INTERPRETATION JOURNAL

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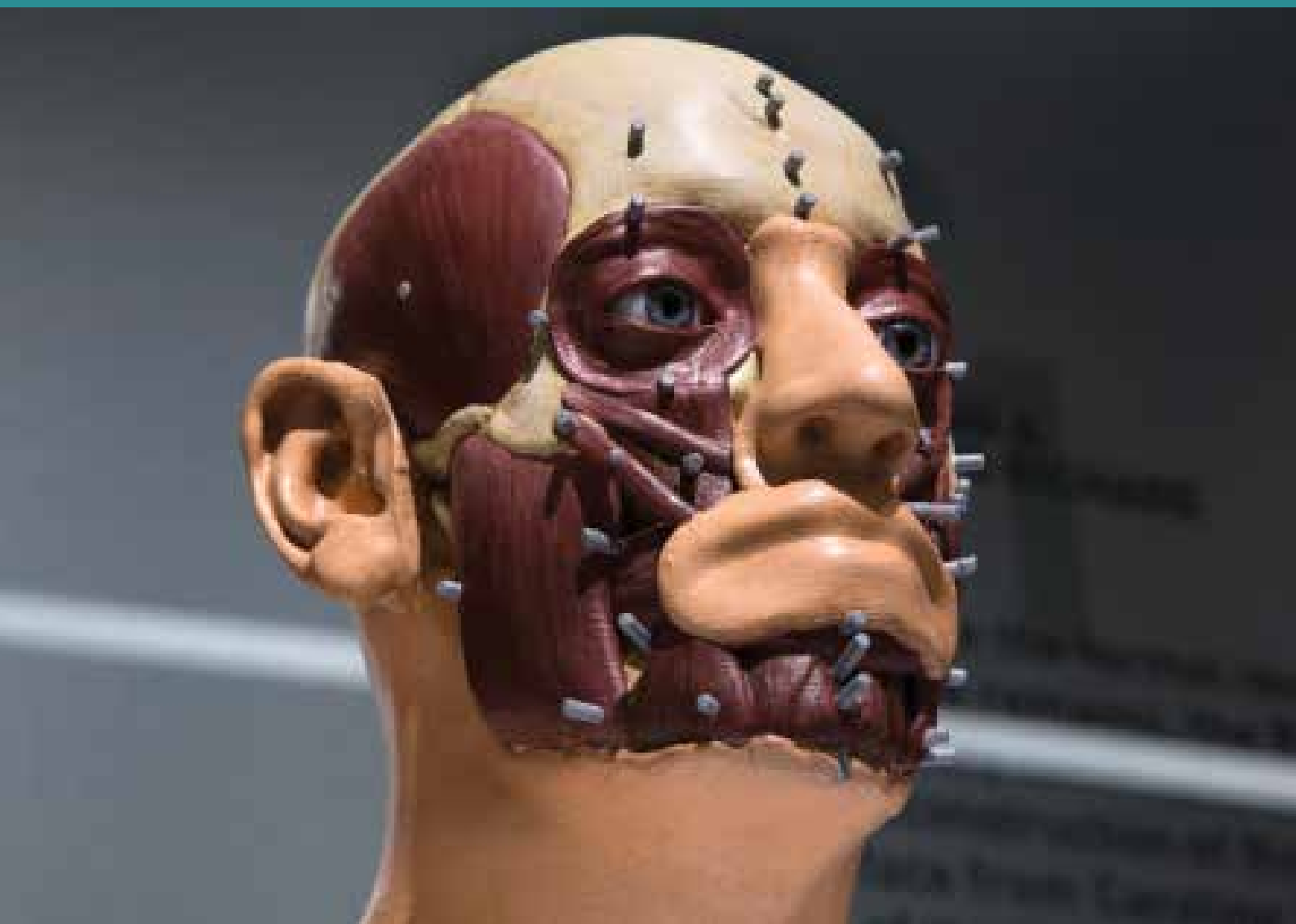
INTERPRETING EMOTIONAL AND CHALLENGING TOPICS



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For more information about the Association for Heritage Interpretation [AHI], send an email to admin@ahi.org.uk or write to the Administrator, AHI, 54 Balmoral Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 4PG tel: +44 (0)560 274 7737. Individuals can join AHI as Associate or Student Members or can apply to be elected, subject to qualifications and experience, as Full Members or Fellows. Businesses can join as Corporate Members with the same rights as individual members. All members receive *Interpretation Journal*, and other mailings. They can participate in AHI events and (if paid-up) can vote at the Annual General Meeting.

FOREWORD

Welcome to this Autumn edition of the Journal. A hundred years ago, in the Autumn of 1914, people still believed the war 'would be over by Christmas'. How wrong there were. A century on, and we may have learned little about the horrors and futility of war, but we have developed a capacity to interpret challenging subjects with sensitivity.

War, sex, death, faith, controversy and commemoration form the focus for this edition, in which we pose some challenging questions. How do we tell a story about something as dark as war and the countless casualties of battle? How do we balance conflicting views, sincerely and passionately held, on both sides of an ancient argument? How do we interpret faith and belief from the perspective of an atheist? How do we present sexually graphic images that are the artistic achievement of a past culture?

Whilst in addressing these challenges, most contributors draw on various aspects of the First World War, but we also explore the interpretation of King Richard III. He was surely the most controversial king in history (and a project I was fortunate enough to be involved with). We visit a temporary exhibition of Japanese Shunga art at the British Museum – which elicited our own editorial debate about how sexually graphic we could be with the accompanying images (not very was the answer!). We also explore how an experienced interpreter grappled with presenting the beliefs of two committed Catholic communities.

We hope these case studies and the issues they raise will inspire your own thoughts and reflections – at a time of national reflection on the outbreak of the supposed 'war to end all wars'.

David Masters
Commissioning Editor

Website Members' Section

The AHI website has a 'members only' section full of useful resources for the practising heritage interpreter. This is the place where you will find back issues of *Interpretation Journal*, conference papers, best-practice guidelines and a host of other materials relevant to professional development. We are adding more resources all the time and will publicise them in the AHI e-News as well as on the website.

You need to be a member of the AHI and register with the website to access this section. To register, you will require your AHI membership number (shown at the top of your e-News) and the email address your copy of the e-News is sent to.

You then enter your membership number and the common case-sensitive password to log in. The password will change with each issue of the journal and the new password is 100trenches.

The resources link is http://www.ahi.org.uk/www/resources.

NEWS FROM AHI

In November 2013 a review of AHI began: but why? The AHI Board of Trustees wanted to understand what members and non-members alike believe AHI does well, what areas need improving upon and what its future priorities should be bearing in mind limitations of resources and capacity.

The review comprised three parts: a public survey; a series of interviews of with individuals identified by the Trustees as AHI's key stakeholders; and desk-based research.

Key recommendations included:

- Restructuring and reinvigorating AHI's continuing professional development and training offer.
- Developing strategic partnerships to increase capacity, broaden opportunities and strengthen AHI's ability to advocate for excellence and professionalism in heritage interpretation.
- Continuing to explore the feasibility of re-launching an award scheme that recognises and promotes excellence in heritage interpretation.
- Increasing the diversity of voices and perspective through open calls for journal contributions and conference sessions.

As a result of the AHI Review we have now restructured AHI's Committee sub-groups so that we are in a better position to deliver on the key areas identified. We feel it is important that AHI's members can see what their committee is doing. We have tried to introduce greater transparency around our activities and plans by including the AHI Forward Plan 2014-17, AHI Activity Plan 2014-17, AHI Sub-groups 2014 and full AHI Review documents on the members' section of the website.

We hope you will join us on this exciting journey into AHI's future.

Lisa Keys, Secretary AHI

FEATURE NEWS

BELOW:
Delegates gather outside the iconic earth shard at Imperial War Museum North.

AHI CONFERENCE REVIEW 2014

This September, the interpretation community gathered once again for our annual conference, this year in the historic northern City of Manchester. Our theme centred around the art of communicating emotion through our work. As always, it was lively three days as practitioners from all sectors came together to learn about the wide variety of techniques that are used to build emotional connections with audiences.

It was, of course, a timely debate, given the centenary of the First World War and we learned much on the varied, innovative and powerful techniques interpreters are using to tell the multi-faceted stories of the Great War. However, it wasn't all conflict and misery! Throughout we learnt about interpretation on many positive topics as well.

The event had a fantastic beginning, with AHI fellow Susan Cross challenging delegates on how practicing interpreters identify and articulate the value of interpretation – not only to the heritage profession but also wider society. In her engaging keynote speech she also took us on a journey of exploring the roles of interpreters and WW1, and the role we play in this important remembrance event.

This theme was built upon by other delegates and we heard of the power of audio to communicate emotions – both positive and negative – plus help reveal untold stories. Alexander Botham nicely rounded off the military theme, with a wonderful reflective installation – bringing a corner of a WW1 field to Manchester's City Centre. In her unique tent based experience, the emotions of WW1 soldiers were revealed.

Not just restricted to conflict, we also looked at other difficult subjects but interspersed with much humour. This included death with Catherine Brew speaking on her innovative technique of unfolding the realities of death through personable latex! We also enjoyed a captivating first person interpretative performance by an actress from the People's History who took us back to the 19th Century Manchester and let us in on her role at the Bryan match girl strike.

We also focused on the positive! Ewan McCarthy of Bright 3D began by challenging us on how landscapes can be interpreted and suggested we should put aside pre-conceived ideas to create a surprising visitor experience. AHI fellow Michael Glen spoke of the power of song in interpretation and we also enjoyed two fascinating talks on interpreting spiritual sites

BELOW:
Emotive topics –delegates learning the art of interpreting death.

RIGHT:
Delegates captured by the magic of Chetham's Library.

and the challenge of interpreting modern and ancient religious site and communities to audiences of all faiths and none.

Of course no AHI conference would be complete without visits out to see interpretation in action. We began with a magical early evening tour of one of Manchester's most beautiful, but hidden, assets – Chetham's Library. This stunning medieval complex, which converted from a medieval seminary to a public library in 1653, is surrounded by modern city buildings, which made what we discovered even more exciting. The small set of buildings, complete with a great hall and cloister, was straight out of a Harry Potter novel, and in fact some young students even visit the library in the hope of finding a Wizard or two! However, this beautiful and remarkably well preserved library has a magic all of its own and the building wasn't the only surprise we were there to see. The library's curators had embarked recently on a project to retinerpret one of the city's most loved public parks where circus and various entertainments were regularly preformed. Taking on a collection of cuttings and park records, they asked students to create an exhibition of celebration. However, the emotional response to the collection was unexpected – instead of fun and enjoyment, the students saw mainly animal and human cruelty resulting in a very different but no less engaging exhibition, which delegates had the opportunity to explore.

Our next visit took us to the Imperial War Museum of the North. An obvious choice in 2014, but instead of focusing on their approach to WW1, we engaged with their Head of Exhibitions on the emotion enshrined in the building itself. Built by Daniel Libeskind in 2002, the actual subject of the interpretation is weaved into the museum's stark design. Clad in aluminium, the landmark building aims to be a visionary symbol of the effects of war – based on the concept of a world shattered by conflict, a fragmented globe reassembled in three interlocking shards representing conflict on land, water and in the air. The architect's principle aim was that visitors feel uncomfortable and disorientated as they move around the building, and most of us indeed feet this sensation keenly. However, this poses a serious dilemma for the interpreters themselves – how do you engage visitors on a powerfully emotive and challenging subject when they feel lost and not at ease? This goes against some of the fundamental principles of interpretative planning and a lively discussion was held on the advantages and disadvantages of the brave design, plus the interpreters response.

Our final visit was to discover a very difficult yet still challenging subject, the cotton mills of the north at one of the National Trust's treasured assets, Quarry Bank Mill. Recently the setting for the TV series "The Mill", delegates were able to explore the site and witness excellent examples of live interpretation. We learnt how the TV series and power of this media, had enhanced the emotional response of visitors to the site and challenged the Trust on how the site is presented. Andrew Beer, the Trust's Head of Visitor Experience and Learning, followed this up with a truly engaging presentation on the Trust's move to become bolder about expressing emotion at their sites.

All in all we enjoyed a fascinating three days that was as emotionally charged as the topic, thanks to superb speakers, site visits hosts, and the delegates themselves. We were delighted to welcome a number of new members and welcome back long standing members of our interpretative community. Next year we head for Wiltshire to explore the visitor experience at one of the UK's most iconic historic sites, Stonehenge and the area's other fantastic assets and I do hope you'll be able to join us there.

Ruth Coulthard, AHI Trustee and Conference Director

BELOW:
2007 AHI Awards winner. Foynes Flying Boat Museum, Co Limerick: A replica Boeing B314 that carried transatlantic passengers between Southampton and New York via Foynes and Newfoundland during the Second World War.

AHI RELAUNCHES INTERPRETATION AWARDS

Do you have a new interpretation project or site you are really proud of? Do you have a great example of new interpretation? Would you like professional peer recognition for it?

If your answer is yes, then get ready to enter the *AHI Discover Heritage Awards – for excellence in cultural and natural heritage interpretation in Britain and Ireland*.

AHI created quite a buzz among delegates when we relaunched our Awards at the 2014 conference and it looks as if there will be massive interest. Clearly, others feel – as we do – that there is a need to celebrate heritage interpretation in its many forms, create a prestigious badge of recognition for best practice, have a scheme which judges entrants based on site visits, and showcase good interpretive practice and the organisations responsible for it within the profession and beyond.

You will be able to enter one of these five categories:

1. Museums and historic properties/sites.
2. Landscapes, forests, nature reserves, parks and gardens.
3. Visitor and interpretation centres.
4. Community projects (developed and co-managed by community groups).
5. Interpretation for a target audience (where you have created interpretation for a specific group, whether it be visitors with particular disabilities, BMEs, young children, excluded groups,those in need of skills and training, etc.).

Entries open on our website in January 2015. Eligible projects are new ventures in the UK and Ireland launched within two years of the spring 2015 deadline for entries.

We will train site judges who will visit shortlisted sites during summer 2015. The final decision then rests with the AHI-appointed judging panel who will choose the winners based on the site judges' reports.

The final two categories are 'The AHI Award for Excellence in Interpretation' – the best in show award picked from the category winners – and 'The Lifetime Achievement Award' for nominated individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to heritage interpretation in the UK or Ireland.

We will hold the first Awards ceremony at the 2015 conference with a gala dinner for delegates, shortlisted entrants, judges and sponsors. The winners will be announced on the night and their award presented by AHI patron Loyd Grossman. The Awards will be held biennially thereafter.

Would you like to be on the judging panel or be a site judge? We will soon ask for nominations for the judging panel and seek site judges. As well as training in interpretive evaluation, you will receive travel expenses to visit the best new interpretation projects around.

AHI has a range of sponsorship opportunities available for companies and organisations wishing to promote their services and support the scheme. We are delighted to announce that three organisations have already come forward to sponsor three of the five judged categories – Bright 3D, Canal & River Trust and Colour Heroes. If you would like to find out more about Awards sponsorship, please check AHI's website: www.ahi.org.uk

Bill Bevan

LEFT:
2007 AHI Awards winner. Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow: The Painting of *A Marriage of Convenience* inspires visitors to imagine the thoughts of the young wife and her much older husband.

RIGHT TO REPLY

After reading the 'Reporting research' article by Sarah Watts in AHI's Spring 2014 (Volume 19, Number 1) *Interpretation Journal*, Stephen Pardue of Differentia Design got in touch to suggest that there are tried and tested methodologies like the Logical Framework Approach for involving communities in the development of interpretation.

Stephen said:
The Logical Framework Approach is an easy tool to use and is jargon free. It is being used by professionals in the field to develop schemes such as Green Infrastructure Delivery Plans and Parks Restoration Plans as well as a range of diverse international projects. By clearly understanding the linked nature of the aims, objectives, outputs and activities, a realistic programme of what a project can achieve individually and in partnership and how likely it is to succeed can be developed. Some activities will be within the direct control of the project, whilst others will rely on outside influences/ actions of partners. Incorporating indicators within this framework introduces a means of monitoring project activity. This approach works well with communities, including those where English is not their first language, and helps them to put their fears, hopes and aspirations into words.

Simply google: Logical Framework Approach, Logical Framework Method.

LINKS:

http://gretajensen.com/index.php?Id=42

http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/resources/booklets/BK006_LOG_A4_Pages.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253889/using-revised-logical-framework-external.pdf

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical_framework_approach

AROUND-THE-CLOCK INTERPRETIVE PLANNING

Nigel McDonald gives a crash course in interpretive planning under pressure.

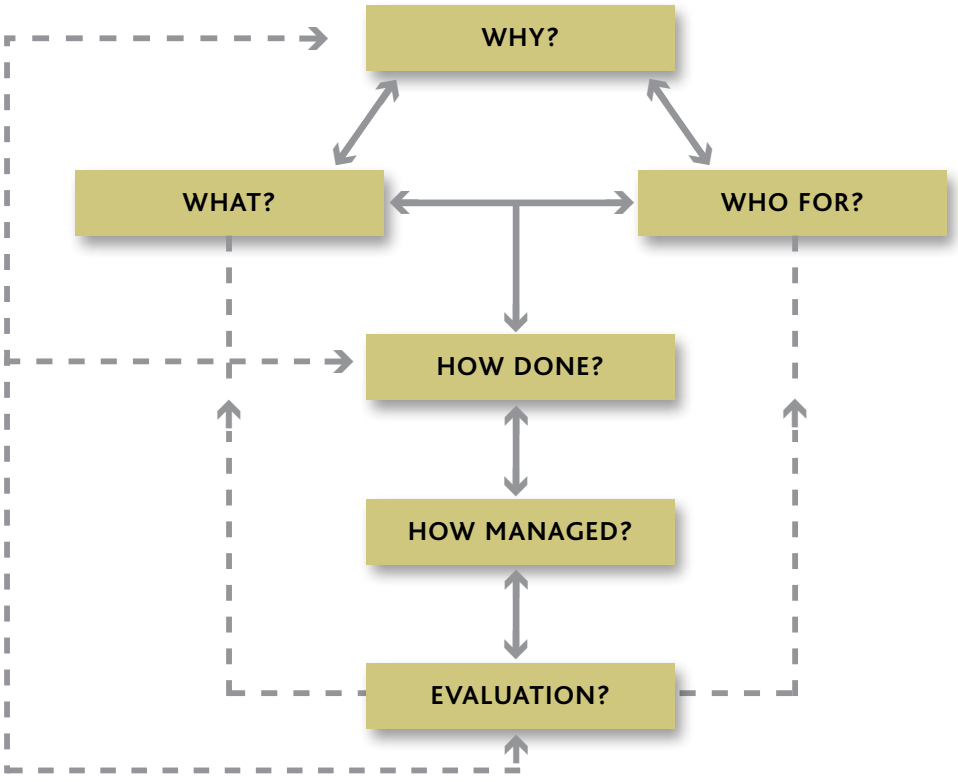
SETTING THE SCENE

The art of the interpreter is to simplify a complex subject for people with potentially little pre-knowledge or possibly even the desire to know more. Here's the scene: Monday morning, 9 am meeting. You can still taste the toothpaste because you haven't had time to obliterate it with the sweet taste of coffee. Around the table sit a group of brow-furrowed colleagues looking to you to answer the time-honoured question 'So how are we going to interpret this then?' You've been given barely 20 seconds to think about it.

SO WHAT DO YOU DO?

You could whip out a copy of the 'Full Monty' planning model (see Fig 1.). But, it's a lot to take in so you need to interpret the process, without referring to a complicated diagram. You may after all be dealing with people with potentially little pre-knowledge, or possibly even the desire to know more.

Figure 1: The Full Monty Model



How do you do this? Let's start with a couple of principles.

1. Interpretation relies on feedback. We are not interested in carelessly throwing our bread on the water, we want to make sure that the ducks a). Eat it b). Enjoy it and c). Start looking for more.

2. We have a purpose for doing what we do. Sam Ham[1] calls this 'persuasion' and I'm very much in Sam's camp on this one. Without persuasion, we are only dealing in information. We want to bring about changes or stirrings in our audiences' thoughts, feelings, attitudes and even (potentially) behaviour. Freeman Tilden called this 'provocation'[2].

1. Sam Ham 1992, Environmental Interpretation – A practical guide, Fulcrum Publishing Golden Colorado.
2. Dr R. Taylor 2013, The Philosophy of Interpretation in AHI Journal Spring 13 V18 No 1 p 12-14.
3. Landy P, The Borne Ultimatum (Ch 4 every other Friday).
4. Ververka J, 1998, Interpretive Master Planning, Acorn Naturalists, California.

AM/PM FIVE STEP PLAN

Simply put this is an acronym – easy to adapt, it allows you to break down the problem 'in boxes'[3].

• A IS FOR AUDIENCE

This is not marketing speak. Dump the demographics and focus on the people and the sort of experience they are looking for. Think about families, couples, small groups and solos. Think about large groups and about what they often become once they've arrived – small groups, couples, families and solos. Think about why they come, what they are looking for and why they may be interested. *'We want to do more for families... children streak right through this gallery... what about something that gets them to slow down, encourages play and group interaction?'*

• M IS FOR MESSAGE

I love a theme (another reason to get into Sam Ham). What are we trying to say? Don't think facts and figures, think ideas and provocation. Ask 'What do our visitors want to know?' and my favourite from John Ververka, 'So what?'[4] Write a theme or themes that inspire you, your colleagues and your audiences.

• P IS FOR PURPOSE

Ask your colleagues, why are we doing this? What are we trying to achieve? And be very clear about getting this down on paper. It's very easy to write wishy-washy objectives. Get to the heart of the issues and write objectives that can be meaningfully measured, *'I will increase the average dwell time in this gallery for family visitors with children under 8 years old by 5 minutes.'*

• M IS FOR METHOD

We only start talking about how we are going to do it after we've agreed, what, why and to who. Think about asking your visitors how they may want to be communicated with. How do they want to receive the information?
'I'll increase activity in the gallery with some simple themed interactive games and puzzles, designed for children under eight'.

IS THAT IT?

Hang on a minute! I said a five-point plan and AM/PM is only 4 points...

• E IS FOR EVERYDAY, IT'S ALSO FOR EVALUATE

Think of evaluation in three stages: pre-formative, formative and summative.

A **pre-formative** question may be: Why don't families spend longer in this gallery? Or, What would get families to spend longer in this gallery? You could try asking them directly. You could also time families as they pass through to give you a base line for later.

A **formative** question may be asked to a representative group of these families: 'We are thinking of putting interactive games like this in this gallery. What do you think?'

A **summative** question asks: 'What did you think?' Or 'How long are they spending now?'.

WRAPPING UP

So there you have it, you look your colleagues squarely in the eye and say: 'I'm glad you asked me that... let's start with audiences'. Then grab a coffee and have a great day.

Nigel McDonald is an interpretive planner, trainer and director of nononsense-interpretation ltd www.nn-i.co.uk

FEATURE NEWS

LET'S HEAR IT FOR HERCULANEUM!

Sarah Court looks at how an interpretative approach based on conservation can raise the profile of an important neglected site.

POOR SISTER

At the beginning of the 21st century, Herculaneum – sister site to Pompeii – was in a severe state of decay and two-thirds of the site was closed due to risk of collapse. At an international conference it was cited as the world's worst example of a site where there was no civil war to explain its conditions. However, while the professionals lamented what was happening, the situation went largely unremarked among the wider public. In stark comparison, the similar situation at Pompeii regularly causes huge public outcry, media attention and parliamentary inquiries. Where does the difference lie? It would seem that more people *know* about Pompeii and, therefore, care about what happens there. In contrast, at Herculaneum, a situation had arisen whereby the international community was largely unaware of the place and the local community had become cut off from their heritage.

It was in this context that the Herculaneum Conservation Project was created by the Packard Humanities Institute and the local heritage authority in 2001, followed soon after by the involvement of another partner, the British School at Rome. Soon after this, a sister initiative, the Herculaneum Centre, was launched in partnership with the town council. While priorities were initially dictated by simply stabilising the archaeological site and ensuring that no more of the Roman town was lost,

BELOW:
Herculaneum lies under Mount Vesuvius, which both destroyed and preserved it in the eruption of AD 79.

Sarah Court/HCP

RIGHT:
Early visits to site built relationships between the teams working on site and local community groups.


Sarah Court/HCP

it became clear to the Italian team on the ground that without bringing on board as many individuals, groups and organisations as possible, there was a huge risk of history repeating itself. These two initiatives were, therefore, taken forward with particular emphasis on seeking new ways to increase participation – including the use of interpretation as a tool for engaging the local and international communities.

PRACTITIONERS → LOCAL COMMUNITY

In the early days of work at Herculaneum we realised that the site was invisible from outside. Only once a ticket was purchased could you see the 4.5-hectare excavated area of the Roman town, meaning that, for many local residents living under the poverty line, their heritage was inaccessible both physically and visually. Conversations with residents revealed enormous pride in Herculaneum's past but high numbers of people who had never visited the archaeological site, including some in key social roles such as teachers. This led us to organise visits for strategic groups, such as the residents living in the street immediately bordering the site, teachers, trial school groups, etc., who were accompanied by team members who worked on the site. Colleagues from a range of disciplinary backgrounds provided personal interpretation as they shared what made the site special to them. The local community remarked on how many parallels they could see in their own lives to that of 2,000 years ago and how much continuity there is in living in the Vesuvian area today. They commented on how personal revelations about daily life in the Roman world had led to increased awareness of the importance of the site and a deeper sense of connection. Others mentioned how site visits had provoked further thoughts on contemporary issues, such as living with the risk of future volcanic eruption.

LOCAL COMMUNITY → INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Over time more formal programmes were established with a range of stakeholders, including local schools. Interest in the social implications of educational and cultural initiatives at Herculaneum attracted the attention of international visitors, such as the European Commission's Cluster for Social Inclusion. This provided an opportunity for the heritage practitioners to take a back seat and hand over the visit to the Herculaneum community. On this particular occasion, our teams helped preparations for the European Commission delegation but left the site visit entirely in the hands of local schoolchildren, who guided the group round and provided interpretation.

The most interesting moments were unscripted, revealing the thoughts of the children themselves: one girl spontaneously concluded by telling the delegation that they should now understand the importance of the site and,


Sarah Court/HCP

therefore, the need to conserve it for the future. An added benefit of standing back to let the children take over the interpretation was that each child had to be accompanied by a relative, meaning that messages of Herculaneum's significance, fragility and need for protection were received by a secondary group of local residents, many of whom would not have participated in more direct interpretative programmes.

BELOW:
Local schoolchildren provided personal interpretation for a range of visitors, including the European Commission.


Tsao Cevoli

SAPES Archive

Ascanio D'Andrea/HCP

ABOVE:
Herculaneum's College of the Augustales in 1960 and 2009. Former site workers were able to describe to the current team how they excavated, reconstructed and presented the Roman buildings.

LOCAL COMMUNITY → PRACTITIONERS

While empowering local community groups to interpret their own heritage was an important step forward, a key moment in our work was when we began to identify the ways in which local contribution could influence our work as practitioners. A significant example is the oral history project, which involved older community members recording their memories of local tangible and intangible heritage, historic events such as the Second World War, the last eruption of Vesuvius, the creation of Europe's largest second-hand market and other themes.

BELOW:
Displays of original Roman objects were installed within the archaeological site as part of an open-air museum. This display within a shop dates to 1933.

SAPES Archive

This project provided key results for the team working at the archaeological site, when former site workers were identified as had taken part in the large-scale 20th-century excavations. Much of Herculaneum had been dug in the decades before the Second World War by local workers who had had to invent techniques for excavation, reconstruction and maintenance of the Roman town due to its unique burial conditions. A lot of their work remains undocumented, and talking to the surviving workers – many of whom had learned on the job from fathers and uncles – provided previously unknown information that informed today's conservation work.

The oral history project also provided us with insight into the process by which much of the Roman town had been re-erected by the archaeologists. Insights into reconstruction and interpretation of the archaeological remains have fed into ongoing research on this early 20th-century experiment to make Herculaneum an open-air museum. Not only did this experience illustrate how much Herculaneum's local residents still have to contribute to managing the site today, but the project had wider repercussions thanks to intergenerational activities aimed at increasing social and cultural inclusion.

USING INTERPRETATION AS A POLITICAL TOOL

The method of interpretation we are undertaking at Herculaneum is one that uses interpretation as an ongoing way of building relationships with local community members and increasing their participation. Dialogue and exchange have been established, based on an agenda that reinforces management aims. We believe that interpretation in this broader sense can be a key tool for contributing to some of the heritage sector's key contemporary agendas, such as participatory management and social inclusion. Interpretation provides a vehicle for allowing community members to go beyond a passive visitor role by actively engaging them in a broader range of initiatives. It is this active role in interpreting their heritage that seems to have provoked community members to have bigger thoughts about the meaning of their heritage and explore a wider range of values – and indeed contribute to our work conserving the site.

Sarah Court is a heritage specialist based in Italy, working primarily at the archaeological site of Herculaneum.

THE RIDDLE OF THE MARSHES

10oz of gold. One bank vault. One solution. Arc Creative describe a project designed to get people out and about in the Lincolnshire countryside with a really big incentive.

SOMEWHERE, hidden amongst the ancient pastures and rolling landscape of East Lincolnshire lie the answers to a riddle that will unlock a vault containing a gold bar worth around £9,000.

This project took its organisers over three years to research, plan and implement. A cross between an interpretive trail and a geocaching experience, the 'Riddle of the Marshes' is a bit of an experiment that so far, seems to be paying off. The unique treasure hunt leads 'riddlers' on a journey of knowledge and wonderment, discovering local myths, history and legends.

The Riddle of the Marshes celebrates Lincolnshire's valuable grazing marshes and the work of the Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes Partnership to protect this important natural habitat and the rich cultural history of England's lesser-known landscape in a way that has never been done before. Participants are guided through picturesque communities and ancient pastures, learning about a colourful history of salt making, smuggling, farming and market towns in a totally new way.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

It was the brainchild of Joe Blissett, project officer for the Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes Project. A long-term fan of the artist Kit Williams and his book *Masquerade*, published in 1979, which held hidden clues to buried treasure, Joe wanted to create a similar book with hidden clues to encourage people to explore and protect a special part of his home county.

As Joe puts it, '*The Riddle of the Marshes Project has been developed to showcase a landscape teeming with wildlife and cultural history that people just aren't aware of – an undiscovered part of England that is at risk of being lost forever due to post World War II economic pressures on farming, the price of wheat and biofuels, as well as an expanding rural population. The Riddle of the Marshes tells the story of this landscape in a completely new way*'...

DID WE MENTION THERE'S £9,000 OF GOLD!!

CLUES, RED HERRINGS AND MISSINFORMATION ARE HIDDEN EVERYWHERE...

LEFT:
Hey – if you think you're good enough, come and get it.

ABOVE:
Promotional poster sets the tone.

WHEN IS A BOOK NOT A BOOK?

When our team got together to tender for the project, we proposed a 'Riddle Pack' rather than a book. We wanted to make something special to capture the imagination and to justify the £15 purchase price. Therefore the quality of the ideas, the artwork and the materials for the pack were paramount. The gold is the big incentive of course, but everyone taking part should enjoy the hunt and feel that they have gained from the experience. We wanted them to visit the real-life locations, but also to enjoy a psychological journey and experience a spirit of mystery, adventure and intrigue. Like a virtual computer game... err, so to speak!

ABOVE:
High resolution printing, gold ink and spot varnish all add to the quality feel.

ABOVE:
Interpretation panel featuring a landscape frieze on top and Lincolnshire Red cow in Corten Steel.

HIDDEN TREASURES

Our plan hatched, the plot thickened and so we set to work.

The journey begins with the cryptic story of 'Boykin', a young cattle drover from the past, who meets a stranger and is sent on a quest to discover seven treasures. In order to unlock the gold, 'riddlers' follow his journey to look for the seven treasures. They will discover (like the hero of our story) that the real hidden treasures of the Grazing Marshes are of a more subtle and enduring nature. Those wishing to crack the riddle must first prove that they understand the importance of ancient grassland relating to the history and wildlife of the area – the aim of the Heritage Lottery Funded Project.

BELOW:
The gold.

SEDIMENTARY MY DEAR CEDRIC

With the riddle forming part of a wider interpretation project, clues may be found on panels or visitor hubs recently created. The clues in the story refer to the area's historic buildings, stained-glass windows and gravestones, whilst others are to be found in the landscape itself... we can't tell you any more, you must crack the 'riddlers code'!

The pack is beautifully produced, containing a decorative riddle booklet and a map/puzzle that is used as a mechanical device to solve certain clues onsite. Clues, red herrings and missinformation are hidden everywhere and nothing can be discarded or ignored. The pack can sit proudly on any coffee table for many years to come, providing a theme for any visit to this corner of rural England and well beyond the lifetime of the project.

RIDDLE LOCAL – THINK GLOBAL

Packs have sold to Europe, Canada and the Far East and we're receiving feedback from far and wide, some from seasoned treasure-hunters and some from young families exploring the landscape on day trips out.

ABOVE:
There's a lot to look at...

The true success story, however, is in the feedback from local museums, libraries, attractions and B&Bs, who are seeing new faces in the area asking very prying questions and looking very sheepish! A lot of people are biking for miles around in search of clues – so it's helping people to keep fit, too!

Perhaps this approach might be worth considering for an interpretation project near you? Did we mention there's £9,000 of GOLD??!!

The Riddle of the Marches was conceived, written and and produced by Joe Blissett (LCGMP), ARC Creative, and Red Kite Environment.

ABOVE:
Artistic and cryptic typography add a mysterious feel to the Riddle Packs.

REPORTING RESEARCH

EVALUATION: 'SHUNGA' AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The sexually explicit nature of the exhibition Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art at the British Museum posed some unique challenges. Stuart Frost describes the role evaluation played in developing the exhibition and measuring its impact.

The British Museum's recent exhibition, (3 October 2013–5 January 2014), was the first major show dedicated to what is arguably a unique phenomenon. Between 1600–1900 sexually explicit paintings, prints and illustrated books known as shunga ('spring pictures') were produced in Japan in vast quantities and rarely actively suppressed. Shunga was produced by many of Japan's most celebrated artists, including Hokusai (best known today for *The Great Wave)*. Although collected by Europeans and Americans from the 1860s onwards, shunga's unapologetic celebration of sex meant that it remained confined to stores for most of its institutional history.

During the 20th century shunga became taboo in Japan. Although a number of major western museums and libraries acquired significant holdings of shunga it was only from around 1970 onwards that it became possible to display it publically. The British Museum's recent exhibition was one of the major outcomes of a five-year collaborative research project aimed at furthering understanding of a neglected and misunderstood subject. Arranged in five sections, the exhibition looked at shunga's origins, its masterpieces, its legality, and its functions and decline as Japan opened up to the modern world. The sexually explicit nature of the material posed some unique challenges and this was something that the interpretation team was particularly keen to test with the public. This article focuses on the role evaluation played in developing the exhibition, and measuring its impact.

ABOVE:
***Kitagawa Utamaro*, print ten from the series *Utamakura (Poem of the Pillow)* (1788), a colour woodblock print of lovers in a teahouse.**

FORMATIVE EVALUATION

The evaluation agency TWResearch was commissioned to undertake formative exhibition evaluation. The main aims were to explore visitors' responses to shunga and, the proposed structure of the exhibition, and to test exhibition titles and marketing images. Five focus groups were held over February and March 2013; these were amongst the most interesting that I have ever been involved with.

The focus-group transcripts and the final report provide a wealth of insight into the public's perceptions of shunga and its relationship with contemporary conceptions of pornography. The participants agreed with the curatorial team's proposition that shunga had high aesthetic merit: everyone responded to it primarily as art and the majority felt comfortable with the idea of viewing it in a museum exhibition. The aspect of shunga that generated greatest interest and debate was not the explicitness of the scenes or the humour, but the apparent mutuality of sexual pleasure in the selection of images that were shown. Female participants, in particular, were surprised by images that depicted women enjoying sex:

'I feel that these images are more accessible to women. The person that has created that picture has really thought about the women in it.'
(Female participant aged 20–30)

CHAT ROOMS

Although participants were engaged by the beauty of the works, and the tenderness between the lovers, some of the language in the accompanying inscriptions proved to be more provocative. The exhibition curator Timothy Clark describes shunga as a chatty art form because many of the images carry inscriptions representing dialogue between the participants.

For example, one print of a couple having sex was accompanied by the following exchange:

> Man: If I don't do it even for half a day, I lose my appetite. This is the ninth time today. Let's sleep for a bit, then do it seven or eight times more.
>
> Woman: Ah! It feels like I'm going to faint. Really. Even deeper, up there… That's it. I'm going to come again! Ah! Oh!

In this instance, visitors found the language more problematic than the image. In response to the dialogue described above for example, visitors remarked:

> *'It's far more shocking. I thought the print was beautiful. I find that distasteful'*
> (Female participant)
>
> *'[It] makes it more vulgar. … It makes it more male dominated.'*
> (Female participant)

The project team felt it was important to include some translated inscriptions to represent shunga accurately and meaningfully, and a number of representative examples were integrated with the text throughout the exhibition.

Across all of the sessions, participants responded positively to shunga, recognising its aesthetic qualities and artistic merit. This consultation gave the project team reassurance that the public were comfortable with shunga and that the exhibition's broad approach was correct. One of the most influential aspects of the evaluation was the discussion of humour in shunga, something that was initially considered to be helpful potentially in putting visitors at ease. In fact, the mutuality of pleasure in shunga generated the greatest interest, and this conclusion influenced the nuancing of the approach, the exhibition title and the marketing campaign.

NOTES OF CAUTION

The museum took legal advice as the show developed and the exhibition was accompanied by an advisory statement: 'Parental guidance advised for under 16s.' Additionally, a book of typical images was provided on the ticket desk so that visitors could check that they were comfortable with the show's contents before purchasing a ticket. For the marketing campaign, a representative print was selected but carefully cropped, to ensure that the sexual content was communicated effectively but in an appropriate way.

The text developed for the exhibition balanced aesthetic and contextual comments with frank discussions of sex. Terms such as 'sex workers', 'masturbation' and 'erection' reflected a desire to use a direct approach avoiding coy, obscure or euphemistic terms used in the past. The labels and text panels did acknowledge the use of shunga for arousal and masturbation, but eschewed the term 'pornography', to avoid the negative and anachronistic connotations it carries.

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

The exhibition attracted around 90,000 visitors, more than double the original target. A comprehensive summative evaluation was undertaken by the interpretation team to explore visitors' reactions to the show. Exit questionnaires, visitor observations and post-visit depth interviews were carried out throughout the exhibition's run. The 14 depth interviews, each lasting around 20–30 minutes, provide rich qualitative insight. The questionnaire provided quantitative data about the audience profile, the visitor experience and what visitors thought about shunga. 205 visitors completed the questionnaire. The overall findings were extremely positive; indeed, 95% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the show, and 96% said it met or exceeded their expectations. Visitors spent on average 77 minutes in the exhibition, a reflection of an engaged audience. The number of negative comment cards completed was remarkably low, and these focused on crowding or lighting rather than the sexual nature of the exhibits.

ABOVE:
***Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art* (2013), view of the exhibition.**

ABOVE:
***Kitagawa Utamaro*, print three from the series *Utamakura (Poem of the Pillow)* (1788).**

More female visitors participated in the evaluation than men. As with the formative evaluation, women seemed less embarrassed and gave more direct or detailed answers. Mature visitors seemed the most comfortable and open when discussing sex. None of the respondents expressed anything stronger than mild embarrassment when describing some of the more graphic images or text, and everyone completed the questionnaire without declining to answer a question.

VISITOR RESPONSES

Several participants thought the best thing about the display was the existence of the exhibition itself, that shunga could now be shown publically. Visitor feedback suggests that society's tolerance for sexually explicit art has increased over the last decade and many felt that an exhibition like *Shunga* was overdue. A number of people commented on the atmosphere in the show:

> *'Lots of people are in the exhibition and nobody is uncomfortable, there is a good atmosphere.'*
> (Female respondent)

> *'…everyone seems a lot more interested and relaxed than I thought they would be… there were lots of quiet conversations.'*
> (Female respondent)

Visitors felt it was important that the museum acknowledged the importance of sex and sexuality to human experience, something reflected in other exhibition evaluations. They were also positive about the representation of sex in shunga, describing it as open, mature, tender, naughty, wholesome, erotic, tasteful, risqué and unashamed. When discussing the shunga works themselves, humour, aesthetics and the different Japanese attitude to sex were frequently appreciated. The following comments are representative:

> *'….the sheer gorgeousness of the drawings, the vibrancy, the detail, the tenderness… I found this to be the most exciting thing really.'*
> (Female respondent)

> *'I was surprised at the strong homoerotic side of it and the way that seemed totally accepted.'*
> (Male respondent)

> *'A lovely sense of mutuality about it… The way it was depicted was all about mutuality.'*
> (Male respondent)

Shunga represents the largest exhibition devoted to the subject to date. It is also probably the first time that extensive formative and summative evaluation about shunga has been undertaken with the public. The response from the exhibition-going public indicates that visitors to *Shunga* accepted the curatorial argument that shunga is art, and that it has strong aesthetic qualities and cultural value.

The beauty and the explicitness of the images challenged visitors to reconsider their own attitudes towards sex, pornography and art. Some attendees spoke of their difficulty in placing shunga into a neat category, but almost everyone talked about it as art. Shunga was perceived positively; it encouraged debate and reflection, and frequently inspired laughter. The evaluation reveals conclusively that the public believes shunga should be exhibited, rather than just being passively preserved in storage as has been the case for much of its museum history.

Stuart Frost is Head of Interpretation and Volunteers at the British Museum.

INTERPRETING EMOTIONAL AND CHALLENGING TOPICS

'Like the mythologist, interpretation serves to deal "with the goodness of wine, not with the wine itself."'

Roland Barthes

INTRODUCTION

Most societies have been affected by war and conflict at some point in their histories. As such, it is inevitable that we are left with places of death, tragedy and pain. What we do with these places and how we make sense of their stories has enormous implications for interpretation.

We know that there's an increasing demand for dark tourism (visiting sites associated with death and tragedy). Every year thousands of young Australians and New Zealanders travel to Gallipoli to take part in the ANZAC Day services on the 25 April. On a daily basis, streams of people visit Auschwitz-Birkenau, some take selfies under the famous gate that reads 'work makes you free'. Others choose to visit the Tunnels of Cu Chi in Vietnam, the Killing Fields of Cambodia or Hiroshima City Peace Memorial. What is it about these places that attract so many people? Why do people choose a visitor experience that could possibly be deemed unenjoyable and one that focuses on intense and potentially emotionally difficult subject matter?

Much of interpretation is about telling stories, helping people to make connections with the world around them. This is especially pertinent for the interpretation of war, conflict and memorialisation where the human race shares many experiences through international conflicts. However, interpreters hold a greater responsibility than merely telling the 'whys and wherefores' of historical events. Yes, our aim is to remain impartial, but interpretation has the ability to affect social change, work towards reconciliation and in some cases even right past wrongs.

Winston Churchill famously once said, 'history is written by the victors'. Consequently, scores of communities around the world have been marginalised and in many cases indigenous populations continue to be marginalised and reminded of past tragedies. Australia's annual commemoration of the first British settlement in 1788 (Australia Day) is also known by Aboriginal Australians as Invasion Day.

It is easy to tell the obvious stories of conflict, the ones that don't necessarily challenge. However, we need to remember that, like the mythologist, interpretation serves to deal 'with the goodness of wine, not with the wine itself' (Barthes 2009:187). If we go beyond the physical evidence and look beneath the surface to the layers of intangible and cultural associations, we start to get to the heart of the human story that continues well beyond the conflict. In the case of the National Museum of the Native American, close working with Native Americans enabled the museum to remedy the misconception of a 'homogenous native community' (Pes 2005), opening to an 80,000 people-strong ceremony. More than a museum, it defined a 'moment of reconciliation and recognition in American history' (Pes 2005). When applied to its highest standard, interpretation can be revolutionary.

Our role is to encourage reflection, create a context for the construction of meaning and therefore facilitate an appreciation of the potentially unknown or undervalued. Crucially, when interpreting conflict and commemoration, the skill and responsibility of the interpreter lies in determining when meaning is not self-evident. Look beneath the surface. Tell the story of the forgotten. Tell the story that might otherwise remain untold.

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ONE GOD, TWO ORDERS AND AN ATHEIST

This article on the challenge of interpreting contemporary religious communities to audiences of all faiths and none is based on a presentation given by Carolyn Lloyd Brown at the 2014 AHI conference, 'Interpreting Challenging and Emotional Topics'.

CHALLENGES AND FEARS

I have spent the last 12 months grappling with the challenge of how to communicate something intangible, the beliefs and activities of two different Roman Catholic orders. Both communities wanted the support of an interpretive design team to help interpret their values and lifestyle.

The first group are Benedictine monks, a traditional closed order, largely silent, and based at Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight. The second is an open community of nuns, who have chosen not to wear habits or be recognised in anyway as a religious order apart from wearing tiny brooches that are symbolic of their order, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), based at the Bar Convent in York – the oldest living convent in England. Both communities have many similarities in terms of their faith, their vows and their focus on community and individual prayer. Both report to their one God; I was the atheist responsible for delivering their interpretation plans and content.

BELOW:
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Bar Convent, York.

Both communities wanted to develop new facilities for visitors: the monks at Quarr Abbey were converting their courtyard into a separate visitor facility near the abbey guesthouse and the nuns in York were using a dedicated space within their historic convent. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported Quarr Abbey while the Bar Convent chose not to apply to HLF, preferring to fundraise and use other sources.

INTERPRETING PASSION AND BELIEFS

A further challenge was that of visitor perception and expectation. The Benedictines at Quarr, who always dress in their traditional black habits, were often asked if they were actors in costume! The nuns in York, with their 'everyday' clothes, are regularly asked, 'where are all the nuns?' Both communities were often asked, 'Are you *real*?' Therefore, interpretation also needed to communicate the sincerity, passion and dedication of their beliefs, vows and lifestyle to today's visitors of many different faiths or, very often, of no faith or belief whatsoever.

Apart from these challenges, I had real fears:

- that my lack of shared belief might lead to a weaker or less sincere approach;
- that the communities might find it difficult working with an 'interloper';
- that the interpretive content may not deliver the empathy and interest that the communities were seeking;
- that I might fail to persuade the communities of the need for balance between conveying historical context and explaining their beliefs and lifestyles.

So how did the interpretive content develop? Two different approaches emerged and they reflected the different community lifestyles and the 'spiritual personality' of each.

RIGHT:
Quarr Abbey, Isle of Wight.

THE BAR CONVENT

The Bar Convent focused its content on inspirational historical and contemporary figures, which strongly relates to their mission. The nuns wanted to explain the significance of their history; their inspirational founder, Mary Ward, and the history of their convent and the dark period of recusancy in England – when the Catholic faith went underground and to be discovered as a Jesuit priest meant certain death.

The content is chatty in style, open and wide-ranging in topics, with relatively little about themselves and their lifestyle. They preferred to explore their proud history and demonstrate their outward mission across the globe, especially focusing on their work with girls' education and the empowerment of women.

The institute chose to have only a small area that focused on their work today – as a community with an outward mission across the globe – working with all faiths and wherever there was need, as defined by the United Nation's millennium goals. This involves human trafficking, education for girls, AIDS education and medical care, land seizures, and even working undercover in some countries. Not quite what visitors might expect from nuns! All of this exciting, relevant and myth-busting topicality is confined to a modest part of the exhibition because it is not in their nature to promote what they do.

The most compelling parts of the exhibition will be the simple face-to-camera films with the members talking about their beliefs and their life's work as a force for good, especially in relation to women and girls across the globe. We try within the content to compare past and present, as it is evident that their work is inspired by past lives and that they seek to inspire and empower today. Their tradition is unchanged; they are doing exactly the same work and have the same approach as 300 years ago, just different problems to tackle today.

QUARR ABBEY

At Quarr Abbey, the content explores the concepts of silence, prayer and work, all central to the monks' Benedictine values. The content is deliberately sparse, with words that reflect the Benedictines' chosen path – through discussion we agreed to use quotations from the Rule, the Desert Fathers and scripture. We selected words to try and capture what it meant to dedicate oneself to a life of prayer and show that, for the monks, this was their *work*, and that it was not an easy path to take, perhaps especially in the 21st century.

An example of the copy content:

LISTEN

Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven.

This is a place for peace and prayer.

This is a place for listening to the word of God, listening to the prayer of silence, listening to the voices of plainchant during services and listening to the sounds of nature around us.

This is a place for an inner search through prayer of the heart.

HAVE WE MET THE CHALLENGES?

Only time will tell if we have been successful with breaking down misconceptions and providing new insight. The filmed interviews with the sisters are compelling and revealing and we predict will be a highlight for many visitors, as they will not doubt the sincerity and passion for their work.

The visitor feedback at Quarr Abbey since the opening has been fabulous and the community is quietly delighted.

'God made women to be our leaders. Beautiful place, thank you'

Some of the children's comments include:
'Monks are cool'

'Silent but amazing'

AND WHAT ABOUT THE ATHEIST?

I realised that I had been scared of my own preconceptions about lives that I did not comprehend, but which I was curious about. As interpreters we encourage and explore curiosity about humanity, and emotions are at the heart of good interpretation. We often shy away from this vital aspect of interpretation, yet it can be the most powerful and effective tool for engaging audiences and developing new insight and empathy with very different lives to our own.

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COMMEMORATION AND CONFLICT

2014 has seen a number of major anniversaries commemorated and the national awareness of major anniversaries marking conflict has been raised significantly. Lucy Donoughue explains how the Imperial War Museums have risen to the challenge.

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of D-Day, Imperial War Museums (IWM) welcomed veterans back on board HMS *Belfast* for an event at which the prime minister spoke after a flyover by a C-75 Dakota. We are fortunate to have a small number of veterans who served on board the ship on D-Day, who are still willing and able to talk about their experiences of the campaign. As a museum, the ship is visited by hundreds of thousands of people every year, but the words of our veterans told stories that no other interpretation could achieve. As individuals, they told what it felt like, what they saw, how they feel now 70 years later, and how the experience shaped their lives after the war.

The centenary of the outbreak of the First World War has undoubtedly been the largest national commemoration this year, and public participation in this commemoration has been immense. As the conflict is now out of living memory, we no longer have the ability to ask how the war impacted those who experienced it. Visitors to the museum no longer come with their own 'grandparent guides' – older members of the family who remembered and spoke about the war or the immediate aftermath – as they did in the 1960s and 70s. However, IWM holds in its vast collections the voices, letters and diaries of those men and women and thousands of objects that tell a myriad of different stories.

In July 2014, after an 18-month transformation of the museum, IWM London opened its doors once again, complete with new First World War galleries, designed by Casson Mann, to commemorate the centenary.

The First World War galleries' team, led by IWM's James Taylor, applied two principles to the way the story of the war would be told within the space. The first was a policy of contemporaneity, depicting events just as people experienced them at the time, without the benefit of hindsight. This frees the galleries' narratives from the post-1918 reconfigurations of the war and the modern tendency to view the conflict through the prism of the Second World War.

The second principle was to make use of the 'voices' of people from that time. The words of

Richard Ash © IWM

BELOW AND ABOVE RIGHT:
IWM London's First World War Galleries.

Richard Ash © IWM

Richard Ash © IWM

those who lived and died during the war feature throughout the exhibition – not only in the text but incorporated into the fabric of the gallery space itself. The voices used are those spoken or committed to diaries and letters at the time, rather than being taken from later memoirs.

Covering over 1,000 square metres, the galleries feature over 1,300 objects. Artillery pieces such as a tank and aircraft sit alongside smaller exhibits such as letters and personal trinkets, integrating the destructive machinery of war with the experiences of those who fought. Each of the objects on display gives a voice to the people who created them and, cared for them and reveals stories not only of destruction, suffering and loss but also endurance and innovation, duty and devotion, comradeship and love.

The galleries are set out in a large horseshoe shape and are made up of 14 areas of narrative. On the inside of the horseshoe visitors discover the efforts of those on the home front, in tandem with stories from the fighting front on the outside of the horseshoe. The exhibition addresses the impact of war on civilians as well as serving personnel; the fundamental importance of their support in keeping nations fighting; their mobilisation as war workers and the fact that they themselves became the target of enemy attack.

Over 60 interactive displays and immersive spaces also feature in IWM's galleries. A Sopwith Camel plane and Mark V tank loom above a recreated trench with a light and soundscape that evokes what daily life may have been like. In a section named 'Feeding the Front', an interactive table over four metres long allows visitors to discover the unprecedented scale of production required to keep the troops fed and fighting. Two atmospheric reflection areas featuring objects and IWM's sound collections encourage visitors to explore and question some of the most difficult aspects of the war, too.

Beyond the First World War galleries at IWM London and our Street to Trench exhibition at IWM North, IWM has worked in other ways to take the collections the museum holds and present them to our audiences to support commemoration. In early 2014, we launched *Lives of the First World War* (www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org) – a permanent digital memorial to over 8 million men and women who lived, died, fought and survived throughout the conflict. The site holds records and photographs from IWM and beyond and, over the course of the centenary, we are encouraging the public to piece together the life stories of each person by adding family knowledge, photographs and linking official records, to tell the complete story of each person's wartime experience. This is a massive act of remembering as well as safeguarding this knowledge and information for future generations. Since the site was launched just six months ago, over 6,800,000 life stories have been added, 64,900 people have been remembered and the public have added 364,652 facts and photos.

We have worked with others to help us interpret and present our unique collections, too. Through a partnership with the BBC and a nationwide project, *BBC World War One at Home*, we have told stories about the First World War in every region of the UK using IWM's collections. Through *Voices of the First World War*, a Radio 4 series using sound archive from both IWM and the BBC, people have heard the first-hand experiences of those who served, and by working with ITV on *The Great War; The People's Story* – we brought the words of those from both the home and fighting fronts, through their letters and diaries, to a primetime Sunday night audience over four weeks.

IWM will continue to play a major role in the commemoration of conflict in 2014 and beyond, as we have done since our establishment in 1917, while the First World War was still being fought. By using the voices and objects of those who experienced and continue to experience conflict, interpreting these in a way that is relevant and accessible to today's audiences, and by using the technology and channels that are now open to us, we can share our collections with many more people than it was ever possible to do so before.

Lucy Donoughue is Head of Communications at Imperial War Museums.

THE KING IN THE CAR PARK

When the remains of Richard III were discovered in a council car park, they also revealed the story of medieval conflict and modern controversy about the circumstances of his death. Sarah Levitt explains.

ABOVE:
A 3D print of Richard's skull based on detailed CAT scan data.

THE KING'S GRAVE

The King Richard III Visitor Centre opened on 26 July 2014, less than two years after the momentous discovery of 'the king in the car park'. The centre tells the story of Richard III's life, the finding of his remains on the 527th anniversary of his burial, and the skillful archaeology and amazing scientific research that identified his remains.

The visitor centre is housed in a Victorian school building next to the excavation site. The excavation had shown that the footprint of the Friary Church extended across the playground and into a council car park, where the grave was located only two hours after the start of the excavation.

The city council purchased the school and invested over £4 million to renovate it and create the centre, which is now managed by the King Richard III Visitor Centre Trust. A glass-walled extension with a gleaming metal roof has been added, housing the entrance, reception, shop and a link building to the grave. This extension follows the footprint of the Friary Church, ending in a special enclosed area where the king's gravesite can be viewed under glass. The simple stone paving and walls, gold metal and wood finish of the new build is modern in treatment but with a timeless feel, and the gold metal door and fittings acknowledge that a king was once buried here.

PEELING BACK THE LAYERS

The exhibition itself covers two floors of the building. The ground floor tells the story of Richard's youth, the circumstances of him becoming king in 1483, his short kingship and the mysterious disappearance of his two nephews, the 'Princes in the Tower'. It then moves on to tell the story of Henry Tudor's insurrection against him, his arrival in Leicester, the Battle of Bosworth, his death and burial by the Grey Friars.

The upper floor firstly examines how he has been regarded by history and how perceptions of him were shaped by the Tudors and by Shakespeare's play. It charts the way views about him changed over time, how the Richard III Society was set up to find out and present the truth about him and his reign, and how passionate campaigners the world over, known as 'Ricardians', have supported his cause. This growing interest is what brought scriptwriter and ardent Richardian, Philippa Langley to the car park in 2004. This visit, on top of her

RIGHT:
The introductory gallery and AV interpreting Richard's formative years and experiences.

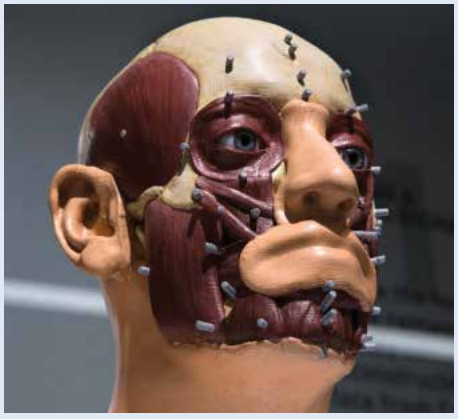
previous research, convinced her that the king's remains were still there, and she set up the 'Looking for Richard' project, along with a team of Ricardian experts, to plan and advocate for an excavation of the site and a fitting reburial.

The next part tells the story of the dig, which was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Service and made possible by Philippa's efforts and by the Looking for Richard project's fundraising appeal, which was supported by Ricardians across the world.

TRIAL BY TECHNOLOGY

The final section explores the detailed research, led by the university, which positively identified the remains, culminating in a press conference to announce their findings in February 2013. This presents a whole array of modern techniques, enabling us to know more about Richard's life and death, and the context in which he died. These range from a CGI reconstruction of the Grey Friars in medieval

BELOW:
A partially completed facial reconstruction, interpreting the process of determining how Richard looked.



times and a 3D digital print of the king's bones, to analysis of the type of armour he wore, his wounds, diet, general health, scoliosis, genealogy, carbon dating and DNA. The computer-generated facial reconstruction model that featured in Channel 4's documentary screened on the night of the press conference is shown, as is the press conference itself. This was a 21st-century excavation and so film, photography and digital presentations are primary documents. Key stakeholders including the University of Leicester and Darlow Smithson Productions for Channel 4 generously made available a wide range of material.

CONFLICT AND CONTROVERSY

The whole story told in the exhibition is one of conflict and controversy. King Richard's life and reign was mired in controversy. Despite this, there is much evidence that he was an able monarch, supporting reform and good laws, and he has a place in the hearts of the people of Yorkshire, where he was a popular governor of the North.

Richard's life ended at Bosworth, where he was the last English monarch to lead a cavalry charge and die in battle. The birth of the Tudor dynasty on that day is considered to mark the end of the medieval era. Richard's naked body was slung over a horse and carried back to Leicester with Henry Tudor's retinue. There it was displayed in the Church of the Annunciation, a 'Lancastrian' church for a 'Yorkist' monarch, before a hasty burial by the Grey Friars. Following the Reformation, the Friary Church was demolished and a rumour

ABOVE:
A scene from the Battle of Bosworth display.

took hold that an angry mob had dug up Richard's bones and thrown them into the river nearby. This legend held sway for the next four centuries.

Shakespeare's *Richard III* was created about the time that this story began to be told. His reputation as an 'evil hunchback' began and returned to prominence in the 20th century with Laurence Olivier's famous performances in the title role. The controversy was compounded when art historians showed how early portraits of Richard appeared to have been overpainted to make him look more sinister.

However, the people of Leicester never forgot King Richard's association with their ancient town, and in the mid 19th century a plaque was erected next to Bow Bridge telling this story. Further plaques and a beautiful statue

BELOW:
Peering at the replica bones of King Richard III.

ABOVE:
The CAT scanner display – the centre piece of the 'Science of Discovery' gallery.

followed from the 1980s onwards, sponsored by the Richard III Society. These reflected the research of both local and Ricardian historians, who by then had come to doubt the bones-in-the-river story.

Philippa Langley then approached Leicester City Council proposing an excavation of the Social Services car park. Richard Buckley, Director of the University of Leicester Archaeological Service, supported the idea, not as a hunt for King Richard's remains, but because of the information it could give about medieval Grey Friars.

THE CONTROVERSY CONTINUES

With the discovery of King Richards remains came astonishment, fascination, worldwide interest… and further controversy. The chances of finding King Richard's remains, and in such a complete form, were minuscule and therefore it is fair to say that, not unreasonably, no one concerned had fully considered the implications. Nor had anyone foreseen the worldwide and national interest and the excitement and passion that would greet the news.

The King Richard III Visitor Centre was entirely created against a backdrop of continued discussion and dispute. This began immediately after the discovery when petitions appeared on the E-Government website supporting reburial in York, a Catholic burial, and reburial in Leicester. Questions in Parliament and much press coverage followed. Channel 4's programme, screened on the day of the press conference, was the most watched documentary in its history. It won a prestigious award and broke new ground, telling Philippa's very human story, presenting her emotional reactions, and passionate belief, alongside the (equally passionate) professional research of university specialists.

Within a few weeks the Plantagenet Alliance had made representations, claiming that, as living descendants of King Richard's sister, they should have been consulted on the place of burial. Their actions resulted in a full Judicial Review hearing in the High Court. In May 2014 judgment was given in favour of Leicester, and preparations are now underway for reinterment at Leicester Cathedral in 2015.

Resentment about this judgment amongst supporters of Richard III who feel that Leicester should not be his place of rest was probably the reason why, even before the formal opening of the centre, a negative social-media campaign emerged, including a plan for mass filling-in of Trip Advisor with one-star ratings. Fortunately the visitor centre's opening was very much welcomed and greeted with great excitement in Leicester. Customer feedback has been good, and the centre received 10,000 visitors in its first month. Many have travelled long distances and it has clearly had a positive effect on tourism.

RIGHT:
The culmination of a visit – seeing the king's grave that was lost for 427 years.

CREATING THE DISPLAYS

With so much going on in the background, and so many considerations to bear in mind, the interpretive team gave a great deal of thought to the telling of the story. It was important to be impartial, and so consultation began at concept stage with both the Ricardians and university specialists, and continued throughout the process. In addition, consultations were also carried out with Leicester Cathedral and a specialist in modern representations of disability. All the exhibition text was reviewed by key consultees and their views were taken into account.

Consideration was also given to best practice in the presentation of human remains, since although the remains are not on show, the exhibition includes detailed photographs, 3D digitally printed replicas of the skeleton and the vertebrae, and the actual grave site, which is lit intermittently by a 'gobo' light to show the silhouette of the skeleton.

The team was also mindful that Richard III was a member of the royal family, and so special consideration was required, for instance in developing the visitor centre's logo. These views all had to be balanced against the need to tell a good story to attract general visitors, which had to be accessible, inevitably told visually, and in few words. A great deal of detail could not be given, even though the subjects were complex and wide-ranging.

The resulting King Richard III Visitor Centre tells a gripping story for the general public, but it also recognises the contribution of so many people who gave their time, enthusiasm, opinions and expertise to its creation. We are most grateful to every one of them.

Sarah Levitt is Head of Arts and Museums, Leicester City Council.

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FOR KING AND COUNTRY?

Roz Currie examines some of the challenges in interpreting unknown or conflicted histories from the past, and how strong passions still felt in the community today were negotiated in curating the exhibition For King and Country? at the Jewish Museum London.

ABOVE:
Marcus Segal. All Marcus's letters were available for visitors to explore by date, subject and via a search engine. They can be found online here: http://sarahfairhurstjmm.wordpress.com/2014/07/07/marcus-and-florence-go-online/

The exhibition For King and Country?, the Jewish Experience of the First World War, was held at the Jewish Museum London this year with collections largely drawn from the Jewish Military Museum. In curating the exhibition, we had to negotiate a myriad of contemporary sensitivities while aiming to engage visitors with experiences and emotions from people living a hundred years ago.

A QUESTION OF LOYALTY

A crucial aspect for me, when beginning to curate an exhibition on the Jewish experience of the First World War, was the question of loyalty. Following both world wars, fascists and others who wanted to prove a lack of loyalty to Britain among its Jewish populace propagated stories of Jews not serving the country. In part to counter such claims, Henry Morris, himself a World War II veteran, founded the Jewish Military Museum.

However at the outbreak of war the Jewish community was not a monolithic entity. From the 1880s onwards, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe had come to Britain, their numbers overwhelming the small existing population. The 1905 Aliens Act was brought in largely to restrict the settlement of poor Jews in Britain. How loyal were these 'new' Jewish immigrants to Britain? What did it mean to have loyalty and be an immigrant? And what were the implications of exploring this story for members of the Jewish community today?

COMMUNITIES DIVIDED

The outbreak of war in 1914 exposed divisions within the Jewish community and revealed the fragility of community leadership. In August 1914, *The Jewish Chronicle* proclaimed *'England has been all she could be to Jews, Jews will be all they can to England'*. Jews had been emancipated in Britain in the 1850s. The settled

BELOW:
The offices of *The Jewish Chronicle* proudly display their wartime slogan.

Anglo-Jewish community wanted to show Jews as proud and loyal British citizens. By December 1914, over 4,000 young men – largely from the settled community had enlisted.

In contrast, the immigrant population was more ambivalent about serving. Many did not want to fight on the same side as Russia; they were practised at avoiding service and felt less inclined to fight for Britain. To begin with, non-naturalised Jews were not liable for service in the British army. However, even following conscription and a relaxation of the laws relating to aliens, many immigrant Jews avoided service.

Naively, I assumed these divisions were well known and understood. However, as I began to bring these issues up in discussion with members of different Jewish communities, I hit barriers. Given the legacy of the fascists and continuing anti-Semitism in this country, many were distinctly uncomfortable and upset at the idea that all Jews had not fought bravely but that some resisted, rejected and in some cases actively avoided service. This was difficult on a personal level for me. I'm not Jewish. Could I presume to tell a story of Jewish communities that had been deliberately unexplored by many

RIGHT:
For King and Country?
at the Jewish Museum London.

for years? Particularly one constructed to refute untrue and bigoted claims that Jews had not 'played their part' in serving Britain down the decades.

LISTENING TO VOICES

Questions of authenticity are complicated in curation. It is too easy to create the story you want by simply bringing together a selection of stories and objects, rather than uncover areas of the story as they are. Given the diversity of opinions and agendas available, the process of choosing narratives was critical and we had to avoid putting words in people's mouths. At the Jewish Military Museum we have many incredible accounts written by individuals themselves in the midst of the war. By using the voices of individuals, we cut straight to the heart of their experience and understand their personal motivations.

For example, we hold over 150 letters written by Marcus Segal, a 2nd Lieutenant from Kilburn in London. He wrote to his family from the trenches of France. Through the humour and empathy of letters, I feel visitors were able to get close to him as an individual.

'I am sure there is no man in the world could be blessed with better parents than you are to me. I think all day of you just as you must think of me.'
11th November 1916

'A strange thing happened, one of the Scots took a prisoner who had a teffillin in his pockets and he rushed to Hdquts thinking he had found some new signalling device. I did laugh'.*
Undated 1916-17
(*Teffillin are small black leather boxes containing scrolls inscribed with verses from the Torah, which are worn by observant Jews during weekday morning prayers.)

Marcus also wrote clearly of his experience on the front line,
'My darling parents, 'Have just got out of the trenches since the big attack on 3rd April [3rd May], having had 9 days, the worst in my life in the trenches. I had one biscuit and one cup of water for 3 days having been cut off in a wood and I dare not breathe for the danger of being sniped…I had my equipment and Zeiss glasses hit in several places and was unconscious for 24 hrs but managed to pull myself together. God alone could describe the fighting here and to see Fritz sniping our wounded crawling back was in itself enough to make a man go raving mad. For goodness sake never have anything to do with anybody German whilst you are alive… Things I have seen do not stand thinking about so I will shut up.'
11th May 1917

The warmth and humanity represented in such letters is hard to reconcile with his death aged 20 in 1917. By allowing Marcus to build up his own character through his letters, audiences grow to know him incredibly quickly and the news of his death brings a rush of unexpected emotion. When giving gallery talks on the subject, even though I have read the letters many times, I would sometimes find tears in my eyes.

The exhibition allowed us to use our diverse collection to tell authentic stories from across the spectrum of Jewish experience. This was supplemented with objects from other museums, such as a postcard sent to a Jewish 'shirker', to fill gaps where a military museum's collection inevitably was lacking.

Responses to the exhibition were overwhelmingly positive, despite our visitors having a wide range of different viewpoints. Deliberately sparse text left visitors to bring together the various stories and individuals, and gave them the opportunity to explore the exhibition widely.

Despite emotions running high, I feel that by reflecting the multiplicity of experience of the Jewish community, and contextualising the choices made by Jewish men and women to serve or not serve, we did justice to our subject. By including the stories and voices of a diverse range of individuals, members of the public could build up their own picture of Jewish service. This also justified the final question mark on our title, 'For King and Country?', reflecting the complexity of voices and personal feelings of loyalty that the exhibition ultimately addressed.

Roz Currie is the curator at the Jewish Military Museum and also at the Jewish Museum London, ahead of the amalgamation of the two museums.

THE NEW FOREST REMEMBERS

Jim Mitchell and Gareth Owen discuss the difficulties that lie in the need to reveal the truth without causing offence when dealing with contentious issues.

From 2012 to 2014 the New Forest National Park Authority undertook a bold project to record all the archaeology, history and living memories of the New Forest during World War II. The aim was to make the findings freely available online and via talks, events, interpretation panels and exhibitions.

The New Forest sits on the south coast of England and comprises forest, heathland, farmland and coastline. During World War II, due to its ease of access by train and its strategic location near the port of Southampton, it was an important accommodation, storage, training, testing and staging area, in particular for the build-up and execution of the D-Day landings of June 1944.

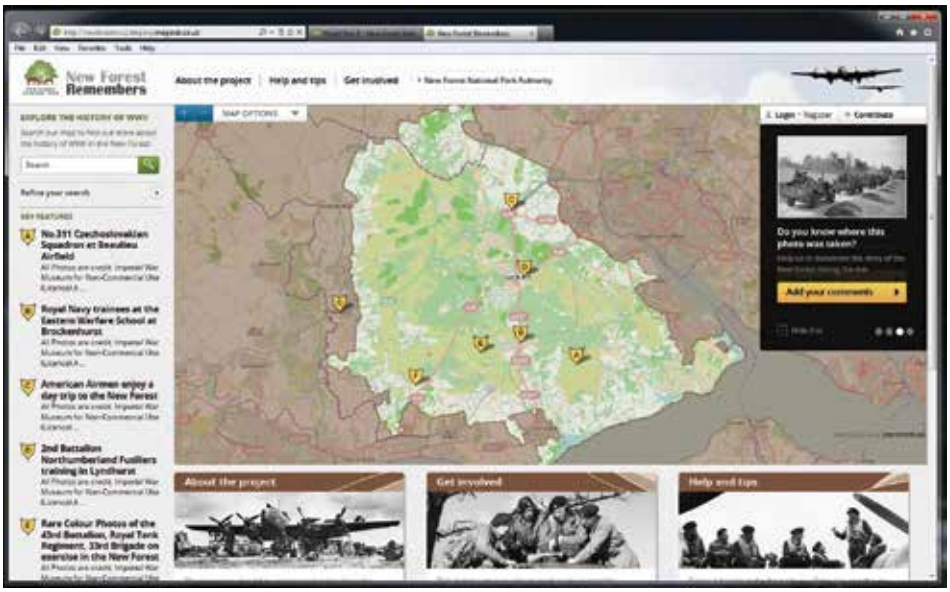
In addition to the archaeological survey work and document research, we aimed to record 75 oral histories, helped by trained volunteers. We ended up recording 146, containing 86 hours of interviews and covering a wide range of topics. These oral histories raise some challenging content and we had to decide how best to make these available and use them in our interpretation.

A COMPLEX PROCESS

Once an oral history interview is recorded, it is transcribed. During the transcription, we asked transcribers to highlight in red any words the transcriber couldn't understand and to highlight in blue content that could be offensive, derogatory, slanderous or controversial in any way. This identified sections of the interview that needed further and more detailed review.

The project didn't aim to collect physical material, though some was donated. Instead we scanned or photographed the material found through research or loaned to us by members of the public, ready for upload to the digital online archive. The interactive portal is the project's online archive, holding a range of digital material including documents, photographs, sections of the oral history interviews and their transcriptions and survey data. There are also links to our YouTube channel with period film footage (from Imperial War Museum) and 3D animations of reconstructed sites. The site is the project's main output of our findings and is designed to be interactive, with anyone being able to register to add comments on already posted

BELOW:
Staff of the top-secret testing site Armaments Research Department, Millersford, 1945. Courtesy of Vera Storr.



LEFT:
The home page of New Forest Remembers.

material or add new information and images via writing a new article.

We chose not to upload entire oral histories onto the portal as this would not only have taken up too much bandwidth, but also been too much information for people browsing the site. Instead we edited the interviews to produce 'quick clips' – stand-alone sections of an interview. In some cases this can involve editing multiple sections of a full interview to produce one quick clip. These are usually no more than two minutes long, as we have produced a mobile app and the listener may be anywhere in the Forest while listening to the recording.

SENSITIVE STORIES

The Forest is still a fairly close-knit community, and many of our contributors have lived there all their lives and still meet and see individuals or family members to whom their memories still relate.

A number of individuals were happy to talk to us but not be recorded, and in a few cases contributors being interviewed would ask for the recording to stop while they told us amazing stories of bravery, lucky breaks, gossip or, in their opinion, bureaucratic bungles by government decision-makers that cost lives. This of course leaves us with a range of information and stories we are just not able to tell.

The flip side to this has been the interviews where the contributor has recalled all sorts of stories including things like 'Mr "Smith's" father is not Mr Smith but Mr G.I.!', naming the person concerned. For the majority of interviews the contributor has released the recordings to us with no restrictions and in all cases signed over the copyright to the National Park Authority. This has meant that for some interviews we must make the decision as to whether we publish or close all or part of a recording to protect those spoken about and/or the contributor.

'LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS'

Our contributors grew up or worked in a climate of 'careless talk costs lives'. So it is not surprising that some contributors, particularly those working in technical roles or for the military were reluctant to talk about what they did during the war years.

One site in particular where we met this was a top-secret explosive testing site in the Forest. We were able to find and copy de-restricted reports for some of the tests conducted at the site, known as the Armaments Research Department, Millersford. Our interviewers took copies of these to the contributors, which they found very interesting and enabled them to talk freely about their work for the first time.

DIFFICULT INTERPRETATION CHOICES

When we receive the transcriptions from the volunteers, one of their roles is to identify derogatory, offensive or questionable sections and highlight these in blue text. In a number of cases, this blue text raises a dilemma. This could refer to misdemeanours conducted when the contributor was younger. Sexist, racist and other pejorative comments have been recorded. The contributors have signed off their interviews, allowing us to use it in interpretation. But how do we go about using this material responsibly for all parties?

One of the untold stories is that of the contribution made by the black American service personnel. In most cases they arrived ahead of the white Americans to set up the camps and are spoken about with a high regard. But these accounts also refer to the racist and segregated views of the time, for example when white British soldiers were not allowed to play sports with the black Americans due to objections made by some white American soldiers. Another example is where black American soldiers were drinking in their local pub. When white American soldiers arrived for a drink later on, they told the barman that 'we're not drinking while they're here, so get them out'. The interpreter needs to be both aware of the historical context and the potential for present-day offence when relaying these stories.

The New Forest Remembers: Untold Stories of WWII concluded in September 2014 with the aim that the interactive portal will stay interactive for at least the following four years before becoming a static online archive. Find out more by visiting the portal at www.newforestww2.org.

Jim Mitchell is the Interpretation Officer for the New Forest National Park Authority; Gareth Owen is the New Forest Remembers Education and Outreach Officer for the New Forest National Park Authority.

WHERE WAS GOD DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR?

Victoria Harrison and Helen Moore explain York Minster's response to commemorating the First World War through an exhibition and educational programmes.

James Drury

How does the Church commemorate war? The Church strives to preach peace and toleration, so in tackling how to mark this centenary year it has been critical to ensure our work does not celebrate or glorify war.

YORK MINSTER'S TREASURY EXHIBITION

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Britain was fundamentally a christian country with most people regularly attending Church. During the First World War, some 4,400 army chaplains were recruited including a young Eric Milner-White who would later become Dean of York. We might assume then that God was a constant presence in the minds of both those at home and in the trenches.

Using personal letters, photographs and prayer lists we opened our Treasury exhibition, entitled 'They died that we might live', with:

'The story of York Minster and the First World War is one of courage, sacrifice and remembrance. In the chaos and confusion of war, faith offered comfort and hope. But where did people find God in the face of such unprecedented conflict?'

GRIEF, COMFORT AND MEMORIAL

We explored what it was like at the cathedral and in the trenches for members of staff involved in the conflict, showing how God was used to rally spirits, bring comfort and find reconciliation. We also considered the role the cathedral played after the war in offering a place for collective grief and memorial.

ABOVE:
2 pieces of artwork inspired by the theme of Saints and Heroes by Leeds-based street artist CBLOXX.

RIGHT:
A display of the stencil artworks created by young people in York as part of the project.

James Drury

However, the exhibition is only a small part of our programme:

- We have created memory boxes for use with schools. Each one takes a name from either a memorial or the staff roll and contains personal objects and reminders for students to explore and consider. The sessions end with an act of remembrance to the sounds of *Nimrod*, with students placing poppies into a wreath with comments on what they have learnt.
- We have included two sessions in our adult learning programme to discuss further how God featured in the lives of soldiers and to pose the question 'whose side was God on?' which examines literature published during 1914-1918 to see if prayers ask for peace or victory.
- We also have a central worship role to play – through services such as our vigil, which marked the outbreak of war on 4 August – throughout the war as the Mother Church of the Northern Province.
- We have been looking to the future: 'Commemoration and memorial' took our key First World War memorial and explored its relevance today as outlined below. And as the four years continue, our projects and worship will also shift their focus to explore themes of reconciliation and conflict resolution, drawing on comparisons with the modern world.

YORK MINSTER'S FIRST WORLD WAR YOUTH PROJECT: ID

100 years after the First World War, York citizens killed in service and commemorated in the unique memorial *The King's Book of York Heroes*, continue to be remembered by the next generation of York residents. An innovative project has brought young people from York closer to their ancestors than ever before.

In 2014, York Minster ran a First World War community engagement project called 'ID' with approximately 80 young people in York aged 13–19 years. The project was run in partnership with the City of York Council's Youth Services. Youth groups included York Young Carers, Door 84, Choose 2, 4 Corners and Copmanthorpe Youth Club, reaching a wide variety of vulnerable young people from varying backgrounds. The aim of the project was to engage with young people in the city – an audience we struggle to find amongst those visiting York Minster.

STREET ART

The young people worked with York Minster's Community Engagement Officer and commissioned street artists Joy Gilleard (CBloxx) and Jonny Packham (Jay Pee) to explore the themes of identity and remembrance to create a modern-day version of *The King's Book of York Heroes* called *York's Book of Young Heroes*. We chose street art as it's an accessible art form that appeals to young people.

Each group reflected on themes of identity and how those included in the book are remembered before using street art to create their own personal 'tag' and concept of 'what makes a hero' for inclusion in this modern-day version of the book.

The groups also created their own unique spray-paint artworks using stencils. Each design was connected with the theme of remembrance with words such as 'conflict, prayer and peace', 'hero' and 'ID', and symbols of prayer hands, a medal and a poppy.

BELOW:
Pages from the York's Book of Young Heroes created as part of the project.

James Drury

James Drury

RIGHT:
The contemporary medal shaped memorials on display in York Minster.

A secondary project was also run with the York Youth Offending Team, within which two young people aged 16–18 took part in a street art project inspired by the First World War centenary and York Minster's *King's Book of York Heroes* and achieved Bronze Level Arts Awards.

SAINTS AND HEROES

As part of the cathedral's community outreach programme, this group developed their artistic talents over a ten-week period, resulting in the creation of a huge memorial for display in the cathedral. Each young person has used spray paints to populate their own giant canvas with names from the *King's Book of York Heroes* to create contemporary medal-shaped memorials.

All the artworks went on display in the Minster during October half term as part of a remembrance-themed family arts festival called 'Saints and Heroes', and many of the young people came to visit with their families. *York's Book of Young Heroes* was displayed alongside projections of *The King's Book of York Heroes* and through this we were able to highlight our many memorials and the commemoration exhibition. The exhibition was displayed alongside two professional street artists painting live throughout the event, creating new remembrance-themed artworks. This contemporary approach to the work has proved incredibly successful in engaging with young people and in particular hard-to-reach groups.

Victoria Harrison is Collection Manager and Helen Moore is Community Engagement Officer for York Minster.

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