



My Fair  
Kelty



The song  
of the bird  
of the sea



A  
Common  
Thread



Rainbow  
City

the journal for Scotland's Interpreters

# Interpret Scotland

issue 14 | winter 2006

## A' Foillseachadh na h-Alba



### Communities

Power to the people

# Interpret Scotland

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Interpret Scotland is an inter-agency initiative that seeks to:

- ◆ Improve the quality and quantity of interpretation in Scotland
- ◆ Promote the co-ordination of interpretation at local and strategic level
- ◆ Share resources, expertise and experience to avoid duplicating effort



'Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want and deserve to get it good and hard'  
H L Mencken

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## Too much of a good thing?

Our original title for this issue was 'Interpretation and communities', later changed to 'Power to the people' in light of the content of the articles we received. If you work for an agency or NGO, doesn't our new title fill you with terror? Do you see months of difficult community consultations stopping you from getting on with your work? If you are part of a community, don't you find the idea of initiating interpretive projects daunting, bureaucratic or just downright intrusive?

Reading through this issue I've been struck by one thing. Despite the broad definition of community – villages, gay communities, urban groups – and the range of professionals with which they worked, they are all success stories. Communities of all shapes and sizes working closely with professionals to develop inspiring and original projects.

There are valuable lessons to be learnt from each, but I was, perhaps perversely, rather disappointed that there weren't more problems to be discussed, more difficulties to be overcome. Ongoing news in the media about the marine parks consultation process highlights the conflicting interests and views that are found in most communities, even the smallest. Sometimes working our way through issues like this teaches us as much about achieving our goals as the success stories.

However, the articles in this issue do show that great things can be achieved if people have the confidence and vision to look beyond the traditional view of agencies coming in and working above the heads of 'ordinary people'. People power is set to be the Next Big Thing in interpretation, so take note!

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Interpret Scotland is published twice a year and is distributed free on request. If you would like to join the mailing list, or if you are receiving duplicate copies, please contact Sandra Phipps at Scottish Natural Heritage on 01738 444177 or [sandra.phipps@snh.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.phipps@snh.gov.uk) You could also visit the Interpret Scotland web site: [www.interpretscotland.org.uk](http://www.interpretscotland.org.uk)

### Next edition

Issue 15 of Interpret Scotland will address training and career development for interpreters. What qualifications, if any, does an interpreter need? How can training and education develop both individual skills and interpretation practice? And is being an interpreter a career, or a vocation? James Carter will be the editor. Please send suggestions for articles or letters for publication to [james@jamescarter.cc](mailto:james@jamescarter.cc)

'In communities where men build ships for their own sons to fish or fight from, quality is never a problem' *Old Greek proverb*



# My Fair Kelty

Colin Peacock, community and environment ranger for Forestry Commission Scotland, explains how the Kelty community helped change its local forest from ladette to lady ...

Once regarded as a problem forest of burnt out cars and fly-tipping, Blairadam Forest, near Kelty in Fife, is now attracting visitors from the whole region. The forest is owned by Forestry Commission Scotland, and in 2006 it celebrated the tenth year of an exciting three-way community partnership project to transform its negative image.

The Kelty Heritage Trails Group manages the project, and represents a number of different interest groups in the area. As a former mining community, Kelty has its share of social problems and unemployment. Yet despite this there is a strong sense of community in the town. Much of the initial drive for the Heritage Trails project came from the Lindsay Memorial Committee, a group of local ex-miners who had raised funds to erect a memorial to those killed in a local mining disaster. They were looking for an appropriate way to use the remaining funds to commemorate the local mining industry, while improving things for the community. The achievements of the partnership, which also includes Forestry Commission Scotland and Fife Council, were recognised this year, when it was awarded the Scottish Forestry Society's Tim Stead Trophy for Finest Community Woodland.



*Kelty folk walking the newly-opened trail through Keltyhill Glen*

The partners meet once a month to plan and develop projects. The group is a very fertile source of ideas. The major success of the partnership has been our ability to transform these ideas into action. Progress is often achieved by one of the partners developing ideas

using their particular expertise or contacts, with support and input from the others. The result has been an eclectic mix of interpretation methods to complement the improvements.

Meetings are not always plain sailing, and it took time to build up trust and momentum. It is particularly satisfying to see an idea through from its earliest stages to the finished product. The partnership has achieved a great deal by working together, much more than each partner could have achieved on their own.

The Heritage Group has always been keen to incorporate artworks within the forest. One successful installation resulted from links built up with Lauder College in Dunfermline, where the group has the opportunity to commission environmental artworks from the students. The first was a Celtic-style carving of a wildcat chiselled into the brick abutment of an old railway bridge. The carving was not only inspired by local legends of a large black cat, but also by the historic place name *Crancat* found within the forest, which translates as 'rock of the wildcat'. The Group loved the image so much that we have adopted it as our logo.

Construction of a drystone dyke at the entrance to the forest provided an opportunity for further low key interpretation. Ten massive stones have been incorporated into the design. Each has a set of initials carved into the rock surface. These have already given rise to a number of theories among the locals. The initials in fact refer to each member of the Blairadam Antiquarian Club, close friends of William Adam and Sir Walter Scott, who all met at Blairadam each summer from 1817 to 1831.

The wider community has been kept informed of what's going on in the forest through the local press and the community newsletter. Numerous events such as a woodland spring clean, trail opening, school visits and a forest festival have attracted hundreds of local people into the wood.

One of the keys to the ongoing success of the project is the management committee, which has its own simple constitution. This means that while individual members may come and go over time, the constitution ensures continuity. The project is embedded in the local community, and while agencies such as Forestry Commission Scotland and Fife Council can offer expertise and funding, it is the community's own contributions and sense of ownership which have ensured the town's enthusiastic support.

## Links

[www.ourheritage.org.uk](http://www.ourheritage.org.uk)  
[www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

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'One generation plants the trees, another gets the shade.'

Chinese Proverb

# Bigot busters tackling sectarianism



Photo Courtesy of Glasgow Museums

Kiran Singh, education and access curator at St Mungo Museum in Glasgow, discusses a groundbreaking new approach to the seemingly insurmountable problem of sectarianism in the city.

In 1993 St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art opened with the aim of challenging bigotry and promoting mutual understanding and respect between people of different faiths and of no faith.

However, staff knew that the museum's goals were going to be challenging. Only two months after the museum had opened, a visitor attacked and permanently damaged the museum's image of the Hindu god Shiva as Nataraja – the man said that he was acting in the name of Christ.

Over the past few years, St Mungo Museum has recruited a team of education and access staff who, along with museum curators, research, plan and deliver programmes to raise awareness of religious divisions, promote understanding of world religions, and tackle social issues such as racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

In 2002 the team at St Mungo initiated Scotland's first museum citizenship programme for schools. They later realized there was a need to create programmes to explore the subject of sectarianism in more detail, and to work with a wider range of audiences, including adults from faith communities, young people, teachers and, more recently, gang members and politicians. The result was a programme called *Bigot Busters! Tackling Sectarianism*, which – with support from local awareness groups such as Nil By Mouth, Sense Over Sectarianism, and Learning and Teaching Scotland – has now become one of the UK's largest and most popular anti-sectarian programmes, with over 1200 people taking part in it each month.

Group visitors are first welcomed to the museum and then taken to see the damaged image of Shiva as Nataraja. We explain how the statue was attacked by someone who saw the placing of a Hindu image along side Christian objects as offensive. This aspect of the workshop leads to a thought-provoking discussion about why someone would want to attack a religious image that others view as important or sacred, and about how some people use religion as a tool to divide.

To explore the language associated with sectarianism, we start with the rivalry between the football clubs commonly known in Glasgow as the Old Firm. At a football match between Glasgow Rangers and Glasgow Celtic, people will see examples of social and global divisions, as well as political connections, unfolding before them – by the flying of Irish, British, Palestinian and Basque flags, and by the singing of sectarian songs.

Objects on display in the museum and handling objects – such as sectarian merchandise sold at Old Firm games – are used to facilitate discussion of how people's views and beliefs can be shaped by upbringing, and what can often lead to prejudice in the form of racism and sectarianism.

The team at the museum relies on the community to support its programmes. In order to engage support from the wider community, staff at the museum often work in partnership with anti-sectarian groups, young offender organisations and social work departments, as well as teaching groups, faith representatives and other museums.

Although we know that we cannot always change the views of someone with sectarian beliefs, we have discovered that a thought-provoking visit can lead visitors to question themselves and their views, if not now, then perhaps in the future. We hope that these workshops will help people to rethink about what type of city they want to be part of, and what we all can do to change it. We see the museum as a place where people should feel safe to discuss issues relating to sectarianism and methods to eradicate the problem across all levels of society.

A key objective of Glasgow City Council is to promote social inclusion, tackle poverty, and improve health and well-being. The Council's corporate Equality Policy recognises the need to promote equality and challenge discrimination. It has identified faith communities as a priority group, and outlines the Council's commitment to promoting good relations between people from different communities.

The work of St Mungo Museum ties in with Glasgow's Cultural Strategy, a strategic priority of which is to develop socially inclusive cultural services which promote equality, challenge discrimination, and increase participation amongst under-represented / hard-to-reach groups. The Action Plan which underpins the strategy commits the Council to developing St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art as a national centre for challenging religious discrimination, promoting inter-faith dialogue, and exploring sensitive issues of faith in the 21st century.

St Mungo Museum will continue to expand its work on social issue topics. As part of this year's commemoration of the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade within the British Empire, schools and groups across Scotland are being offered the chance to take part in a free workshop called Towards Understanding Slavery, which looks at crimes against humanity – both in the past and human rights violations and forms of slavery today.

**Kiran Singh, [Kiran.Singh@cls.glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:Kiran.Singh@cls.glasgow.gov.uk)**

'I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.'

George Bernard Shaw

# A gem on our doorstep

When a community is truly involved in a project from the start the achievements can go well beyond the original remit. Historic Scotland started the ball rolling at Lincluden Abbey, in Dumfries-shire, but it was the commitment of the volunteers, supported by an enthusiastic professional, that made this project such a great success.



In 2003 Historic Scotland approached the North West Communities in Partnership to discuss how they might jointly develop a project to promote a sense of community ownership at Lincluden Collegiate Church, known locally as Lincluden Abbey. The aim was to reduce anti-social behaviour, promote tourism and develop better access to the site. The post of a community development worker (culture & heritage) was then created to take the initiative forward.

The management committee of the North West Resource Centre was approached to find active members interested in protecting their local heritage site. This led a group of like-minded enthusiasts to meet and form the Culture & Heritage Active Volunteers (CHAV).

The first thing we felt we had to do was to consult with the community. An extensive consultation process was put into action with local community groups and organisations, most of which had little or no previous involvement in local heritage projects.

In August 2005 we launched our plans through an awareness raising event called *Abbey Antics*. Over 1000 people attended this unique spectacle, which was the first of its kind in the area. We received tremendously positive feedback from those who attended on the day. This was our first big exercise and put us all to the test. We discovered that our group worked well together under pressure, and it really brought out the skills of individual members.

CHAV members, along with the community development worker, made a short film documenting the thoughts and observations of the *Abbey Antics* event. Shot at Lincluden Abbey, the film also features the volunteers giving a tour of the Abbey, and provided insights into its history. The film clearly demonstrates how the volunteers overcame some of the difficulties in the organisation and delivery of the event. We also held an evaluation day using National Standards of Community Engagement, and found this to be an invaluable tool for future ambitions.

Having created widespread and renewed interest about the Abbey in the local community, the Interpretation & Information sub group has recently produced a new leaflet. It contains photographs and a short history of the Abbey and is currently being distributed to local schools, libraries, churches and tourist outlets throughout the region. We also have a website in preparation.

Earlier this year CHAV was approached by the Robert the Bruce



*The painting of Robert the Bruce – a stunning example of community action!*

Trust to help in the commemoration celebrations of the 700th anniversary of the slaying of the Red Comyn by Robert the Bruce in Greyfriars Church in Dumfries. Two projects were undertaken. The first, a film entitled *Bruce's People*, was written and performed by members of the group at NWRC, and shown to great acclaim in Greyfriars Church on the Anniversary. The second project involved 25 community groups throughout the region being given a square of canvas to paint. When put together the finished painting showed the slaying of the Comyn on that fateful day.

So much for the past! Most exciting of all for the future, CHAV is currently trying to acquire a piece of unused land adjacent to the Abbey with a view to creating a medieval play park, a biodiversity area, an interpretation shelter and a permanent landscape design including picnic areas, paths and parking facilities. A feasibility study to look into the realisation of these plans will start later this year following the decision of a Lottery bid.

**Carole McCann (vice chair Culture & Heritage Active Volunteers), Margaret Ellis (secretary Culture & Heritage Active Volunteers), supported by Sean O'Toole (community development culture & heritage, Historic Scotland).**

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'We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something!'

*Sandra Day O'Connor*

# The song of the bird of

Kat Jones tells the story of a remarkable project that involved two diverse communities in a scheme to interpret their cultural and natural heritage. Its strength was in braiding the strands of education and interpretation together, just as the strands of cultural and natural heritage also hold the project together.



All photos copyright SNH

*Children have hands-on experience of the boat*

*Ancient and modern cultures collide as Eun na Mara nears Glasgow*

The idea of the Arran Boat Project was to explore the bonds that link two very different communities, Govan and Arran. Both sit on the Clyde, sharing much history, but are very different in aspect and environment. Inspiration for the project came from the late Colin MacLeod, the powerhouse behind the GalGael Trust, who had a vision to link the disparate Clyde communities through building and sailing traditional wooden boats. The project would take trees from Arran to Govan, where they would be crafted into a traditional wooden boat called a yawl, and then sail back to Arran across the Firth of Clyde. The journey would be a hook for all sorts of education, community and interpretation activities.

The scheme had the potential to link communities on Arran to their own natural and cultural heritage, as well as leaving a lasting and mutually beneficial link between the people of Arran and Govan. It would also increase the confidence and capacity of the newly formed community woodlands group, 'Roots of Arran'. Crucially, for my work with SNH, there was the possibility to use this project to interpret the natural heritage of Arran – namely the woodlands and marine environment – to Arran's schools and communities, and to raise a wider awareness of Arran's environment.

We launched the project with a tree-felling event. This tree, along with some wind-blown giants from Brodick Country Park, toured the island schools acting as the catalyst for lessons about trees,

woodlands and their wildlife. Representatives from the 'Roots of Arran' followed up with regular visits to the schools while the boat was being built in Govan, and each school planted a tree of their own. Their theme, 'From Seed to Tree' and GalGael's theme 'From Tree to Boat' linked together to form the whole. *Eun na Mara* (Bird of the Sea) was chosen as the boat's name after a competition in the local newspaper, and GalGael wrote a Gaelic song to accompany her on her journey back to Arran and around the island.

The boat, and her trappings – willow baskets, plaids, knotted fenders, handmade ropes, pulleys and tapestry – became the centrepiece of the educational work of the second part of the project. She was the object of the interpretation. Her weather-beaten crew told the stories woven into her during the year-long project to groups of schoolchildren as the boat made her way around the island. These included marine life, the proud maritime heritage of the Clyde, and the woodland that she came from. More than just a boat, she was an achievement to celebrate, and three community events were organised to do just that. They were very different in character: the first, at Corrie, was a family fun-day where *Eun na Mara* raced the native Viking longboat (and cheated!). At Kilmory we were welcomed by drumming, singing, a beach barbeque and an all-night ceilidh, and in Lochranza an educational event completed her journey.

'None of us is as smart as all of us'  
*Japanese proverb*



Crown Copyright Historic Scotland

# the sea

## A common thread

The project successfully involved many people, both on Arran and in Govan. It created a real buzz on the island, and gained a lot of community goodwill, publicity and interest. However I feel that such a symbolic and inspiring project had, and still has, a lot of untapped potential. The limiting factor was the lack of dedicated officer time to maximise the opportunities that the project presented. Given more time we would have looked harder at the bigger picture, drawing in more community groups, particularly from Govan, the Gaelic-speaking community, various craft and traditional activity groups, local marine and natural history groups. We would also have considered how we could build on our success for the future, including making the wider public aware of the project. An ambitious and highly visible project like this is a great way of drawing in lots of communities and individuals. There is a need to ensure that people make the best use of the opportunities that arise.

It is only now I have the space to contemplate the links between education and interpretation in the project that I see the potential of *Eun na Mara* to continue to interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the Clyde. She draws together the disparate threads of many stories: the woodlands of Arran with their accompanying biodiversity, the historic trees of Brodick Castle Park blown over in a gigantic storm, the endeavours of a community woodland group. In that small boat can be felt the history of the Clyde – from the fishing yawls of the Gaels, to the flourishing industrial shipyards of Glasgow and back again, to the construction of a traditional boat by a group striving to bring renewal to Govan. Who is telling her story now?

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Autumn 2007 will see the opening of one of Historic Scotland's most ambitious projects in recent years – a £5m visitor centre within the former complex of cotton mills at Stanley, near Perth. Jim Broughton, interpretation manager for presentation and displays, describes the extent of community involvement in developing displays for the site, which has been unprecedented for Historic Scotland, most of whose properties date to the medieval period or earlier.

Cotton spinning at Stanley began in 1787. At its height, the enterprise employed almost 2,000 people, most of whom lived in a planned village that is still home to dozens of former workers.

The mills closed in 1989, but in 1995 a partnership of Historic Scotland and the Phoenix Trust, with major support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, saved the site from demolition. Since Stanley Mills is too vast a complex to be sustainable as a visitor attraction alone, the plan has been for a mixed-use development, including housing, offices, leisure and light industry.

Defining the 'community' to be involved in the project was no simple task – was it the village, the new residents or the diaspora of former workers, many of whom had retired long before the closure of the factory? The answer of course was all of these groups – and the task was to enthuse everyone to share their knowledge, memories and perceptions of the site.

Initially the curiosity factor proved a large asset. With so much building activity after six years of dereliction, events held in Arkwright's spectacular Bell Mill during Scottish Archaeology Month and on a Doors Open Day were enormously well attended, turning into veritable Antiques Roadshows as people brought along their own photographs and mementoes, and in many cases met up with former colleagues they had not seen for years.

This social aspect of the project was helped by a close working relationship with the local history society, whose president happens to be a resident of one of the new townhouses! A core network of contacts was soon established, including 14 former mill workers who were happy to participate in an oral history project. In 2005 Historic Scotland contracted Dr Emma Robertson, a researcher at Loughborough University specialising in workplace culture, to record almost 20 hours of interviews. Transcriptions and recordings of these will feature heavily throughout the new interpretation scheme.

Historic Scotland has generated much local goodwill in developing Stanley Mills, the result of more than a decade of groundwork – particularly on the part of the conservation and maintenance team that has steadily managed the site's restoration. Through attending community meetings, school presentations and even arranging the village's carol service, the team has created an open and inclusive climate in which interpretation planning was simply one more stage in the process of the mills' resurrection.

**Jim Broughton, [Jim.Broughton@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Jim.Broughton@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)**

'No army can withstand the strength of an idea whose time has come'

Victor Hugo



# Doing it for themselves

There's a wealth of information available online for Interpret Scotland readers looking for help with community interpretation projects. Sue Walker highlights some of the best.

Many of Interpret Scotland's readers are professional interpreters. A number work for government organisations, NGOs and local authorities. For them, 'interpretation and communities' will probably mean ways in which they can engage and enthuse local people to co-operate with a project they, or their organisation, has initiated.

However, there is an encouraging new trend emerging – communities are doing it for themselves. As some of the case studies in this issue demonstrate, groups of people from diverse backgrounds – urban, rural, radical or traditional – are getting together to initiate interpretation-focussed projects, and approaching the 'professionals' to help them.

Much of this empowerment has come from changes in the way funders are distributing their grants. Communities can now access a wide range of funds not available direct to other organisations. This has put them in the driving seat – and it is important that 'professionals' know how best to work with these communities within the new parameters.

There are a number of excellent websites that offer advice on working with communities in this way. The Forestry Commission's 'Forests and People', and 'Community Partnerships on the National Forest Estate' reports are very helpful – find them at

[www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

Other sites include:

Sharing Good Practice  
[www.snh.org.uk/sgp](http://www.snh.org.uk/sgp)

Opening Doors:  
Learning in the Historic Environment  
[www.openingdoorsreport.org.uk](http://www.openingdoorsreport.org.uk)

Local Interpretation  
Plans Toolkit for Communities  
[www.herian.org/1098.did](http://www.herian.org/1098.did)

Community Webnet  
[www.communitywebnet.org.uk](http://www.communitywebnet.org.uk)

Partnerships Online  
[www.partnerships.org.uk](http://www.partnerships.org.uk)

Renewal  
[www.renewal.net/toolkits/BuildPartnership/](http://www.renewal.net/toolkits/BuildPartnership/)

These sites also provide useful information for communities who want to begin their own projects. Research indicates that there are big benefits to communities in taking this path. Projects can bring a sense of social cohesion, giving people a real feeling of control, and the sense that it is possible to make things happen, if people work together.

Interestingly, and perhaps obviously, a number of communities that have successfully initiated interpretive projects count 'professional' interpreters among their number. They can provide the first impetus to start a project, offering 'insider knowledge' of funding opportunities and expertise. For groups looking for that kind of information,



All pictures on this page © Forestry Commission, Scotland

the following websites give details of funding for communities who want to improve their environment – including the use of interpretation to do so:

Scottish Natural Heritage  
[www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk)

Greenspace Scotland  
[www.greenspacescotland.org.uk](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk)

Big Lottery Fund – Investing in Communities  
[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

Forward Scotland – Transforming Your Space  
[www.forward-scotland.org.uk](http://www.forward-scotland.org.uk)

For communities who really want to do it for themselves, there is guidance available on the web to help them through the process of producing their own interpretation. Scottish Natural Heritage has a best practice interpretation toolkit on its website that is considered by many to be the 'industry standard':

[www.snh.org.uk/ww/Interpretation/default.html](http://www.snh.org.uk/ww/Interpretation/default.html)

Interpretation can help a community to find itself if it's carried out appropriately, and with the full participation of the group. Take inspiration from the case studies in this issue, and information from the resources above, and see if your communities could benefit from doing it for themselves.

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'The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation should be one uniting working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds!'

Abraham Lincoln



Volunteer workers make the past come alive again

Photos by Marika Saranne

## what's <sup>up</sup> elsewhere Acting the part

Marika Saranne, project manager at Peräpohjolan kehitys ry LAG, describes how a community is at the heart of an interpretation project in Finnish Lapland.

The Peatland Meadow Culture Path is in Finnish Lapland, in the Arctic Circle Hiking Area. Over 100 years ago people used live here, making hay for their cattle from the rich meadows on the edge of the peatland.

The project was made possible through the co-operation of a number of different groups, a combination of professionals and local volunteers. These included the Vikajärvi community, experts from organisations like Metsähallitus ([www.metsa.fi](http://www.metsa.fi)), the Geological Survey of Finland ([www.gtk.fi](http://www.gtk.fi)), Lapland Regional Environment Centre ([www.ymparisto.fi](http://www.ymparisto.fi)) and local action group Peräpohhitys ([www.lapland.ws/ppk/](http://www.lapland.ws/ppk/))

The aim of the site is to show visitors, especially the younger generation, how hard people worked in the past, and how they used the peatlands to support themselves. Old buildings have been restored, including a meadow cabin and barn, and haystacks, scythes and rakes add to the scene. Explanatory interpretation helps people understand the exhibits. Volunteer guides are dressed in old peasant style and re-enact peasant life on the site. Visitors have the chance to try mowing for

themselves, and hear stories of peasant life on the meadow peatland.

Initial plans for the site were drawn up by expert conservation organisations, working in partnership. This fruitful co-operation led to a project where a broad range of disciplines is covered in the site's interpretation. Once these plans were drafted the next step was to talk to the community. They gave their opinion of the draft plan, and were committed to the regular meetings which were held during the planning process. The community took an active part in this planning. They collected the folklore of the peasant culture and the site's history. They also looked for old tools and buildings, and were involved in voluntary construction work on the site. The stories and folklore they collected are included in the site interpretation.

The project has been a success because people were open to others' ideas, there were opportunities for discussion, a willingness to redraw plans if necessary, local people were given responsibility and tasks in the planning process and last, but not least, people could see the benefits to the community and individual which came out of the project.

**Marika Saranne**  
project manager, Perapohjolan kehitys ry LAG

## Creative Corner The Participant

Scottish Natural Heritage's Sharing Good Practice (SGP) programme (see [www.snh.org.uk / working with you](http://www.snh.org.uk/working_with_you)) is a series of one day events that invites people to get together to share experience, ideas and inspiration on a wide variety of topics. An SGP event is not a conference, seminar or training course, but a gathering of people who may have very different levels of experience, but who all have something to contribute and something to learn. Over the last three years we have run three events on working with communities, in partnership with colleagues from SEPA and Forestry Commission Scotland. The first looked at

how we can move from consultation to meaningful participation; the second turned things around to look at working with organisations from the perspective of the participant; and the third, in September 2006, focussed on evaluation of community projects and experience.

Thinking about our very broad audience at these events, with representatives from a variety of organisations and community groups, we decided that instead of giving participants a sheaf of conventional handouts, we would produce a newspaper, *The Participant*. This features articles written by the presenters and workshop facilitators, photos and cartoons, relevant news items and adverts

for useful resources and websites. *The Participant* has the look, feel and style of a local paper, but each issue has a shelf life of around twelve months, and plenty of extra copies have been produced and distributed because it is aimed at a much wider audience than those who come to these events.

Copies of *The Participant* can be collected from SNH's Battleby Conference Centre near Perth, or posted on request (contact [sgp@snh.gov.uk](mailto:sgp@snh.gov.uk)). It is also available as a pdf on the SNH website.



# News

## A Highland Spark

Next year marks Highland 2007 - a year of events and projects focussing on the Highlands of Scotland. These will celebrate the area's heritage, reflecting on its traditions and celebrating contemporary culture. Highland 2007 will work with agencies, individuals and communities throughout the Highlands and further afield to bring together a rich and varied programme and develop the cultural infrastructure of the Highlands to provide a legacy lasting after 2007.

Events and projects range in scale from multi-million pound agency projects to small community events, and most of the members of the Interpret Scotland Forum are involved. Here is a small selection of what's on offer:

- ◆ The National Exhibition. A touring display which focuses on the theme of Highland culture and the myths, history and reality of life past, present and future.
- ◆ The Culloden Battlefield Memorial Project. This involves the creation of a new visitor centre, and a reworking the battlefield interpretation to present the story of the battle with dignity and impartiality.
- ◆ Nature Bus. A specially-designed nature bus that will travel throughout Scotland attending community events and visiting school and learning institutions.

To find out more check [www.highland2007.com](http://www.highland2007.com).



Interpret Scotland in partnership with the Association for Heritage Interpretation is contributing to Highland 2007 through the staging of The Vital Spark - a major international heritage conference to debate a range of widely-applicable issues and to showcase interpretive practice in the Highlands of Scotland. It is already attracting key representatives from interpretation organisations throughout the world as well as many leading practitioners and teachers of interpretation. Its themes, which are of universal appeal as well as direct relevance to the Highlands, are:

- ◆ The Vital Spark: Interpretation as a driver for cultural regeneration;
- ◆ Creativity and innovation: interpreting remote and fragile areas;
- ◆ Voices in interpretation: languages, cultures and communities;
- ◆ Authenticity and re-interpretation: traditional icons in the 21st century.

[www.thevitalspark2007.org.uk](http://www.thevitalspark2007.org.uk)



### Call for Papers

The Vital Spark conference will take place in Aviemore from 30 September until 3 October 2007. Register your interest in speaking or taking part by visiting [www.thevitalspark2007.org.uk](http://www.thevitalspark2007.org.uk)

## Broaden your horizon

This year, ARCH is running a new exchange programme, ICHI ('Innovation in Cultural Heritage Interpretation'), with partners in Turkey, Bulgaria, Iceland and Slovakia. ICHI seeks to develop the skills of Scottish professionals from the heritage management, interpretation and tourism sectors. The project offers an opportunity for Scotland's managers, training planners, curriculum developers and trainers to gain new skills and to expand their European perspective. It also gives participants a chance to become involved in international joint working ventures.

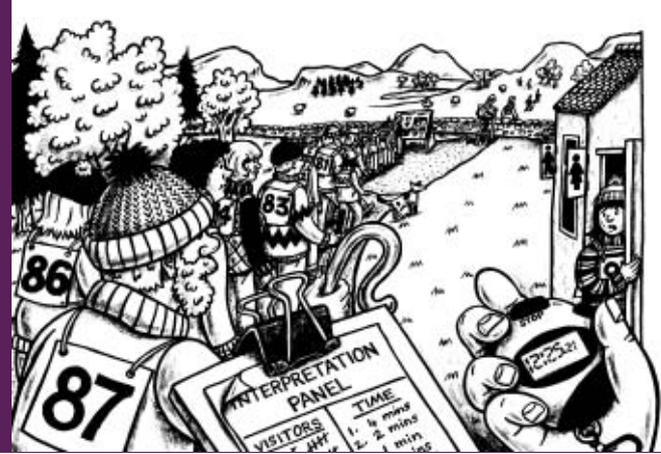
The project is funded by the British Council through the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The grant will cover the cost of travel, accommodation, insurance and subsistence for all participants. The new programme for 2007 is now up and on ARCH's WebPages. ([www.arch.blogware.com](http://www.arch.blogware.com)) - please take a look, and if any of the projects are of interest to you or your staff, then please apply using ([www.arch.blogware.com/blog/ICHI/ApplicationForm](http://www.arch.blogware.com/blog/ICHI/ApplicationForm)) or write to me for more information.

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'Grown-ups never understand anything for themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.'

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

# Is it working?



## Interpretive planning

In issue 13 of the Journal, the Interpret Scotland group published the first of a series of quick-reference guides to the key stages of interpretive planning. These guides will also be published on the IS website and when complete, will provide 'bullet point' introductions to the questions:

- ◆ What do you want to say?
- ◆ To whom do you want to say it?
- ◆ How do you want to say it?
- ◆ Is it working?

Gillian Findlay, of the Scottish Museums Service, has been working on the guide to evaluating your interpretation.

## Is it working?

Evaluation is simply about measuring how well you are doing. It can tell you how successfully you are engaging your visitors and how effectively you are getting your message(s) across. Your findings can then help you to use your resources to best effect, to improve what you already have or to plan and produce new interpretive media in the future.

Here are three basic questions to consider when you're thinking about evaluation:

### Why evaluate?

Regular evaluation, based on clear interpretive objectives, will help you to:

- ◆ *understand* your visitors better; to know what they like or don't like, and to be able to react to their needs
- ◆ *assess* whether your visitors understand the stories or messages you are trying to communicate to them
- ◆ *judge* how well you are doing, and allow you to target funding and plan for change
- ◆ *advocate* what you do with others, by providing a record of your achievements

### When should I evaluate?

Evaluation can, and should, take place at several different stages during your interpretive project:

- ◆ *planning stage*: discover who your visitors are and what their prior knowledge and pre-conceptions are. Use this information to refine your interpretive objectives
- ◆ *design stage*: test your visitors' response to each piece of your proposed interpretation. Does it communicate your message(s)? Change it now if you need to

- ◆ *completion stage 1*: install your interpretation, checking it all works physically, is accessible, well lit etc. Make any final amendments
- ◆ *completion stage 2*: once in place, find out how the finished product actually works. Does it meet your interpretive objectives? Share your findings with sponsors, funding bodies and colleagues in order to guide future work.

### How do I evaluate?

Various techniques exist which can help you to evaluate your interpretation, but no matter what stage of a project you are considering, there are two basic types of information to collect:

- ◆ *methodologies*: questionnaires, focus groups, and carrying out critical appraisals (or professional reviews) are all established evaluation techniques. You might also consider observing your visitors' behaviour or tracking their movements in order to understand how they relate to pieces of interpretation or use a certain space
- ◆ *data*: quantitative data is numerical, ie numbers of visitors, amount of time visitors spend on a particular piece of interpretation. It's useful because it can be analysed statistically. Qualitative data includes your visitors' opinions, feelings, perceptions and attitudes. To be meaningful it requires deeper organisation and interrogation.

For more on evaluation, try these resources:

SNH Guidelines on Interpretive Planning  
[www.snh.org.uk/ww/Interpretation/default.html](http://www.snh.org.uk/ww/Interpretation/default.html)

SMC Factsheet and Guidance on Evaluating your Interpretation:  
[www.scottishmuseums.org.uk](http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk)

The Evaluation and Visitor Research Special Interest Group, also in Australia <http://amol.org.au/evrsig>

A site run by Roger Greenaway, who specialises in evaluation techniques [www.reviewing.co.uk/evaluation/index.htm](http://www.reviewing.co.uk/evaluation/index.htm)

Research Councils UK guide to evaluation  
[www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/evaluationguide\\_print.pdf](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/evaluationguide_print.pdf)

Issue 4 of Interpret Scotland focused on Evaluation. Back copies of this journal can be viewed online at [www.interpretsotland.org.uk](http://www.interpretsotland.org.uk)

Gillian Findlay, [gillianf@scottishmuseums.org.uk](mailto:gillianf@scottishmuseums.org.uk)

'Snowflakes are one of Nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together'

Vista M Kelly

# Rainbow City

## Stories from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Edinburgh



**Helen Clark, Special Project Manager, City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries, tells the story of a community that called the shots, and the amazing exhibition that resulted from their vision.**

In 2000 a member of the Edinburgh's gay community wandered among the People's Story Museum displays, which tell the story of the life and work of Edinburgh's people. Although the museum had made an attempt to ensure that the stories mirrored the city's own social diversity, he pointed out that the history of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities was missing. A letter to the Director led to a meeting of the museum staff, the Living Memory Association and members of the communities. Rather than a few token interviews, what the LGBT community wanted was a full-scale project to collect oral history interviews, photographs and other material that would be deposited in the museums collections and be used in a publication and an exhibition at the City Art Centre.

An initial pilot project led to the award of £100,000 of Heritage Lottery funds. The full project, named Remember When, began in August 2004. Premises were rented in the pink triangle area of the city, and Ellen Galford and Brian Thompson the project workers, and administrative assistant Anne Smith, were appointed.

A project steering group was set up that consisted of the project workers and myself for the Edinburgh City Museums and Heather Robertson for the Living Memory Association. Volunteers were trained to record oral history interviews. During the course of the project over 100 interviews were carried out and these have been fully transcribed and deposited in the People's Story oral history archive.

These interviews and the consultation advised

the themes for display. An exhibition group was set up which consisted of members of museum staff along with an audio-visual consultant. The steering group identified the main themes of the exhibition as Identity, Activism, Scene, People and Culture. Collections of objects started to flow into the museum.

One of the most challenging parts of the exhibition was the 'Corridor of Fear'. This had negative newspaper headlines on the wall and voices conveying spoken insults and internal fears about 'coming out'.



A view down the 'corridor of fear'

This in-your-face treatment was very different to the way the communities dealt with racism in The Peoples of Edinburgh. This was a two year community-led project celebrating cultural diversity in the city, which also led in 1996 to an exhibition in the City Art Centre. Here the steering group didn't want any attention given to negative sentiments and elected to call a panel on racism 'Problems and difficulties'.

So it was very interesting when the LGBT group wanted a significant part of the exhibition space to be given to the 'corridor.' The aim was to attempt to convey an idea of what it was like to be subjected to homophobic abuse.

Having this corridor did give us a slight problem. If an unsuspecting member of the

public wandered into the exhibition and had abuse thrown at them, they might be offended or upset. We put signs up in the City Art Centre lift and at both entrances to the exhibition saying that the public should be aware that there was plain language in the Rainbow City exhibition. No complaints of this feature were brought to our attention and it may have even served to bring more visitors to the exhibition.

Ideas went both ways and the museum designer suggested having a closet that could be opened to reveal historical characters. The group ran with this idea and suggested putting in the closet photos of James IV, Henry Stewart Lord Darnley, Sophia Jex-Blake, Andre Raffalovitch and John Grey. Ellen wanted to put a badge saying 'How dare you presume I am heterosexual' on James IV, but one of the conditions of reproducing a National Portrait Gallery image was that we didn't interfere with the image so we decided against it.

In other ways we facilitated their suggestions of sound points, a video, a computer displaying photos, a browsing area for people to read transcripts of the interviews, and borrowing Elton John's 1975 costume from the National Museums of Scotland. Ellen wrote all the panels, with some guidance about word length, and worked directly with our designer. The cartoonist Kate Charlesworth created a series of life size characters that were positioned around the exhibition. Photos and extracts from the transcripts can be found on the website at [rememberwhen.org.uk](http://rememberwhen.org.uk) and the book *Rainbow City, Stories from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Edinburgh* can be purchased from The People's Story price £10.99 plus p&tp. To order a copy please ring 0131 529 4057.

**Helen Clark, special project manager, City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries, [helen.clark@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:helen.clark@edinburgh.gov.uk)**