

# insights

## EUROPE

City History in a  
Costumed Walk — p.14



1848ers: Fighting for  
Democracy — p.12



Constructing Knowledge  
Through Live Interpretation  
in the Museum of Fine Arts  
Budapest — p. 05



The Pleasure

of the Past

|| by Barry Kay - Sovereign Hill — p. 08



Membership  
Application  
Form  
- p. 36





# Editor's Corner

**IMTAL**  
international museum theatre alliance

Welcome to Insights Europe, the Journal of the International Museum Theatre Alliance – Europe

Insights Europe is published biannually by *The International Museum Theatre Alliance - Europe* and the *Catholic University of Linz*. The International Museum Theatre Alliance has promoted theatre and live performance as interpretative techniques in cultural institutions since 1990. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, photographic, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publishers. All contents are copyright ©. Whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, no responsibility can be accepted for inaccuracies howsoever caused. Contributed material does not necessarily represent the opinion of the publisher.



IMTAL-Europe is a company limited by guarantee (Company No. 3765707, registered in England and Wales) and a registered charity (No. 1080494). Insights Europe is published biannually and is a benefit

of membership. For more details please see our website <http://imtal-europe.net/>, like our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/IMTAL-Europe/> or contact us at IMTAL (Europe), Marc Van Hasselt (Company Secretary and Chair), c/o Björn Jakobsen, Fotevikens Museum, Museivägen 24, 236 91 Höllviken, Sweden, [board@imtal-europe.com](mailto:board@imtal-europe.com).

Secretary and Chairman: Marc Van Hasselt  
Treasurer and website: Björn Buttler Jakobson  
Membership: Annemarie Pothaar  
Board Members: Tony Jackson, Chris Cade, Jerker Fahlström, Chris Gidlow, Steve Howe, Rognvaldur Gudmunsson  
Insights Co-Editors: Angela Pfenninger & Ingo R. Glückler  
Insights Advertising & Subscription Department: Ingo R. Glückler, Tel.: ++43-(0)732-7842934120, [i.glueckler@ku-linz.at](mailto:i.glueckler@ku-linz.at)  
Design & Production: Stefan Dorninger & Ingo R. Glückler  
Printing: colour & point, untersberger und deutschbauer og, Paul-Hahn-Strasse 1, 4020 Linz.

Postal address of Insights Europe: Editor Ingo R. Glückler, Catholic University of Linz, Bethlehemstrasse 20, 4020 Linz, Austria, [i.glueckler@ku-linz.at](mailto:i.glueckler@ku-linz.at), Tel.: ++43-(0)70-7842934120.

ISSN 2410-5090

Cover: Ádám Németh from the Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism in late medieval attire, Photography by Szesztay Csanád. Small pictures by Louise Baldock (Past Pleasures) & Lee Brady (Past Pleasures).



Rail Against Randomness!  
Sometimes, certain themes and movements are in the air.

Currently, it is my impression, it is the ever-growing call for professionalization in the field of interpretation and historically-themed events.

With the articles of Thorsten Ludwig, Ingrid Aune Nielsen, and the works of our other contributors, I feel IMTAL has the potential to be spear-heading the "move towards meta". We have the knowledge, skill and competence to reflect upon our own doings, to make informed choices and counteract the plethora of randomness that is raining down on us at historical sites and events every which way.

At this sensitive time, it is crucial we manage to network effectively, bring together the training initiatives that are starting up everywhere, and harness our combined strengths for a common goal.

New IMTAL events, workshops and meetings are an important factor in this. We can communicate via skype, email and social media all we like, but nothing beats the face-to-face meeting, when pints are downed and intellectual sparks fly. Currently, the board is considering a variety of choices regarding this year's conference activities, certainly in combination with an existing event or another association whose nature and goals provide a suitable match for ours. Whatever it'll turn out to be: our input will be crucial. Make space for creative exchanges in your calendar, and let's end the hibernation!

— Angela Pfenninger, co-editor ■



There has been a growing recognition within the museum community that emotions play an important part in the visitors' learning experience.

IMTAL-Europe and its mouthpiece "INSIGHTS" present museum professionals with feasible and effective methods by which to engage both visitors' emotions and cognitive function in order to create an emotionally appealing, interesting and attractive learning environment.

With the articles of Éva Birkás, Chris Cade, Ingrid Galadriel Aune Nilsen, Barry Kay, Eva-Maria Kienast, Thomas Bertagnolli and all the other European contributors the latest, bumper, full-colour, action-packed edition of IMTAL-Europe's "INSIGHTS" journal opens the door to learning as an enjoyable, intellectually and emotionally satisfying experience that includes moods and feelings, as well as attitudes, beliefs, tastes and appreciations. It shows how the field of museum theatre further continues to evolve and again brings together museum professionals who engage spectators' emotions through empathy. If we manage to create an



emotionally appealing, interesting, attractive learning environment through informal learning institutions, people will choose to attend and in attending will find learning an enjoyable, intellectually and emotionally satisfying experience.

The new IMTAL-Europe's "INSIGHTS" journal cover features Ádám Németh from the Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism in late medieval attire. In the snapshot, he performs a graceful mid-body gesture with his left arm. Noble gestures in acting consist mainly of moving the arms. The best way to open the arms is to move them sideways using the elbows first. Often actors do not know how to deal with both arms, so one way to keep a noble attitude is to hide one of them behind their back just as Ádám is doing it. Gestures should be ample

but few. It is also a form of non-verbal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages, either in place of, or in conjunction with, speech. Arms are absolutely crucial for creating impressive stage effects. They are the main medium for expressing feelings, emotions and attitudes.

An awareness of the importance of gestures and movement on the part of the interpreters is just one of a myriad tools available to enhance audience experiences. How do you engage your guests? We are constantly looking for contributions. If you have something to share or to tell, please, contact us via our website <http://imtal-europe.net/>.

— Ingo R. Glückler, co-editor ■



## DEPARTMENTS

**02** ..... Editor's Corner

**04** ..... Letter from the Chair

**11 & 16** ..... Reviews

## COVER STORIES

**05** ..... Constructing Knowledge Through Live Interpretation in the Museum of Fine Arts Budapest by Éva Birkás



**08** ..... The Pleasure (and Pain) of the Past by Barry Kay

**12** ..... 1848ers - Fighting for Democracy by Christian Wolff

**14** ..... City History in a Costumed Walk by Barbara Kern



# Contents

## FEATURE STORIES

Staying in Touch with the Whole Interpretive Family by Thorsten Ludwig ..... **17**

Olaf's Tales of Battle by Chris Cade ..... **18**

Interpret Europe Conference Digest by Angela Pfenninger & Marc van Hasselt ..... **22**



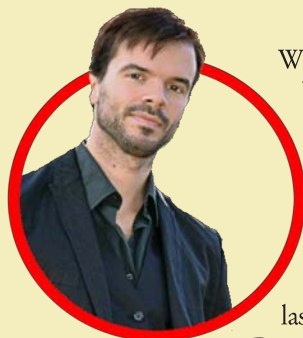
Breathing Life into Old Walls - Museum of Tyrolean Farms by Eva-Maria Kienast & Thomas Bertagnolli ..... **25**

Duo-Kleine-Secunde - Living Lectures on Medieval Music and Poetry by Cosima Hoffmann & Hans Hegner ..... **28**

The Viking Way ... by Ingrid Galadriel Aune Nilsen ..... **30**

Saalburg Meta-History by Angela Pfenninger ..... **33**

# Letter from the Chair



What, exactly, is interpretation?

We use this term a lot. We talk about heritage interpretation, historical interpretation, costumed interpretation and so on. But what is it that we are interpreting? I am not the first to ask this question, of course. I am pretty sure I won't be the last either. But I like asking it because, in Dutch, we don't have an adequate term to even start this conversation. There is no "interpretation" in Dutch – not in the way there is in English. Interpretation has multiple facets: it can refer to the interpretation of the past by experts; the way the public interprets the facts laid out in front of them; how the past is "translated" for those who do not have the historical background to make the necessary connections; and to the fact that all historical research is, in fact, an interpretation. In Dutch, you can only really refer to one of these facets with any one term. This makes conversations about the practice of interpretation – especially live interpretation – a bit of a minefield of misunderstanding.

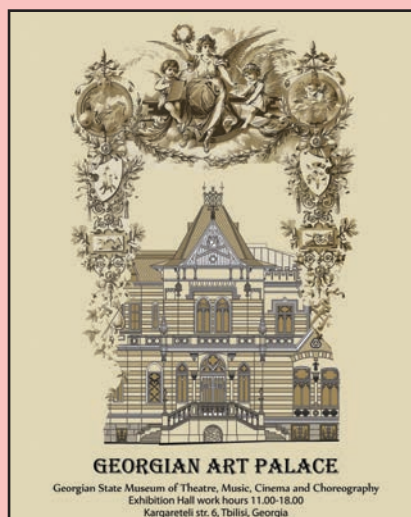
I ask this question too, because it came up a lot during our visit to the Interpret Europe conference in Mechelen, Belgium, 21-24 May 2016. I went with the intention of talking about specific uses of live interpretation but ended up mostly explaining what live interpretation actually is. Specifically, what sets it apart from re-enactment, living history or live action role-playing. My conclusion was that before we can convince Europe that live interpretation and museum theatre are the way forward, we have to get better at explaining what it is.

I think the answer lies in asking that one question – what are we interpreting? What is the end goal of

heritage sites (museums, castles, battlefields, manor houses, Neolithic sites etc) when they are talking about their site? I believe they wish to explain not just what people are seeing but are trying to give a sense of why this is important. In giving a lecture on live interpretation, I gave the example of a gladiator show that we put on in Archeon. The show itself, and the talk I gave about it, was laced with humour and wit. It gives the impression of being set up merely as an educational entertainment, a show with an historical background. But in the end, I wanted to convey the message that gladiatorial games were not a laughing matter. People fought and died in the Roman Arenas; something we are sometimes too quick to forget in our fascination with the distant past. And while re-enactments of Second World War battles are serious affairs, there are a lot of quasi-historical re-enactments of Roman or Medieval battles which seem to be mostly a good-natured romp. Why is it important to remember the Medieval past with the same gravitas as the more recent past? Why is it as important to appreciate the lives and efforts of those dead 600 years or more, compared to those of our grandparents' time? Does distance in time breed lack of empathy?

In my report on the Battle of Wisby in the next issue, I touch on this subject. Human affairs and human suffering are serious matters and should be taken seriously. I think this balance between humour and entertainment and the serious nature of the subject matter is what live interpretation is best at. We can introduce the public to the subject with a smile and a wink, then invite them to step into the shoes of their ancestors and, for a moment, imagine what it was like to be them. For better or worse.

— Marc Van Hasselt, Chair IMTAL Europe ■



The editors of Insights Europe are looking for IMTAL Americas Insights and older IMTAL Europe Insights in order to store them and save them for the future in the Insights Europe archive. We are also cataloguing them in our Museum Theatre Database "interpretation: The International Bibliographic Database of Living History" (<http://www.livehistory.de/interpretation/>) and we are planning to digitize older issues and index them in order to make all issues online available for members only. If you have

**INSIGHTS**  
Europe  
Archive



any older issues, please, contact Ingo R. Glückler at the Catholic University of Linz/Austria via email: [i.glueckler@ku-linz.at](mailto:i.glueckler@ku-linz.at) or phone: ++43-(0)732-7842934120.



# Constructing Knowledge Through Live Interpretation in the Museum of Fine Arts Budapest



In the Museum of Fine Arts Budapest live interpretation programmes were first launched in 2008. For the 100th anniversary of their collection of classical antiquities, Éva Birkás developed four characters of Ancient Greece, working together with four students of the University of Theatre and Film Arts.



ÉVA BIRKÁS

I was inspired to introduce this programme by a study tour in the UK in 2005 that was sponsored by the Foundation for Museums and Visitors, and a workshop organized, also by the Foundation, involving experts from Past Pleasures Ltd., UK. Later, in 2011, I had the chance to be an intern with Past Pleasures for 3 weeks in the UK, sponsored by Tempus Public Foundation. Seeing the good practices helped me to improve our programmes.

As I work at the department of classical antiquities, my background naturally defined the period I could build characters on. Accordingly, since 2012, school groups can book live interpretation sessions where they meet ancient Greek or Roman characters. With

the help of costume designers, I planned their appearance on the basis of scientific resources.

Last year the museum decided to expand the programme to other periods and collections, so I developed three more characters for two museum events of a larger scale<sup>1</sup>:

an ancient Egyptian tomb-builder; an apprentice of a guild in Medieval Florence; and the wife of a paintings merchant from XVIIIth century Netherlands. Colleagues from various departments of the museum helped me in this work with their knowledge on these periods.

During the development phase of these programmes, I outlined details

of the characters (their name, age, profession, status, circumstances and so on), set the learning objectives, selected the artefacts I wanted to incorporate and assigned

*“Interpreter and visitors figuratively wink at each other, as a symbolic agreement that they all pretend as if ...”*





ques were not an additional thing for them to learn. For playing the Egyptian, the Medieval and the XVIIth century characters, three re-enactors of Mare Temporis Foundation for Historical Traditions were called upon. Due to their background, they had a lot of knowledge of the two latter characters' period and had their own authentic costumes. For the ancient Egyptian tomb-builder, I planned a costume with the help of an Egyptologist and she also helped me to train the interpreter and create the research pack for him.

In all cases, during the rehearsals, a roughly planned sequence of artefacts (and from this, a sequence of themes) inspired the movements, dynamics, characters' feelings and special features which the interpreters and I determined together. So these plays are not scripted but have certain cornerstones that have to be incorporated each time.

The environment that we work in is a traditional museum setting: objects in the gallery of classical antiquities are displayed mostly in showcases — there are no reconstructed interiors of the period. Despite this, I decided to develop first person interpretation from the beginning as I thought it the most effective, immediate

them to the different themes appearing in the performances, and created research packs for the interpreters.

From then on, I worked together with actor-teachers (practitioners of theatre in education groups) because it proved to be a natural thing for them to deliver the piece in an interactive way; interactive techni-

*In this process children are not passive recipients but active meaning-makers.*

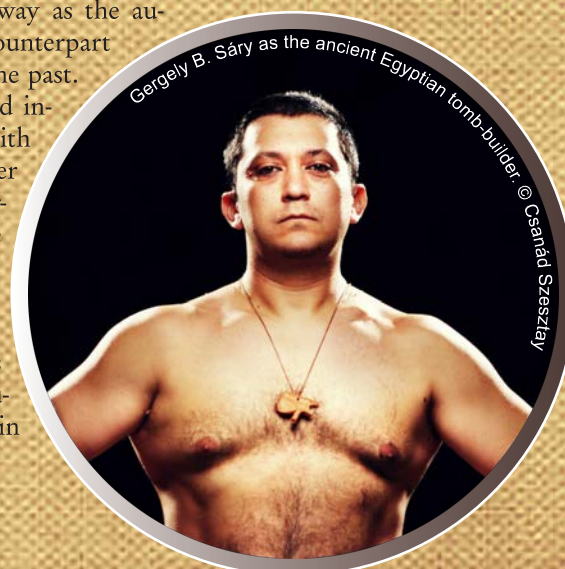
and engaging way of conveying information. We try to smooth away this contradiction with the determined manner of the interpreters as they begin the show; they put the audience in role in the first moment as they address them. When visitors grasp that this is all about playing, interpreter and visitors figuratively wink at each other, as a symbolic agreement that they all pretend as if they were customers in a vase painter's or a sculptor's workshop, or subsidiary slaves in an ancient Athenian citizen's house — it's part of the game. As with drama in education (when drama techniques are used in the classroom to support learning), children and teacher are playing roles and interacting with each other in roles, creating an "as-if" world<sup>2</sup>.

Based on the mode of action of drama education, I would like to strengthen the meaning making-function of our sessions. According to the theory of drama in education, in the imagined, and therefore safe context of drama, children try out new ideas, concepts, values and so on<sup>3</sup>. These imagined actions correspond to real-life actions, unlike classroom situations where, unfortunately, the acquired knowledge is usually neither accessible nor applicable in everyday situations. Learning in authentic contexts may meet with difficulties but in drama we can create "as-if" worlds, with all the necessary elements of authentic contexts<sup>4</sup>. In this process children are not passive recipients but active meaning-makers. They learn best by making and doing, and have already existing experiences which they use as a

means of making sense of new information. It is the teacher's task to make bridges between what they already know and the new experiences<sup>5</sup>. This all corresponds to constructivism, the dominant learning theory in the last two decades<sup>6</sup>.

First person interpretation in a museum is a proper tool to put visitors into an imagined context; it is not possible to have similar contact in any other way as the authentic counterpart of it is in the past.

Meeting and interacting with a character from a far-away time lets them challenge their concepts, ideas and attitudes in connection





with the period and people's lives then. The aim is to enable participants to see how today's way of living, ideas, morals and so on result from the periods preceding us. Such experiences can inform their world concept which, hopefully, proves to be applicable to their everyday life.

To reach the above mentioned goals, in our live interpretation programmes we include interactive elements when the character asks the visitors about their lives and habits in comparison with his or her own life. For example: the Medieval apprentice asks the visitors about marriage as he has to marry a woman to be a master and a wedding is very expensive; the somewhat prudish wife of the merchant asks the visitors about

their opinion of pictures that are popular but, for her, upsetting due to the topic they are representing; the ancient Roman sculptor continually hurrahs Emperor Augustus and asks the visitors to discuss whether the regime introduced by Augustus is better or the republic before.

To develop and improve the programme further, by the opening of the Museum in 2018 I aim to focus on these interactive elements and include as much of them as possible in our pieces, with the ambition of enabling participants to extend their knowledge to a higher level. ■



Éva Birkás is a museum educator in the Museum of Fine Arts Budapest, drama teacher and student of Doctoral School of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest.

**DUBLINIA**  
EXPERIENCE VIKING AND MEDIEVAL DUBLIN

**EXPLORE  
LEARN &  
DISCOVER**

**VIKING & MEDIEVAL DUBLIN**

St Michael's Hill, Christ Church, Dublin 8  
Tel: 01 679 4611 | Email: info@dublinia.ie

[www.dublinia.ie](http://www.dublinia.ie)

- 1 Since 2015, the Museum of Fine Arts Budapest is closed due to reconstruction works, presumably until 2018. Visits and programmes are suspended until then.
- 2 Andersen, Ch. (2004). Learning in "As-If" Worlds: Cognition in Drama in Education. Theory Into practice, 43 (4), 281-286.
- 3 Neelands, J. (1984). Making a Sense of Drama. Oxford, Halley Court, Jordan Hill: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- 4 Andersen, Ch. (2004). Learning in "As-If" Worlds: Cognition in Drama in Education. Theory Into practice, 43 (4), 281-286.
- 5 Neelands, J. (1984). Making a Sense of Drama. Oxford, Halley Court, Jordan Hill: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- 6 Karagiorgi, Y. & Symeou, L. (2005). Translating Constructivism Into Instructional Design: Potential and Limitations. Educational Technology & Society, 8 (1), 17-27.

**Kleine Sekunde:**

Minnesang und  
Sangspruchdichtung

... begleitet auf  
historischen Instrumenten

[www.duo-kleinesekunde.de](http://www.duo-kleinesekunde.de)

[www.beleefhetverleden.nl](http://www.beleefhetverleden.nl)

40.000  
JAHRE  
MENSCH

**MAMUZ**

SCHLOSS ASPARN/ZAYA  
MUSEUM MISTELBACH



# The Pleasure with of the Past

Barry Kay, Interpretive Theatre Manager at Sovereign Hill Museum in Australia, spent several weeks in Europe visiting sites offering live interpretation and getting involved himself. He encountered a breadth of approaches – some successful, some less fortunate – which he shares with us.

*Past Pleasures*  
**BRINGING  
HISTORY  
TO LIFE**



**BARRY KAY**

In July 2016 I was fortunate enough to be able to travel to the UK and spend some time with Mark Wallis and his company, Past Pleasures, the most experienced historical interpretation company in the UK. For me in my role as Interpretive Theatre Manager at Sovereign Hill, it was a chance to observe a highly successful, exemplary heritage interpretation company in action and be inspired with fresh, new ideas. My experience with Past Pleasures was all I could ask for and more. I should say, here and now, that Mark Wallis is my dear and valued friend. Our friendship over the years has grown out of our shared love of history as well as the





Audley Christmas (Past Pleasures) © Barry Kay



Capability Lancelot Brown (Past Pleasures) © Barry Kay



power and possibilities of costumed historical interpretation. I am so grateful for his generosity in spending so much time with me during my residency with Past Pleasures, and allowing me such privileged access to the operations of his marvellous company.

As well as spending time with Past Pleasures, I travelled for a several weeks in the UK and France and visited a number of cultural institutions and historic sites. Sometimes you need to see poor quality interpretation to truly appreciate the good stuff – because the good stuff, especially when it's really, really good, can be so deceptively easy, simple or even invisible, that you don't even notice it. Now I am not going to "name the names" of the places where I had a less than satisfying experience as that won't serve any useful purpose here. Suffice to say that none of the less than satisfactory experiences during my travels were with Past Pleasures. So, to the not so great experiences ...

- At a historic house which I was very excited about visiting, the bad experience began even before entering the building. Along with a number of other visitors I was forced to stand in the rain while a non-costumed staff member in the small entrance room delivered an introduction to a group of people ahead of us – there was no room inside for more. At one point I momentarily caught

the eye of the staff member – she could see we were all getting wet. But no, she did not cut short her intro to the group ahead of us. Boy, it must be really important to the whole experience, this long introduction, I thought. Finally, we were allowed in and she began her stock speech to us – essentially it was a bland, mundane, overview of the history of the site, delivered in a rather uninspiring style. Already bored, my mind drifted, and then I noticed there were other people getting wet in the rain just outside the door. Apparently, the main reason we were being held in this small, rather uninteresting room was to restrict the flow of people through the site.

- Once we were allowed to move through the site it was apparent that there was a determined "more-is-more" approach to the overall interpretation. Inside, there were both non-costumed staff as well as costumed interpreters – some were first person, others in third person – and while they were able to answer questions, they did not really engage with the questioner, not on any relevant or meaningful level anyway – one costumed interpreter just wanted to ask me about the football team I barracked for in Australia! The house was apparently set-up in such a way as to appear as if it was still lived-in by the original

occupants, but this was done so half-heartedly and unimaginatively as to be a distraction rather than an encouragement to imagine what it was once really like to live there. And in some rooms there were intrusive, very modern Perspex display stands in the middle of an otherwise historic setting. I could go on, but all in all it was a disappointing mish-mash of mediocrity, resulting in a very disappointing experience.

- There was the guided tour where the guide's constant efforts to apparently lighten the mood by inserting jokes into her commentary meant that the subject of the tour, which was more appropriately quite profound and serious, was completely trivialised.

What made these experiences so disappointing? In my

*Sometimes you need to see poor quality interpretation to truly appreciate the good stuff – because the good stuff, especially when it's really, really good, can be so deceptively easy, simple, or even invisible, that you don't even notice it.*





opinion it was about not putting the visitor experience at the forefront of the planning and delivery. The story-writing teacher Robert McKee says (and though he's talking about film specifically, I think the same principle applies to historical interpretation) that we go to the cinema in order to: see amazing things; to go to strange, remarkable and sometimes familiar places; meet inspiring characters; be carried away by wonderful stories, all in order to discover... ourselves! I think in much the same way visitors want to connect with history. We want to know what it was really like to live back then. Who were these people? Why did they do what they did? What happened to them? What would I have done in their situation? And so on. At the places where I was disappointed with the experience, it was always apparent that there was a lack of vision, clarity, simplicity and detail... not to mention an absence of passion, charm and empathy!



Which brings me to Past Pleasures where all of these things –

especially passion, charm and empathy – are at the core of what they do. Everyone I met at Past Pleasures had a palpable love

Barry Kay is Interpretive Theatre Manager at Sovereign Hill, an outdoor museum which recreates and tells the stories of the 1850s gold rush period in Victoria, Australia, when thousands of international adventurers made their way to the goldfields to make their fortunes. Barry oversees, researches, writes, directs and sometimes performs in the interpretive theatre program. He has been at Sovereign Hill for 18 years and prior worked in professional theatre as an actor, director and writer.

for history and a desire to share their passion with the public. They were all warm, friendly, generous and engaging communicators. And each of them clearly felt a deep connection with the characters they were portraying – as well as the audience they were presenting to. And what a range of heritage interpretation Past Pleasures offers! From intimate

to large scale, from earliest human history to much more recent events, from comedic to more serious and so on. They interpret, educate, consult, train and design and they make the most exquisite, beautiful, detailed, thoroughly researched and authentic costumes.

What were the highlights of my time with Past Pleasures?

- The wonderful interpreters at Audley End House, especially in the kitchen who chatted and prepared real food with visitors, bantered skilfully with each other, all the while subtly sharing insights into life in an 18th

Century grand home.

- Again at Audley End House, the terrific tour presented by Capability Brown, the famous landscape

architect, who took us on a delightful, captivating tour of the grounds as though he'd just received his commission to redesign the grounds. As he described his "vision" for the estate, we could see the results of his work – just wonderful.

- At Kensington Palace I saw a group of primary school children captivated by young Queen Victoria as she chatted with them about what it was like to be a queen, what she got up to with her dog, Dash, and growing up as princess, and so on.

- At Hampton Court Palace being taken into the confidence of Lady Rochford, lady-in-waiting to Catherine Howard, Henry VIII's fifth wife as she manoeuvres in vain to save herself, her mistress and Thomas Culpepper from treason charges. It was so special to be in the

place where much of the story of Henry VII unfolded, being complicit in such a tumultuous event – terrific.

- Attack the Tower at the Tower of London – observing such skill from interpreters who worked with a large crowd in a challenging space telling a great, enlightening story, with a lovely twist at the end!

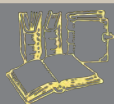
- An audience with King Henry VIII at Camp Bestival in Dorset, where the gentle, effortless skill of the interpreter playing Henry VIII allowed even the most timid or nervous child relax and chat intimately with a king.

I could go on and on. I watched rehearsals, saw other presentations, met other "characters", sat in on meetings, and marvelled while witnessing the research, dedication, skill and patience that goes into making Past Pleasures' wonderful costumes. And all the while, Mark was there with me to answer queries, pose questions and engage in robust, thoroughly engaging discussions with me. I was spoiled rotten.

Stay tuned for the results of my inspiring time with Past Pleasures coming through in my work at Sovereign Hill – because inspiring it certainly was! ■







# Book Review



Jennie Sutherland Clothiera: „Authentic Pretending: How theatrical is Museum Theatre?“ in: *Museum Management and Curatorship*. Issue 29/3, 2014 (pp 211-25). ISSN: 0964-7775]

—Angela Pfenninger

Sutherland Clothiera's article is a stimulating read, containing many well-known names in LI circles, and it offers a theoretical but highly accessible approach to the mutual institutional "headaches" caused by theatre usurping the museum space (and vice versa).

The author examines the relationship between theatre and museums, the extent to which the two are equal (or not) and their compatibility, in spite of the fundamental distinction between *"the museum as a place of authority and truth, and the theatre as a place of insubordination and fiction"*.

She interviewed a wide range of practitioners and used other academic research to reflect upon notions of efficacy and authenticity. Whilst the method may not be for everyone, and the notion of theatricality includes a host of unwelcome associations in the museum context, its benefits are pointed out. To outline these, the author is referring to practitioners and research. Whilst similar studies emphasise museum theatre's impact on the visitor, the author aims to complement existing literature with greater attention to performers and their issues. She offers a concise overview of museum theatre as an educational method stemming from the dual influences of Theatre in Education and Living History.

Sutherland Clothiera further examines possible reasons why museum professionals feel unease in connection with theatre, to the extent of holding performers accountable for a "Disneyfication": is that down to puritanical beliefs that meaningful education cannot be entertaining, or is theatre too closely associated with fantasy, counteracting factual accuracy? She goes on to an interesting outline on how theatre has – historically – been eyed with suspicion and distrust, and how this perception differs significantly from the social origins of museums (and their comparatively greater ascribed trustworthiness). However, new museology over the last twenty years has initiated a move towards the role of forum (rather than temple) and *"appears to generate far more compatibility between theatres and museums, as both now foreground subjective meaning-making and learning"*. But that process took a long time, leaving a large gap between practices in the US compared to the UK.

Issues of respectability were key in the earlier days of adaptation, overcoming the prejudice that performers were not to be trusted with the education of audiences. However, since the 80's institutions and audiences have changed somewhat, and visitors appear more comfortable with

performance and personal interaction, so *"museum theatre has found a relatively comfortable space – not only within institutions themselves, but within the expectations of the general public"*.

However, museums still legitimate their authority on the basis of the possession of the authentic object. And *"for institutions who sell authenticity, the concept becomes their point of vulnerability"*. Theatre, largely associated with fiction, invariably poses a problem. However meticulously performances are based on thorough academic research, the past can never truly be recreated. We all rely on a contract of performers with their audiences that enables both parties *"to enter into dialogue with fictional and historical characters."*

One of the arenas in which the "A"-debate is being fought is certainly costumes and props. There is an assumption among performers and visitors alike that if a representation is physically correct, then any associated information will be trustworthy (and vice versa) – another reason for the great lengths to which many interpreters go regarding their kit is the fear of being humiliated by visitors.

The author elaborates on various takes toward accuracy of replica, also quoting Brook : *"When theatre attempts to mimic reality too closely,*

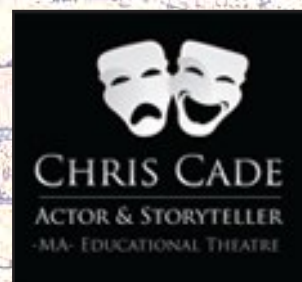
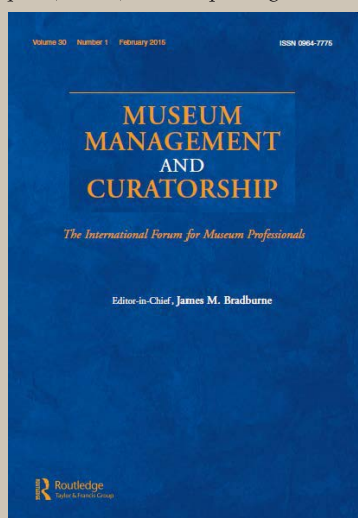
*audiences become more conscious of what is imitative than what is real"*. On the other end of the scale, performers can make good a lot of educative content from more authentic costume by sheer contrast to contemporary visitors' dress. As there is usually no performer-audience-divide, costumes are *"stages in themselves, signifying the conventions of performance."* But authenticity is not about material culture alone. Museum theatre holds the chance to create personally meaningful experiences – and these, in turn, are authentic.

The experience is enhanced further for the guest by the use of humour. Referring to Kate Fox, the author assumes that *"if a museum performer fails to employ the appropriate level of humour to demonstrate that they do not take themselves too seriously, the audience may read the performance as pompous and therefore be unlikely to engage in the enactment of make-believe or feel the*

*performance is authentic"*.

She outlines developments in post-dramatic theatre and its turn away from mimesis. Interestingly, *"while the new museology movement has deeply influenced museums, museum theatre has been markedly less impacted by the post-dramatic theatre movement"*, even though the common denominator of re-contextualisation and re-negotiation of meanings is inherent in both approaches. However, practitioners felt that the institutions hiring them were not always ready for open, debatable new formats, although it can be said that *"meaningful work is seriously impeded if it is limited to comply with visitor expectations"*.

Some case studies are referred to in order to demonstrate the beneficial effect of classic first-person interpretation and formal experiment that challenges institutional and individual beliefs. In spite of hesitant museum authorities, the author encourages *"a greater diversity of theatre techniques to explore the boundaries of the practice as an accessible learning tool and as a performance art"*. Amen to that! ■







# 1848ers

## Fighting for Democracy

Full of expectation, the visitors of the Odenwälder open air museum in Gottersdorf look up to the desperate man at the brickworks window. While the Prussian soldiers begin to break down the door, he tries to estimate whether he's likely to survive the lifesaving jump through the window, or not. Deciding everything is better than Prussian imprisonment, he jumps! Fortunately, he falls onto a haystack beneath the window. As he is running off like hell, the Prussian soldiers have no chance to capture him ...

© Brigitte Mayer, Verena Michalski und Christian Wolff



CHRISTIAN WOLFF

The story of Johann Adam Stumpf was re-enacted at the Odenwälder Freilandmuseum by members of the "IG Lebendige Geschichte 1848/49" – leading the visitors back in time to the German revolution as experienced in the Grand Duchy of Baden in the year 1849.

In the 1840s, Germany did not yet exist. From the ruins of the "Holy Roman Empire of German Nation", which was destroyed by Napoleon in 1806, more than 35 small principalities and free cities were created by the

lords on the Vienna Congress in 1815, united in a loose German Federation. During the war against Napoleon since 1812, however, the people of these states had developed a national consciousness and the desire for a national state: Germany.

In the years between 1815 and 1848, there was an increasing number of political demonstrations to demand this. At the same time, the economic world was changed by the Industrial Revolution. Famine, poverty and political discontent were preparing the ground for the revolution in 1848. The men and women on the



barricades, victorious over the royal troops, forced the aristocratic authorities to permit free elections. The elected national assembly, the "Nationalversammlung", had the task of developing a constitution for a German nation under the rule of an Emperor, elected by the people. This was an insult to the lords.

However, with political manoeuvres and military pressure, the reactionary lords could slowly usurp back the power. In May 1849, the last chance of the "Nationalversammlung" to save the achievements of the revolution was a call to arms. But only in a few towns like Dresden, Iserlohn, Düsseldorf, in the Grand Duchy of Baden, and in the Bavarian Palatinates, the people rose up. The mostly badly drilled and ill-equipped fighters for freedom and unity were defeated quickly by the well-trained and disciplined reactionary military forces - and the revolution failed.

It first occurred to Christian Wolff in 2007 to re-enact this interesting, but mostly overlooked, period of German history. While re-enacting the part of German soldiers during the American Civil War, he found out that lots of them did have a revolutionary history. Out of curiosity he did several years of research and gathered likeminded re-enactors to form the "IG Lebendige Geschichte 1848/49".

The "IG Lebendige Geschichte 1848/49" shows several aspects of life during the German revolution. There are

the soldiers of the Royal Prussian Infantry Regiment No. 24. There is the hard-working dressmaker with his wife - running a little farm, too- as well as the wealthy widow of Carlsruhe and of course the Dorfschulze, somewhat like a mayor of the village, and his plotting wife.

“While re-enacting the part of German soldiers during the American Civil War, I found out that lots of them did have a revolutionary history.”

Re-enacting the focuses on the uniforms and replicas of history and made from payment

The history of the Royal Prussian Regiment No. 24 allows the performers to re-enact various scenes of the revolution on a provable base. In 1848, the regiment was based in Berlin, appointed to suppress the local riots. After that, it was sent to Westphalia and the Grand Duchy of Baden to fight against the revolutionary forces in 1849.

Royal Prussian Regiment No. 24 common soldier. Our patterns for equipment are detailed preserved originals, regimental military dress codes. Facsimiles were original identity papers, military papers and lists, supported by a highly dedicated book-binder.

Civilian life offers lots of individual options.





© Brigitte Mayer, Verena Michalski und Christian Wolff

© Brigitte Mayer, Verena Michalski und Christian Wolff

© Brigitte Mayer, Verena Michalski und Christian Wolff

Like in any other era, it means a bit more personalized research. Our civilians visited, contacted, and found support by, various museums, writers and specialized re-enactors as well. We try to figure out different life styles in clothing, living places, etiquette, choice of food and beverage etc.

It is a very special period, in which many things changed from pre-industrial to industrial production. Fashion covers a wide range from near-Napoleonic era silhouettes, worn by the rural population, to the newest fashion for the town citizens.

The journey is the reward. Therefore, we keep up annual workshops to finish military equipment, civilian clothing and womens' corsets, to learn historical "Kurrentschrift" – the writing used in Germany during the 1840s –, to chat about interesting cooking experiments and to improve our formal manners.

Regarding the 170th anniversary of the German Revolution – the birth of democratic structures in Germany – we are looking

forward to lots of interesting scenarios in 2018/19. Communication and planning with different museums and relevant cities have started already. ■

Christian Wolff was born in Hagen/Westphalia in 1982. Since 1998, he has been re-enacting different parts of the 19th century, and he published his first book in 2016: "Der preußische Infanterist im badischen Feldzuge 1849" (The Prussian infantrymen during the Baden-Campagne 1849). He lives with his wife in Solingen.



Of course we are interested in re-enacting and co-operating with other European groups focusing on the years 1848/49. For more information please visit our homepage [www.revolution1848-1849.eu](http://www.revolution1848-1849.eu) and feel free to contact us. You can also find us on Facebook (IG 1848/49).

# Cit in a

Waldkirch, a small city in the Black Forest, is situated about 10 miles North of Freiburg. The town has an ancient history. Its origins stretch back to the year 918 AD.

Ten years ago the costumed tour, led by the "Gatekeeper's Wife" (Towächters Weib), was introduced. Intended as a 'mere value-adding for the football-denying guests', the costume experiment proved to address a demand that nobody even knew was there.





# City History Costumed Walk



**BARBARA KERN**

Initially the primary school teacher and tour guide, Barbara Kern, offered an ordinary city walk once a month. Then, on 9th June 2006, the guided tour and the opening match of the World Cup in Germany (featuring the German team) coincided. To attract even a few guests to the tour, Barbara came up with an idea: she invented, and impersonated, the fictional character of the gatekeeper's wife. And it worked; despite the opening game, there were 30 participants to the city tour who were guided by the wife of the guardian of the Niedertor, dressed in robe and beret. Starting from the district of the former convent of St. Margaret, the journey continued to the city wall, to "her" gate and the industrial river, which

*“The tour underwent further development, and what started with two costumed guides rose to seven medieval figures appearing today. The guides of the “Gatekeeper’s Wife” have become an indispensable part of the town.”*

was created in the 13th century. Barbara's character was joined by her husband Thomas Kern, in-role as a gem cutter as Waldkirch was formerly an important centre of the gemstone industry with several flourishing periods, including one in the 16th century.

Not only did the German soccer team celebrate a 4:2 opening victory, the gatekeeper's wife also ended up a direct hit. Bernd Wintermantel, resident shopkeeper for historical jewelry, was so fascinated that he took up his professional ancestor's character next to the grindstone the following year; portraying 500 years of tradition of the grinding trade.

The idea of encountering historical figures was expanded.

Thomas Kern did not have to look far to find a new role for himself and chose the most famous son of the city, Balthasar Merklin. He lived at the time of the Reformation and Renaissance, had contact with Erasmus of Rotterdam and Philipp



© Dieter Haberer

© Dieter Haberer

Melanchthon, amongst others. So he played Balthasar, the Provost of the Waldkirch monastery, who was appointed by Emperor Karl V. In 1527 he was appointed Bishop of several dioceses and Imperial Vice Chancellor, getting involved in contemporary world politics. But Thomas wanted to contribute even more and, in 2007, he surprised the guests, and his own wife alike, with an appearance as the gatekeeper from Niedertor, which has since become an integral part of the offering.

The success was remarkable and groups responded well to the more immersive, live interpretation approach which conjured up the spirit of past times. Matthias Schmieder joined in 2009 with the (new) role of night watchman. Equipped with lantern and halberd, he passed through the narrow streets of the city and amazed the audience. In 2014, Dirk Hess joined as guardian of Kuchlinsburg, one of the four former Waldkirch castles. One year later, he also added the new role of the barber, demonstrating the different tasks of this profession with the help of historical medical instruments that could have been used in the Waldkirch public bathhouse (first mentioned in 1287).

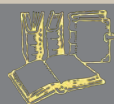
All the actors enjoy their respective roles and this enthusiasm easily transfers to the

guests - certainly a part of the secret of their success. ■

Barbara Kern is a primary school teacher. During her employment at the Elztal Museum, before she started to work as a teacher, she began to guide groups. Together with her husband Thomas, she started third-person tours in Waldkirch and to nearby Kastelburg Castle in 2002, also involving other performers.



## Book Review



Flower, Amanda. *The Final Reveille: A Living History Museum Mystery*. Midnight Ink, Woodbury (Minnesota), 2015. 327 pages. ISBN 978-0-7387-4473-5.

—Katharina Mitsche

Kelsey Cambridge is the director of Barton Farms, a living history museum in Ohio. The museum is struggling and only exists because of the generosity of Cynthia Cherry, its elderly benefactress. But Cynthia is ill and intends to hand control of the Cherry Foundation to her nephew Maxwell.

In an effort to boost visitors and revenue, Kelsey has staged a Civil War encampment which is scheduled to conclude with the first annual Blue and Grey Ball.

Kelsey becomes the leading suspect when her benefactress' nephew is found murdered during the Civil War reenactment weekend, for she was seen arguing with him about the future of the museum.

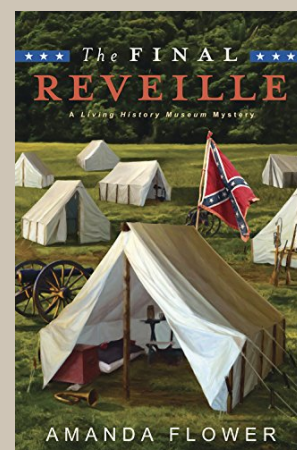
Searching for answers to clear her name, Kelsey not only faces her ex-husband's threats over custody of their son but also a suspicious Civil War medic, a detective who seems to be set against her and several people who had cause to murder the unpleasant Maxwell Cherry. The dead man had enemies among the reenactors and also among the staff of Barton Farm because he had no interest at all in history and thought donating money to the museum was a waste of his aunt's fortune.

Kelsey is determined to find the killer herself despite the demands of managing the reenactment, looking after her young son Hayden, and fending off the advances of Chase, an attractive paramedic who happens to be the nephew of the police chief. On top of it all, Kelsey must clear herself before her husband's new fiancée uses the police suspicions to gain custody...

*The Final Reveille* has many of the classic elements of a crime story with a couple of new creative components mixed in. Amanda Flower has captured the ambiance of living history museums with her docents who stay in character (even with annoying teenagers trying to get them to break character), the featured activities of the town and the added excitement and trials of having civil war reenactors about. The author combines a love of history and the importance of family into a fresh mystery novel complete with engaging characters and interesting facts, set against a background of 19th century living in a 21st century world.

I enjoyed reading this book as it captured my attention and kept it until the end. Whilst there is plenty of intrigue, action and flirting, there is little in the way of genuine suspense. However, it is a good read unless you prefer your crime more violent and bloodthirsty.

I think it is a great weekend read that will certainly keep you entertained. I enjoyed it and would recommend it as good holiday reading. ■



insights

Place your classified ad or display your business card in Insights Europe.

Only € 15,- per issue or € 20,- per year!

Call 0043-67687764120 or send email to [i.glueckler@ku-linz.at](mailto:i.glueckler@ku-linz.at)



# Staying in Touch With the Whole Interpretive Family



**interpret europe**

European Association for Heritage Interpretation

What's happening in other areas beyond live interpretation? What trends should all interpreters be aware of? How do European values connect to our daily work? These are just some of the questions Interpret Europe is dealing with.



**THORSTEN LUDWIG**

Interpret Europe is a young network organisation which was set up to serve all who use first-hand experience to give natural and cultural heritage a deeper meaning. It brings together European stakeholder organisations, including universities, suppliers and exhibit planners, as well as guides and live interpreters. Established in 2010, Interpret Europe currently has more than 350 members from more than 40 countries, including associations and institutions, companies and individuals.

Interpret Europe's annual conference focuses on the active involvement of its members and of extensive study visits in the host country. The latest, 6th edition of the conference, "Heritage Interpretation – for the Future of Europe", was held in Flanders. It included more than 100

presentations, workshops and study visits and was dedicated to the question of how the experience of historic sites can contribute to learning about more challenging subjects such as

human rights, active citizenship and peace.

Interpret Europe also recently launched its training programme with certification courses for interpretive guides as a first step. So

far, the 40-hour course involving several heritage facilities has been offered in seven different languages. In addition, the very first trainers have now been



*“Interpret Europe is set up to serve all who use first-hand experience to give natural and cultural heritage a deeper meaning.”*

Thorsten Ludwig is one of Interpret Europe's two Managing Directors. He lives in Germany where he has run his own company since 1993, providing interpretive planning and training services. Thorsten has an MSc in Interpretation Management and Practice from the University of the Highlands and Islands (UK) and has been certified as Interpretive Planner and as Interpretive Trainer by the National Association for Heritage Interpretation (USA). You can contact him at [tludwig@interpret-europe.net](mailto:tludwig@interpret-europe.net).

FEATURE STORIES



certified after an international trainer course in Moravia. Besides guiding, the programme will contain many other modules, and dedicated IMTAL Europe members are ensuring that live interpretation will be one of them.

Like other organisations, Interpret Europe is also involved in European projects. Indeed, over the last 5 years, Interpret Europe has been a partner in initiatives focusing on quality criteria for interpretation, quality vocational training, work with specific audiences, and competence-based learning approaches.

“ *Individuals who like to interact with neighbouring fields, can join IE in addition to their professional commitments in their own organisations.* ”

For its members, Interpret Europe offers information on the latest news, opportunities and developments through frequent newsmails and comprehensive quarterly newsletters. Members can register for training courses and pay reduced fees at conferences. Individual membership costs just € 30,-, a price that is deliberately kept low. The idea is to allow

individuals who like to interact with neighbouring fields to join IE in addition to their professional commitments in their own organisations. ■



# TALES

Chris Cade performed to family audiences at Clifford's Tower for English Heritage during The Jorvik Viking Festival, February 13-21, 2016, the 950th anniversary year of the last Viking invasion. As part of the performance, child volunteers are enlisted and equipped as Viking warriors - three with specific roles: Hardrada, Tostig and the champion on the bridge. Ever wondered how such a thing can be scripted? Chris offers a peak ...



CHRIS CADE

*"Never kneel in battle or crouch behind your shield  
You'll likely lose the battle if you begin to yield  
Hold your head up high, your mighty weapon wield  
Fight until the bitter end upon the battlefield".*

That is the rallying battle cry of Harald Hardrada.

Me? I'm no Viking warrior ... I'm Olaf the Viking storyteller. You'll always find me a short



Want to find out more? Then visit [www.interpret-europe.net](http://www.interpret-europe.net), [www.interpreteuropeconference.net](http://www.interpreteuropeconference.net), or Interpret Europe's LinkedIn and Facebook sites – or contact us any time at [mail@interpret-europe.net](mailto:mail@interpret-europe.net).

**Experience the Past**  
Historical Event & Advice Company

Martine Teunissen, M.Phil  
[www.experiencethepast.org](http://www.experiencethepast.org)  
Tel. 0031-616433632



# OLAF'S OF BATTLE



distance away from the battle. Someone has to live to tell the tale!

This story is from a significant year in your history, I believe, 1066. As I understand it, Edward the Confessor had been King for 24 years or so. He was on his deathbed without a son and heir. At his bedside was Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex, saying anything the old king wanted to hear in exchange for his blessing. As soon as Edward breathed his last, the pretender pronounced himself King Harold II of all England.

Tostig Godwinson, Earl of Northumbria and Harold's younger brother, was immediately banished from the country by the new king and set off looking for an ally and revenge. There was indeed sibling rivalry!

Tostig approached two claimants to the English throne; William Duke of Normandy had ambitions and plans of his own, but ruthless warmonger Harald Hardrada, King of Norway, was keen to extend his kingdoms. Together they made up a formidable force. Might with local insight.

Hardrada, a fierce giant of a man, was feared throughout the world as the Land Ravager. His banner? The Landeyda, a mythical Nordic bird of prey.

*"If the raven is seen to be flapping his wings, victory always ensue*

*If the raven hangs limp and flightless, even Hardrada could lose".*





With a fleet of three hundred long ships, we set sail across the northern seas leaving the fjords of Norway far behind. It was a rough crossing. The gales threatened to rip the single sails from the masts. Hardrada's flag, however, was unquestionably unfurled.

On 15th September the coast line of Northumbria was in sight. We rowed ashore and hauled the long ships onto the beach. It was time to stake our claim. The locals of Skardaborg, as we call it, not so far from here

marched towards where the Ouse and the Fosse meet, the natural stronghold, the capital of the north. We would like to take it and rename it Jorvik. You had called it Eoforwic before and since we were last here and ruled.

Our valiant warriors would have to fight to regain the capital from Morcar, the new Earl of Northumbria and his brother Edwin, Earl of Mercia. Morcar mustered his men at the boggy fen known as Gate Fulford on the southern outskirts of the city.

Hardrada, the master tactician, took charge. We Vikings were split in half. Tostig, the adopted Viking, marched his half, the right wing, along the road from Riccall. The land in the vale is mainly flat. However, Tostig, knowing the lie of the land, found some higher ground approaching the bog.

Hardrada marched his half, the left wing, along the eastern bank of the meandering River Ouse and likewise approached Fulford. He would arrive slightly later than Tostig. It was key to his strategy.

Morcar must have thought Tostig's half were the whole of the Viking invaders and moved forward, committing all of the Saxon army to tackle them head

on in expectation of an easy victory.

Unseen, Hardrada's half of the Vikings appeared from the river bank with the raven banner flying before them and attacked the Saxons from behind. As metal, wood and bone splintered, the ground beneath them became a quagmire of mud and blood. It was a slaughter. The battlefield was so littered with Saxon dead

*I'm Olaf the Viking storyteller.*

*You'll always find me a short distance away from the battle. Someone has to live to tell the tale!*

that we Norsemen could step dry foot over the fen!

Our wounded returned to Riccall, but the rest of us marched into town victorious. It was a Saxon surrender.

No need for pillage and plunder which was a bit of a shame.

We sailed down the east coast, past the chalk cliffs and into the wide estuary of the River Humber, up to the mouth of the meandering River Ouse and further upstream to Riccall. Here there is a sweeping bend in the river. Tostig advised it was suitable for the mooring of the fleet. A haven. We set up camp.

On 20th September, we

demands. Hardrada commanded that we laid waste to the town. Now I might be at a safe distance when there's a battle, but when

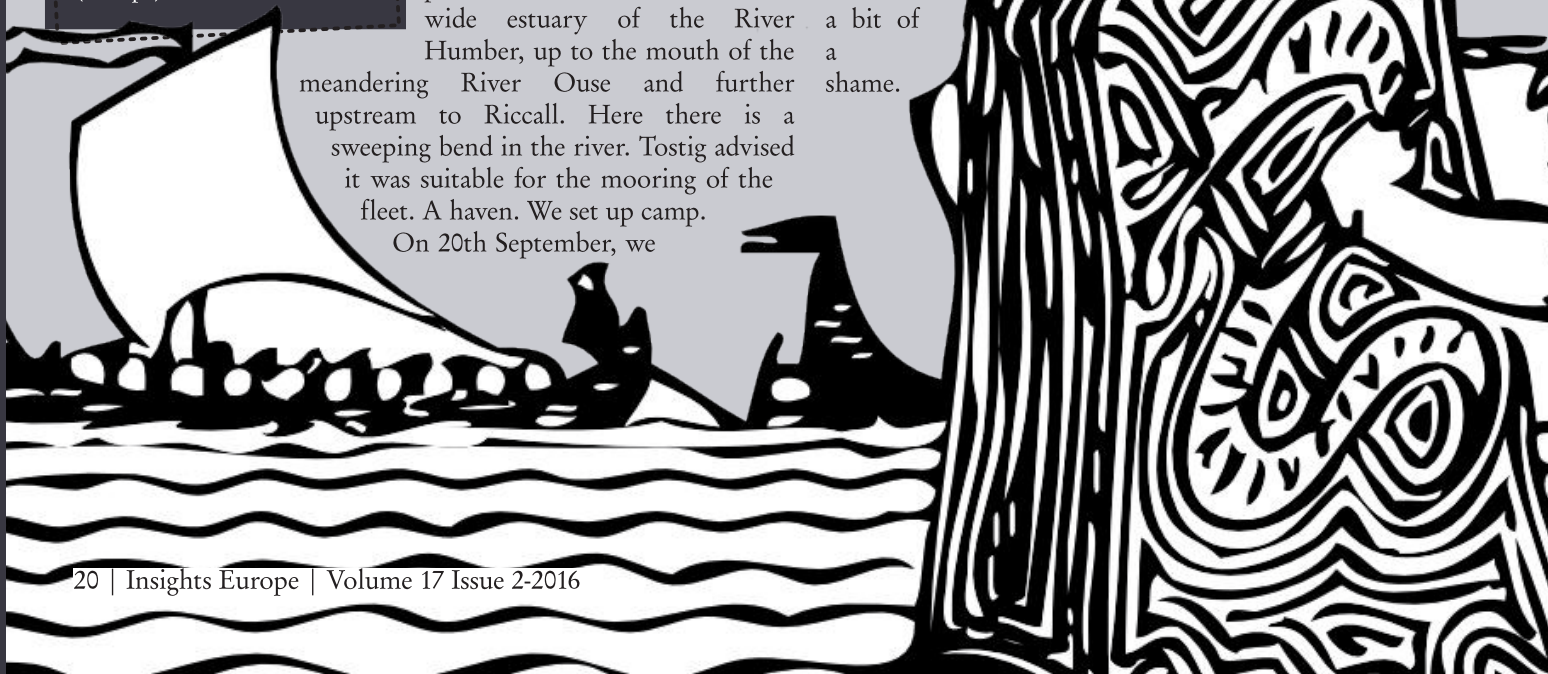
it comes to pillage and plunder I'm as involved as the next man. We took what we wanted and then we burned the town to the ground, to send out a message: *"The Vikings are back!"* No doubt word soon spread.

We sailed down the east coast, past the chalk cliffs and into the wide estuary of the River Humber, up to the mouth of the meandering River Ouse and further upstream to Riccall. Here there is a sweeping bend in the river. Tostig advised it was suitable for the mooring of the fleet. A haven. We set up camp.

On 20th September, we



Chris Cade M.A. (Educational theatre) is a freelance actor & storyteller and a member of the IMTAL (Europe) board.





Eoforwic's elders held parley with Hardrada and gave in to all his demands, handing over the city and all its provisions. Haradrada was one step closer to becoming King of all England. Tostig had won his earldom back.

"Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we may die." That is our philosophy. We celebrated our victory at Fulford for five consecutive days and nights. We Vikings certainly know how to enjoy ourselves.

A hundred hostages were to be handed over as spoils of war at the place where four roads meet, eight miles to the east of the city. Here there is a sandstone ford over the River Derwent. Of course, there is also a wooden bridge for crossing when the river is swollen. You may know it as Stamford Bridge.

25th September 1066 dawned. A very still and balmy day. Hardrada led us on a casual march. His banner, I noticed, hung limp. We had delicate heads, it has to be said, after our feasting. We arrived just before noon with the minimum of weapons and armour and relaxed in the long grass on the banks of the river awaiting the handover.

Meanwhile, back down south, Harold Godwinson would have noticed the change in the weather. He faced a dilemma. Which was the bigger threat to his throne? William of Normandy and his imminent invasion, now that the Channel had calmed or news that his younger brother Tostig, along with Hardrada the warrior King of Norway, had already invaded and taken the capital of the north? Godwinson, it appears, marched his Saxon army up to Tadcaster during those five days and nights that we were celebrating.

*"I swear I heard thirty-five splashes as the individual assailants fell into the River Derwent. Next time I tell the tale, it might be forty!"*

One Norseman, as big as Hardrada himself, stood on the bridge as a lookout; anticipating a cloud of dust that would herald the arrival of the hostages. But what he saw was a bigger cloud than he expected. It was the Royal Army approaching! The sun glinted on their armour

and weapons, sparkling like a field of broken ice.

He warned Hardrada.

Our king directed us

onto the opposite bank of

the river. The Saxons would have to cross the

bridge to reach us. Hardrada arranged his

Viking warriors into a shield wall

formation on the

high ground though

we were ill equipped

and ill prepared

for battle.

Our

champion

stood alone on

the bridge

wielding his axe and

singlehandedly seeing off Saxon challengers one by one.

I, at a safe distance remember, swear I heard thirty-five

splashes as the individual assailants

fell into the River Derwent. Next

time I tell the tale it might be

forty!

One wily Saxon found a swill tub

on the bank of the river, launched

the vessel, got inside and

manoeuvred himself into position

directly beneath where our

champion was standing on the

bridge. Through the timbers he

thrust his sword and brogged our hero from below. I

never said this was a cosy bedtime story, did I? He was

transfixed from crotch to chest! He fell with a big splash.

The Saxons crossed Stamford Bridge. They outnumbered

us. Battle began with a fierce roar. Godwinson raised his

hand and strangely there was a halt in proceedings. He

recognised his younger brother.

"Tostig," he said, "call off Hardrada and I'll give you your

earldom back." But Tostig had already won his title back

at the Battle of Fulford. "No," he replied.

Indeed, he made demands of his own, "How much land

can my ally Hardrada have?" Godwinson took one look

at the size of the giant

Norwegian King and said,

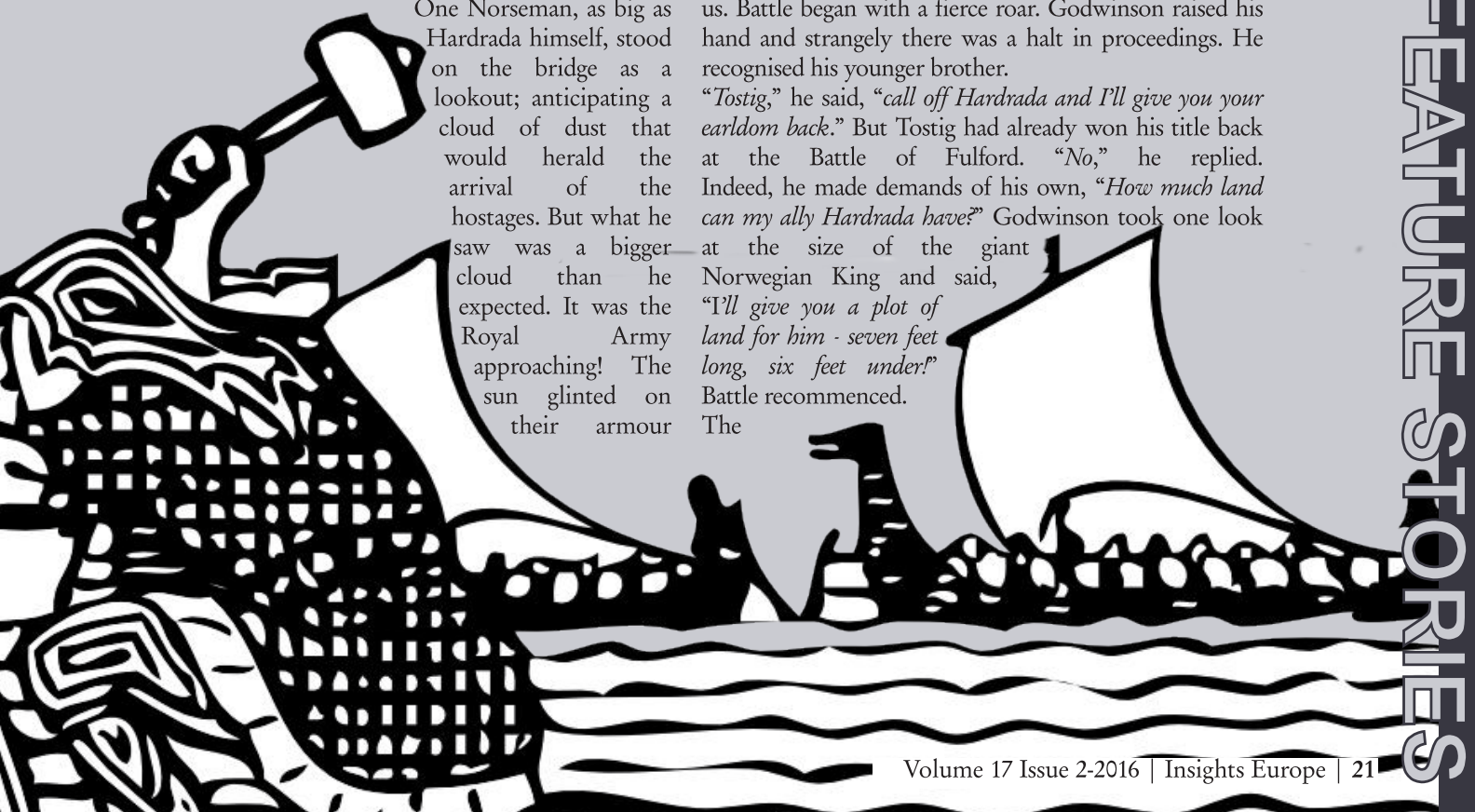
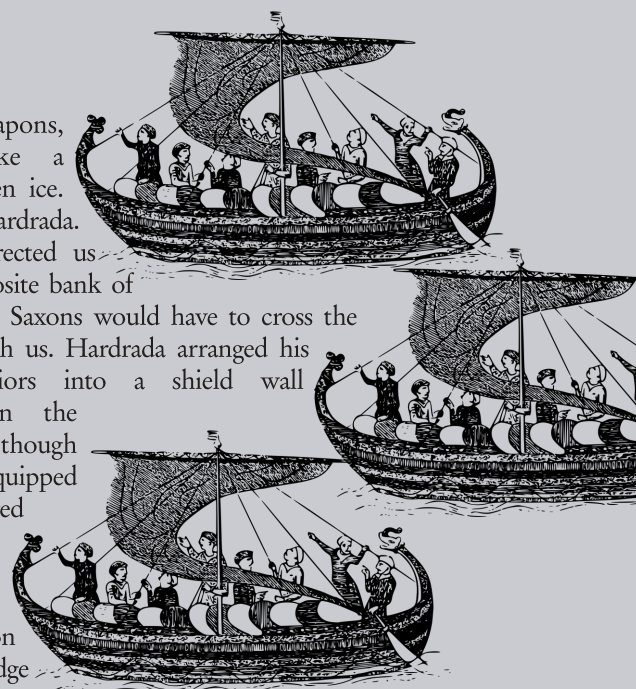
"I'll give you a plot of

land for him - seven feet

long, six feet under!"

Battle recommenced.

The







two sides slogged it out for almost three hours. As metal, wood and bone splintered, the raven banner must have been trodden underfoot. Haradrada suffered a severe wound to the neck. He fell to the ground. The Land Ravager was dead. Tostig was next. Casualties were high. I, at a safe distance, you understand, led a hurried retreat back to the fleet at Riccall. Someone has to live to tell the tale! We set sail home in less than thirty of the three hundred

long ships that had brought us.

However, do not think of our fallen heroes as bodies strewn across a battlefield at Stamford Bridge. Think of Haradrada, Tostig and our champion on the bridge as celebrated guests feasting for eternity with the gods in Valhalla, the hall of the valiant slain!

As we sailed, I saw in the night sky a strange blazing star with a tail arching across the firmament: a harbinger of doom, if ever I saw one. Yet it cannot be a message for us Vikings. We have just been defeated. Perhaps it is a warning for Harold Godwinson who has to march back down south to meet William Duke of Normandy. But that, as they say, is another story ... ■

Further Reading: The Battle of Stamford Bridge 1066, by Chris Rock, Battleground Yorkshire. Visit: [www.chriscade.co.uk/](http://www.chriscade.co.uk/).



**Uwe Hildenbeutel**

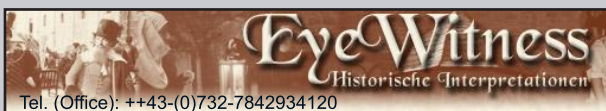
Gundolfstraße 26 · 64287 Darmstadt  
Tel. 06151-1543771  
[info@touchthepast.de](mailto:info@touchthepast.de) · [www.touchthepast.de](http://www.touchthepast.de)



<http://www.livehistory.de/interpretation/>

**Interpretation**

The International Bibliographic Database  
of Living History



Tel. (Office): ++43-(0)732-7842934120

# Peers and

A short digest of the “Interpret Europe – the European Association for Heritage Interpretation” conference in Mechelen, Belgium from 20-24 May, attended by board members Marc van Hasselt and Angela Pfenninger. The conference comprised a variety of lectures, parallel sessions, study visits and evening programmes under the theme of “The Future of Europe”.



ANGELA PFENNINGER & MARC VAN HASSELT

## Location and Crowd

Even though the conference theme was explicitly European, many attendees came from much further afield, creating a very international atmosphere. Attendees and speakers originated from – for instance – the U.S., Australia, Colombia or Belarus, of course a majority from Belgium itself, the Netherlands, and a fair amount were from the UK. International cooperation between professionals in the heritage field was stressed throughout the conference. In hindsight, and in view of “Brexit”, the European theme seemed a bit of an irony, but the dedication of all involved was such that global policy should not affect networking on a personal and institutional level.

Mechelen itself is lovely and can be strongly recommended – it’s a mere half hour on the train from Brussels, boasts a lot of culture, picturesque cityscapes and is ultimately “walkable” (with lots of quaint cafes and pubs to boot!). However, there was not much free



# Beers



interpret europe

European Association for Heritage Interpretation

© Marc van Hasselt

time due to the great number of parallel sessions: during short presentations, delegates explained their best practice, challenges, methods in the interpretation of cultural or natural heritage. It was actually quite hard to select just one topic out of a variety of interesting themes that were on at the same time. An overview of the programme is still on <http://www.interpreteuropeconference.net/programme/>

## Introducing IMTAL

IMTAL Europe was represented by Marc van Hasselt's talk on live interpretation. During the conference, it became clear that the participants were not as familiar with this form of interpretation as one might assume. During informal talks and through attending keynotes, presentations and excursions, the IMTAL members noted how little was known about the different forms of Live Interpretation and its associated activities such as Living History and re-enactment. To clear up some of the confusion, Marc's

audience.

## IMTAL and Interpret Europe – How Do They Fit Together?

Interpret Europe members are all interpretation professionals for cultural and natural heritage, offering a diverse range of services: they work as guides, authors, park rangers, administrators, strategic planners or consultants, devise and programme IT-based tools, or – like us IMTALers – perform in a heritage context.

Directors Willem Derde and Torsten Ludwig decided to meet a growing need amongst their

wider membership by establishing a sub-division for nature interpretation only. This need for further professionalization in sub-groups led IMTAL to embark upon talks about the establishment of a live interpretation branch within IE, which is now being spearheaded by our chairman Marc. This will enable our members to increase their networking

*“It became clear that the participants were not as familiar with Live Interpretation as one might assume.”*

talk therefore focused on an introduction of IMTAL and examples of (successful) interpretative programs and presentations. These included programs run by Tony Jackson and Chris Cade, among others.

The goal of the presentation was originally to have a debate on authenticity, emotion and audience participation within Live Interpretation and Museum Theatre. As it turned out, the discussion was much broader and less in-depth due to the need to introduce the subject first. In that respect, it was an interesting exercise in one of the most important skills for an interpreter: to know your



activities with more people in their professional field, get a feel for trends outside the world of LI or museum theatre, and gain access to decision makers.

In practice, IMTAL will strive to work together with Interpret Europe, coming together in a real sense to exchange ideas and experiences. In 2017 we are hoping to have one or more conferences, seminars or workshops in cooperation with this organization, increasing the experience and reach of both IMTAL and IE.

### Summary

The conference was superbly organized and offered much in the way of networking opportunities. The lack of experience with Live Interpretation is not a hindrance, as the goal of all interpretation is to increase understanding. The push of IE to professionalize the field and offer courses for guides and guide trainers seems a good example of best practice in the field. We are at a point in the development of IMTAL and the field of live interpretation where we as an organization can offer expertise to those willing to learn. Let us grasp the opportunity!

### Belgian Attractions

A variety of excursions to regional heritage sites was part of the programme. Here's our tips for those of you that travel near Brussels ...

### Visiting the Beguines

The Beguines were an order of nuns that lived in a number of buildings in the centre of Mechelen, from the Middle Ages onwards. We had a chance to visit some of these buildings accompanied by a city guide. As these were under construction to

be turned into luxury housing, or actually lived in (in our case by a number of students), this was a rather unique chance to see these lovely houses.



Angela Pfenninger is a freelance live interpreter in Germany with a particular interest in first-person, immersive and experimental formats. She holds a degree in English and Cultural Studies from Regensburg University and, apart from performing at various sites, offers lectures and workshops on the subject of museum theatre.



Marc studied Medieval history at Utrecht University and has been doing Medieval re-enactment as a hobby and professionally for about 20 years. His interests cover literature and art history, armour and weapons, but focus on the presentation and interpretation of history in general. He is a self-employed consultant and co-founder of Novitas Heritage, as well as Chair of IMTAL Europe and Live Interpretation Coordinator for Interpret Europe.



The tour itself was very much of the traditional "follow the guide" variety. In that sense, rather disappointing during a conference where cutting-edge heritage interpretation was supposed to be the norm. I had expected more and would have loved to have seen some live interpretation used to enhance the experience. It was a good chance to do some networking, however.

### Kasteel van Horst

This Medieval castle, rebuilt in the 17th century, was a lovely place to visit and have dinner. It boasted its own, locally brewed beer and had very friendly and helpful staff. The guides took the effort to dress up, but the quality of their clothing could be improved upon and looked acquired from a fancy dress shop. The castle itself had been restored insofar as that the furniture was removed and all the walls painted white. The idea was that in this way, it provides a "blank canvas" on which interpretative programs and events can be placed. The effect on me was to be struck by the emptiness and coldness of an abandoned-looking castle.

### Alden Biesen, the "Storytelling Castle"

Alden Biesen, an old centre of regional government established by the knights of the Teutonic Order, is now a cultural centre and places a programmatic emphasis on the art of storytelling, publishing widely on the subject. At the annual storytelling festival, artists from various countries perform in their native tongue: [www.alden-biesen.be](http://www.alden-biesen.be).

### Kazerne Dossin Belgian Holocaust Memorial

Though not internationally-known, Kazerne Dossin left its guests full of the most moving impressions, intellectual and emotional narratives of perpetrators, victims, society at large. The exhibition design displayed a rare skill: to present history as something that is topical today, a sequence of events, attitudes and dangers as virulent nowadays as ever: [www.kazernedossin.eu](http://www.kazernedossin.eu). ■





# Breathing Life into Old Walls

## Museum of Tyrolean Farms



Located in the idyllic scenery of Kramsach, Austria, the open-air Museum of Tyrolean Farms offers a glimpse back into pre-industrial times, when the daily life of rural folk was centered around hard labour and a struggle to live from the land.



EVA-MARIA KIENAST & THOMAS  
BERTAGNOLLI

Founded in 1974, the museum provides a vivid insight into the agricultural history of the State of Tyrol, the western region of Austria. Fourteen historic farmhouses and twenty-four annexed buildings, such as a sawmill, a blacksmith's workshop and two chapels, from different regions of North, South and East Tyrol have been dismantled with great care and rebuilt on the museum grounds. As these farmsteads were once home to a living and breathing family, they still retain their special atmosphere and thus bridge the gap between times gone by and the daily cares of a modern visitor. To enhance the experience of stepping back in time, the buildings are brought to life again: video projections in selected farmhouses, live displays of traditional handicrafts, performances of alpine music bands or the annual "Kirchtag" fair give an impression of how bygone generations lived, laughed and loved.

Additionally, once every summer, a living history event transports the audience back into medieval times and allows the visitors to experience the past with all senses.

The museum's director, Dr. Thomas Bertagnolli, explains the didactic concept:

*"The events held here at the museum, especially one like the living history weekend, are intended to bring the historic farmsteads to life. Last year we implemented a new and exciting way to present the houses to our visitors. Short films projected onto the walls of several of the buildings give a glimpse into the simple and often difficult lives of the farmers of the time. These often emotional film clips burst the idyllic bubble of the ideas many of us have of this period and instead portray a more realistic picture of our history. For our younger visitors we have installed hands-on play areas, enabling them to enjoy their visit to our museum. With the installation of new information boards we have been able to show how the houses looked before being dismantled and brought to us here in the Museum of Tyrolean Farmhouses."*



## Animating the Past – Living History as Crowd Puller

The scenic setting of the farmsteads, in its peaceful surroundings - hidden away from the distractions of modern life, free from traffic, street lights, ugly electricity pylons and the like, makes the Museum of Tyrolean Farms an ideal place for a living history event. Working alongside the

Austrian “Interessensgemeinschaft 14. Jahrhundert in Österreich” and the Northern Italian living history group “Niedertor mit Gefolge”, for one weekend in August the historic “Franzl’s – Klaisla’s” farmhouse in the museum was filled with life again.

The event was titled “Farm Life in Medieval Tyrol” and demanded

high standards and diligent preparation by the interpreters.

“There were multiple challenges to be met,” explains Eva-Maria Kienast who, as a living history interpreter herself, was responsible

for the thematic briefing of the participants as well as the organisational aspects of the event. “As none of the interpreters had experience of farm work, a lot of research had to be done in preparation for the event to be able to portray the farmer’s household accurately.”

### Preparing the Interpreters – Research and Understanding

To meet this goal, the participants read literature on Medieval rural society structures, the daily work routines of a farmstead, the animals and plants cultivated, the gender-specific distribution of work on a farm and immersed themselves in detailed research of regional peculiarities: Who were the

feudal landowners in the County of Tyrol? What was the history of the farmstead that would be occupied

during the event and how did the law of inheritance affect its resident’s life? Also, how did the rich profane and religious customs that were so important to Medieval people punctuate the essential structure of the agricultural year?

“In all the research, high priority was given to the aspect of regionalism. The people portraying the household occupants should be as credible and authentic as possible,” clarifies Eva-Maria Kienast. This demand proved to be an extra challenge for the 23 people from the three cooperating living history groups. Some of whom would normally portray city craftsmen and middle-class people and therefore needed a completely new set of clothes and accessories for their rural Tyrolean personas. Others, who usually portrayed a nobleman’s entourage, had to adapt their outfits to that of working class farmers.

Another had to put together a complete kit that met the museum standards of authenticity.

“This was only successful as all participants had agreed the quality criteria regarding personal equipment and showcased handicrafts. They also brought with them a high level of enthusiasm and willingness to make the event a success,” reveals the organizer. Nonetheless, a lot of discussion had to take place before the common standards were set and communicated to all participants.

### Capturing the Audience – Compiling the Event Schedule

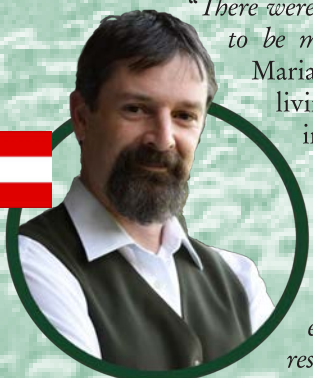
When all the preparations were in order, the focus turned to the visitors’ programme. “The aim was to connect the audience with the past and combine a mix of craft displays and everyday activities

Eva-Maria Kienast is a media professional by trade, works as a secretary at a university and has been fascinated with the Middle Ages since her childhood. She specializes in historic embroidery techniques and fashion development in the 14th century and is part of the Tyrolean living history group “vrouwen maere” ([www.mittelalter.tirol](http://www.mittelalter.tirol)) and the “IG 14. Jahrhundert in Österreich” ([www.ig14.at](http://www.ig14.at))

Thomas Bertagnolli was appointed Curator of the Museum of Tyrolean Farmhouses in 1998 after studying History at Innsbruck University. The research of the historic farm buildings with specific reference to the varying Tyrolean landscape and economic development between the different regions of Tyrol is the main focus of his work.



© Eva-Maria Kienast



Thomas Bertagnolli was appointed Curator of the Museum of Tyrolean Farmhouses in 1998 after studying History at Innsbruck University. The research of the historic farm buildings with specific reference to the varying Tyrolean landscape and economic development between the different regions of Tyrol is the main focus of his work.



(c) Christina Curreli





© Christina Curreli



© Christina Curreli



© Christina Curreli

in the farmsteads with semi-formal lectures at set times," explains Eva-Maria Kienast. Apart from being able to watch routine household chores like cooking on the open fire, mending clothes or caring for small children, visitors were to be invited to wander around the premises and admire displays of historic handcrafts

simple means of communication. Photos of reenactors at work captured attention and print and online media channels helped to pull huge crowds into the museum," Eva-Maria Kienast summarises the promotional efforts.

And the museum's director, Dr. Thomas Bertagnolli adds, "For us, the living history event plays an important part in bringing the farmhouses to life and lets the visitor take an authentic look into the past." ■

*The event was a challenge for the 23 people from the three cooperating living history groups.*

set up outside the historic farms. Here, the interpreters answered a never-ending string of questions regarding their craft or their appearance. The hourly lectures focused on one issue in detail and spanned a wide range of topics: including a 14th century fashion show (including the secrets of Medieval underwear), an insight into the production and trade of woollen and linen textiles in historic Tyrol, obtainable colors in plant-dyeing and the secrets of Medieval dishes. The audience flocked to all presentations in great numbers; a sure sign that the focus on regional aspects was a success and the promotional work effective.

### Promoting the Event – Pictures do the Trick

Although it was a museum event that did not mean that the promotion had to be drab. "It proved extremely effective to label the presentations in Middle High German. People instantly felt addressed by this



The Museum of Tyrolean Farmsteads preserves old farmhouses and their adjoining buildings as witnesses of the pre-industrial rural way of life and culture. At the moment, the Museum of Tyrolean Farmsteads consists of 14 farmhouses and numerous adjoining buildings. All those buildings were reconstructed in the museum area. They chose right this area for the museum because it offers the ideal landscape for imitating the geography of Tyrol. For our younger visitors we have installed hands-on play areas, enabling them to enjoy their visit to our museum.



insights

**PUBLISHING DEADLINES**  
for Articles, Ads, and free Event Listings are as follows:  
**28th February 2017**  
**30th September 2017**  
Call 0043-67687764120 or send an email to [i.glueckler@ku-linz.at](mailto:i.glueckler@ku-linz.at)



# Duo Kleine Sekunde

## Living Lectures on Medieval Music and Poetry

The medieval music duo "Kleine Sekunde" (English: minor second, named after the musical interval) was formed by Cosima Hoffmann and Hans Hegner in 2006. Besides concerts on medieval markets and festivals, they give lectures on the history of Middle High German literature and music in schools and universities. Here is a short description of this special program of "Kleine Sekunde"

© Kleine Sekunde Promo



COSIMA HOFFMANN & HANS HEGNER

The Middle Ages are a distant but nevertheless fascinating epoch of history for many young people. Medieval markets, music bands and movies and also Live Action Role Playing have popularized the Middle Ages during the last 30 years. The examination of this exciting period leads us to the roots of today's literature, music and language and supports the understanding of the poetry and culture of later eras.

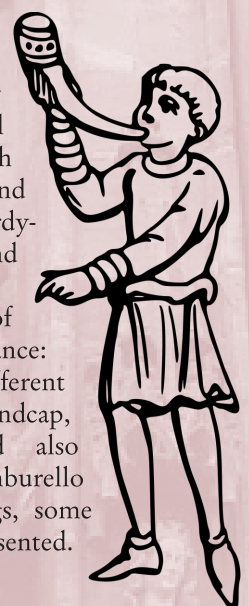
The Berlin musicians mainly perform songs and music of the Middle Ages, most songs are written in Middle High German language and date between 1150 and 1500, their genres are "Minnesang" (courtly love), "Sangspruch" (political and moralistic poetry), spiritual songs, early folksongs and ballads. They sing in the original languages, speak elaborate translations within the performance and play a great number of medieval and folk instruments.

*"Minnesang" was closely connected with live performance – it has never been a clandestine exchange of love letters.*

"Minnesang" can be translated as "love song" and was closely connected with live performance – it has never been a clandestine exchange of love letters. Lyrics, music and the special sound of the medieval instruments fascinate the present-day audience, who should experience "Minnesang" as a living stagecraft.

Cosima and Hans recite the translations as a dialogue. They sing the original Middle High German lyrics and play various hurdy-gurdies and woodwind instruments of

the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: bagpipes, shawms, crumhorns in different sizes, recorders with and without windcap, gemshorns, three-hole pipe, and also percussion instruments: tabor, tamburello and friction drum. Beside the songs, some medieval dance tunes are presented.







© Ingo R. Glückler



© Kleine Sekunde Promo



Pictures, for example from the Codex Manesse or the Codex Weingarten, are shown to illustrate courtly life, the Minnesingers and the instruments.



The cultural background, social life in the Middle Ages, tradition and reformation in music and poetry, different concepts of love and chivalry, education and written record are explained between the songs and music.

The lecture follows a chronological order and starts with the art of the Troubadours

and Trouvères, introduces the Minnesingers Kurenberger, Friedrich von Hausen, Bernger von Horheim, Heinrich Morungen, Walther von der Vogelweide, Neidhart von Reuenthal, Wizlaw von Rügen and ends with Oswald von Wolkenstein.

The spoken translations are part of the performance to enable the audience to understand the sung Middle High German lyrics. On request, the material (songs with translations) will be distributed during the presentation or sent ahead by mail. It can be used for preparation but is not necessary in order to understand the performance.

Depending on whether there's enough time and space, Cosima and Hans love to finish their lecture with a communal dance. Indeed, there are no



written dance

*The audience should experience "Minnesang" as a living stagecraft.*

dancing knights and ladies. And so Kleine Sekunde wants to involve their audience with fun and emotion. After the presentation, the participants are

invited to ask questions and come to the stage to inspect the instruments and pictures. ■

Hans Hegner was born in 1959 in Berlin. He studied German language and literature and comparative linguistics. Since 1983, he has performed medieval songs and music and is also member of "Fundevoegel", "Collage" and "Vinkoop". He collaborates with Dr. Lothar Jahn's minnesang.com for several stage projects and writes translations for other medieval artists.



**Kleine Sekunde:**

Minnesang und  
Sangspruchdichtung

... begleitet auf  
historischen Instrumenten

[www.duo-kleinesekunde.de](http://www.duo-kleinesekunde.de)

**Duo Kleine Sekunde from Berlin**

Cosima Hoffmann: [mail@cosima-hoffmann.de](mailto:mail@cosima-hoffmann.de);  
[www.cosima-hoffmann.de](http://www.cosima-hoffmann.de)

Hans Hegner: [hanshegner@arcor.de](mailto:hanshegner@arcor.de);

[www.hanshegner.de](http://www.hanshegner.de)

[www.duo-kleinesekunde.de](http://www.duo-kleinesekunde.de);

[facebook.com/kleinesekunde](https://facebook.com/kleinesekunde)







Midsummer celebrations. © Daniel Secarescu

In June 2016, the project managers of Hands on History (HoH) and Trondheim Vikinglag organized the one-week reenactment event “The Viking Way” (TVW). The event took place in the deep Norwegian forest of Trøndelag and had 120 participants. It was a big success and the feedback has been massive. In this article I will explain what we made, why we made it and how we made it. I will also elaborate on my thoughts about successful dissemination. Furthermore, I will emphasize the importance of talking about historical re-enactment and living history on a meta-level.



INGRID GALADRIEL AUNE NILSEN

In 2015, I published my festival guide “How to Organize a Historical Event Involving Reenactment groups”.<sup>1</sup> Working all around Europe, I had both seen and organized several historical events, Viking Markets in particular. To me it seemed like most organizers were operating on pure instinct - copy-pasting elements from past events and making few deliberate choices. There seemed to be a set of unwritten rules and conventions being followed. Without really knowing why, organizers and participants made the same good and bad choices over and over again. I am not referring to choices regarding purely logistical matters, but rather choices concerning curation and dissemination; the conceptual frame, the overall aesthetics, the program content, activities carried out by the re-enactors and the marketing material. It

looked like all of the events were cast in the same ill-conceived mold. The result was an inflation in program content, poor dissemination, bored re-enactors and confused outsiders. By outsiders I am not only referring to the visiting public, but also to those who in other ways encountered the content, pre-, during - and post-. Some outsiders will claim that the re-enactment scene is very dubious, consisting of “adults who like to dress up”. Re-enactors tend to blame the outsiders for not respecting and

*“Material authenticity will generate and maintain all other forms of authenticity, like situational authenticity displayed in actions and authentic atmosphere.”*

understanding what re-enactment is all about. However, the responsibility of heightening the understanding amongst the outsiders is not bestowed upon the outsiders.







### Changing the Recipe

After publishing the guide, I immediately felt the need to challenge the now obvious rules and conventions. I now knew all the ingredients to make new recipes. Me and the rest of the HoH team members started hatching plans for a new conceptual frame that would take curation, facilitation and dissemination one step further.

### Conceptual Frame

We made some drastic choices when designing our conceptual frame. In my opinion, operating under the living history and historical re-enactment banner demands some sort of actual re-enactment - some theatrical guidelines and some considerations regarding the design of the area. We wanted to meet this demand.

The fictional alibi and context for most historical events (in Scandinavia) is "Vikings gathering at Kaupang to trade or sell goods". Therefore, we banned all sales tents, changing the fictional alibi and context to: "Traveling Vikings living in a temporary settlement, living in and surviving off nature". This also

The responsibility is bestowed upon the practitioners and organizers.

I wrote the guide to start a conversation about re-enactment practice on a meta-level. I wanted to put words to unwritten rules and conventions and ask "what", "why" and "how". My goal was to challenge and help organizers make deliberate choices. In its turn, this might heighten the overall quality of the re-enactment scene and deepen the understanding of re-enactment as a genre and dissemination tool.

meant that each participant could not bring more equipment than they could carry. No big tents, no chests, no chairs and no beds. In our opinion, this fictional alibi was very plausible and possibly a more realistic one.

In my Bachelor's thesis (2012), I investigated re-enactors and their different agendas and motivations for participation. As you may have noticed, people are drawn to this activity for several different reasons, thus bringing different content to the table. If this mix of agendas is not accounted for by the organizers, the conceptual frame of any event will dissolve, diverging in several different directions. This is why we decided to create an event for a particular group of re-enactors, namely the "hardcore" re-enactors. These re-enactors are generally hard to please, they are less interested in the commercial aspects of an event, they tend to be obsessed with material authenticity and they are generally very into research. We knew that these re-enactors would provide material quality and knowledge. We would persuade them into working together and disseminating their knowledge on our terms.

We challenged the participants by asking them to think about who they were portraying and why they were there. Scandinavian re-enactors usually don't engage in acting a specific character, they lean more towards self-representation. However, we wanted their story and individual fictional alibi to match the event's fictional alibi and context. Therefore,

*“Re-enactors possess unique knowledge and skill, and we are willing to go a long way to enable them to be the best at what they do.”*







Ingrid Galadriel Aune Nilsen holds a Master's degree in performing arts from the NTNU university in Trondheim. She is a curator and program manager at the Sverresborg Trøndelag Folk Museum, the founder of the Trondheim Vikinglag re-enactment group and the Co-founder of the action-knowledge bank Hands on History AS.

we only allowed one jarl wearing silver, the rest of the participants were to be crafters and commoners.

Our event grounds met with a very particular need: a stream of fresh drinking water running through the camp. Furthermore, the event grounds were untouched, isolated from the modern world (but not impossible to access for visitors). During TVW we did not allow any modern equipment at all. There is a simple reason for this: material authenticity will generate and maintain all other forms of authenticity, like situational authenticity displayed in actions and authentic atmosphere. This will fuel the imagination of both the re-enactors and the visitors, aiding them to engage in the fiction.

To help generate authentic actions and atmosphere, the camp was organized in a credible historical manner. All participants were assigned everyday tasks natural to a small community: doing the dishes, making sure there was enough fire wood, cooking and tending the animals. We believe making the everyday tasks visible is both a great form of dissemination and a nice opportunity to immerse oneself in authentic atmosphere. And besides, it freed up time for the organizers to focus on other aspects of facilitation.

### Dissemination and Curated Content

HoH curates participants by hand-picking them and establishing a claim-counter-claim dialogue. We pick participants based on their skill, theoretical knowledge and ability to disseminate content. The invited re-enactors fit our vision, each of them being a part of the big puzzle. This form of curation is indeed time-consuming, but the rewards are beyond measure. By accumulating ideas and actively claiming and receiving counter-claims regarding the content and dissemination, we earn the respect of the re-enactors. They possess unique knowledge and skill, and we are willing to go a long way to enable them to be the best at what they do.

During the preparation for TVW, we encouraged all participants to come up with ideas for experiments and projects. We promised to pay for any and all materials they would need to perform them. These experiments, along with the tasks of daily life, were to

be our program. No time schedule, no fight shows, no concerts, no games, no lectures - just on-going workshops for all participants, with all participants.

During the week we had over 20 projects going, such as turning wood and tanning skins, cooking, blacksmithing, pottery and iron production. When the event opened to the public the same projects were still going on - this time with all participants, for all participants and the visiting public. Marketing the event, we made one simple promise to the visiting public: the promise of dirty hands.

### Bake Your Own Cake

Establishing a good dialogue and exchange of knowledge between re-enactors and between the re-enactors and visitors relies on several factors. We succeeded in providing and communicating our conceptual frame. We managed to provide credible and functional event grounds. We curated our participants and facilitated the activities. We strove to help the re-enactors to do their very best by supporting them academically, creatively and financially.

In my opinion, any good historical event relies on the organizers' and re-enactors' understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing it. Awareness of what, why and how on a meta level is just as important as the quality and authenticity of the material work. Awareness breeds security, security equals a solid conceptual frame and quality dissemination. I encourage all organizers to take a look at the ingredients - all the elements available for putting a successful recipe together. If we all tried to bake our own cake there would be so much more to talk about. ■



Making arrows from scratch. © Daniel Secarescu

### Become craftsman at Foteviken Museum!

We are looking for craftsmen to take part in our living history education at reconstructed Viking town of Foteviken Museum. We are primarily focusing on themes like textiles, leatherworking, ceramics, food and cooking, metal- and wood-working. All work takes place in or around the Viking houses that form the historical museum environments. We work in time typical Viking Age clothing, using historical tools and methods.

Send your application to [info@foteviken.se](mailto:info@foteviken.se) with the subject line "Mediation of Viking Crafts". Please include a picture of yourself and your craft and a description of what your skills are.

Read more at [www.foteviken.se](http://www.foteviken.se)





Exhibits have a history we are keen to communicate to our visitors. But museums, as institutions, have a history too. Often it is not a particularly fascinating one but sometimes a site may have emerged as a result of political and ideological developments that deserve being brought to the forefront. Such was the case at an event at the reconstructed Roman fortress of Saalburg, Germany for UNESCO World Heritage Day.



# An Exercise in MetaHistory

© Dieter Schowalter



ANGELA PFENNINGER

For Heritage Day, the Fortress planned live interpretation with a group of performers. Normally, if they offer costumed interpretation, they invite re-enactment groups demonstrating Roman military divisions which are focused very much on authenticity of material culture and less on interactive theatrical methods of getting a message across.

The dozen performers who came together for the first time for this one-off event consisted of: four ensemble members of the nearby open air museum Hessenpark; their three (costumed) children; two individual performers (the author plus a colleague who impersonated early 20th century Roman re-enactment); three performers from the interpretation agency "Facing the Past"; and one representative of the neighbouring automobile museum with a costumed demonstration of a 1910 motorcar.

## The Site

Our performance themes came from the history of the actual site. The reconstructed fortress is situated next to a real antique remnant, the Limes Wall. The Limes, dividing occupied Roman territory from the indigenous Germanic tribes, was a strong symbol for Teutonic identity and nation-building. A fascination for the ancient past and our "barbarian" ancestors whose lives are largely shrouded in darkness, led to increased interest in this kind of heritage around 1900. The German emperor "Kaiser" William I commissioned historians with the preservation of existing Roman artefacts as well as systematical archaeological research in the 1870s. Later, an entire fortress was ordered to be reconstructed on the site of a previous one, locally known as the Saalburg. The main works were carried out from 1897. This early 20th century version of a Roman fort saw its ceremonial opening in the

*“Reconstructed sites are an architectural exclamation mark. It is our job as interpreters to make them question marks.”*





Angela Pfenninger is a freelance live interpreter in Germany with a particular interest in first-person, immersive and experimental formats. She holds a degree in English and Cultural Studies from Regensburg University and, apart from performing at various sites, offers lectures and workshops on the subject of museum theatre. [www.museum-theater-events.de](http://www.museum-theater-events.de)



presence of Emperor William II in 1907. A major of the German army artillery also reconstructed a whole variety of ancient long-distance weaponry. His method was as state-of-the-art as was possible at his time. He was referring to written and pictorial sources (and getting a lot of it wrong in the process, as we know today). The laying of the foundation stone of the main building was celebrated with a pageant: people in bedsheets clumsily dressed up as Romans – the first re-enactment on the grounds that were themselves a simulacrum.

### Themes and Characters

This was our quarry for characters and themes: some interpreters were representing the jingoist attitudes of 1910 Germany: profoundly

belligerent, proud of its colonies, “superior” Teutonic culture, technical ingenuity and the breakneck speed with which its navy rose to challenge Britain. Much in the same way as imperial Germany alienated the other European nations, we appalled a modern-day audience with our attitudes.

Other interpreters were appreciating the then “up-to-date” replicas of ancient weaponry, and highlighting the contemporary understanding of Roman lifestyle and warfare. A colleague wore the kind of costume the early re-enactors had on the grand opening, providing a stark contrast to the very professional Roman

re-enactment groups that visitors have got used to seeing nowadays. Some impersonated local people for whom the grounds and museum were recreational space and who were hoping to see the Kaiser who occasionally visited the site in his fancy motorcar.

### Forms of Interaction

There were four fixed scenes, the times of which were communicated to visitors. These would bring the loose narrative forward but could also be seen individually without missing anything vital (it all circled around “Are the rumours true, is the Kaiser coming today?” or “Can the Krupp weapons expert explain the site better than the military engineer who also roams the premises?”). Most of the time, we kept busy just interacting in first person, improvising on the political and social agenda setting prevalent at the time of the fortress’ construction.

### What Use is Meta-History?

In a self-critical approach, the Saalburg reflected upon the circumstances of its own creation as a venture that was both ideological and scientific. This was a not-so-glorious era of imperial hybris and jingoism, testimony of a nation on its way to a global superpower (or such was the plan), with an unbroken faith in progress and certainly in the business of subjugating whoever stood in their way.

By our populating the grounds with a crowd of 1910, the audience was caught off-guard. They had expected to see “Romans” on Heritage Day. However, without our programme, they may never have thought about the following: that those allegedly authentic “Romans” looked very different indeed (even to the untrained eye) depending on whether

a contemporary 21st century re-enactment group serves to enliven the site, or whether we are looking at early 20th century notions of historicity. Perhaps Romans will look different still in re-enactments of the future. Very likely. Reconstructed sites, like theme parks, are ascribed authenticity by the unsuspecting guest. People often cannot be bothered to read the signage and thus be clear about the nature of what they are looking at. Or, even if they do, they may choose not to







differentiate and still give the mere appearance of antiquity the same status as the Real McCoy.

Sites such as Saalburg illustrate the value of making meta-history obvious. Reconstructed to the best of early 20th century ability, the buildings seem so final, right, solid, in their stony appearance: an architectural exclamation mark rather than a question mark. It is our job as interpreters to undermine this.

The learning outcome was not just “Romans had this kind of weaponry”; it was also “This site was opened in 1907 and isn’t actually old”. The most important thought our guests should leave with is that our way of telling the story, of laying out the buildings in a compound and ascribing meanings, can only ever be of our own time. That it is, in itself, subject to trends, agendas, changes. In Germany, popular media such as films tend to spread a very simplified, unquestioning notion of historicity. Heritage sites have a duty to counteract this.

### Lessons Learnt

Although it is highly beneficial and no less entertaining, self-referential interpretation is seen rarely in our country. More sites could adopt a self-critical stance, allowing the ironies of history (ie. making wrong assumptions of the past evident without mocking previous generations of scientists) to seep into current discourse.

Of course, we must not to introduce too many layers of meaning or else the message will be watered down and visitors get

“ It should be one of museum theatre’s core educational aims to encourage audiences to see the historicity of their own contemporary representation of the past.

con interpr fused. We, as eters, must still be in charge of the core insights we want people to go home with so that they will have learnt the right things. Not every visitor enjoys the intellectual exercise of academic relativism; many guests are just after having a good time.

Germany saw a wave of open air museums being established in the 1970s (perhaps as part of the renewed appreciation of “folk culture” in various areas, as well as a more liberal, holistic approach to what constitutes culture in the first place). A lot of these compounds have just been, or will shortly, celebrating their anniversaries. How better to commemorate one’s own roots than to reflect upon the agenda, and assumptions, of their establishment? The same principle can be applied to historical museums and exhibits who tend to hide behind the aloofness of infallible academia. And

who better to further this kind of understanding than us live interpreters?

It should be one of museum theatre’s core educational aims to encourage audiences to see the historicity of their own contemporary representation of the past: how this is but a construct which is subject to change, to constant readjustments and course corrections; how the past is made to serve ideological and political agendas.

I like to believe that our Heritage Day visitors are now less likely to “gobble up” any old so-called authentic programmes they may see in the future, having been our accomplices in a fun exercise at deconstruction. ■



In the next issue (Vol. 18, issue 1-2017):  
Battle of Wisby 2016 by Marc van Hasselt





IMTAL  
EUROPE

THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM THEATRE ALLIANCE EUROPE

IMTAL Europe is a subscription membership organisation open to individuals and to institutions from anywhere in Europe (board@imtal-europe.com). Members include those who perform, programme and curate all forms of live interpretation and museum theatre as well as students and academic researchers.

I would like to join IMTAL-Europe as an:

Institutional Member (£73 / 85 Euros) ☐

Individual Member (£32 / 37 Euros) ☐

Contact name

Institution name (if applicable)

Address

Telephone number:

Fax number:

Email address:

Website address:

Postcode:

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENT METHOD - please tick your preferred option

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to IMTAL-Europe

☐ I will arrange payment by bank draft - payment by BACS to IMTAL Europe in £ Sterling  
IBAN SE87 8000 0821 4996 4288 3988 SWIFTBIC SWEDSESS

☐ I will arrange payment by bank draft - payment by BACS to IMTAL Europe in Euros  
IBAN SE87 8000 0821 4996 4288 3988 SWIFTBIC SWEDSESS

☐ Please send me an invoice quoting purchase order number:

Please return the completed form with your cheque if applicable, to:

Björn M. Jakobsen - Museum Director  
Foteviken Museum  
Museivägen 27  
S-23691 Höllviken  
Sweden

info@foteviken.se

IMTAL  
EUROPE

ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH PERFORMANCE

www.imtal-europe.org

International Museum Theatre Alliance | Company number 3765707 | Charity number 1080494