuing financial health of the museum. We have also received very positive feedback from the school groups stating that the quality of the tours has been exemplary. Here are some examples of feedback received recently:

"I overheard one of the boys in my class saying "this is the best school trip I've ever been on!"

"The Roman Tour Guide really made the pupil's day."

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"Incredible tour today, with awesome enthusiastic guide!"

Perhaps the greatest benefit of bringing the tours in-house is the fact that we can adapt the content to compliment the themes of MOSI. Therefore we now cover the industrial nature of the Mamucium vicus and draw parallels between the lives of the Romans and the lives of the residents of Manchester during the Industrial Revolution. We are also now in a position to explore the possibility of adapting the tours to different audiences. This has resulted in Roman tours of Mamucium taking place for the first time with adult groups, elderly groups and families.

The Future

Thanks to the overwhelmingly positive reception to the tours we are now looking at how we can develop the content for different audiences. We are looking to offer the tour as part of the Public Programme so that the general Museum visitor can enjoy the tours for the first time. We are also working on the development of a female character to compliment the male soldier as we feel a female character can interpret some aspects of life in the vicus more easily than a male soldier. The female character may also allow us to explore the relationship between the Romans and the native population as it is possible that this soldier's wife may well have been a native Briton.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would say that what we have learned from this project is that sometimes in order to succeed you have to bite the bullet and break with the status-quo. This project has represented a significant and ongoing investment of resources and it would have been easy to have taken the path of least resistance and carried on as things were. However, having made the investment, we have been rewarded massively in terms of the satisfaction and enjoyment we now get from performing the tours and also the reception the tours have received from the audience.

Gareth Redston, Public Programmes Team Leader
Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester (MOSI)

FIRST TIME MUM

by Jo Dowding, Guernsey Museums

On the east coast of the second-largest Channel Island lies St Peter Port, Guernsey's main town, with its cobbled streets and higgledy-piggledy skyline.

On the south-east corner of this medieval town is a collection of streets known as the 'Old Quarter'. Home to a small number of antique shops and galleries, it is also currently the centre of a regeneration project which aims to improve the area for visitors and businesses. The main fundraising events of recent years have been the 'Old Quarter Street Parties'. When the Christmas one approached, I thought it was time for Guernsey Museums to try something interactive and really different to standing behind a stall.

Roaming around on Youtube one evening I found a video of a Mummers Play. I must admit I had never heard of one (shame on me!) but I dug deeper and discovered a few things:

You only need a few people to do one
You only need a bit of space, preferably a pub
You get to collect money, hopefully enough for a round
You get to wear amazing costumes

I set about finding three willing volunteers to do (as far as I know) the first Mummers performance in Guernsey. Lizzie and John are members of the Guernsey History in Action Company (GHIAC) and Eddy is a social worker I'd met through reminiscence sessions, who I knew had a passion for stories. Lizzie had previous Mumming experience and took care of finding a suitable script, re-writing it and then together we Guernsey-ified it. This meant replacing St George with St Samson (the patron saint of Guernsey) and replacing Beelzebub/Turkish Knight with the Black Witch of Cobo (a figure in local folklore). Lizzie helped us focus on getting the Mummers 'look' by focusing on gestures and body language.

We practised twice before the big night and located costumes from a variety of places including GHIAC's cupboard (thanks Lynne), charity shops (thanks Oxfam) and family (thank God my mum is a Morris dancer).

The night came and thanks to Lizzie's direction, we were ready to Mum. Unfortunately the weather wasn't ready - it was one of those continually grey, wet and drizzly days. We considered calling it off; no one would notice if we weren't there and my sofa, a book and a mug of Horlicks were looking more and more tempting... But no, if there was ever a night that needed tickling with

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brightly coloured streamers, this was the night. We stuck to our original plan of doing two outdoor performances (sadly there are no longer any pubs in that area of town). The night was a real community affair, where people of all ages were huddled together making hats, gazing at artwork, buying Christmas gifts or catching up over a mug of Guernsey's Rocquette cider (hot and spiced!) The street was a hive of activity and we were there in the middle, getting dressed as a quack, a saint, a witch and Father Christmas.

The first performance was not ideal. The area was windy and the rain meant people didn't want to stand still for long. The crowd were quietly intrigued and a bit reserved, or maybe they couldn't hear and didn't have a clue what we were doing. For the second session, we were kindly given space inside an art gallery and this was a world apart. Our singing (*Holly and the Ivy*) echoed beautifully in the space and drew the welcome crowd in off the streets. The audience really got into the spirit of things (encouraged by our family members). After the Quack was finally distracted by a mug of hot spicy Rocquettes, we collected money - not for the pub but for the Regeneration Fund. As I stepped out into the night to walk home, I felt lighter, brighter and happier than two hours previously. It's amazing what an evening of singing, dancing and laughing can do for you, lighting up a winter's night like a star in the darkness. Long live Mumming!

Jo Dowding
Access & Learning, Guernsey Museums



Owen of Wales takes a tumble after St Samson has finished with him

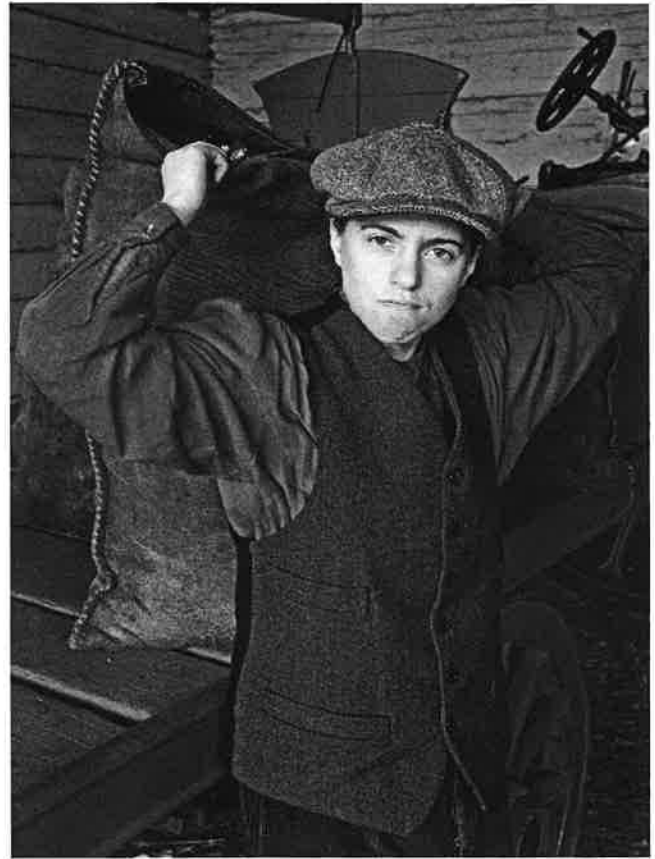
Ulster Folk & Transport Museum: Bringing the Living Museum to Life

by Ruth Turkington

Since 2005 a group of enthusiastic members of the Visitor Services Department at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum, have championed first person interpretation at the site. They have worked with curatorial staff and conducted extensive research into the rich resource that is the museum's Sound Archive – the only purpose-built facility of its type in Northern Ireland – to recreate authentic stories and first person interpretation on the seasonal event days such as Hallowe'en and the Spirit of Christmas Past.

In 2010, front-end evaluation conducted with visitors to inform the development of the TITANICa Project, indicated support for first person Interpretation as an engaging way of developing the exhibits and the *Titanic* story. The TITANICa Project was the ideal catalyst for the museum to develop its own first person interpretation team, with the intention to bring a sense of life into the buildings and streets of the Folk Museum and enhancing the interpretation of the collections on display in the Folk Gallery and Transport Museum on a daily basis. It was agreed to use the medium of drama during the summer months of 2011, following the launch of the exhibition, to aid in the interpretation of the social history of Belfast at the time of the building of the great White Star Line liners.

Two scripts were commissioned; one from local playwright, Jo Egan, telling the story of white embroidery homeworkers meeting with the Agent at the Post Office, and the other commissioned from Gillian Brownson, Director of Little Lights Theatre at the V & A, who was invited to write a script based on the Kelly's Coal Yard exhibit. The brief to both was to produce a ten to fifteen minute drama for three to four performers to be performed in the related exhibit buildings. They both had



six weeks to research and write their scripts – a challenge that both rose to with great aplomb. Jo produced *The Agent and the White Workers*, a four hander to be staged in the intimate space of Ballycultra Post Office, while Gillian, up against her own deadline of last stage pregnancy, delivered *Mines, Mills & Maritime*, a ten minute ensemble piece. Ulster Folk & Transport Museum curators directed the research of both playwrights and vetted the final drafts before they went into production.

The short time frame ruled against the development of an in-house performance team before the summer launch of the TITANICa Project, so Kabosh Theatre Company was



commissioned to perform at weekends during July and August. Two *Titanic*-related monologues, *RMS Olympic* (written by Laurence McKeown) and *RMS Titanic* (written by Rosemary Jenkins) were also performed by Kabosh Theatre Company during this period.

Meanwhile several costumed Visitor Guides took the plunge and developed first person interpretation related to the *Titanic*. Violet Jessop, a surviving stewardess, was ably portrayed on an almost daily basis in the TITANICa Exhibition in the Transport Museum while the Riveter's story was similarly told in the Cluan Place house of the Folk Museum. Filmed monologues of the Riveter, Lady Duff Gordon, George Russell, and the Tram Driver, all performed by Visitor Services staff, now feature in the exhibition and online.

Exit surveys conducted over the summer months and visitor feedback over the summer of 2011 are testament to the success of short scripted dramas and monologues as a medium for bringing to life the social history that forms the backdrop to museum collections, and exhibit buildings of an outdoor museum. The success of this enterprise supported the development of a small team of Re-enactors assembled from the ranks of the Visitor Services Department under the direction of Ruth Turkington, Visitor Services Manager. The intention is for this team to bring a sense of life into the buildings and streets of the Folk Museum and enhance the interpretation of the collections on display in the Folk Galleries and the Transport Museum by using first person techniques and scripted re-enactments on a daily basis.

Working in partnership with the Education Department and the Live & Learn Project the team will also be able to offer first person and short dramatic interludes tailored to the needs of education and community groups, such as the *Famine Trail* in the Rural Area, and *The Accused*, a script commissioned from Sharon Jennings by the Live & Learn Project, which will be staged in the Court House.

Similarly the team will work with the Business Marketing team to deliver short scripted re-enactments and first person monologues to booked tour groups. This will add a unique perspective on life in early twentieth century Ulster to out of state tourists to enhancement to their visit.

The Re-enactment Team is actively encouraged to use the research facilities of the Library, under curatorial supervision, in order to underpin the authenticity of their performances and continuing curatorial advice and monitoring will ensure the accuracy of their interpretation.

The next phase of development will be scriptwriting workshops with local playwrights and museum curators to enable the team to devise some of their own performances related closely to the exhibits and themes of the museum.

In this way it is envisaged that a number of exhibit buildings, hitherto lacking in Visitor Guide interpretation, will be brought to life and add value to the visitor experience. In the first instance the buildings under consideration include the National School, the RIC Barracks, The Dispensary and the Tea Lane Labourer's House.

The success of the first person interpretation of the TITANICa Exhibition, as exemplified by the Violet Jessop Story, will be continued and additional characters based on source material will be added as the team goes from strength to strength. It is hoped that the range of roles to be developed by the team will give greater flexibility to public programming throughout the year, and increase visitor numbers and visitor satisfaction throughout the forthcoming year..

Ruth Turkington
Visitors Service Manager

National Museums Northern Ireland



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