

## Review of AHI's ReBalance conference

## Generative AI through the eyes of a technologist

## Find out about AHI Fellowship

Interpretation Journal, the Association for Heritage Interpretation 28-2 / Winter 2023

# Inspire



## Engaging People Awards 2023 Winners and Finalists

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*Morag Myerscough worked with the local community to create The Future Belongs To What Was As Much As What Is, this colourful take on a Roman gatehouse at Housesteads Roman Fort, Northumberland. Winner, Temporary Event or Activity, AHI Engaging People Awards 2023.*

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# Editorial

**Welcome to the Winter 2023 issue of the Interpretation Journal. This is our Engaging People Awards special issue, where most of the content is handed over to Awards Group Chair Jackie Lee and the judges, who evaluated all of this year's finalists. As in previous years, there are a wide range of excellent projects to celebrate and for our members to take inspiration from.**

## In This Issue

I had only one day at ReBalance, our annual conference which was held this year in historic Lincoln. Even during my short time there as a delegate, the desire of AHI members to connect with each other in person, as friends and as colleagues, was obvious. This friendly and welcoming aspect is something that makes AHI conferences special, as well as having the opportunity to visit sites with excellent interpretation and gain insights from speakers. I wholeheartedly recommend members who have not yet been to an AHI conference to attend next year. I, for one, aim to clear my diary and attend for the full three days!

**News, Views & Reviews** brings together news from AHI, across the industry and our partners in the Global Association for Heritage Interpretation, as well as why you should apply to be an AHI Fellow and a review of ReBalance from two newbies. We also hear from AHI's new chair, who was approved at the AGM held during the conference.

**Interpretation Hacks** is a series of short, practical ideas that covers a range of aspects of interpretation – live interpretation,

sustainable materials, writing and a special longer digital hack that dives into the pool of generative AI. It also focuses on one of AHI's brilliant best-practice guidelines.

We then have the special **Engaging People Awards 2023** section that showcases all of this year's finalists and winners. The ceremony, held at the conference, was a gala experience where some very surprised and delighted winners stood up to receive their awards. The Chair of the Awards Group, Jackie Lee, introduces the section with an insight into the judging process. There are also the stories behind the recipients of the Outstanding Achievement and the Lara Clare Munden Young Interpreter Awards. The latter has been renamed in memory of Lara Clare Munden, a talented interpretive writer with York-based Bright White Ltd, whose life was tragically cut short this year.

The issue is rounded off by Bob Jones's delve into **Past Issues**, with a reminder of some of the previous award winners.

I hope you enjoy the issue. We always welcome feedback, ideas and discussion about the contents. Look out for posts about the journal on AHI's social media channels and feel free to email me at: [journal@ahi.org.uk](mailto:journal@ahi.org.uk).

**Bill Bevan, MAHI**



*Shamshad Noor (pseudonym) is a south London-based occasional artist and heritage consultant with over a decade's experience at leading organisations, including the British Museum and Science Museum. She specialises in content development, interpretation and events. She is also the creator of the woefully rarely updated webcomic My Museum Life.*

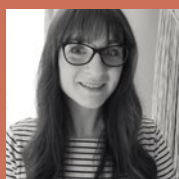


**Bill Bevan, MAHI**  
Engage Editor

**This issue we feature the following contributors:**



**Jackie Lee**  
Chair



**Mary James**  
The Way Design



**Chris Walker**  
Bright White



**Rachael Plumb**  
Historic Environment Scotland

# View

## from the Outgoing Chair

**As I close two years as Chair, it feels essential to reflect on the 'F' word... the ideology of feminism, striving for equity for all. It's recognised that the role of Chair carries personal sacrifice, a sacrifice that's compounded for a sole-income parent, such as me. Like touch paper, this drove a desire to blow open the doors of natural and cultural heritage for all to thrive. Almost exclusively online, I have sought to steer AHI emerging from the pandemic, stronger and more equitable for our future. Here are several highlights.**



*Iona Keen and Beth Môrafon presenting AHI's Diversity Best-Practice Guideline at the M+H Show, 2023.*

In early 2022, we reran the diversity scheme after its success the previous year, offering up to 30 one-year sponsored memberships to people with protected characteristics, including poverty. In this vein, the Board also took part in mandatory Cultural Humility training, utilising classic online resources developed by Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia in 1998. We also cemented our policies for supporting reduced rates for retired and low-income members and, despite inflation, we froze joining fees.

In November 2022, we hosted our first post-Covid in-person conference, Y cysylltiad/The connection, in Snowdonia, Wales. Though a highlight of the year, figures predicted a loss. Going ahead supported AHI's values. The team crafted a remarkable conference, with opportunities for connection, celebration and insight. Sponsored places enabled early career interpreters in Wales.

In January 2023, we secured a Heritage Trade Up grant with the School for Social Entrepreneurs. Participation with UK heritage organisations provided access to a grant reflective of income increase against the previous year.

In February 2023, AHI held its only in-person board meeting, with a half-day focused on the Forward Plan, to consider activities to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of AHI in 2025. The Board identified cornerstone future values:

- Exemplar; we champion and celebrate excellence
- Diverse; we shape a more inclusive, self-reflective and equitable world
- Inspirational; we showcase inspiring, resonant and innovative approaches
- Professional; we respect professional debate
- Collaborative; we support communities to share skills, collaborate and build trust

This year our ReBalance conference in the historic cathedral city of Lincoln was packed to the rafters. It offered a rich array of keynotes, workshops, visits and the gala awards. Again, sponsorship helped interpreters attend.

Finally, I want to thank the executive board, Trustees and AHI's administrator Lyn Redknapp for their consistent support.

It's been an honour to serve AHI and I warmly welcome Jackie Lee as our new Chair.



**Beth Môrafon, MAHI**  
*Outgoing Chair*  
Association for Heritage Interpretation

# View

## from the Incoming Chair

**I am here, literally on my chair, musing over the fact that I have been elected as your Chair for the next three years and thinking what an honour this is, and equally what was I thinking when I allowed myself to be talked into this!**

In all honesty, I am very excited about this new and exciting challenge. At the AGM I made the bold statement that I want to see our membership grow so that in 2025, as we celebrate 50 years of our organisation, we also celebrate a membership of 500 interpreters. While I and the other trustees will push forward a membership campaign, we also need your support. You, our current members, need to be part of this campaign. Wherever you are working or networking, you need to tell those you meet about our organisation and its benefits and why being a member is essential to their professional development; tell them why you belong and why they should, too.

As we grow our membership, we must also be mindful that the AHI should be representative of society today and therefore be diverse in the widest possible terms – in ethnicity, gender, culture and social values. This is crucial to our survival as a meaningful organisation within the world of interpretation.

While we take on the challenge of growing our membership, I would also like us to consider the inner workings of the AHI and how we define what it means to be a 'Full Member'. A quick look at the website seems to suggest that it means quite a bit of work and a more expensive membership fee! There appears to be little benefit to those who undertake this process apart from being able to put MAHI after their name

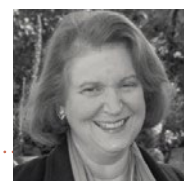


*A costumed guided walk in the company of Mrs Grant (Jackie Lee).*

and a reduction of the conference fee, which was introduced this year. The reasoning behind why anyone should undertake this process needs to be made more meaningful.

Before I sign off I want to thank Beth Môrafon who has been our Chair for the last two years. She has done tremendous work in raising the profile of the AHI with her outreach work. Thank you for everything you have achieved in your position as Chair.

As we grow our membership, we must also be mindful that the AHI should be representative of society today and therefore be diverse in the widest possible terms – in ethnicity, gender, culture and social values.



**Jackie Lee**  
Incoming Chair  
Association for Heritage Interpretation



# Globetrotting

## United States of America

### National Association for Interpretation SuperHero Campaign

**The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) in the USA has adopted striving to be a leader in Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion (JEDAI) as one of the core goals in its strategic plan.**



To remain relevant, it's essential that our organization and our profession reflects the communities that interpreters work in and serve. Broadening the array of voices and perspectives that make up the critically important field of interpretation is ingrained in our organizational values. It makes us stronger, and it reflects our members and their goals.

We've made great strides, but there's so much more we hope to accomplish. Some of the projects we have identified include:

- Scholarships for interpreters from underrepresented communities to attend the NAI Conference and other trainings.
- Grants for complimentary memberships for interpreters from underrepresented communities.
- Cultural competency training for NAI leaders and trainers.
- Certified interpretive courses and other training for underrepresented communities.
- Printing and distribution of *Legacy en Español*.
- Webinar series on JEDAI issues.

One of the methods through which NAI is trying to support these initiatives is a fundraising campaign we're calling the SuperHero campaign – because interpreters are superheroes.

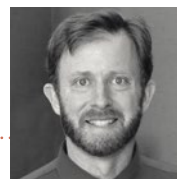
The field of interpretation has never been more important. In a world where our precious natural resources are in constant peril, our socio-political landscape feels hopelessly divided, and the important lessons of our history are either incompletely understood or dangerously forgotten, interpreters share conservation messages and create connections with nature, build bridges of understanding between cultures and communities, and keep alive the history that informs so much about our modern-day trials and tribulations. Truly, the work interpreters do contribute to a cleaner, safer, kinder world.



*Abigail Swisher, Educator II, engaging with guests.*

Interpretive associations are the superhero's Hall of Justice for interpreters, where we connect with kindred spirits who share our values, our aspirations and our experiences. At NAI, many of us have connected with mentors, role models and teachers and found new inspiration throughout our careers. Our goal is to provide a home where the spirit and practice of interpretation is nurtured and protected and where we can all reconnect with that spirit at any time. We hope that our mission will live far into the future, helping interpreters save the day for decades to come.

Website: <https://www.interpnet.com>



#### **Paul Caputo**

Paul has been with the NAI since 2002. Prior to stepping into the executive director role in 2022, Paul served largely in design and communications within the organisation, including as editor of NAI's *Legacy* magazine.

# New Zealand

## Introducing the Interpretation Network of New Zealand

**The Interpretation Network of New Zealand (INNz) is the national network of interpretation professionals based in Aotearoa, New Zealand.**



Our network is versatile and comprises a wide range of interpreters and visitor engagement professionals from around the GLAMPH sector (galleries, libraries, archives, museums, parks and heritage sites) including heritage professionals, guides, zookeepers, park rangers, museum curators, writers, exhibition developers, designers and more. We strive to support all in their pursuit of telling meaningful stories to visitors around Aotearoa.

We offer a range of engaging and informative programmes, networking and resources to support and enhance the practice of interpretation in Aotearoa. We share our knowledge and skills to enable us to speak in a collective voice.

During 2022-2023, INNz has expanded its paid membership by focusing on providing core services. These included a new website, a regular webinar events schedule and regional meet up opportunities around the country.

resulted in a successful Interpretation on a Shoestring webinar. Offering mentoring for professionals around the country in aspects of interpretive practice has been another focus.

For international audiences the INNz hosted Global Alliance of Heritage Interpretation (GAHI) webinar showcased 'Te Taiao', an exhibition weaving Mātauranga Māori knowledge with science to spark sustainable action. This example highlighted contemporary New Zealand interpretation where Māori knowledge and language is increasingly interwoven with science and other knowledge systems, showcasing our nations ambitions with respect to our foundational document, the Treaty of Waitangi.

Website: <https://www.innz.org>

Keep an eye on the GAHI website (<https://www.gahi.online/global-excellence-in-heritage-interpretation-webinar-series/>) for more information about AHI's international colleagues.



### Welcome to INNz

Third Monday 2023. We are a membership organization for interpreters and visitor engagement professionals in Aotearoa New Zealand.

To stay in touch please follow us on our socials below or subscribe to our quarterly newsletter. [Sign up](#)

[Instagram](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Subscribe](#)

[Join our membership](#)

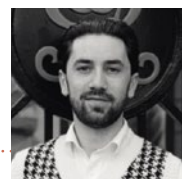
### About us

Our network brings together interpretation and visitor focused professionals from around the world. We offer a range of engaging and informative programmes, support, networking and resources to raise the practice of interpretation in Aotearoa. We share our knowledge, skills and speak in a collective voice.

Our community includes a diverse range of organisations including interpreters, heritage professionals, guides, museums, park rangers, museum curators, writers, exhibition developers, designers and more. Wherever you are located, we will strive to support you in your pursuit of telling meaningful stories to visitors around Aotearoa.



Due to the nature of the sector in New Zealand, the majority of INNz members come from small and medium-sized organisations nationally. Therefore, it was vital to provide support and information to these smaller organisations for them to succeed in delivering their best interpretive work. This included utilizing the specialised expertise from larger organisations which are better resourced to inform practice e.g. webinars from Auckland War Memorial Museum and Te Papa to help inform aspects of practice such as visitor research, accessibility and exhibition development. An appetite for low budget ideas from membership



**Nick Yeats**

Chair of INNz, who and currently works as an interpretive planner at Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira.

# Why Apply For Fellowship?

## Why apply?

To be a Fellow of the Association is to be passionate about interpretation – passionate about explaining the meaning of stuff – for that’s what an *interpreter* does, but also passionate about passing on your knowledge and experience to those who will follow in your footsteps. And in so doing you help in keeping the Association strong.

## So why not submit an application?

Fellowship (FAHI) is open to any Full member who has normally had a minimum of 10 years’ experience in one or more sectors of interpretative practice, including seven years in a senior role or position of responsibility. The qualification period is normally an ‘absolute’, however this may be waived in exceptional cases. Fellowship membership differs from full membership in that prospective applicants should demonstrate accomplishment in at least three of the key core criteria below:

The Fellowship Panel will look for the following criteria:

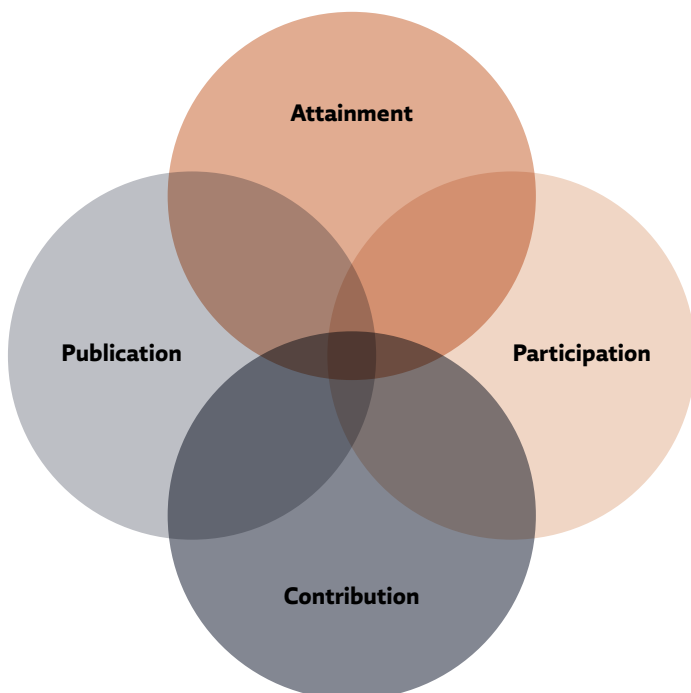
- **Attainment:** Applicants to be in possession of an appropriate qualification in interpretation or in another discipline relevant to the theory or practice of interpretation.
- **Contribution:** Applicants to be capable of demonstrating strategic thinking in the planning, research and development of interpretation.
- **Participation:** Applicants to be able to provide evidence of playing an active part in the work of the Association (or other appropriate body) through teaching and leadership; through extended service as a trustee; or through participation in projects which have had a substantial impact on interpretive practice.
- **Publication:** Applicants to be the author of a substantial published contribution to interpretive theory or practice.

Applicants are asked to supply evidence of projects, schemes or initiatives that illustrate work for which they have been directly responsible. Published works, or descriptive evidence of academic activities will help to paint the canvas of an individual’s contributions to the profession.

## Benefits of Fellowship include:

Fellows enjoy the same benefits as Full members. However, a Fellow is defined as an individual who has attained distinction in their field of work – peer recognition – and crucially as ‘someone who has contributed signally to the promotion and furtherment of their profession’. It behoves a Fellow to think not what Fellowship can do for you, rather what you can do for the interpretive profession.

**Interested?** In the first instance contact the AHI office: [admin@ahi.org.uk](mailto:admin@ahi.org.uk)





### Museums + Heritage Show 2023 Talks Online

All of the show's 55 2023 sessions are available to watch online, including AHI's Diversity and Inclusivity talk. They are free to the show's attendees with the password sent to your email, or to buy for £55 incl. VAT. <https://show.museumsandheritage.com/product/museums-heritage-show-2023-recordings>

### UNESCO Designated Sites

The report of the fourth regional workshop on the Role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites is available online. It provides insight from participants on tourism sustainability, visitor management and heritage interpretation. The workshop was held in Buzau, Romania and brought together managers from 22 UNESCO sites across 16 European countries. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/enabling-visitor-centres-promote-sustainable-tourism-unesco-designated-sites-new-report-regional>

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and UNESCO have recently launched new Guidelines for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites in Egypt. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/launch-guidelines-interpretation-and-presentation-cultural-heritage-sites-egypt-collaborative>

### Young People's Engagements with Heritage

Arts Connect and the Institute for Community Research and Development have published the results of their research commissioned by Historic England on the value and impact of young people's engagements with heritage. The report includes case studies, key findings and recommendations for public policy. <https://artsconnect.co.uk/heritage-report>

### Guidance for Trans-inclusion

University of Leicester's Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, working with a team of legal scholars and experts in inclusion, equality and ethics, has developed comprehensive guidance on advancing trans-inclusion for museums, galleries, archives and heritage organisations. The guide is available online. <https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/trans-inclusive-culture>

### Historic England Segments

Historic England have made their segments freely available for organisations of all sizes to enable them to reach a diverse range of people. They were originally developed for Historic England by audience strategy and insight consultancy Morris Hargreaves McIntyre. <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/training-skills/heritageskills-cpd/inclusion/segments>

### We Hear You Now

Artist, writer and cultural activist Alinah Azadeh has led a landscape storytelling project for South Downs National Park Authority. Stories draw on untold and under-told histories, climate change, biodiversity, and equity and representation in the countryside. Each work can be heard within the landscape using NFC/QR codes or online. <https://www.sevensisters.org.uk/we-hear-you-now>

### Museum of Land Speed in Wales

After a three-year development project, the former Museum of Speed has opened on the Welsh coast. Based alongside the seven miles of Pendine Sands in Carmarthenshire, the museum sits at the site of many land speed record attempts, dating back to the 1920s. <https://cofgar.wales/venues/museum-of-land-speed>

### Horniman Nature + Love

Work on the Nature + Love project will begin in 2024. This will redevelop three areas of the Horniman Museum, including the Natural History Gallery, a new Action Zone about local wildlife and introduce Nature Explorers Adventure and Sustainable Gardening zones into the Gardens. <https://www.horniman.ac.uk/story/major-grant-for-nature-love>

### The Collective Wisdom Handbook: perspectives on crowdsourcing in cultural heritage

Written through the Collective Wisdom project, this is a draft as the authors consider options for formal publication. This book was written by 16 collaborators from the US and UK, brought together with funding from the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council. <https://britishlibrary.pubpub.org>

### AI: Who's Looking After Me?

Running until January 2024 is Science Gallery London's questioning and playful look at the ways artificial intelligence is already shaping so many areas of our lives. Presented in collaboration with FutureEverything, this free exhibition features 12 inventive artistic collaborations with artists, technologists, researchers, patients and young people. <https://london.sciencegallery.com/ai-season>

If you have anything you would like to submit to digest, please email: [journal@ahi.org.uk](mailto:journal@ahi.org.uk). Deadline is 15th March for publication in June.

# First-timer at the Conference

**Arriving in Lincoln is always a great experience. Seeing the cathedral up on the hill from the trainline always sets the scene for a good time. This was how I arrived on Tuesday, alongside three colleagues. As a native of Lincolnshire (a *yellerbelly*, if you will) I was returning to familiar ground. The very aptly named Steep Hill proved to be a good test of our cardiovascular stamina, while also allowing us to get our bearings of the city centre. The Lincoln Hotel couldn't have been in a better place, with stunning views over the north façade of Lincoln Cathedral.**

## Talks and Reflections

Having arrived a day early, and with the AHI conference not beginning until 1 p.m., we took the opportunity for a benchmarking visit to Lincoln Medieval Bishops' Palace on Wednesday morning. The conference began with a series of keynote talks covering the social value of heritage engagement; interpretation promoting good health; and the process of regenerating Lincoln Castle over a 10-year period. This gave a useful insight ahead of our site visit the following day. More talks were followed by a much-needed stretch of the legs (the uncomfortable plastic chairs were the only

negative of the conference). We returned for more keynotes covering co-creation, accessibility and representation.

By 6.20 p.m. we were ready for a break ahead of the conference dinner. This would prove to be our first experience of the gorgeous food on offer and I was proud that my table won the Lincolnshire Quiz (though perhaps having two *yellerbellies* on the team did put us at an unfair advantage!) The dinners on both evenings provided an invaluable opportunity for me to meet fellow interpretation professionals. As someone at the beginning of their career in interpretation, it was so great to hear what other people are working on. It was particularly interesting to get ideas from people whose work mainly focuses on natural heritage as this isn't an area I usually work in. Everyone was so welcoming and enthusiastic, an enthusiasm that has followed me back to Edinburgh.

## Site Visits and Workshops

On Thursday, we went on site visits. Although the International Bomber Command Centre looked amazing, I opted for a day of exploring Uphill Lincoln. This began with a walking tour including Bailgate Bingo (which my team won again) and finishing up in the John Dawber Garden, a small garden recently taken over by a community trust. This showcased a fledgling community-led project beautifully. Here we got the opportunity to create clay tulips for a new piece of art in the garden, a lovely example of involving the community in their garden.



*Walking tour around uphill Lincoln.*

At Lincoln Castle we were greeted by Lucy and Norman, two smoke-breathing dragons. We explored at our own pace, discovering the Magna Carta Vault with its stunning 180° film, then the Victorian prisons. The prisons made great use of each cell, using the small spaces to their benefit. Then it was up onto the wall walk enjoying the audio guide before eating our packed lunches and enjoying an open-top bus tour. We then had a couple of hours spare which I used to visit Lincoln Cathedral with its new exhibition and interactive space. It's always great to be able to dress up and practice your calligraphy skills during the working day. The great thing about everyone exploring in small groups at the same time was bumping into other people and hearing their opinions before splitting up again.



© Tim Richards

*Group open-top bus tour.*





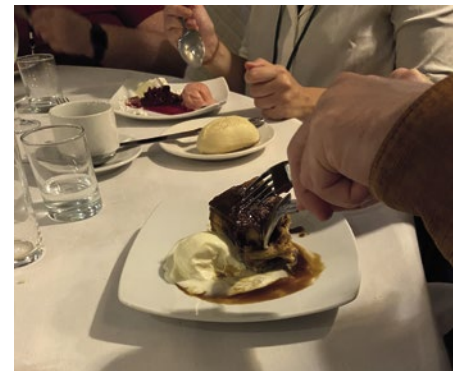
*Lucy and Norman at Lincoln Castle.*

As someone at the beginning of their career in interpretation, it was so great to hear what other people are working on. It was particularly interesting to get ideas from people whose work mainly focuses on natural heritage as this isn't an area I usually work in.

Once the site visits and Open Space workshops were over, it felt like time was quickly running out on the conference. In the evening the Gala Dinner and the AHI Awards showcased the best of the best in our industry from across the UK and Ireland. The next morning, there was a workshop led by Claire Fox, of the Sensory Trust, some final talks before lunch and then the gentle roll back down Steep Hill to the train.

### Reflections

So, what are my takeaways as first-time attendee at the AHI conference? Conferences can be nerve-wracking, especially when you are a new face in the room. This conference was warm, welcoming and relaxed which put me at ease immediately. Everyone was free with their knowledge and advice but also keen to hear about my work, too. So, thank you to all who welcomed me. I'll see you next year in Glasgow.



*Plum bread and butter pudding.*



**Rachael Plumb**

Interpretation Assistant  
Historic Environment Scotland  
rachael.plumb@hes.scot



# LIVE INTERPRETATION

## *Emoting for a Living*

**For 20 years, I had the best job in the world: presenting interactive science shows. A hundred expressive, distractible and brutally honest children make a brilliant emotional performance laboratory. Scary, but revealing.**

It was like working on a stage under intense psychological spotlights. If you forgot to display or provoke a particular emotion when you normally would during a science demonstration, you immediately saw the difference.

One hundred faces didn't react or started to lose interest.

As a performer and educator, I lived or died by how well I could emote and trigger emotional responses. Without them, I couldn't keep the attention of my voluntary audience. And without their attention, I couldn't achieve any of my other objectives.

Humans have evolved to pay attention to emotions above other cues because their lives depended on it. Feeling fear when you spotted a snake in the grass kept you alive. The viral nature of feelings also protected the rest of your tribe. Those who picked up on your fear first survived. Nowadays, unlike most signals, emotions still have a privileged pass directly to the conscious brains of your audience.



© Dr-Bunhead

*Emotions keep our presentations alive. Tom Pringle (aka Dr Bunhead) and a brave volunteer about to explode a hydrogen balloon.*

Emotions used to keep us alive.  
Now they keep our presentations alive.

You can display a wide range of emotions when interpreting: curiosity, amusement, anticipation, uncertainty, happiness, wonder, awe, surprise, joy of understanding, shock, confusion and mild fear. For example:

- Modelling the curiosity you felt the first time you thought about the question you've just posed.
- Showing your amazement about a fascinating fact, even though you've shared it hundreds of times before.
- Expressing delight at how understanding your subject allows you to appreciate wonderful, hidden things about the world around you.

- Reacting honestly when you make a mistake — presentation errors are instances of peak audience attention to exploit: the person the audience glimpses at these vulnerable, spontaneous moments is the version of you they will trust the most.

How could you incorporate emotional hooks like these in your presentations?

### **Read on...**

Paul is author of *Hook Your Audience* (2021).



**Paul McCrory**  
HOOK training Ltd  
[www.hooktraining.com](http://www.hooktraining.com)

# Sustainable Interpretation

When you can't see the wood for the trees: choosing sustainable timber

**The question of where to begin when making sustainable choices for your projects is one we always come back to. Let's shed a little light on some considerations when sourcing wooden products. While there's no one-size-fits-all solution, informed choices pave the way to a more sustainable future.**

## FSC or PEFC, and GIB?

FSC is well known and you may have seen this code on a production quotation or their logo on all sorts of products from tissue boxes to timber! The second global scheme you want to look out for is PEFC. GIB is a British certification. If your timber is sourced locally and meets one or more of these standards, you're in a great position.

- **FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council):** FSC, originally conceived to combat illegal timber sourcing in tropical regions, is a globally recognised certification. It guarantees that timber products are sourced from responsibly managed forests. Forest operations must meet 10 principles, encompassing everything from workers' rights to environmental impact and community relations.
- **PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification):** PEFC is an umbrella organisation that ensures responsible wood sourcing with a focus on environmental sustainability and ethical practices. With flexibility for regional specifics, PEFC assesses against international criteria and was set up in the 1990s, to support sustainable forestry management in Europe and North America.
- **GIB (Grown in Britain):** Grown in Britain is relatively new compared to other certifications. This scheme provides assurance that timber is grown in the UK and meets the UK forestry standard.



Winlatter Archway.

Wood treatments, enhancing the longevity and durability of wood is key:

- **Thermal and Pressure Treatments:** While pressure treatment is a chemical process, it can be sustainable if the chemicals used are non-toxic and the process is well-managed. These treatments enhance wood's resistance to decay and extend its lifespan.
- **Protective Coatings:** Varnishes and sealants shield wooden surfaces from weathering and moisture, but they often require regular maintenance. Opt for water-based or low-VOC (volatile organic compound) options which are less polluting.

- **Hardwoods vs Softwoods:** Hardwoods generally have a longer lifespan than softwoods, which might require more frequent treatments.

We have only scratched the surface here, but these insights are a good starting point to making sustainable choices.



**Mary James**

The Way Design

<https://thewaydesign.co.uk>





Map data © 2023 Google, Imagery © CNES / Airbus, Maxar Technologies.

The what3words website interface.

# Write Track

## What! Three Words?

**You've probably come across what3words whether you have used it or not.**

The system divides the world into three metre squares and assigns a unique combination of three dictionary words to each square. This claims to be an easy and accessible way for people to precisely refine their location for navigation or emergencies.

Three words is enough to throw up some interesting phrases that evoke ideas connected with the 'choice' of words and the place. The front door of No. 10 Downing Street is located at `/// slurs.this.shark`.

Your venue or site is divided into multiple squares, which you can find using the what3words web map or app. One of the rooms at Skara Brae Neolithic village, Orkney is `///epidemics.trails.tingled`.

Here is a fun interpretive planning and writing exercise that takes inspiration from what3words without replacing it as a navigation tool. It is basically a familiar workshop exercise where participants are asked to describe a place in one word on a sticky note. Three words extend the interpretive meaning significantly.

Describe what your site, a feature or object means to you in just three words. No more, no less. Have fun and play around with different words. You can do this alone or as a group activity over a tea or coffee. How hard or easy is it to choose just three words? Which three words convey the meaning of what you are describing to best effect? How do different combinations of words vary meanings and ideas?

As with other workshopping techniques, this can form part of your interpretive planning and consultation process as well as becoming building blocks for interpretive writing. You can extend this to label key locations or objects in your site, each with three interpretive words to help map visitor engagement as people move through the venue. Can you take it further and present three words as part of your interpretation? This could work in an indoor venue if it is clearly communicated and branded that they are heritage3words and not the actual geolocation tool. It is essential not to risk confusion with what3words, especially at an outdoor site, where the service may be used for navigation or in an emergency.

**Explore on...**  
<https://what3words.com/>



**Bill Bevan**  
Engage Editor



# Best-Practice Guidelines Creating an Interpretation Plan

**It seems appropriate in this issue to highlight our best-practice guide called, 'Creating an Interpretation Plan: An introduction'. Not only is interpretive planning central to delivering excellence, as celebrated in this special awards issue, but it is also written by Carolyn Lloyd Brown, FAHI, the recipient of the Outstanding Contribution to Interpretation Award.**

The guide is essential reading for anyone who is new to the interpretive planning process so provides a quick overview to help you write, commission or manage creation of your own plan.

It takes you through the interpretive planning process step by step. Carolyn keeps it simple but provides a suggested reading list if you want more in-depth information.

## **The guide explains the following areas:**

**What a plan is and what it does:** A description of what a plan is for and key tasks to consider.

## **Why interpret – your project aims and objectives:**

This covers why you want to interpret, an explanation of the work undertaken to produce the plan and an understanding of your stakeholders.

## **What do you want to interpret – the resource/assets:**

Your site, including collections, habitats, the building, footpaths, etc.

**Who the interpretation is aimed at:** Begins with a call to collect information about your current and potential audiences and outlines how to use this data.

## **What, how and where – creative approaches and media:**

Think about what makes your site special, convey your enthusiasm, develop a theme and be creative with types of media and how they relate to your site.

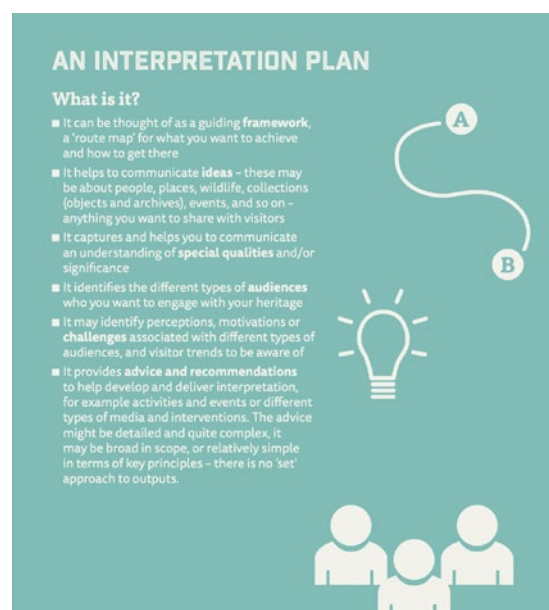
**Making it happen:** Advice on planning costs and working with specialist suppliers.

**Evaluation:** An introduction to evaluation, which is also covered in our guide 'Demystifying Evaluation', as showcased in our Summer 2023 issue.

Creating an Interpretation Plan: an introduction  
Carolyn Lloyd Brown, FAHI  
AHI Best-Practice Guideline 11, September 2020

## **Read on...**

You can read and download the full version of 'Creating an Interpretation Plan: an introduction' and all our best-practice guidelines  
<https://bit.ly/AHIProDev>



# Digital Horizons

## Generative AI: Through the Eyes of a Technologist

**In the 1970s I remember being amazed by my grandfather's new calculator – a machine that you could keep in your pocket, and it could do any sum instantly. In the 80s I remember getting my hands on a BBC Microcomputer for the first time – until that point a telly was something we passively watched programmes on, but it had now become a portal into the internal workings of a silicon chip, and we were in control of it.**

Both of these moments opened up new horizons for me. I was instantly fascinated and obsessed with standing on these new conceptual platforms and staring out at new futures not imaginable even hours beforehand. I felt that same reverence for only the third time in my life last year when a friend first sent me a link to ChatGPT.

GenAI today is a magnificent demonstration of the state of the art in combining multiple technology layers, data manipulation, applied mathematics, computer science and human-computer interfacing. It's a genuinely impressive human achievement.

### What is GenAI?

What we, as users of GenAI, interact with is a website that looks like a chat room – it's a much simpler interface than most people imagine. You enter a command (a prompt) in plain English and it then generates a response and displays it for you. You can then refine it. It's really very simple, and that's part of what makes it so impressive.

There are currently two main types of GenAI: the first generates text, the other generates images.

### How Does Text-Based GenAI Work?

Computer scientists have identified truly enormous amounts of structured texts written by humans and collected them together. The texts are processed by

incredibly powerful computers, breaking human-readable text down into a vast array of mathematical descriptions of those texts. The output from that highly intensive mathematical processing (called training) becomes the LLM – the Large Language Model – in simple terms the model is a very large computer file, measured in hundreds of gigabytes. The model contains mathematical descriptions of how humans speak (which we might call a tradition) but also, importantly, it contains information that can be presented as 'knowledge'.

We tap into the information and tradition in that model through a Conversational Agent, which is a fancy word for a ChatBot. Think back to my story about the 80s and being able to see into the silicon chip through the telly – with GenAI we 'see' into the language model through text chat. Text chat is something we are all familiar with, so we can all access it. I asked it to 'Write me a short poem about life in a post-industrial town in the UK'.

In a town where chimneys stood tall and proud,  
Now they echo silence, their voices disavowed.  
Post-industrial echoes whisper tales of yore,  
Ghosts of progress linger, haunting evermore.

Once the clang of steel and the furnace's fiery breath,  
Now replaced by quietude, a city confronting death.  
A landscape once adorned with factories and machines,  
Now wears scars of change, like fading dreams.  
Yet within the ruins, hope takes root and grows,  
Community binds, determination shows.

A spirit resilient, forging paths anew,  
Life persists and colors bloom in muted hue.  
Families gather, sharing stories of old,  
In the shadow of progress, their resilience bold.  
Reclaiming the narrative, embracing the past,  
They build a future that will forever last.

[Poem written by ChatGPT]



Image created by Midjourney

A photograph of a post-industrial town in the UK.

### How Does Image-Based GenAI Work?

Rather than collecting together huge amounts of texts as in the above example, image-based GenAI is made by collecting together unimaginably large numbers of labelled images. The fact that the images are labelled is critical – the mathematical analysis of the images relies on a label, or caption, being present. Imagine feeding a computer images of Black Labrador dogs that

each have a correct caption; given a large enough sample, the mathematical analysis of the images can be used to extract what is common between the images and understand in mathematical terms what features an image should have if it contains a Black Labrador. Now you've just got to repeat this for all 'things' in our world – we can start to imagine the scale of the challenge and the amount of data involved.

Once this image model exists, we tap into it again using a chat room interface. We type in a caption for an image that we seek, and the system generates it for us and displays it. I typed in this prompt: 'A photograph of a post-industrial town in the UK'.





Image created by Midjourney

A photo of a Black Labrador in an English Garden.

## Characteristics

If you read the poem and view the image at the same time, as we are often invited to do in interpretative displays, it's hard not to be impressed with the sophistication, detail and sheer humanity that GenAI outputs can recreate.

The key step forward with GenAI is that it can blend together aspects of your prompt. It can set a Black Labrador in an English garden and do it convincingly.

## Application in Heritage Interpretation Practice

This is where things stop being quite so heady and we must face reality. There is scope for using GenAI in a limited way in our practice, but it is our duty as professionals to think very carefully about the consequences of our actions, and that's not always easy with revolutionary new technologies like this.

## Law

The development of GenAI has been very rapid, far too fast for the legal system to keep up with and, arguably, too fast for communities all over the world to properly absorb the ramifications of and create new ethical codes to frame GenAI.

We're currently in a phase where GenAI products are being promoted relentlessly at the same time as major court cases testing some GenAI outputs against copyright law that is relatively

aged. One of the key unresolved questions is about training data provenance – think back to the section about the collecting together of huge amounts of human-written text and human-made images – where does it all come from? Some parts of the GenAI industry are clear about where it comes from, others not so clear.

In the US, Getty Images (with whom we are all familiar in the heritage interpretation industry) has filed a lawsuit against Stability AI, makers of an image-based GenAI system.

People across the world are keeping a keen eye on this landmark case.

Until ethical codes and law have matured around GenAI, it is difficult to confidently use some of the outputs in production. Some products are very clear that nobody can 'own' the outputted images – you cannot hold copyright and you cannot transfer it to your clients. The only reason I have felt safe including the poem and image above is because they are used in this journal for editorial purposes, an established fair usage exclusion in copyright law.

## Morality and Ethics

We have to ask ourselves if investing in AI systems rather than the people in our company is a wise choice. In

*The development of GenAI has been very rapid, far too fast for the legal system to keep up with and, arguably, too fast for communities all over the world to properly absorb the ramifications of and create new ethical codes to frame GenAI.*

our company, we have had an open conversation with all staff, and agreed that while we might use GenAI in pre-production phases, we will never use it in production. This safeguards our staff, and we are training them on how to use GenAI as a supportive tool to help them in their work, rather than replace them.

If not already doing so, I would encourage companies and organisations to familiarise themselves with these tools, and hold open conversations across the company with a view to establishing a code of GenAI ethics for the organisation. Cultural organisations are often influential thought leaders, so people will be interested in your thoughts, and companies need to take a position that secures their future.

### Accuracy

One of the strengths of GenAI is its confidence – ask for a text on a topic and it will answer in a very convincing and authoritative tone. However, that confidence is dangerous as GenAI often gets its facts wrong. At the very least, human verification of any fact is necessary. The position of the UK's cultural organisations as 'trusted organisations' has been established through decades, in some cases centuries, of rigour and veracity and that cannot be replicated with AI and won't be in the foreseeable future.

### Opportunities

There is currently a role for GenAI to assist with exploring options as part of the creative process. Let's say you are pulling together a mood board of visual references or exploring tones of voice in text by pulling together examples – GenAI can be consulted alongside traditional methods and can deliver surprising options that perhaps might not have been imagined normally.



Image created by Midjourney

*Chris Walker from York, standing on a platform, staring out at an imaginary futuristic technological landscape.*

There is also a role for automation of pre-production tasks. For example, turning a screenplay into visual storyboards by typing in a description of a storyboard cell. The key here is that the output is not used in the final production, instead it is used as a stepping stone and then discarded.

### Conclusion

GenAI is an incredibly powerful new tool, and like any new tool it's important to understand its strengths and limitations. My recommendation is to play with it with a view to understanding it but advise extreme caution about deploying it in the real world just yet. Standing on that platform, staring at new futures is one thing, actually taking a step forward requires certainty that the ground is firm.

### Explore on...

Midjourney Image-based AI:  
[www.midjourney.com](http://www.midjourney.com)

ChatGPT Text-based AI:  
[www.chat.openai.com](http://www.chat.openai.com)

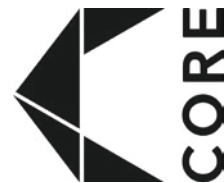


**Chris Walker**

Bright White  
[www.brightwhiteltd.co.uk](http://www.brightwhiteltd.co.uk)



# Introducing The Engaging People Awards 2023



Sponsored by The Core

## What it's all About

**Our second round of The Engaging People Awards has proved that we made the right decision to rename the AHI Awards to reflect what interpretation should be doing – engaging people. No matter whether this is in the field of heritage, culture, nature or science our primary aim must be that of providing visitors with an experience that enables some form of participation which evokes an emotional response and which, hopefully, transcends the actual visit.**

## The Categories

This year the Awards Group thought it important that the issues surrounding the Climate Emergency be recognised with a special category – ‘Calling Out Climate Change’. Our Lockdown Category became ‘Online and Remote Engagement’, and the others remained as they have been before:

- Indoors
- Outdoors
- Temporary Event or Activity
- Community Engagement.

The AHI Award for Excellence in Interpretation chosen by the Panel Judges from the category winners remains the icing on the cake of the awards. The winning project is the most innovative, inspiring of the category winners and crucially has demonstrated superb engagement and diversity.



Gareth Gardner

*Wordsworth Reimagined Dove Cottage.*

The Outstanding Contribution to Interpretation has replaced the Lifetime Achievement Award. The Awards Group felt that it was important to widen the category to include those of all ages who have made an outstanding contribution to our profession, whether it be with a particular project or over some time.

In recognition of Lara Clare Munden, whose life was tragically cut short, it was decided by the Panel Judges that the Young Interpreter Award should be dedicated to the memory of this gifted young interpreter. The award will now be part of our bi-annual awards from

this year onwards. This category is open to young people aged 18 to 25 who are already showing great promise within the interpretation profession.

## The Judging Process

The judging process established at the beginning of the AHI Awards scheme in 2015 remains as rigorous as ever.

All entries are reviewed and shortlisted by the Panel Judges. Some projects who do not make the final receive special recognition for an aspect of their project, while all receive feedback.



*Climate café participants SWRI looking at banners.*





© Historic Royal Palaces

*Permissible Beauty – immersive projection.*

Once the shortlist is created, the Site Judges visit their allocated project either in person or virtually for projects that have ended. They work in pairs as mentor and mentee, thus balancing experience with those in the early stages of their careers. They provide in-depth reports on their site visit to the Panel Judges, who choose the winners after much debate.

It is this process that is so unique to the AHI Awards and which ensures that the actual visitor experience is tried and tested for its ability to engage, as well as provide evidence of its planning process and the other attributes that go into creating the best interpretation.

To ensure that all our judges are well prepared, they must attend two training sessions prior to the beginning of the Awards Scheme, which runs over two rounds over four years. It is now the case that a refresher training session is run

prior to the second round of this period. Mindful that our judges come from a large geographical area, the training is carried out online by the Awards Group, thus cutting down on costs both to the planet and the budget.

As Chair of the Awards Group, I am delighted to have this opportunity of singing the praises of all those involved in making the Awards happen, from the Award Group who have met tirelessly through the year on zoom to create this amazing Award Scheme and manage it to all the judges who give of their time and wisdom. None of this would be possible without you.

A big thank you goes to The Creative Core, who once again have sponsored the Engaging People Awards, to our category sponsors – BeWunder, Fraser Randall, NovaDura, Tandem Design and The Way Design, and to Michael Hamish Glen and Bright White, who jointly

sponsor the Lara Clare Munden Young Interpreter Award. Gavin Glencorse designed the certificates and Becky Boyes-Major of Bright White, who designed the physical manifestation of the Young Interpreter and Excellence Awards.

Thanks also to Beth Mórafon, AHI outgoing Chair, for her presentation of the Awards at the Gala Dinner.

Remember the 2025 round will be launched next year and the presentation will be at the AHI's 50th anniversary celebratory conference. What a wonderful time we will have celebrating all that is good in interpretation.


*Oot and Aboot – Rothbury visitors.*

*All entries are reviewed and shortlisted by the Panel Judges. Some projects who do not make the final receive special recognition for an aspect of their project, while all receive feedback.*


**Jackie Lee**

*AHI Chair and Chair of the Awards Group*

# AHI Award for Excellence in Interpretation



Association  
for Heritage  
Interpretation

Sponsor: Association for Heritage Interpretation

## Winner:

### Changes in a Lifetime – Climate Cafés at Stromness Museum, Orkney Natural History Society Museum

#### Entrant's Project Description

A series of 'climate cafés' were set up in our community run by Orkney Natural History Society (Stromness Museum) using our collections as a conversation springboard. Cafés, entitled 'Changes in a Lifetime' invited people to think about changes they have seen within their own lifetimes which could be attributed to climate change.

#### Site Judges' Report

This project was carefully planned and beautifully executed, resulting in an intimate, enriching and rewarding experience for participants and a strong, optimistic forward plan for the museum in relation to climate change. The success of the project is evidenced not only by the new and diverse audiences it succeeded in reaching – many of whom had not engaged with the museum before – but also by the museum's inspiring and uplifting decision to become an anchor organisation for climate change. By inviting local communities to engage in dialogue in safe spaces, by listening respectfully to all views, no matter how varied and by implementing findings immediately in a dynamic and fun-filled forward programme, Stromness Museum is a wonderful example of how climate change consciousness can be integrated effectively in a holistic manner, giving agency to both staff and audiences.

The museum's interpretive thinking behind climate changes in a lifetime was highly impressive. Encouraging

participants to consider the effects of climate change that they themselves had witnessed first-hand was an effective way of making an abstract, frightening and global concept more accessible, but equally local and embedded in the personal. This approach was well-received by audiences and deftly connected with museum collections, contextualising Orkney's environment, society and history in a memorable way.

The hands-on component of the workshops, in which participants drew on personal experiences to select words which they then stamped onto metal jigsaw pieces, was particularly impressive. These objects created by

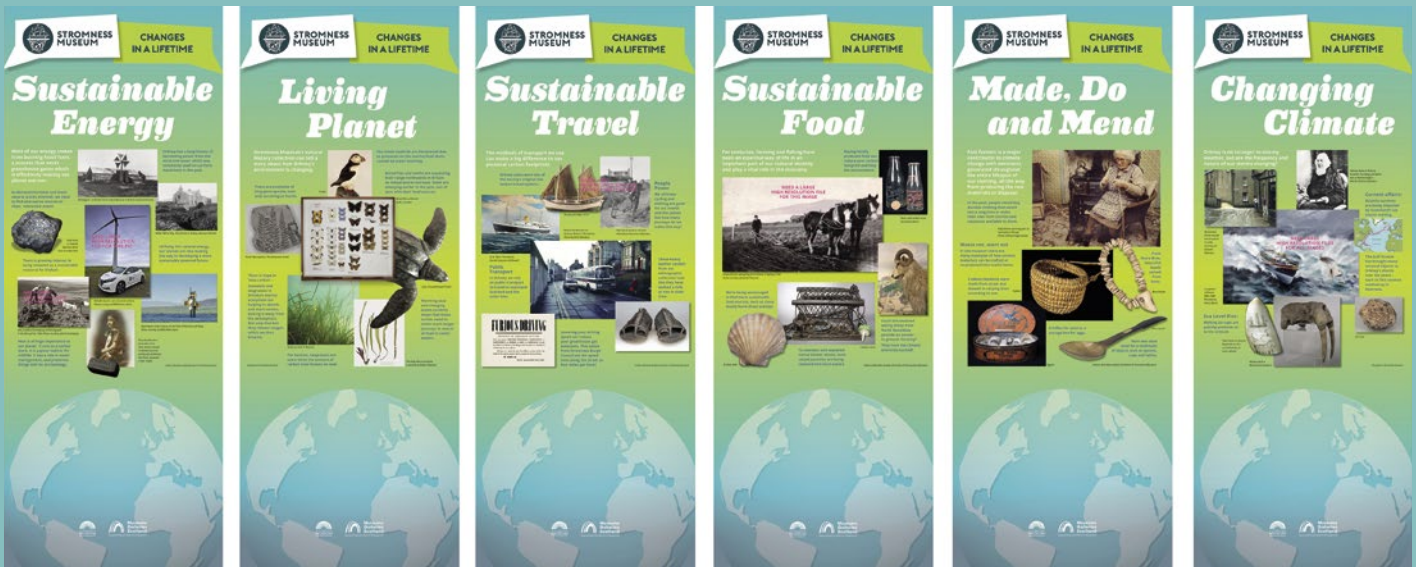
the participants were later transformed into being part of a stunning climate change artwork viewable by the general public. In collaborating with a local artist interested in climate change action, the museum succeeded also in supporting other creative industries in the region.

The resulting exhibition from the work of the café participants neatly summarised the main themes and stories which emerged. The museum's goal to showcase its collection was not lost at the expense of the important work of the café participants. Word count on labels was kept short with excellent use of images. The resultant artwork using the components created



*Climate café art installation detail.*





Pull-up banners graphics for climate cafés.

Throughout the project, the museum consistently showed a willingness to learn, improve and accommodate its audiences, as well as support the development of its staff through training.

by all the various groups from which the artist produced the stunning sculpture, now an important object in the museum collection, was very much the centre piece of the exhibition.

Throughout the project, the museum consistently showed a willingness to learn, improve and accommodate its audiences, as well as support the development of its staff through training. Whether by changing hosting locations to enable participants to feel more comfortable, utilising non-digital methods of engagement where spaces were unequipped with Wi-Fi or providing travel budgets to eliminate physical barriers, the staff displayed good practice throughout.

What is particularly outstanding about this project is the legacy it has created. Mention has already been made of the museum becoming an anchor organisation for climate change discussions and action in the

community with a focus on using their natural history collections to facilitate people engaging with climate change. The activities that have resulted so far are impressive and have extended far

beyond Stromness itself. For example, shoreline biodiversity surveys on the neighbouring island of Hoy have been carried out and the museum delivered events at the first Orkney Climate Festival. They have partnered with the RSPB to run the Big Garden Birdwatch and are developing a new Orkney garden-bird guide, as well as running 'Shoreline Rambles' for the public, which focus on the natural world around the museum.

Their commitment to highlighting the issues around climate change and giving a voice to those who feel their views are not noticed is exemplary.



Men's Shed climate café metal stamping.



A World of Good Gallery View, Wakefield Museum.



Sponsor: The Way Design

# Calling Out Climate Change

*In every reconfiguration of the Awards a new category has emerged as being of particular relevance to the world in which we live. While every category entry requires evidence of concern for this global issue, it was decided a special category dedicated to 'Calling Out Climate Change' was a must. This special category is for projects that inspire people to think about the consequences of their personal choices and to encourage them to take action that makes positive sustainable changes. Projects may be temporary or permanent, on or off-site, indoors, outdoors or online.*

## Winner:

**Changes in a lifetime – Climate Cafés at Stromness Museum, Orkney Natural History Society Museum**

Please see the previous pages for this entry, which was also the recipient of the AHI Award for Excellence.

## Finalist:

**A World of Good at Wakefield Museum, Wakefield Museums and Castles**

## Entrant's Project Description

'A World of Good' aimed to inspire action on the climate crisis. The project centred on a multisensory exhibition, featuring letters by Charles Waterton, a 19th-century environmentalist who campaigned for nature. Through collaboration with artists and renowned experts, the exhibition highlighted parallels between Waterton's campaigns and our situation today.

## Site Judges' Report

This was a simple, beautiful exhibition which engaged visitor emotions around the climate and nature crisis.

There was evidence of innovative use of different media and a clear commitment to creating high-quality artworks through engagement with artists, which was particularly effective. Using artists was a clear intention to bring quality and beauty to the exhibits, which is to be applauded and also allows visitor appreciation on numerous levels (e.g. artistic excellence), increasing inclusivity. The level of detail in the paper sculpture was remarkable as was the animation ensuring that it was not dependent on written content.

There was clear evidence of the experience inspiring and motivating visitors which was a core aim of the project team. Visitors were encouraged to make pledges as part of a campaign called 'Do A World of Good', some of which have already been incorporated into other exhibitions and displays.

The team displayed very strong sustainability credentials and 'walking the talk' for the subject matter.

Overall, the excellence of this project shone through.



# AHI Outstanding Contribution to Interpretation Award

Engaging People Awards 2023

*We wish to celebrate individuals who have made an impact in our sector. They may have affected the way we think about, develop, deliver and evaluate interpretation and visitor engagement; conceived and delivered a piece of groundbreaking interpretive or visitor engagement work; and/or consistently demonstrated and shared best practice in the sector over a number of years.*

## Recipient:

**Carolyn Lloyd Brown, FAHI**

We asked Jo Scott, long-standing colleague, collaborator and friend of Carolyn's to explain why she should be honoured by this award.

Our profession would be the lesser without Carolyn's invaluable contribution. Alongside delivering several hundred successful projects, she has been a champion of interpretive innovation, a tenacious advocate for people and places and an inspiring mentor. She's also great fun to work with!



## A Trailblazer

Carolyn's interpretive career blazed a trail from the start, as project coordinator and researcher for Jorvik Viking Centre in the 1980s. This groundbreaking family-friendly project dramatically changed the UK's approach to interpretation and visitor experiences, and Carolyn has been visioning, developing and delivering schemes that push interpretive bounds ever since.

## Advocating for Interpretation

In the 1990s Carolyn founded and directed PLB, one of the UK's first team of consultants and designers dedicated solely to cultural heritage planning and delivery. In this much-commended role, she led many successful projects and mentored new interpretive practitioners. At PLB and later as an independent consultant, she campaigned for interpretation's contribution to a wider context – from tourism and economic development to regeneration and conservation – and for a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to visitor management and destination development.

Many of Carolyn's projects have rightly been celebrated. She was, for example, a key member of the Battle of Bannockburn experience team that won the 2015 AHI Discover Heritage Award

for Excellence and received a Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Award for the conservation management plan she co-authored for Castle Howard, North Yorkshire.

## Making her Mark

Carolyn has also contributed significantly to AHI, as member and chair of the managing committee and, recently, on the ethics group and fellowship committee. She was made a Fellow in 2019. She has also been an International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) committee member, worked extensively on World Heritage Sites, and was visiting lecturer at the University of York and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) Summer School in Rome.

## An Outstanding Contribution

Through her passion, wisdom, empathy and dedication, Carolyn has helped to influence best interpretive practice, develop our profession and grow the skills of its practitioners, as well as delivering many authentic and engaging projects that make a real difference to people and places. She is therefore absolutely deserving of recognition for her outstanding contribution to interpretation.

# Indoors

*This category is for permanent or semi-permanent indoor projects that engage people inside, and provide interpretive visitor experiences in heritage, nature, culture or science. Projects can be physical and/or digital indoor experiences and may be part of a wider visitor experience.*



Sponsor: Fraser Randall

## Winner:

## National Famine Museum, Tandem and Irish Heritage Trust

### Entrant's Project Description

The National Famine Museum is one of Ireland's most important heritage destinations, dedicated to the impact and legacy of the Great Irish Famine (1845-52). Tandem delivered a compelling and emotive visitor experience, telling the story through the lens of the Strokestown Estate archive of 50,000+ documents and eyewitness accounts.

### Site Judges' Report

In 1979 Strokestown House and estate changed from being family owned to local ownership. It was then discovered that extensive archives existed relating to the history of the house, estate and local tenants linking them to the Great Irish Famine. It is these unique archives that are used to tell two stories – that of the estate owner but also that of the tenants on his land at the time of the Great Irish Famine.

The famine devastated Ireland when over two million people, a quarter of the population, died or emigrated.

There were two strands to this project, the first being to improve the visitor experience on arrival and across the site by creating essential facilities and infrastructure for larger visitor numbers. The second strand was to refresh the interpretation and provide a multisensory experience to bring it in line with visitor expectations.

From a practical side of things, the improved arrival experience has been achieved by providing lots of space in the reception area for large groups as well as easy access from the car park and around the main buildings. Visitor facilities in the form of a café, and importantly toilets, are also available.

With regards to the actual on-site visitor experience, this has been transformed into an immersive encounter with the story of the local landlord Major Denis Mahon and his tenants through archive materials, panels and audio-visual (AV) displays. A reconstructed dining room tells of his lavish lifestyle illustrated with documents from the archive showing how much was spent on entertainment and fine food. This contrasts sharply with the lives of his servants and the estate tenants, living in cramped conditions and heavily reliant on a single food source, the potato. Further displays explain the impact of potato blight on the local crop resulting in hunger and eviction of those unable to pay their rent. In desperation, the tenants petitioned the Major for aid and a facsimile of the petition is sensitively presented. Hearing it read aloud is very emotive.

The AV, which explains how many were forced to leave the area and/or emigrate, was very moving. It's worth noting it did not end well for the Major either as he was assassinated!

The exhibition ends with the opportunity to contemplate what has been learned and to leave comments.



Artefacts and models at the National Famine Museum.



There is also an opportunity to have a guided tour of the house after the exhibition and consider the impact of the wealthy occupants on the life of the locals.

Many visitors arrive knowing very little about the famine or the estate and leave with a deeper understanding of the life-changing events that occurred, not only

here but across Ireland, and globally. While a difficult visit in many ways, there is also a children's trail for families to use, prompting empathy and relating to the lives of children now.

It's a thought-provoking visit which definitely engages people just as the Award says should happen!

## Engaging People Awards 2023







## Finalist: Marble Hill, English Heritage and Skellon Studio

### Entrant's Project Description

Saved from destruction by an act of parliament in 1902, Marble Hill is the last complete survivor of the elegant villas which once bordered the Thames. The Marble Hill Revived project has transformed this 18th-century home of a remarkable woman, Henrietta Howard, for the local community and wider audiences.

### Site Judges' Report

Marble Hill did a fantastic job of highlighting Henrietta Howard's story as a survivor of domestic abuse and her identity as a D/deaf woman. The project team demonstrated great finesse in the way in which they dealt with challenging subjects such as colonisation, slavery, gender politics and female empowerment and the methods used to raise awareness of these issues in a non-confrontational way was excellent.

This project has numerous and wide-ranging examples of compelling interpretation, and a wonderful design approach that is full of character. We would especially like to applaud the team for its nuanced and engaging storytelling, for its effective consultative work in identifying an appropriately sensitive and yet straightforward tone, and for its flawless execution in confidently tackling challenging subjects in a family-friendly, non-confrontational and inclusive way.

There is clear evidence of working with local people and specific audiences at the planning stage. Key groups within the local community were consulted and included particularly with reference to Henrietta's story relating to hearing loss and domestic abuse. This consultation was carried through to the project design and delivery.

The accompanying family trail was fun and beautifully designed, and with the inclusion of sensory, tactile and interactive exhibits that promoted curiosity and exploration at all ages. The red room folders in most rooms were very well thought out, perfectly sized and an enjoyable length – a joy to browse. We were impressed with how deftly the content anticipated and answered questions that visitors might have asked, and we appreciated that each room offered multiple copies to allow for simultaneous engagement. Mention must also be made of the on-site volunteers who contribute greatly to the visitor experience with their friendly and knowledgeable manner, keen to engage visitors with tales of Marble Hill.



**Finalist:****Reimagining Wordsworth, The Wordsworth Trust and Nissen Richards Studio****Entrant's Project Description**

As a young man living at Dove Cottage in the Lake District 200 years ago, William Wordsworth wrote poetry that has the power to speak to people today, whatever their background. 'Reimagining Wordsworth' aimed to bring Wordsworth's poetry to life by showing the links between people, poetry and place in this inspirational landscape.

**Site Judges' Report:**

A primary aim of the Reimagining Wordsworth project was to attract new audiences and revitalise the site. The Wordsworth Trust have re-interpreted the site to ensure their story appeals to everyone especially those who have no prior knowledge of the poet before

their visit. They have successfully used a variety of different interpretive methods across the site such as digital interpretation, interactive interpretation with a guide and engaging activities, thus achieving what they set out to do.

The key story that clearly drove the interpretation was that of people, poetry and place; people being Wordsworth and his family, poetry in his writing and place in Dove Cottage and the surrounding landscape, though the exhibition space was also key to the telling of the story and explaining aspects of his life and thus in itself becomes a place.

The digital introductory video was a very strong piece of media which provided an interesting and comprehensive introduction to Wordsworth, his life and the relevance of his poetry. The Dove Cottage interpretation was delivered by

a very knowledgeable and interesting guide and the facsimiles of Wordsworth's writing dotted around the house gave it a lived-in feeling. The garden and outside areas had a light-touch approach to delivery. The main exhibition space had a variety of displays including text, images, audio stations and opportunities for powerful, simple engagement. For example, in a high-quality exhibition environment, children and adults alike are free to try out writing in ink even if the ink is going to run free.

The Wordsworth Trust also sought to increase links with local people and specific community groups at the site and there is evidence of several co-production projects and new volunteer programmes. A Sensory Garden was designed with a volunteer group and community groups contributed to the temporary exhibition space.

*Quill writing in the gallery of Prelude manuscripts at Wordsworth Reimagined.*



*This category is for permanent or semi-permanent outdoor projects that engage people outside and provide interpretive visitor experience in heritage, nature, culture or science. Projects can be physical and/or digital outdoor experiences and may be part of a wider visitor experience.*

## Finalist:

### More Than Words, The Sensory Trust and Wheal Martyn Clay Works

Commended by the Panel Judges for the Trust's new approaches to sensory engagement and the consultation that developed it.



Wheal Martyn on-site creative activity.

## Entrant's Project Description

'More Than Words' is making meaningful connections for a more diverse audience. In partnership with four sites in Cornwall, we are working with people with disabilities to develop accessible experiences, test new approaches to sensory-rich interpretation (sensory stories, trails, activities) and create richer, more memorable and engaging opportunities for all.

## Site Judges' Report

This project had a clear target audience and the Sensory Trust's ambition to support the four sites involved in widening access and engagement for visitors with different access needs, learning abilities and styles is impressive. The title of the project 'More Than Words' seems especially apt in this respect.

A wide range of groups and individuals were involved in the planning and design stages of the project, and this comes across as a strong and important element for the overall outcomes.

The Pause and Explore benches, with inset tiles designed by participants at workshops, were placed in a perfect nature setting at Wheal Martyn Clay Works and were a very appropriate addition for this site. The tiles were individually designed with sensory and tactile elements within them.

At Geevor Tin Mine, the soundtrack in The Dry, (the place where the workers changed before and after shifts and an area which had been mothballed from the day of the mine closure) worked exceptionally well. The audio/oral histories available at this site added an extra dimension to the sensory elements.

*A wide range of groups and individuals were involved in the planning and design stages of the project, and this comes across as a strong and important element for the overall outcomes.*



**Finalist:****Revealing, Reviving and Restoring Great Linford Manor Park, The Parks Trust and Outside Studios**

Commended by the Panel Judges for creatively connecting everyday visitors to the built heritage in the landscape and their continuing programme of activities.

**Entrant's Project Description**

Our project innovatively restored a public parkland to its 18th-century landscape and provided creative interpretation for the community to learn about its important heritage. We supported physical works with a diverse programme of interpretive activities for people to explore the natural and built heritage of the park.

**Site Judges' Report**

This project has transformed Great Linford Manor Park into an attractive space that can be enjoyed by the local community in particular, for many years to come.

In the planning of the project, it is clear that public consultation was important in the development of the interpretation. Plans did change because of suggestions made during this process.

The restoration of the buildings and landscape has been sensitively done and the sculptures are an excellent addition to the park. They fit into the landscape well, and encourage tactile engagement of the site, whether it is using the Doric seat as a small-event venue, or children being able to climb on the sheep or jump on the leaf stepping stones.

For those wishing for more information, the high-quality series of interpretation panels and markers across the site provide more historical facts and

context about the whole location. The central hub of panels express the key themes and have a very effective metal cut out detail, which reflects the landscape in which they are situated. The Alphabet Trail is a particular highlight.

By working with the community, much of the historic story of the manor house and the village has been brought to life. The events programme and dementia-focused engagement both provide opportunities to benefit the local community as well as those from further afield, thus fulfilling their original aim to widen the appeal of the park beyond the local community.

*Interpretation panel in the Linford Manor Park.*



# Temporary Event or Activity



Sponsor: BeWunder

*This category is for time-limited events or activities that engage people with heritage, nature, culture or science. These can include pop-up exhibitions, festivals, costumed interpretation, guided walks, family activities, theatrical experiences, performances, short films, musical performances, dance, light shows.*

## Winner:

### **The Future Belongs To What Was As Much As What Is by Morag Myerscough at Housesteads Roman Fort, English Heritage**

#### Entrant's Project Description

Artist Morag Myerscough responded to Hadrian's Wall's history for HW1900, the 1900th anniversary of Hadrian's Wall. She created a contemporary, colourful take on the original Roman gatehouse at Housesteads Roman Fort, Hexham, Northumberland with the local community. The result, an artwork entitled, The Future Belongs To What Was As Much As What Is, brought people together.



*The co-created artwork is installed.*

#### Site Judges' Report

This was a bold, innovative, inspiring project with a real 'wow' factor. For a short period, this installation brought a tricky and inaccessible archaeological site to life in a wonderfully, exuberant way. In doing so it has created a new and exciting approach to archaeological interpretation.

The Future Belongs To What Was As Much As What Is set out to involve local communities in their heritage and in the process created a cultural focus that attracted new audiences, told an important story, engendered pride in its creators and triggered debate.

This project was well planned with clear aims and collaboration built into it from the start.

A key aim was to make this a project for the community by the community. Consultation and collaboration led to an impressive depth and breadth of community involvement and to a heightened emotional engagement between the heritage site and those who live locally. The structure did not just land in the landscape without any local involvement or local knowledge. Local schools, home-schooled children, refugee groups and young people with learning disabilities were amongst those involved in the creation of the words used on the panels that formed part of the final structure. The artist, Morag Myerscough, wanted to find out what this part of Hadrian's Wall meant to local people and incorporated that into the final work.

The theme, of taking a traditional gateway between two communities – the conquerors (the Romans) and the conquered, and exploring its relevance today, was clear from the start as was the role of colour and symbolism in the Roman world. The end result was clearly traceable from these first thoughts and the theme beautifully expressed in very accessible terms.

Those involved with the workshops were clearly proud to have been part of this work. The title, The Future Belongs To What Was As Much As What Is, came from one of the workshop participants. Some of the participants and groups expressed an interest in wanting to be involved in future projects. Some of them became Art Explainers, who were





© English Heritage

*The completed Roman gatehouse installation looks across Hadrian's Wall and Housesteads Roman Fort.*

specifically trained to help the visiting public, explaining what they had helped to create with great enthusiasm.

The design not only allowed visitors to climb on, walk through and sit on it but also allowed them to enjoy a view that has not been enjoyed for 1,600 years, giving a greater understanding

of the landscape and of the fort and of Roman life. Close collaboration between the artist and curators and historians is reflected in the careful choice of real Roman artefacts that were brought together to form part of the accompanying exhibition and display on-site. These illustrate well the Roman love of colour and pattern on everyday objects and buildings.

The experience was supported by a planned programme of events linked to this project, which included live poetry readings by local poet Ellen Moran linking to the Romans and the Wall, educational visits, family trails and guided walks with trained art explainers to help people get more out of their visit.

Careful consideration was made to help people with different needs engage with the project. There were British Sign Language-trained staff, some of the materials were provided in braille, text was translated into four languages, there were tactile materials and audio-visual resources.

Very thorough evaluation showed that new audiences had been attracted and gave clear evidence of how engaged visitors were. Compared to previous visitor data for this site it showed a significant increase in visitor numbers, there was a higher proportion of younger visitors and also visitors attracted primarily by the artist's interpretation of this heritage site. Most feedback showed that visitors were enjoying it and learning something new. There was negative comment too, as would be expected in the case of something so bold. This was recorded and assessed together with the positive comments. A project review, with lessons learned and recommendation was produced to inform similar, future English Heritage projects.

Thanks to this project archaeology can no longer be seen just as bare walls left behind. The culture of those who once lived there has been brought into focus.





## Finalist:

# Permissible Beauty, Historic Royal Palaces and the University of Leicester

Commended by the Panel Judges for their thought-provoking ethical framework and for an exhibition that is a stunning visual and audio feast that produced a brave, well executed and engaging story.

## Entrant's Project Description

Permissible Beauty was a temporary exhibition/immersive installation at Hampton Court Palace, January – March 2023, exploring and celebrating shifting ideas of beauty past and present through Lely's 17th-century 'Windsor Beauties' and contemporary portraits of six leading creatives in the Black Queer British community, with film, performance and music.

## Site Judges' Report

Permissible Beauty juxtaposes Lely's portraits of the 17th-century 'Windsor Beauties' with contemporary portraits, film and poetry of six leading creatives in the Black Queer British community. This provokes a conversation about what society considers beautiful and how that might have changed over time.

In planning the project, an ethical framework was created for the project team and partners which ensured equality of experience for everyone.

The well-being of the participants was very much at the heart of the project and demonstrates an excellent model for socially engaged practice.

The project is strong in telling a story with the voices of the participants from the Black Queer British community and speaking to a particular audience, both of which have not traditionally been seen or heard from in this context. Aims that were stated early in the project planning process came across strongly in the final product.

Extremely high standards of design, filmmaking, photography, poetry and music were employed very effectively. The exhibition had broad appeal due to the skilful treatment of what could have been challenging topics. As intended, the project exuded a sense of playfulness and a joyful feeling allowing a wide audience to relate to the exhibition content.

Overall, this exhibition was a stunning visual and audio feast that was extremely thought-provoking and very well produced.



*Permissible Beauty - henge with skin & soul portraits.*



**Finalist:****OOT & Aboot: Talking Coquetdale, The Out of Town (OOT) Museum, part of Bailiffgate Museum and Gallery, Alnwick**

Commended by the Panel Judges for their creative and engaging delivery and sustainability.

**Entrant's Project Description**

OOT & Aboot is a high-quality, accessible and enjoyable celebration of Coquetdale and its people. Evocative stories from OOT's archive are presented in fun, sensory and thought-provoking ways for our target audiences, boosting pride in, and appreciation of, the valley's uniqueness, while preserving and sharing its distinctive and fragile heritage and dialect.

**Site Judges' Report**

This exhibition has delivered a traditional experience in an extremely creative and engaging way, bringing a fresh perspective to local history and the use of oral history. Much thought has also gone into how to transport it around a multitude of venues in a sustainable way and to make it easy to reassemble for each new location.

The well-made sound gadgets – the accordion, violin case, radio and bike bell – that triggered the audio stories



Thropton – First school visit.

*The well-made sound gadgets – the accordion, violin case, radio and bike bell – that triggered the audio stories really brought the audio to life...*

really brought the audio to life and immersed the visitor in a context which made the audio more impactful than if it were delivered in a more traditional way. Equally, the oral history stories and the people who told them were well chosen. The dialect was engaging and a joy to listen to, both for somebody familiar with it and somebody encountering it for the first time.

The large-scale images, room sets and handling objects helped visitors to relate to the people in the audio, and

although those people are not shown in photographs, there was still a sense of having 'met' these people and 'knowing' them.

Taking the exhibition back to the communities that provided the oral histories to the project has ensured this touring exhibition has reached audiences in rural communities for whom museum visits are less likely for a variety of reasons. Feedback shows that this has been greatly appreciated by these communities.

# Community Engagement

Tandem™

Sponsor: Tandem Design

*This category is for projects where the community takes the lead, or where organisations work in equal partnership with their communities, to engage people in heritage, nature, culture or science. We are looking for projects where community groups or organisations are directly involved in planning and delivering experiences for local people and/or visitors. These experiences can be temporary or permanent, on or off-site, indoors, outdoors or online, and communities may be defined by geography, special interest or shared experience.*

## Winner:

### Rebuilding Lives: 50 years of Ugandan Asians in Leicester, Navrang Arts

#### Entrant's Project Description

This project was initiated within Leicester's Ugandan Asian community and largely created by community volunteers. It commemorates their expulsion from Uganda by Idi Amin and celebrates rebuilding their lives in the UK – told through the lived experiences of community members. There were five exhibitions, events, engagement and educational activities.

#### Site Judges' Report

This project shows how powerful good community engagement can be. This story is difficult and has become hidden over time. To hear it told through the voices of those who experienced the expulsion of Ugandan Asians is a moving experience. The positive perspective on this story is a great joy to see and there is a real sense of determination and achievement as the community commemorate the 50th anniversary of their expulsion and setting up home in the UK.

This project was incredibly well planned. The core aims were for the Ugandan Asian community to have the opportunity to tell their own story that would reflect what their life had been like in Uganda, their journey after expulsion and how they began their lives again here in the UK. This meant it was almost all planned, developed and delivered by volunteers from the community. Volunteers were recruited and training needs identified and provided for such as how to conduct and record oral history reviews and archive the recorded material. All the material for the exhibitions was collected by the volunteers – the oral histories, objects, photographs and cine film. Special 'Memory Days' were set up to gather the material for the museum displays and these provided further focus on why it was so important to the Ugandan Asian community to record their history for future generations. The meticulous



Bena beside the panel telling her story.





Gallery view *Rebuilding Lives*.

attention to detail of the core project group – seven volunteers – and one paid project coordinator in their collection material is quite remarkable.

At the delivery stage, it was clear that the intention was for all visitors to be part of the story. A very serious subject has been carefully guided into a narrative that is both powerful and accessible by all who engage with it. The first-person recounting means all visitors can be part of the situation as an empathetic ear to soak up the enormity of this event whilst seeing the human faces behind this globally significant historical news event.

The parallels in today's refugee crises were well laid out and thought-provoking questions generated deep conversations which were captured on a comment board. To be offered a voice in this space was an extraordinary experience.

*The approach to allow community voices to drive the narrative was brave and led to a moving and strong account of the historical event and its aftermath that made this project accessible and very engaging.*

The project was innovative and different in the sense that the main exhibit became a feeder project to be altered for different audiences. When other communities around the UK wanted to use the pop-up exhibits, they could be changed to be more relevant to the specific audience, while still telling the main story. The approach to allow

community voices to drive the narrative was brave and led to a moving and strong account of the historical event and its aftermath that made this project accessible and very engaging.

At every stage, community engagement was at the heart of the project. This is an outstanding example of a community working together.



## Finalist:

# Open All Hours, New Opportunities Wirksworth and inHeritage

Commended by the Panel Judges for the way the project team brought the community together and reconnected with Wirksworth High Street as well as sparking other community projects of the future.

## Entrant's Project Description

To record, interpret and celebrate the working history surrounding the shops of the historic Derbyshire market town of Wirksworth, which has a proud history of independent shops. It has sought to engage people who have worked in them, their customers and the wider community, as well as train and engage people in research and interpretation.

## Site Judges' Report

The heart of the community was very much at the centre of this project. The team effectively brought together different elements in the town and community to deliver an impactful project, a highly impressive achievement given the constraints presented to them by Covid. Their adaptability and determination to get the best from the interpretation for the town despite the challenges that arose was remarkable.

From the beginning working with the community to develop the interpretation was integral to the project as was the wellbeing of those involved. The objective to bring people back to the High Street for the economic health of Wirksworth, especially during Covid recovery, was a clear goal.

The interpretive attention to detail through planning, delivery and evaluation was excellent and it was interesting to see how this heritage project fitted into a bigger master plan for the town. Despite the focus here being on post-Covid recovery, every



*A volunteer who loaned her collection of Charles Wright and Son bottles dresses a shop window for the Street Museum.*

market town could benefit from a project like this to draw out the stories that resonate with local people.

The project, and wider initiatives, have resulted in an excellent legacy for the town – an historical archive which is

supported by an engaged community of volunteers. There is plenty of evidence in the submission of skills development and volunteer community historians learning new things, providing a springboard for future work and projects.



**Finalist:****Exchange Project, SS Great Britain Trust****Entrant's Project Description**

A community-led research project in the museum's collections, based on the theme of migration, creating publications, exhibition and community learning resources.

**Site Judges' Report**

This is a well-planned project with a participatory approach clearly evident at the pre- planning stage by an open invitation to parents from one of the most diverse local primary schools in Bristol to carry out collections' research and produce creative outputs for other families. Participants were able to accept and shape the invitation on their terms to give a fair balance of power from the outset of the collaboration. Potential barriers to participation were mitigated

by covering out of pocket expenses and childcare cost/wage replacements. These initial conversations with the parents informed the narratives, audience and structure of the project which also informed the Trust's funding proposal.

The commitment to true and genuine participation throughout is clear and is particularly evident as the ideas for interpretive outputs came from the participants following visits to the museum, looking at 'voyage boxes' and historical documents and not from the SS Great Britain team. It's commendable that the funders realigned the budget to accommodate this new direction.

The participants produced a resource box for schools, a booklet to breakdown misconceptions about the ship and a book documenting the lives of people

of colour on board the ship. Although these were produced with support from the museum's interpretation and collections teams, they are authentic, unpolished and not overly curated which was a brave and highly admirable decision. The project also delivered an open-air exhibition on the quay which documented the experiences of the participants through imagery and quotes.

The participatory approach to engaging a specific audience in heritage and to deepening community engagement demonstrates how to engage people with heritage in a highly impactful and meaningful way. It should be celebrated for starting to develop more inclusive heritage narratives and for sharing its learning to inform better practice.



Exhibition launch SS Great Britain Trust.

## Finalist:

# South Asia Gallery, A British Museum Partnership at Manchester Museum, Manchester Museum and South Asia Gallery Collective

## Entrant's Project Description

The South Asia Gallery is the first permanent gallery in the UK dedicated to the experiences and contribution of the South Asian diaspora. Designed and built in the spirit of collaboration with the South Asia Gallery Collective, an inspiring group of community members whose co-curation spans over five years.

## Site Judges' Report

The genuine commitment of Manchester Museum and the Collective to this project is impressive, with a real depth of involvement of the co-curators in the development of ideas and stories for the South Asian Gallery. It is evident that the project consulted widely within the diverse South Asian community, so that the breadth of South Asian culture is represented.

There are many fascinating objects and stories revealed by the co-curators in the exhibition – evidence of the need for this kind of approach is the revelation that an Indian physicist, Satyendra Neth Bose, gave his name to the boson, better known as the Higgs Boson. The portrayal of such a wide range of talents and skills – from Bhangra to Maths – is a real positive. There is much that is thought-provoking and may be new to many visitors – such as the stories of exploitation of people and resources by the British East India Company, and of the partition of India. The stories span

millennia, from the Indus civilisation to the impact of Covid, demonstrating the value of involving a wide range of people in the project.

The inclusion of large works by artists – the Singh Sisters' detailed mural in the entrance, and Azraa Motala's portrait – and the brightly decorated rickshaw provide moments of impact which complement the otherwise small-scale displays in the gallery.

It is clear that the local South Asian communities are relishing the focus of the gallery. There were lots of intergenerational conversations inspired by the exhibits evident within the gallery. Popular with many visitors were the audio stations offering different types of music from Bollywood to Bhangra.

This gallery really is a place where people with South Asian heritage can experience a sense of belonging and ownership.



Preview Invite – South Asia Gallery Manchester University.

*It is clear that the local South Asian communities are relishing the focus of the gallery. There were lots of intergenerational conversations inspired by the exhibits evident within the gallery.*



# Lara Clare Munden

## Young Interpreter Award

### Bright White



Sponsors: Bright White  
and Michael Hamish Glen

*We are looking for inspirational individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, who are at the beginning of their interpretation and visitor engagement career. We would like to recognise young people who have been actively involved in or have led a project that has helped to engage people with our heritage, nature, culture or science.*

#### Recipient:

#### Catherine Wright

We asked Catherine's colleagues at Tandem Design to write about this year's recipient of the Young Interpreter Award.

When Catherine joined Tandem as an intern two years ago, following her master's in Public History, her natural aptitude for interpretation didn't take long to come to the fore.

Whether trying to understand the geology of the Burren National Park's limestone landscape or finding new ways to connect the community around Divis and Black Mountain with the Irish language, Catherine relishes a challenge. In the time we've worked with her, it's been fantastic to see her confidence grow in facing these challenges.

She maintains her calm under pressure, thinks on her feet and pulls together with the team here at Tandem to support when required. Already in the early stages of her career, she has led the delivery of interpretation across projects varied in subject and scope, including community-based heritage centres in diverse parts of Ireland. She continues to lead and make an impact in the development and delivery of our long-term projects, particularly in those dedicated to interpretation in the landscape.



Equally at home presenting her work to dozens of council officers on a multi-stakeholder team as she is in one-on-one situations, Catherine also listens carefully and asks the right questions at the right times. Her naturally warm and positive personality has helped her to make connections with people from every background, from subject specialists to people sharing their personal memories and reminiscences, most recently in the development of our major project Templemore Baths.

A natural perfectionist who holds herself to the highest standards, in her time with us she has already learned that sometimes despite your best efforts

things don't go according to carefully laid plans... but it's how you deal with the challenges that counts, rather than expecting everything to go perfectly all the time.

Her passion for heritage and interpretation is evident in every project she's involved in, as well as in her hobbies outside of work. Last but not definitely not least, her contribution to the team at Tandem can't be underestimated. From keeping us entertained with Dad jokes, to stories of escapades at her family's farm, Catherine always has something to share that makes our days a little brighter. Just don't talk to her if her rugby team isn't winning!

# Coming in our next issue...

Issue 29-1, Summer 2024 is about the use and importance of emotions in interpretation. We will find out how a range of projects have used emotions, including the Irish Heritage Trust's AHI award-winning National Famine Museum. Susan Cross launches the Provocative Fellow. There will be a focus on emotions in Interpretation Hacks and the Interpretation Research Lab. We will also find out what the British Museum learnt from Room 3, their experimental space for 18 years.



## Have you watched our AHI Webinars?

AHI has produced a series of webinars based on our best-practice guidelines. They are available online 24/7 and completely free for members who have registered with the AHI website.

They include new Chair Jackie Lee on customised interpretation, Cathy Lewis on writing for children, Cassie Herschel-Shorland on inclusive design, AHI Fellow Sunita Welch on evaluation and Journal Editor Bill Bevan on interpretation panels.



Find the webinars here if you are registered and logged in:

<https://bit.ly/AHIWebinars>



If you are not logged in this link will take you to our membership joining page. Just use the website menu to login and go to Member. If you need to register visit here first:

<https://bit.ly/AHIRegister>





# PastIssues

## AHI Awards

**So, here's the thing – AHI's Awards are a recognition of excellence in interpretive practice, a celebration of the best, and best of all they reflect the highest of peer recognition. Yet once the bi-annual ceremony is over they often become little more than a plaque on the office wall and a glimmer in a glowing recipient's memory. But the winners and runners-up are so much more – they are a treasury of what works, of innovation, of creativity. In this Awards year, it behoves us to look back through the Journal archives to sample some of that excellence, and to pause to consider how work from the past can help the interpretists' endeavours today.**

Following a hiatus, the Awards were resurrected in 2015 with the title Discover Heritage Awards. It is almost impossible to select a small number from the kaleidoscope of entrants from the first three years of the new programme, but here goes (apologies to those not included!)



**2015:** From the big hitter of the National Trust for Scotland's Battle of Bannockburn Visitor Centre to the tiny Tideswell History Telephone Box. The former a major upgrade of a long-established and important visitor destination at the heart of Scotland's story. The latter being the innovative use of a former BT telephone box – a classic example of a community project that brought a much-valued asset to the village.



**2017:** In this tragic new age of the military tank, one of this year's runners-up was the Tank Museum's gallery 'Tank Men', a look at these monsters of war from the perspective of the men who rode them into battle.

However, of note in this edition was an article, 'Taking Flight: The Journey to Excellence', contributed by Ted Cable and Larry Beck, of Kansas State and San Diego State Universities. Essential reading who those who would soar with the eagles.



**2019:** This year's recipients included the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln – a compelling example of how interpretation and remembrance can come together. A runner-up was 'Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes' – a capacity-building project driven by the Alnwick Civic Society to encourage local people to influence the future of heritage and conservation in the town.

Don't let the archive become another 'room of concealment' – visit <https://ahi.org.uk/journal-archive> to read the full articles. You will need your membership details to login for access.



**Bob Jones, MBE, HFAHI**  
BlueSkyBlueWater Interpretative Planning Consultancy



*'In the solitude and silence of the wilderness'*

Taken from the Statuta ordinis Cartusienensis originally compiled in 1127 at the request of Hugh of Grenoble.

Image © Historic Coventry Trust

## Coventry Charterhouse

Unlocking the secrets of a medieval monastery through immersive storytelling. An opportunity to rest, reflect and connect with heritage and nature



Visitor experience design for  
museums, heritage and culture

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