

EDITOR'S CORNER

Bravo !

After seven years on the board of IMTAL Europe, Verity Walker stepped down as a director at the AGM in Paris last August. She is very busy with her successful Scotland based company Interpretation but will surely keep an eye on our activities. Thank you again Verity for all the effort put into IMTAL Europe. At this AGM, the Board of Directors has been re-elected and is also happy to have two new great personalities. Anna Farthing, currently focused on the bi-centenary of the British Parliamentary Abolition of the Slave Trade in 2007, has been involved in Theatre projects for 20 years. David Mosley, who spent 25 years in the Education Service of the National Railway Museum, was the previous Treasurer for the Group for Education in Museums (GEM). He is now our new Treasurer. Welcome on board both of you! We hope you like your stout and traditional music because you are up for a trip to Belfast soon...

What's on the Menu?

In this edition of European Insights, you will find several reports about the Paris Conference. The articles are sometimes a shorter version of what has been written in total, so if you want to read the full report, you can download it from the What's New section of our website.

Anna Farthing gives us a report on the training day in London, which went very well, and more literature on the subject will be edited in the next Insights.

The minutes of the AGM and the Treasurer's report will certainly catch your eye too.

And finally you will find a few other pieces of information to please your palate.

But what is to be considered seriously now is the Piece de Resistance: **The Global Conference in Belfast!**

It will take place on the 20-23 September 2007, it is currently being prepared and for this occasion, we need you! We have got the recipe, we need the ingredients.

A 'call for papers' has been circulated since October and we hope to have most of the presentations defined and organised by February 2007. There are advantages offered to delegates presenting a performance or a workshop: more details are to be found in the following Call for Papers article.

As you probably have guessed so far, IMTAL is about sharing, not judging. Therefore, do not be shy and get involved in the conference!

Continental Flavour

Christmas time and family celebrations are just behind us. And we are at the beginning of a new year, a time when we often have a review. And so is the end of the year, an occasion we usually

take to have a review.

IMTAL Europe has had a very enthusiastic 2006 and quite a lot of work to achieve.

The workshop at the National Railway Museum in January, the conference in Paris in August and the training day at the National Army Museum last November were the three main rendez-vous of the year. They were

opportunities to gather and exchange our techniques, our opinions and share our projects.

In Paris, for example, we really had the feeling of a European gathering: attendants came from UK of course, but also from Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, France and even from Hungary. Thank you to all of them who have joined us.

We often talk about 'expanding our horizons'... well, actually, we are doing it. Hopefully next time we will have Italy, Spain and Greece at our table!

I now take the opportunity to invite you to a fine moment of reflexion (and I am not Voltaire!) which should be followed

by action.

Our newsletter is a good way to keep in touch: send us articles.

The website is our archive but also a shop window: send us your advert or your news.

But please remember that being interested in IMTAL is about meeting people: come and join us when we get together! Our gatherings are like a glass of wine or a chocolate: they have got some taste, they are good for you and they will give you plenty of ideas!

Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année 2007.

Loïc Bénot

IMTAL Europe co-Director



SUMMARY

Training London 2006 : Practical session p.3
with Anna Farthing

A Bluffer's Guide to... Role Play p.4-5

Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum p.6-7

PARIS 2006 IMTAL Conference p.6-14

Complete report !

IMTAL Europe AGM 2006 : the Minutes p.15-16

Treasurer's report 2005/2006 p.17

Belfast 2007 : Call for papers ! p.18-19

ENGAGING AUDIENCES THROUGH PERFORMANCE

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM THEATRE ALLIANCE

CASTLE MUSEUM - NOTTINGHAM - NG1 6EL ENGLAND



MEMBERS' CORNER



WELCOME to our new Members

Institutional members :

Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum, Budapest, HUNGARY
Contact: Gabor Erenyi

Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans, WALES
Contact: Owain Rys

Historisch Openlucht Museum, Eindhoven, THE NETHERLANDS
Contact: Bas Van Lingen

Crearthis, Pantin, FRANCE
Contact: Richard Jousselin

Individual members :

Marc Terisse - FRANCE



INSTITUTIONS: make the most of the membership benefits !

Please have another look to the list of benefits for institutions. The fee is a bit higher than for individuals but you are offered much more. For instance, we encourage you to send us articles and **adverts** (one free per year) and a **website banner** if you want to be the '**member of the month**' appearing on our website mainpage.

Do not let us decide for you...

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MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTION 2007-2008

As announced in our previous edition, June 2007 is the month to renew your membership. We encourage you to visit our website to check the difference between institutional benefits and individual ones.

Institutional:

£70 OR 102€ per year

Individual:

£30 OR 44€ per year

So, please just send a cheque (made payable to IMTAL-Europe) to
Jo Kemp -Treasurer/Membership Secretary-
IMTAL Europe, Castle Museum, Nottingham, NG1 6EL United Kingdom.

Or pay by bank draft to IMTAL Europe.

In £ Sterling: IBAN GB74 BARC 20-80-57 80132187 SWIFT: BARCGB22
In Euros: IBAN: GB24 BARC 20-80-57 67355277 SWIFT: BARCGB22

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TRAINING - LONDON 2006:

Practical session with Anna Farthing.

You could not join our Training Session at the National Army Museum? Here is a first article about what went on. More will follow...

This followed an expert example of live interpretation in the Crimea gallery and gave us an opportunity to unpick and explore some of the techniques that can be used to build and maintain an audience in a traditional gallery full of cases with an audience that is not expecting to have to participate in a "performance".

In the space of a brief half hour we explored how we might capture and engage the attention of others in a given space without speech or costume.

After walking randomly in the space, each person identified two others in the room (without letting it be known who they were) and attempted to make an equilateral triangular relationship in the space with them. The movement in the room soon settled down and each person had two people who they had picked out and got into a good place for potential communication. (Triangles are useful as the audience is less likely to back away or all get stuck behind you)

In the next exercise we walked around the space without eye contact, being anonymous. On a clap we froze, and then on a count of five we magnified our body positions and considered where our energies and points of balance were. We were mostly closed, contracted and inward looking. Our contact with the floor was generally not balanced.

This exercise was repeated with personal and individual eye contact, with a sense of ownership of the space, and followed by the same freeze and magnify command, in order to identify where in the body the energy was focussed. We were mostly open, expanded and outward looking. Our contact with the floor was generally more grounded and balanced. Energy was centred.

We tried overt ways of getting attention. We imagined being in a market square trying to compete for attention to sell our wares. On freezing we identified that our energy was very high in the body, we were not able to travel around the space much, and we were not very grounded.

We tried more covert means of getting attention, firstly by picking out individuals and drawing them near (energies were more grounded but we were needing rather than choosing to travel), and then by being so focussed and fascinated by an object that it drew the attention of others to us (for this to be effective we needed to frame the object with our bodies but without overtly showing it off)

It is not necessary to be bigger, louder or more energetic to draw and hold attention

Conclusion

It is not necessary to be bigger, louder or more energetic to draw and hold attention.

Enticing engagement with any potential audience is as much about the subtle manipulation of spacial relationships, the direction of focus, and the grounding of (what can be very nervous) energy, as about what is said or done or how we are dressed. Street theatre techniques can work on a gallery floor and can help build nervous visitors into a confident and willing audience.

Anna Farthing
IMTAL Europe co-Director



**IMTAL-EUROPE
TRAINING DAY**

**LONDON,
FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2006**

a bluffer's guide to role play

By Catherine Shingler

In 1995 I began work as a jobsharing role player at Gladstone Pottery Museum, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent. The only training or experience we had was a week my jobshare had spent at Llancaiach Fawr, where the role play is entirely immersive: interpreters remain in character all the time, even with each other. Apart from that we had to work it out for ourselves.

Until 2001 I was Maud Butters, a correspondence clerk in the office at the Gladstone China Works in 1910; then I became Susannah Peake, a doctor's housekeeper in 1895 in the Red House as it fitted in better with the Victorians in the National Curriculum.

Role playing, or first person interpretation, for an adult audience and role playing for school groups involve two separate techniques. Adults are relatively unpredictable: they are likely to ask questions about a character and want a greater depth of information. Schools usually have particular information requirements and don't always have the time or interest to interrogate a character in any depth.

There are, however, basics useful for establishing any sort of role play.

1. Getting started.

You should think about what sort of information you want to get across, to whom, and in what circumstances. It may be that third person interpretation would be more appropriate, or that you can't afford sufficiently realistic costumes. Or on reflection you may feel that role play is fundamentally misleading, that your visitors won't understand that it is just a reflection of opinion like any other method of historical interpretation.

Unless you bear a striking facial resemblance to a real historical character it is better to aim for the generic rather than the particular. Tomorrow you may fall under a bus and

have to be replaced by someone who looks less like Henry VIII, Florence Nightingale or Charles Darwin (or whoever) than you do.

Visitors can know too much about your character, and can catch you out more easily.

Paradoxically, you are in a position to divulge more information about the character as a gentleman of the bedchamber or housekeeper or other anonymous member of the famous character's circle. You can "gossip", establishing a more intimate relationship with your audience than if you were speaking from a position of greatness. You



A Bluffer's guide to role play (continued)

A bluffer's guide to:

- role play
- third person costumed interpretation in museums
- presenting educational sessions for schools

Written by experienced live interpreter, Catherine Shingler, and produced by Stoke-on-Trent Museums, this is a useful guide to anyone just starting out in this area of work. It is a very easy read, and describes the differences in technique and potential pitfalls of first or third person interpretation. The final section will be useful to anyone tackling education sessions for the first time, with helpful hints for getting school groups eating out of your hand!

Copies of the booklet are available free of charge by contacting Cathy direct at: Cathy Shingler, Interpretation Officer (Schools), Stoke-on-Trent Museums Education Service, c/o Gladstone Pottery Museum, Uttoxeter Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 1PQ.

Email: cathy.shingler@swift.stoke.gov.uk

It is also possible to download it from the Members Section of www.imtal-europe.org!

SURFING THE NET : For a better navigation.

Since the release of our new website, we have been observing the evolution of our "visitors". Despite the fact that more people bookmark us in their favourites (about 10% in July, 30% in November), which is a good, there is one concern about the way people arrive to our site.

More than 90% of the visitors directly arrive on our main page either by typing the exact address (or using the favourites) or through a 'Google' search. It means almost no-one visit us indirectly, using links from other websites.

One of the answers is to use a banner and link to our site (see picture). We would like this banner to be inserted in several related museum - cultural - heritage - theatre websites and as a start, we would like to ask you!

It would be of great help if IMTAL members could use this banner on their website and would have a double purpose: show that you are a member (and use IMTAL's image) and invite your website visitors to have a look at www.imtal-europe.org.

If you have not received it yet by email, the banner is downloadable from our website. Thank you!

CAN YOU Read it ?

Olly srmal poelpe can.

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IMTAL
EUROPE

ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH PERFORMANCE

SCHOLA ARTIS GLADII ET ARMORUM

A Reenactment and Martial Arts School in Hungary

by Gabor Erenyi

Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum, Hungary

There is an organization in Hungary focusing on bringing history closer to the public by choosing quite a unique direct approach. People, especially kids and teenagers just love reenactment shows and renaissance fairs and some of them are not satisfied with just what one reenactment event has got to offer... so why don't let them join the fun and be reenactors themselves?

The beginning...

S.A.G.A., an acronym for Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum (School of the Art of the Sword and Weapons) started in 2001 as a WMA (Western Martial Arts) association. However, Western Martial Arts were virtually unknown in Hungary, while the reenactment scene was already there. Newcomers loved the swordfighting in SAGA, but knowing not the difference between Western Martial Arts and reenactment, they did not understand why a group focusing on medieval fighting methods didn't dress up and didn't appear on reenactment events. The club gained much popularity very quickly and was overcrowded with members, and the demand to venture into the field of reenactment got louder and louder. So finally, the leaders of SAGA "gave in" and started to experiment with reenactment, too.

However, as originally it wasn't their main activity, the group did not focus much on the appearance and proper historical knowledge besides fighting methods, their main concern was still swordfighting. Members were pretty much free to wear what they want and interpret history as they liked. This, of course, quickly resulted in chaos.

One day the group's leading body realized that this could not go on: the members of the martial arts school had to be educated not only on swordfighting, but a whole new field awaited them: the complex wide-wide world of life in the ancient and middle ages. So they started to educate their members and one day they recognized, that unnoticed, they have turned to

a martial arts and reenactment school.

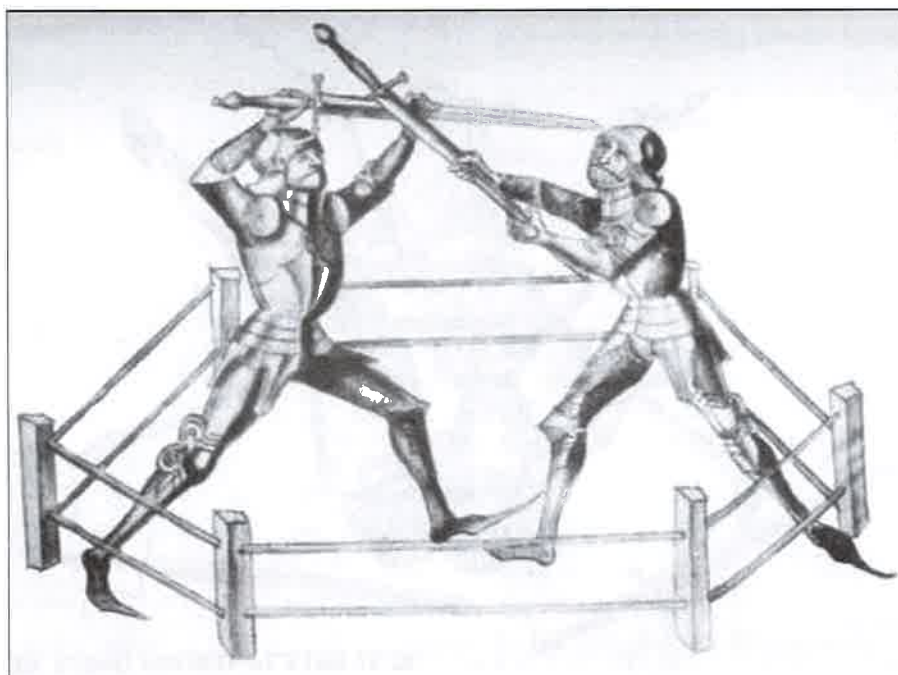
As in any martial arts, the strong focus on discipline, accuracy, and the training sessions was already there, so there was a strong basis to build upon. It just had to be supplemented by education on various historical periods, the lifestyle, religion, beliefs, culture and countless other topics. A vast world and not an easy task, but the group was already focusing on historical research based on the western martial arts background, so it wasn't completely new for them.

Each new recruit who is planning to reenact a fighting character one day is required to take part of the martial arts training. This training still focuses only on the aspects of western historical martial arts, as there are some members who are not interested in reenactment. This part of SAGA is still a martial arts school, completely separated from the reenactment scene, just as it was in the beginning. It uses the

regular methods of most western martial arts groups: the fighting techniques are reconstructed from period fight manuals, the pupils train in modern clothing, using sport fencing masks and padded weapons for free sparring, wooden wasters for learning the techniques and blunt steel replicas to master them. Although there are a lot of fighting techniques which are inherently too dangerous to present in a reenactment show, these are taught as well, as the main concern here is to learn what was real instead of just what can be presented. It also teaches the group's members the necessary discipline and makes them prove their determination.

After each training session, a lecture is held. There are two types of lectures: mandatory lectures presented by the group's instructors and presentations researched by the students themselves. The mandatory lectures include "The Scientific Approach to History", "First Aid and Safety Concerns", various

Fighting techniques are reconstructed from period fight manuals



Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum (continued)



lectures on medieval weapons and armor and "The Ideals and Beliefs of Chivalry". This latter must not only be learnt, but practiced, therefore the last few minutes of this presentation are reserved for "How can I use Chivalry in the modern world?" The presentations are followed by workshops: further presentations, dance courses, rehearsals, equipment making, etc.

The association has a reputation of the most authentic group in Hungary: for example in 2005 there was a gathering and contest of reenactment groups in the Hungarian historic town of Eger, organized by some of the most renowned historians of the country, with SAGA winning the competition; the award was presented with the commentary that SAGA has not

SAGA considers itself not just a reenactment group, but a reenactment school

only won the competition, but in reality, what they do, should be a different category, a new "weight division" should be created for them.

So, although as rules have gotten stricter, more and more people were leaving, the name SAGA still attracts newcomers. Curiously there are also a lot of students, who are members of other reenactment groups, but come to SAGA for study. That's one of

the reasons SAGA considers itself not just a reenactment group, but a reenactment school, among the fact that there are some students who are not planning to reenact, they are only here because they want to satisfy their thirst for knowledge about history. And satisfying the thirst for historical knowledge is what all forms of live interpretation should be all about...

Gabor Erenyi
Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum

If you want to read the complete article, it is available on www.imtal-europe.org

Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum, Hungary -

Email: saga@middleages.hu
Web: www.middleages.hu

PARIS 2006 IMTAL CONFERENCE

Whether you managed to join us in Paris or not, you will find in the following pages a full report of the Event !

Conquering Hearts & Minds...

WILFRED OWEN, “the voice of the first world war”.

By Gabor Erenyi,
Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum, Hungary

The first live interpretation of the 2006 IMTAL Europe Conference was presented to us by Sam Doty and Tristan Langlois of the National Army Museum (London-Chelsea UK).

We had the opportunity to enjoy a superbly performed interview technique, with Tristan playing the famous poet, Wilfred Owen, “the voice of the first world war” and Sam acting as the interviewer. Tristan was, of course, using first person interpretation.

He did not only enter the stage dressed in a complete authentic first world war uniform, but his whole complexion, hairstyle, his whole personality was reflecting the role he had chosen. His acting was astonishing, and I think all people present could feel the overwhelming power of first person live interpretation. We might had smiled at his timidity as he read an early poem of his, but as he started to speak about his experiences in the military hospital, deadly silence fell upon the audience. We heard his voice start to falter, we saw him tremble as he tried to light a cigarette and suddenly the horrors of war were among us. I don't think there was anyone who did not feel the terror, pity and sympathy for the



soldiers lost in the Great War. (Wilfred Owen, too, died in one of the last battles of the war.)

Live interpretation does have unbelievable power indeed! How much information, how many emotions would have been lost if we could only read the same information in history book or as some text in a museum next to a lifeless piece of an old relic from the war? How easier is it to receive this information if it is being conveyed by a feeling, breathing person whom you might actually believe than he has been there? I think this technique is doubtless capable of enriching and enhancing the museum experience.

Gabor Erenyi
Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum

“As he started to speak about his experiences in the military hospital, deadly silence fell upon the audience.”

www.national-army-museum.ac.uk



1942: Cockleshell Heroes

By Hui-Ling Chen,
National Museum of Natural Science - Taiwan -

Timothy Lowe, currently working for the Royal Armouries-Fort Nelson- presented the "Cockleshell Heroes" in one exhibit room of the Musée de l'Armée. He was dressed up in the outfit of commandos and his face painted with ashes as if he just escaped from an exploded spot.

Timothy told a story in first person about Bill Sparks, who was a former British Royal Marine, one of the two survivors on a mission during the Second World War. Bill and the other eleven commandos were assigned to attack on Germany armed ships in the harbour of Bordeaux. To avoid injuring innocent civilians, the commandos were sent to blow up these ships instead of using the high-level bombing. The submarine carried the commandos to the seashore and left them without waiting for their accomplishment: in case the mines exploded, the alert would put the submarine in danger. That was the reason why the British Army offered the commandos only a one-way ticket.

It was so difficult to tell this complicated story in 40 minutes, but Timothy Lowe made it. With his professional theatre technique, we all immersed ourselves into the historic context and atmosphere. Especially, we understood well the object used by the commandos and their meanings in the War. The human aspect about friendship, the conflict between the mission and the companion were vividly described in his theatre interpretation. Arousing the emotions of the visitors is a difficult task in the museum, but Timothy Lowe proved that theatre interpretation can accomplish this mission better than only presenting the objects with the explanative board.

During the discussion that followed, some people doubted the visitors could understand quickly a complicated storyline with so many names. Consequently, some suggested that it would be better to add an introduction before the theatre interpretation and an open-discussion afterwards. I think that it would be a good method to indicate the main story line firstly and repeat the key point lastly.

Hui-Ling Chen
National Museum of Natural Science



*That was the reason why
the British Army offered
the commandos only a
one- way ticket.*

The story of Bill Sparks, who died in 2002, is a thrilling and epic one. If you want to know more about it, please read the full version of this article available on our website. "Cockleshell Heroes" is also a good way to search the internet.

PROVOCATION at the Musée Royal de l'Armée, Brussels.

Christine Van Everbroeck presented
"The educative approach at MRA,
including totalitarian propaganda, a
suitable theme for children?"

At first, she introduced the history of Royal Museum of the armed Forces and of Military History (MRA, Bruxelles BELGIUM), which was created for the world Exhibition of 1910 and was located permanently in the Jubilee Parc in 1923. This museum houses weapons, uniforms, planes, ships, tanks, paintings, sculptures and miniatures which tell the story of soldiers and sailors showing the evolution in military techniques from mediaeval to present. In her speech, C. Van Everbroeck introduced 2 types of activities in MRA.



www.klm-mra.be

symbol of the government. The children then analyze the colors, slogans and layouts of the posters for the elections of Parliament in Belgium in 1936. The educators explain that propaganda is not only used by dictatorial systems of the past but also by democratic countries today on TV, Web and advertising.

As a good way to encourage children understand the ideology by looking carefully at the products of totalitarian propaganda in both dictatorial and democratic countries, they are finally invited to design their own propaganda poster.

The most motivating theme: "convince your parents that going to school is bad for you!"

Hui-Ling Chen

The Middle Age

To be more accessible for the younger visitors, MRA organized more relaxing activities – workshops with traditional guided tours in bilingualism (French and Dutch) which focused specially on the Middle Age. Two educators wearing mediaeval clothes guide the children to visit the collection of this museum. The children make their own helmets, design their gowns or coats and shields in a workshop. After the hands-on, the little knights and maids attend a mediaeval lunch (chicken, ham, bread, vegetable pies, cheese, grapes and a kind of cider). During the meal, they are taught the mediaeval art of dining, habits and customs. After the meal, a master-in-arms teaches how to fence. Through the surrounded atmosphere created by this museum, the children have a better understanding of the past.

Totalitarian propaganda

The reason why the museum affords a workshop about propaganda was the demand of the audience – the necessity of guided tour about the interwar period for the children. Propaganda is a main feature in the development of authoritarian political systems.

Propaganda is not only used by dictatorial systems of the past but also by democratic countries today.

During this workshop, 15 children are divided into small groups to research the showcases, make a jigsaw and handle collection pieces. Each group receive a folder with the questions they try to answer during the visit. For example, find different objects (hat, helmet, cap) corresponding to the countries established after the First World War: Russia (a new country born with a revolution), Germany (a country losing its territory) etc. The second point is to find out the name of the dictator of this country and draw the



1545: The sinking of the Mary Rose

By Gabor Erenyi,
Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum, Hungary

This interpretation was performed in the Salles d'Armures by Geoffrey Pye from the Royal Armouries – Fort Nelson. Geoffrey presented us the story of the sinking of the Mary Rose in 1545 as it might have been told by a survivor.

*“As the jar left his lips,
Geoffrey Pye, interpreter
from the Royal Armouries,
was gone...”*

There are two things I would like to point out of Geoff's amazing interpretation. First of all, I found his solution of the problem of how to switch from the third person interpretation of the introduction to the first person interpretation of the main piece brilliant. First he talked a little bit about the backgrounds, the era, the Mary Rose ship and what we now of her sinking. Then he simply sat down to the chair, sipped a bit of ale from his jar, and as the jar left his lips, Geoffrey Pye interpreter from the Royal Armouries was gone... instead, there was a sailor from the 16th century sitting on the chair previously occupied by a live interpreter from the 21st century.

*“The sailor looked back and
saw a dog desperately
struggling for his life”*

The other thing I found startling is the amazing effort put into the details to make the story come alive. Geoffrey, as so many interpreters during the

conference, managed to reach the very heart of the audience, to really “conquer hearts and minds”. The most poignant moment of his performance (and maybe of the whole conference) was when he told us how he, the sailor, looked back and saw a dog desperately struggling for his life on the sinking ship. As Geoff later told us, there really was a skeleton of a dog found among the ruins of Mary Rose.

But it was not only the spectacular performance which made this interpretation interesting. I think the hottest debate of the conference broke out after Geoffrey has finished his story. Some people objected that he did not use the proper accent; other people were not as harsh and said that it did not matter as much and the performer should use an accent he or she is more comfortable with, even if it is not 100 percent accurate. Being not a native English speaker, I cannot judge who was right, but I do think that these debates encourage constructive criticism and therefore have the right to be present at such conferences even if the topic can be bit sensitive.

Gabor Erenyi
Schola Artis Gladii et Armorum



THE PARIS CONFERENCE REPORT

By Anna Farthing,

Collaborative Student Manchester University & The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

I was extremely fortunate and grateful to be awarded a bursary contributing towards the costs of my attending the conference in Paris. It was inspiring to see and discuss such a variety of work, in a compressed period of time, in a setting that combined the opulent splendour of the Salon d'Honneur, and the live workings of both a museum and a military headquarters.

I have been asked to report back on the presentations given by *de pied en cap* at Musee de l'Armee, Daniel Raichvarg of Universite de Bourgogne, Hui-ling Chen of the National Museum of Natural Science in Taiwan and Chris Gidlow from the Historic Royal Palaces, London. I cannot adequately relate the richness and detail of their contributions in the space available, but from the point of view of someone engaged with both practice and research concerning the use of drama in museums, I will try to draw out those themes that I found particularly thought provoking myself.

Unspoken connections between the live and the memorialised

Representing live interpretation in the third person, Loïc and Michel of Paris based *De Pied En Cap* demonstrated their work as costumed guides at Les Invalides in the uniforms of Napoleon's personal guards, including a visit to the tomb of the Emperor. In costume, but not limited by being in role, they gave an informative and entertaining tour of the site with a really well balanced blend of information, historical context, anecdote and humour. Loïc and Michel knew a great deal about the site, and were highly skilled at matching the tone of the presentation

to the atmosphere of the environment and the queries of the participants. They were also attuned to the power of the iconic moment, such as when they stood before the statues of men in the same costumes, provoking unspoken connections between the live and the memorialised. Their presence always complemented the developing relationship between the site and the visitor rather than forcing or disrupting it. Any curators concerned about Costumed Live Interpretation being under researched or inappropriate would have been converted by the work of *De Pied en Cap* in sensitively opening up a very layered and complex site. Their fluency in both English and French also added to the experience for an international group. How Loïc Benot, as the Paris based IMTAL director, hosted the conference with such calm professionalism and hospitality and also found the time to offer us a demonstration of his professional practice, is testament to his fantastic energy and commitment.

Mr Matter and Mrs Anti-matter argue their points of view...

The second French representative, Daniel Raichvarg, drew upon both his academic work in *Communicating Science to the Public* at The University of Bourgogne and his work as a freelance theatre artist and practitioner working in Paris. Daniel gave us an historical overview of theatre practice in museums, from Merce Cunningham's first dance through the galleries of The Museum of Vienna in 1964 to his own most recent carnivalesque explorations with popular culture, media, and music exploring the ethics of science.





Daniel claims he does not set out to educate but invites the audience to form their own connections and to find their own resonances. From his research, this emotional engagement is shown to aid the retention and recall of memory. He showed us examples from Chiharu Shiota's "Dialogue from DNA" installation at the Centre for Japanese Art and Technology in Krakow, demonstrating how the metaphor of shoes could be used to provoke thoughts about the presence and absence of stories. These individual shoes were displayed with little notes, and other small objects of meaning that were chosen by community contributors. However, these highly personal shoes brought to mind the heap of anonymous shoes, the icon of which we are all familiar with, not so far from Krakov. Although this example was not live, it was certainly theatrical, dramatic and performative.

Daniel also talked about his own work and showed slides of a project which used circus and physical theatre forms to explore complex scientific principles and ethics. Galileo juggles gravity, Newton attempts alchemy with magic and Mr Matter and Mrs Anti-matter argue their points of view. The 25 minute show encourages participation while leaving the audience safely in their seats, simply by getting the audience clapping and singing along, and gradually taking them deeper into the consideration of more complex questions. Daniel's practice and research will be of interest to anyone looking for new ways to develop their work or their studies.

Museums in Taiwan are important repositories of National Identity

Hui-ling Chen's presentation covered the ways in which museum guides can occupy diverse points along the spectrum between teacher and actor, and employ playful and improvisational methods of performance such as music theatre, treasure hunts, storytelling and particularly puppetry in order to make the complex or daunting more accessible and appealing. Hui-ling showed us many examples from her researches in France and Britain and her own work in Taiwan, but it was the focus on the use of puppetry that seemed to me to present the widest range of opportunities. In order to explore complex concepts of Chinese medicine, children followed a guide on a hunt through a garden until discovering a tiny puppet character who explained the medicinal uses of the plants. Scripted puppet shows used animal characters to demonstrate the rhythms of life, day and night, life and death. For an Oceania gallery a puppet Captain Cook introduced the geography of the area. Representing an elderly benefactor of the museum, a hand puppet took on the role of 83 year old Mr Liu to interpret the collections he had donated. Hui-ling did not reserve this use of popular theatrical techniques for audiences of children, she also cited as example a night time opening at the Pompidou Centre in which sexy saxophonists and erotic dancers were used to draw a very diverse and different crowd to the norm.

Museums in Taiwan are important repositories of National Identity. Hui-ling explained their unique role in preserving Chinese culture, much of which was destroyed on the main land during the Cultural Revolution. The recreation of The Astronomical Clock in 1993, the technology for which was invented by the Chinese a thousand years ago but then lost, seems in itself an act of performance. The scale of the twelve meter water tower means that most visitors take a photograph and move on. Hui-ling hopes to use theatrical tools, such as puppetry, to help visitors see both the macro and the micro view, and to better understand the cultural resonances of this object. Her broad ranging international researches will doubtless add greatly to the range of work developed in Taiwan.

article continued on next page...>>>

THE PARIS CONFERENCE REPORT (continued)

Rigorous and regular evaluation at Historical Royal Palaces

The final presentation of the conference was from Chris Gidlow of the Historical Royal Palaces in London. Everything about this presentation seemed big. The vast logistical scale of operating across several major tourist sites from Hampton Court to The Tower of London, the budgets which pay staff more than elsewhere, and fund the most authentic recreation of costumes, the longer term three year engagements with sub-contractors, the round the year operation, and the engagement with big themes such as conflicting religious, political and social ideologies. Chris explained the development of the use of live interpretation at the palaces, from being part of marketing to being part of education, from the use of 3rd person to the use of 1st person interpretation, and from being staunchly anti-theatrical to staging trials and the 400th Anniversary of Macbeth. Chris is often asked whether the work is educational, and he outlined some of the evaluation methods that Past Pleasures employ. I found the qualitative methods of evaluation, such as mind-mapping and tracking emotional journeys by recording visitor's monologues or conversations particularly interesting. Rigorous and regular evaluation on such a large scale which provides evidence of live interpretation being both educational and entertaining, and is therefore worth investing in, benefits the whole industry. Even those who are working alone with limited resources can benefit from the outcomes of such well-resourced projects by joining IMTAL.

If I try to draw together some kind of summary it may be this. At this IMTAL conference I was heartened by the wide range of performance methods and drama practices represented, which included in-depth character work both scripted and improvised, puppetry, music, forum theatre, participatory work with young people, active learning about history, and



of course costumed interpretation. But theatre everywhere in the last twenty years has become more interdisciplinary and participative, embracing popular forms such as puppetry and circus, combining music and multi-media, and blurring the line between performer and audience. These varied approaches to audience engagement seem particularly apt in the wake of the IPPR report "From Access to Participation: Cultural Policy and Civil Renewal" which makes specific reference to the part participation with heritage can play in building a sustainable society. The making of drama, in whatever medium, may have something to offer those museums seeking to widen participation through providing opportunities for a creative process, and can provide an alternative to the more usually employed visual art, literature or craft works. Drama

may therefore increasingly find a place in those heritage departments concerned with inclusion, audience development and outreach as well as marketing, interpretation or education. But rather than start from scratch, those seeking to employ practitioners should be encouraged to begin with those who already have expertise in the specific requirements and myriad forms of Museum Theatre.

I am delighted to have been elected to join the IMTAL board of directors and look forward to contributing to arrangements for forthcoming events and to the global conference to be held in Belfast next year.

Anna Farthing

References

www.depiedencap.net

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Dialogue from DNA : www.chiharu-shiota.com

www.hrp.org.uk

www.manchester.ac.uk/plh

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www.nms.edu.tw/index_eng.html

IMTAL Europe AGM 2006 : The Minutes.

AGM

Les Invalides, Paris, 4 August

Apologies: Carran Waterfield & Richard Talbot – Triangle, Towse, Graham and Bronwen Harrison – Sun Jester, Chris Cade, Chris Bailey, Andrew Ashmore Associates, Elaine Parker, Anna Bunney.

Present: Jo Kemp (Minutes), Robert Forshaw (Chair), Verity Walker, Loic Benot, Rosie Roche, Owain Rhys, John Paul Coyle, Anders Aborg, Gundela Petterson, Chris Laing, Jean Harvest, David Mosley, Lynne Ashton, Oliver Klaukien, Anna Farthing, Ludivine Alexis, Samantha Doty, Tristan Langlois, Geoff Pye, Tim Lowe, Stephen Howe, Jenny Kidd, Tony Jackson, Timothy Hick.

• **Approval of Previous Minutes** - The Minutes of the AGM held in Nottingham on 8 August 2005 were approved.

• **Directors' Report** - The directors report was tabled by Robert Forshaw, Chair.

• **Treasurer's Report** - The treasurer's report was tabled by Jo Kemp (details included in following pages). Income for the period 1/6/05 to 31/5/06 was £859 (there was a fee break for this year) and expenditure £3277.80 and the current balance stands at £7,637.04. Some of this reserve will be spent very shortly to pay the designers for the work they have done on the IMTAL Europe rebranding, website, promotional material etc. Anticipated income through subscriptions for the financial year 1/6/06 to 31/5/07 is approximately £5000.

• **Election of Officers** - It is a requirement that one-third of the directors, or if their number is not a multiple of three then the number nearest to one-third, shall retire from office each year. However, a retiring director shall be eligible for re-election. Verity Walker stood down and the Board and Members extended thanks to her for her hard work over the years. Jo Kemp was standing for re-election and two members, Anna Farthing and David Mosley were standing for election. It had been agreed by the Board that in preparation for the work leading up to the Global Conference in Belfast in 2007, that an addition member would be added to the Board, taking it from 5 to 6 Directors. Therefore all those standing for election could potentially be voted onto the Board, and this information had been made clear when the voting forms were sent out.

A total of 30 voting forms were received. Votes were recorded and the directors duly elected as follows;

Anna Farthing	- 28 votes	Elected
David Mosley	- 29 votes	Elected
Jo Kemp	- 30 votes	Elected



I. IMTAL Global Conference Update

Title/Themes – Pushing the Boundaries (not confirmed).

Dates – Put them in your diaries now! Wed 19, Thurs 20, Fri 21, Sat 22, Sun 23 September 2007

Venues – Queen's University, Ulster Folk & Transport Museum, W5 – National Science Museum of Northern Ireland, Omagh American Folk Park, Navan Fort.

Entertainment – Gala Dinner, Murder Mystery, Ceilidh (pronounced "kaylee")

Budget – Robert has drawn up a draft budget based on 120-150 delegates. Costs increase or reduce according to number of delegates.

Approximate delegate fee £220, with early bird discounts. Presenters will be given free accommodation at Stranmillis Teaching College.

Approval of organising committee – In addition to the Board Members, the Chair asked for members who would be interested in helping out with any aspects of the conference, either pre, during or both.

The following offered support;

John Paul Coyle, Jenny Kidd, Geoff Pye.....others welcome, please contact Robert Forshaw. Lynne Ashton offered support and advice as she was involved in the GEM conference in Belfast and also suggested contacting John Stevenson from GEM for advice.

What still needs to be done – Call for papers by the end of September 2006 with a deadline for returns by the end of January. Booking available from May 2007. Any enquiries about the Belfast Conference to Robert Forshaw.

What members suggested;

Papers to be very focussed on live interpretation, not too many presentations. Open discussions and debates, time to network, time to see the museums that you go to, focus on the audiences – who are we doing it for?

article continued on next page >>>

Possible title; *Changing Lives through Live Interpretation*. Ways of convincing managers that they need live interpretation, 'Changing Minds'. How to put together a 'package' or 'business plan' to take to managers, e.g. using case studies and real statistics showing the impact on visitors. Two-way communication – understanding the reasons that may hold managers/museum directors back from using live interpretation, understanding their point of view and not creating a 'them' and 'us' situation. Possible ½ day tours etc. arranged as part of the conference to include spouses.

2. Report on New Website

£6,000 was allocated at the last AGM for the development of the new logo/image, website, publicity materials etc. We now have a new logo, headed paper, glossy postcard, new format newsletter and website. In May, the first month that the website was online, there were 350 different visitors to the site. In July, 320. The average time spent on the site in May was 4 minutes – now it has risen to 6 minutes. 85% of visitors typed in the IMTAL Europe address directly, 7% came from a link to another site. 10% added IMTAL Europe to their list of 'favourites'. Most visitors were from the UK and England, but also others. The Members section is now available, if you haven't already been emailed a password, please contact Loic. This section will be refreshed monthly with new articles. For the 2007 Global conference in Belfast there will be a 'mini-website' specifically with information and downloadable booking forms etc. Also possibly direct payment through the internet, which may be easier as people will be attending from all over the world. **Any enquiries about the website to Loic Benot.**

3. Bursary Development

Four people attending the Paris conference were granted bursaries or equivalent reduced rates, in return for writing up their thoughts on particular aspects of the conference, for the newsletter. We aim to offer something

similar for the Belfast conference. Small travel bursaries are also available for the training days and for members to attend other conferences on behalf of, and to promote, IMTAL Europe. Lynne Ashton suggested that the Visitor Attraction Conference would be a useful one for IMTAL to attend, it is London based and attracts the people with the power and money. It is about £180 to attend. Rosie has looked into the MA Conference, but the costs to attend this with a stand are very expensive. **Any enquiries about bursaries to Rosie Roche.**

4. Training Day 2007

The next two training days planned are one at the National Army Museum in November and one in the South West in January/February. One of these will be on the theme of 'bring a curator' – or another member of staff whom you would like to convince about the power of live interpretation. More details of the training days will be distributed through the newsletter, on the website and via the E-list. **Any enquiries about the training days to Rosie Roche.**

5. Any Other Business

Paul Taylor from IMTAL (USA) is in the process of drawing up an official agreement between IMTAL Europe, IMTAL USA and IMTAL Australia. The thrust of the agreement is that we will become more officially affiliated and also support each other wherever possible. This already happens, but it will be useful to have it on a more official footing. Rob read the draft agreement to the Members and there were no concerns. However, it was noted that it would be consistent if IMTAL in America, re titled themselves IMTAL US, in the same way that IMTAL Europe and IMTAL Australia do.

ACTION: Robert to put this to IMTAL via Paul Taylor.

Oliver Klaukien noted that at present the website is only in English and French and that he would like to see a German translation. Loic explained that we had decided to focus on English and French for the time being, but that it was an ambition to have more European languages catered for. **Oliver volunteered to translate the website into German.**

Meeting ended 11.35am

Minutes agreed as a true record of the AGM.



The Museums & Heritage Show is the UK's leading trade exhibition for the world of museums, galleries and heritage visitor attractions. Now in its 15th year it is firmly established as a 'must do' event for anyone working in this sector.

The Show exists to help suppliers and operators by providing real solutions, ideas and inspiration. Together with the Museums & Heritage Awards for Excellence these events provide an unparalleled opportunity for the entire industry.

Make sure 9 & 10 May 2007 is highlighted in your diary!

More information at:
www.museumsandheritage.com

TREASURER'S REPORT

2005 - 2006

Jo Kemp,
Treasurer IMTAL Europe
August 1st 2006

Summary of Income	£
Membership subscriptions *	650,00
Training Day Fees	209,00
Total Income	859,00

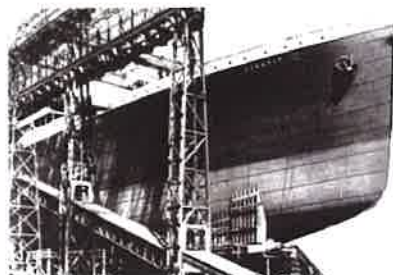
Resource Expenditure	£
Training Days/AGM	889,35
Newsletter typesetting	100,00
Directory CD	155,10
Postage/Copying/Stationery	180,95
Website/Domain Charge	52,88
Accountancy	499,38
Director travel/accomodation/subsistence expenses	1370,14
Bursaries	0,00
Companies House annual returns	30,00
Total Expenditure	3277,80

Funds at 1st June 2005	10 055,84
Funds at 31st May 2006	7637,04

* Collection of arrears during fee break period

BELFAST 2007 GLOBAL CONFERENCE

Call for papers !



Belfast
Northern Ireland

20th-23rd
September 2007



"CHALLENGING MUSEUM THEATRE"

The 5th Biennial International Museum Theatre Alliance Conference 2007

Proposals are invited by the organizing committee for the IMTAL Global Conference in Belfast 2007.

Before proposing a presentation we would recommend that you read the guidelines below, which will be used as criteria for selection:

Themed Days:

Days 1 & 2 will be themed days and descriptions are beneath. This means we would ask for those delegates wishing to present to incorporate that particular theme.

Day 1- Interpreting Belfast

We would invite Museum Theatre Practitioners around the globe to present a performance on the Theme of Belfast. Whether that's taking inspiration from the Titanic that was built there, The Belfast Blitz of 1941, The 30 years of Troubles, or even the industrial v agricultural world - we would invite you to showcase how you would interpret Belfast.

Day 2- Museum Theatre: what's the point?

We would like to give the opportunity for delegates to present workshops in Museum Theatre Training so we can all learn new skills and develop a broader understanding of the various roles within Museum Theatre. We will also ask for delegates to offer their services in chairing a number of forums and debates on some of the most critical and important issues facing Museum Theatre.

Day 3- Day trip to Omagh & Armagh

Day 4- What's next for Museum Theatre?

We would like to give the opportunity for delegates to present innovative and challenging performances and workshops that stretch the boundaries of what Museum Theatre can achieve.

Presentation Options

1. Performance:

We would suggest a time limit of 1 – 1 ½ hours. The Performance should encompass no more than 15 minutes for introductions and slide presentations. We would envisage allowing 15 minutes for questioning therefore leaving 30-60 minutes for performance. We would discourage delegates from the "Show and Tell" form of presentation about what they currently do, but would prefer all presentations to be related to the overall theme of the conference.

2. Workshops:

We would suggest a time limit of 2 hours. They should be hands-on training workshops in any field of museum theatre, and/or, tie into the overall theme of the conference of "Challenging Museum Theatre". Workshop proposals are invited for Day 1 – Interpreting Belfast, Day 2 – Museum Theatre – What's the point? and for Day 4 – "What's next for Museum Theatre?"

3. Panel Discussions:

Debates and discussions will be held over the 4 day conference and delegates will be offered the opportunity to set questions and take part in the debates. More details will be provided when the registration process begins.

How to put forward a proposal:

We would welcome proposals from IMTAL and non-IMTAL members from around the globe.

If you are interested in presenting at the

BELFAST 2007 GLOBAL CONFERENCE Call for papers ! (continued)

conference please send a 100 – 500 word abstract outlining how your performance/workshop proposal will meet the criteria above. Photographs of your performance, although not essential would help the organising committee visualize your performance.

All proposals should be sent to r.forshaw@imtal-europe.org no later than January 15th 2007.

In your proposal please include the following:

- Name
- Position
- Institution or affiliation
- Contact Telephone Numbers
- Postal Address
- E-mail Address

Those selected will be notified by February 2007

CONFERENCE FEE :

(Registration will begin on March 1st 2007)

Early Bird Rate for Members:	£270	March 1st to June 1st 2007
Standard Rate for Members:	£295	June 1st to August 1st 2007
Non Member Early Bird Rate:	£370	March 1st to June 1st 2007
Non Member Standard Rate:	£395	June 1st to August 1st 2007
Day Rate for Members:	£75	
Day Rate for Non Members:	£90	

Non members are advised that if they become a member prior to August 1st 2007, they are entitled to Member discounts.

Members include: IMTAL Europe Members, IMTAL US Members and Museum Theatre practitioners in Australia.

The fee includes all evening entertainment and meals but does not include lunches.

All delegates presenting a paper at the conference will be given free accommodation.

Further details regarding accommodation and transport options will be posted on the website in January 2007.

Programme details will be posted on the website in March 2007 at the same time as the registration forms and methods of payment.

For further information please contact r.forshaw@imtal-europe.org

Association for Heritage Interpretation

The Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI), in partnership with Interpret Scotland, is organising The Vital Spark, the 2007 International Interpretation Conference to be held in Aviemore from 30 September to 3 October 2007.

Keynote speakers from around the world will lead sessions and there will be visits to iconic sites such as Culloden and the Cairngorms National Park. More details will be issued soon but put the dates in your diary!

RENAISSANCE SOUTH EAST museums for changing lives

Renaissance is the government-funded programme to revitalise regional museums, implemented and managed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

In October 2001 the report – Renaissance in the Regions – recommended creating an integrated framework for England's museums based on a network of regional Hubs. It set out how, with direct government funding, these 'Hubs' could be transformed into centres of excellence in delivering services to users and collections management and care.

An online good practice guide for museums and teachers has been developed on www.museumse.org.uk. You may want to have a look at this interesting and full of resources website.



MAIN CONTACTS

To send us a message, ask for anything about IMTAL or give any comments about this newsletter...

Jo Kemp		j.kemp@imtal-europe.org
Robert Forshaw		r.forshaw@imtal-europe.org
Rosie Roche		r.roche@imtal-europe.org
Loïc Benot		l.benot@imtal-europe.org
Anna Farthing		a.farthing@imtal-europe.org
David Mosley		d.mosley@imtal-europe.org

IMTAL ONLINE

Don't forget to visit your Website, www.imtal-europe.org !

Index > Presentation > Concept



ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH PERFORMANCE

PRESENTATION

THE CONCEPT

The International Museum Theatre alliance was established in the US in 1990 to promote theatre and live performance as interpretive techniques in cultural institutions. IMTAL - Europe is an affiliated group established to foster live interpretation in museums, galleries, science centres and historic sites across Europe.



MEMBERS MENU
Hello, Loïc !
Please check your special menu
MEMBERS LIST
NEWSLETTERS

- WHAT'S NEW ?
- PRESENTATION
- CONTACT
- REGISTER

THE CONCEPT KEY DEFINITIONS KEY QUESTIONS DIRECTORS ACTIVITIES

Realization 

International Museum Theatre Alliance - Company n° 3765707 - Charity n° 080494 - copyright 2006 all rights reserved - legal mentions

www.imtal-europe.org