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On the water front

*Interpreting water and waterscapes*

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The next issue will feature  
**Hot topics (contentious issues)**

Email suggestions for  
contributions to: elizabeth@  
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In this issue contributors take on the challenge of interpreting water. Stephen Riley looks at *SeaBritain*, a national initiative to celebrate the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar – one of Britain's greatest victories at sea. Yves Delmaire explains interpretive techniques used in Boulogne to paint the fishing industry in a more positive light, while James Steward shows how *Time and Tide* short listed for a Gulbenkian award, interprets the seaside town of Great Yarmouth, in Norfolk. Carolyn Lloyd Brown describes how she has helped to create a master plan for the landscape with the largest man-made lake in Northumberland, Tim Edwards looks at Scotland's first national park with Loch Lomond in Scotland, while Ruth Taylor and Paul Wynne explain how schools and the local community are involved in interpreting the lake and cascade in one of Britain's most beautiful garden landscapes near Bath, and Annette Simpson explains how she and her colleagues have made aqueducts sexy.

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# 'Waterways for People'

Annette Simpson

Perhaps all those old sayings are right, we do have a strong affinity with water – rain, the sea, lochs, canals, reservoirs and rivers are all part of the British landscape. My own work is centred on waterways and I developed a very close relationship with water last year when camping in Devon!

*Waterways for People* is the rather grand name for the document in which British Waterways outlines the many projects it is engaged in that aim to improve the quality of life for communities close to its waterways. Aims, objectives, milestones, partners, initiatives and budgets are all outlined as good planning dictates but of course it's the photos of people taking part in the activities that bring the document to life. Whether its school children visiting floating classrooms, volunteer towpath ranger schemes or the development of canal sidewalks, there is so much to be involved in.

Reading the articles in this Journal reminded me of *Waterways for People*. The projects may be diverse but they achieve their objectives, whether social, economic, environmental, educational or celebratory by interpretive programmes that encourage people to take a closer look at the environment around them, and by generating a deeper understanding and appreciation of that environment and its history. All of which will hopefully culminate in greater participation at many levels.

My work means that I am involved in many exciting projects but often it's still the unexpected simple everyday occurrences that bring a smile and a sense of achievement. I watched a team of dedicated

volunteers manoeuvring a pair of newly restored 1930s Grand Union Canal boats into a lock outside my office without bumping – bringing a cheer from those passing by. That small scene confirmed to me that the project's restoration and training programme is working, moving historic boats does add vibrancy to the waterways scene and perhaps the skills needed to move and maintain working boats will be around a little bit longer.

Personally I am looking forward to this year's *SeaBritain 2005* events. Recently we visited a riverside festival at Upton-on-Severn, a beautiful place on the River Severn and not actually by the sea. What brightened my day was seeing my kids' reactions to the 'Harry Browns' singing sea shanties – the joy of joining in at the top of your voice, listening to the story telling elements of the songs and for young children discussing the rude nature of some of the words was such fun. And perhaps they learnt something of a sailor's life; they've already told me that they want to visit the *Cutty Sark* as sea going ships are far more exciting than canal boats. I must be losing my touch!

"... rolling home, rolling home, rolling home for dear old England..."

*Annette Simpson is Interpretation Manager,  
British Waterways*

# Take a fresh look at the sea

**Stephen Riley** describes how a national initiative representing the marine environment is set to raise our awareness of the sea and how it affects our lives

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Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson by Lemuel Francis Abbott

COURTESY OF NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, LONDON, GREENWICH HOSPITAL COLLECTION

## The death of Nelson

2005 is a special year – it marks the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar and the death at the moment of victory of Admiral Lord Nelson, Britain's greatest naval hero. Nelson continues to hold a special fascination in the public imagination – a complex and contradictory character, he figured in the final 'Top Ten' in the BBC's *Great Britons* poll in 2002 and vox pops demonstrate a high recognition factor among young and old, seafarer and land lubber alike. Bookshop shelves see a steady flow of Nelson titles – examining and re-examining his career and his colourful private life and hoping to uncover some previously undiscovered nugget.

Plans to commemorate and celebrate the anniversary have been in gestation for many years; the Official Nelson Commemorations Committee (ONCC) has been co-ordinating the activities of various groups including the Nelson Society and 1805 Club among others, to create a programme of events, exhibitions and conferences – The Trafalgar Festival – which explore and promote interest in the bicentenary. Prominent among them will be the National Maritime Museum's own *Nelson & Napoleon*, (July–November 2005) an international exhibition charting the rise to power and influence of two of history's most celebrated heroes.

## The wider story

Against this background, Nelson and the bicentenary were always likely to capture public attention. The media both share and fuel the country's interest in a good story laced with heroism, courage, vanity, romance and sorrow. But there is a wider story to tell whilst we have the public's attention – the story we have called *SeaBritain 2005*.

partners – representing maritime and coastal heritage, water sports, tourism, shipping and the maritime trades, and the marine environment – sharing a common cause to raise awareness of the sea and how it affects all our lives. By coming together to promote their own programmes but combining their 'voices' under the *SeaBritain 2005* umbrella the partners have been able to raise the volume and the reach of the campaign and encourage the nation to... 'take a fresh look at the sea'.

## SeaBritain 2005

As an 'island nation' with one of the longest coastlines in Europe and no one living more than eighty five miles from the sea, it is surprising how many of us suffer from 'sea blindness'. And yet, everyone to some extent depends on the sea. Look on the shelves in your local supermarket : 95% of all Britain's imports and exports come and go by sea.

The *SeaBritain 2005* campaign has encouraged us all to look at the various ways the sea has shaped our culture – made us who we are. It embraces our maritime heritage and history: we have the largest collection of historic craft in the world; it's the source of our pre-eminence as a shipping and trading nation; the defence of our shores, and the strength of our maritime sector – fishing, oil and gas, marine engineering and boat building; insurance and commercial services; it's the stories of towns and villages, great ports and seaside resorts, each of which has drawn its life and character from the sea.

The marine environment and the sea as a driver of our climate extends the campaign further, as does the sea as inspiration for music, drama, literature and art. It offers challenging sport for thousands in

**'The media both share and fuel the country's interest in a good story laced with heroism, courage, vanity, romance and sorrow'**

Here, I hope I can describe how in 2002 this national initiative, led by the National Maritime Museum, and taking the Trafalgar bicentenary as its inspiration, has brought together an eclectic group of

sailing, surfing or just 'messaging about' in boats and it provides recreation and tourism for millions, drawn to the coast by an innate compulsion to 'look over the edge' and dangle their feet in the water.

Right: Planting oak saplings in one of 27 Trafalgar Woods, each one named after the 27 ships in Nelson's fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar

### A national programme of events

But what is *SeaBritain 2005* doing to promote its campaign and what makes it unique? With 'pump priming' funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and resources provided by the National Maritime Museum, including staff seconded to the Museum team from VisitBritain (the national tourist authority) and Trinity House, *SeaBritain 2005* has created an effective partnership of over fifty committed national organisations who share a common interest in some aspect of the sea. The partners – among them English Heritage, RNLI, British Marine Federation, Jubilee Sailing Trust, Ordnance Survey, Marine Conservation Society – have been encouraged to pick up the key themes from *SeaBritain 2005* or the Trafalgar Festival and integrate these into their own planned programmes under the *SeaBritain 2005* brand.

Among the principal partners, VisitBritain have adopted the sea as a prime promotional theme for domestic and international tourism in 2005 and beyond. Liverpool has designated 2005 as their 'Year of the Sea' – a stepping stone to becoming European Capital of Culture in 2008. *SeaScotland 2005*, *SeaGuernsey 2005*, *SeaNorthern Ireland 2005*, *Sea Isle of Man 2005* and *SeaDerbyshire* – not previously well-known for its coastline, but where Dame Ellen McArthur honed her early sailing skills.

The National Trust – owners of over 700 miles of Britain's coastline – will promote 40 years of its Neptune Coastal Campaign to secure the future and accessibility of some of our most dramatic coastline and lead a public debate on the impact of coastal erosion. The Trust have also drawn out the maritime connections of many of their properties and collections and, in collaboration with the National



COURTESY WOODLAND TRUST

successful Olympic sailing nation the Royal Yachting Association are using the *SeaBritain* year to encourage youngsters to get afloat through their new *On Board* programme and to encourage their club members to hold special sailing events and regattas under the *SeaBritain 2005* banner.

The Woodland Trust, with their Trafalgar Woods Project, are a supporting partner of the campaign. Working with the Society for Nautical Research they are planting 27 Trafalgar Woods, each named after one of the 27 ships in Nelson's battle fleet at Trafalgar and each with 1,805 oak saplings. The Trafalgar Woods, planted by children and young people across the UK and linked to a carefully planned education programme, represents one of the long-term legacies of *SeaBritain 2005* and the bicentenary year.

Sea Vision UK are a consortium of maritime and commercial interests led by the Chamber of Shipping to counter 'sea blindness', particularly in schools and colleges, by promoting increased awareness of the maritime sector – a £37 billion business employing a quarter of a million people – with challenging career opportunities both afloat and ashore.

The Royal Navy have created a major programme of events throughout the summer – an International Fleet Review in the Solent involving over 100 warships

**'The *SeaBritain 2005* campaign has encouraged us all to look at the various ways the sea has shaped our culture – made us who we are'**

Maritime Museum and the Magnum Photo Agency, have created *The Coast Exposed*, a travelling photographic exhibition for 2005.

At a time when Britain is the world's most

from around the world (28 June) and the International Festival of the Sea in Portsmouth (30 June- 3 July) all under a *Trafalgar 200* and Trafalgar Festival banner – a programme highlighting

**'SeaBritain 2005 has taken as its inspiration the bicentenary celebrations but has created a bigger canvas in partnership with a disparate group of organisations coming together sharing their enthusiasm and resources'**



Above: Fireworks at the International Festival of the Sea, Portsmouth

COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE SEA

past achievements and its continuing global role.

Re-enactment events are being planned around the UK: the New Trafalgar Dispatch will re-create the journey of Lieutenant Lapenotiere bringing the news of Nelson's victory and death at Trafalgar from Falmouth, where the original dispatch was brought ashore, overland to the Admiralty in London in November 1805. A newly-built post chaise will follow Lapenotiere's 1805 route with new dispatch presentations being made to towns and cities along the route through seven counties arriving in London on 10th September 2005. The route, which will in future be known as the 'Trafalgar Way', has been charted in a specially produced map by the Ordnance Survey.

The *SeaBritain 2005* initiative also has a significant learning dimension: the National Maritime Museum has created a curriculum mapping toolkit – 'Connecting with Schools' – <http://www.seabritain2005.com/curriculum/> – an on-line resource that helps schools and learning providers develop curriculum-relevant resources with a maritime theme. Other *SeaBritain 2005* partners have developed maritime and Trafalgar-related learning materials – Portsmouth's 'Sea and Learn' – <http://www.seaandlearn.co.uk/> – .....with a taste of the sea' and the National Trust's 'Learning & Discovery – Fun at the Seaside' <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/learninganddiscovery/>.

#### **A road show**

To enthuse and inspire potential partners, the *SeaBritain 2005* team took its 'roadshow' to fifteen locations around the UK and Northern Ireland in 2003-04 encouraging national, regional and local organisations to make their own unique contributions and add to the breadth and variety of the campaign. Birmingham City Archives took up the challenge – highlighting the Charles Parker Archive [MS4000] containing a wealth of radio programmes,

folk music and songs about the sea; and the papers of James Watt – better known for his development of an improved steam engine, but, with his family, very much involved with ships and the sea – two opportunities for future research. Many other museums, galleries and archives have uncovered sea-related materials they can display or publish in support of the *SeaBritain 2005* campaign.

At the centre of the campaign has been the website – <http://www.seabritain2005.com> – the main means of reaching our audiences with inspiration and information and using broadcast and print media to raise awareness of *SeaBritain 2005* and the website. An events programme enabling organisations and individuals to register their own events and exhibitions online, has over 800 events listed nationwide. A bi-monthly *SeaBritain 2005* e-newsletter goes out to 5,000 contacts in the UK and overseas – Trafalgar-related events are planned as far afield as Nevis, Antigua, the Falkland Islands, Cadiz, Gibraltar and Nelson, New Zealand.

*SeaBritain 2005* has taken as its inspiration the bicentenary celebrations but has created a bigger canvas in partnership with a disparate group of organisations coming together sharing their enthusiasm and resources. At this stage – four months into the year – it's impossible to gauge what the effect will be on public awareness of the sea but we plan to evaluate its impact through the success of its partners. But what we can say with confidence at this stage is that *SeaBritain 2005* will be seen as a model for uniting very different organisations under a common flag.

For full details go to [www.seabritain2005.com](http://www.seabritain2005.com)

*Stephen Riley is Director of Maritime Heritage/  
Project Director SeaBritain 2005  
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich*

# A tale of two aqueducts

**Annette Simpson** describes two award winning projects centred on the restoration of two canal aqueducts in Warwickshire and Clwyd



Above: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct completed in 1805 and built by Thomas Telford and William Jessop

kept collapsing. He became a believer in the new construction material – cast iron, which combined lightness (as it did not need a clay lining) with strength; the essential ingredients for aqueduct building. With Thomas Telford, Jessop built two of the most famous cast iron aqueducts in the country at Chirk and Pontcysyllte in North Wales.

The success of these aqueducts encouraged others and when the Stratford Canal was extended to the River Avon three aqueducts were completed at Yarningale, Wootton Wawen and Edstone in Warwickshire in 1816. The last two were built of cast iron and the smallest at Yarningale built of brick, however this was washed away in 1834 and was replaced in iron.

## 'A stream in the sky – where birds fly under the fish'

### 1 Past Masters

The Past Masters project was conceived to encourage people to take an in-depth look at the place where they lived.

People pass under the

Wootton Wawen Aqueduct on the A34 everyday and the idea was that they should be able to answer who, why, what and when.

The Stratford Canal has had a chequered history. Today it's hard to imagine that such a picturesque and architecturally unique canal almost disappeared. In the 1950s public outcry over an abandonment notice led to a volunteer restoration of the canal. This safeguarded its future but many of its structures needed further work. A HLF part funded project enabled British Waterways to implement a whole programme of activities to promote physical and intellectual access to the aqueducts and to communicate their cultural significance alongside the restoration works.

British Waterways is responsible for over 130 Ancient Scheduled Monuments and 2,800 listed structures on the waterways it manages on behalf of the nation. We have a duty to not only maintain these monuments of our industrial past but to ensure that understanding and appreciation of our waterway heritage is improved.

Recently British Waterways have undertaken two projects centred around the restoration of cast iron aqueducts which have won BURRA Conservation and Regenerations Awards. One for demonstrating best practice in the conservation of historic waterway structures and the other for involving the community in the regeneration of waterway environments. Interpretation and community art played a large part in helping to achieve these objectives.

### Streams in the sky

James Brindley built aqueducts with low, squat arches. They were close to the ground, safe and strong enough to carry the heavy clay puddling which made them watertight. John Rennie built elegant masonry aqueducts with beautiful arches. William Jessop was at first unlucky with his aqueducts – they

### Your aqueducts... your ideas

Locally the aqueducts are much cherished. An extensive programme of consultation with evening meetings, a touring exhibition created by the local school, questionnaires and guided walks helped us to prepare an interpretive plan. The interpretive objectives were focussed around raising awareness of best practice in heritage and environmental



Above: Activities planned for local schools encouraged children to take a closer look at the canal environment

techniques, improving understanding of the unique structures and human associations of the canal and growing a sense of pride and ownership amongst the local community.

A team of British Waterways staff, local people and a community artist, Stella Carr, worked together to develop ideas for the interpretive media. We wanted to encourage people to look closely, to ask why, by who and when so that they could seek out the human connections and understand that the canal environment is a product of people's decisions and labours. Stella encouraged us to use images from the canal environment itself to inspire designs and suggested using Wilmcote stone, red hand made brick, blue engineering brick, cast and wrought iron.

### Meet the experts

The resulting programme of interpretation was fantastic. There was a whole range of activity and media, some aimed at the local community, some at boating and informal visitors. Formal resources were designed for local schools, and for those with an academic interest in industrial archaeology there were specialist events. Open day events with the engineers working on the restoration were hugely popular and there was an events programme where visitors got the chance to meet characters from the canal's past and present. Verity Walker of Interpretation developed two characters one of whom was William James who practically pushed through the building of the Stratford Canal destroying his health and wealth!

The project archaeologist encouraged people to look very closely when carrying out a small dig on the towpath, investigating how the drainage system on the path had previously worked before being hidden by years of packed ash and surfacing material. You could make your own bat brick or attend one of the heritage skills courses on historic metal work. Making your own iron poker helped people to understand the differences between cast and wrought iron and why they were used on the aqueduct.

### Interpretive railings

The inspiration for the on-site media was the aqueducts themselves. Learning about the processes involved in casting iron and taking part in pattern making was part of the hands-on learning. The bright modern graphics are purposely in strong contrast with the cast elements and the community artist worked with local groups to cast images from the canals past and present in small tablets attached to the panels.

### 2 Happy Birthday Ponty!

2005 is the bi-centenary of the construction of the most famous canal aqueduct in Britain – Pontcysyllte. British Waterways has been working with a range of partners, including Adfywio and Wrexham Borough Council to restore the aqueduct but also to promote the neighbouring Trevor Basin as a tourist destination. Built in 1805 the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct was a marvel of its time. People came from all over the country to see the construction works, and with

**'Why has the bridge got a split in the middle and why are the tops of the aqueducts made from iron? Because the canal was built on the cheap!'**



Above: The infamous duck, one of Anthony Lysycia's stone markers

an iron trough carried on masonry arches 38 metres (126 feet) above the River Dee it is easy to understand why they came and still do.

**A vision of hell**

Whilst the aqueduct is amazing, the adjoining basin had been a bit of a let down for visitors. The site did not reflect the importance of the structure. So a key part of the project has been the careful landscaping of the basin using high quality and local natural materials. This presented the opportunity to re-introduce features that would help people understand how the place worked in the past. Anglo-Welsh, a hire boat company, are based in the basin and whilst this is a fantastic modern day use, visitors may have thought this was always what the basin was for. After all, a basin full of boats is the classic image of canals. In fact in 1885 this area was described as a 'vision of hell' – the light from the furnaces lit the night sky, the noise of the engines blasted out along with sheets of flames and the smells from the chemical plants. The basin was used as a trans-shipment area, goods were loaded on and off boats using wagons. Replica rails have been located back into the surfacing giving a hint of the past use of the basin.

**High-flying fish**

Raising awareness of the built and natural heritage was a key element of the project. An interpretive plan was created by Ian Parkin, Carol Parr and Dennis Brennan. This contained a three year action plan and we are currently implementing a whole series of individual media to communicate the themes. An interpretive map leaflet has been produced, the visually striking interpretive panels housed in specially cast iron frames are about to go in (once the canal supervisor has got over the shock of the size of them!) and we are creating an exhibition within the workshop which once housed the equipment needed to repair wooden boats in the neighbouring dry dock.

And the high flying fish? During the consultation a local child, after watching the birds fly through the arches of the aqueduct, commented that this was the only place in the country that birds could fly under fish – a concept we have been able to record both on the site's interpretive map and stone markers.

**The infamous duck!**

A very successful aspect of the project was the work by community artist Anthony Lysycia who worked with local residents, school children and visitors to produce a series of unique carved stones. His work generated an enormous level of local interest with residents bringing old bricks, tiles, tools, tramway lines and other artefacts from the former industries of the area to be incorporated into the carvings. These same people are now acting as face-to-face interpreters by proudly showing their artefacts displayed in the stones and providing their own personal interpretation of the area's industrial heritage.

The only issue that provoked debate was the inclusion of a carving of a large duck created by the local school. The children had carved what was important to them and they enjoyed using the basin to feed the ducks. So despite our discussions on the 'worthy' history of the site the duck stayed. As interpreters, it's our role to help people articulate what is special to them. This is why community art is such a useful tool and why this element of the project was so successful both for visitors and local people. The combination of having an artist on site brought activity and participation for visitors and an opportunity for the community to express their own past and present connections with this place.

*Annette Simpson is the British Waterways Interpretation Manager. She worked with Edward Moss, Community & Special Projects Co-ordinator on the Past Masters project and Nicola Smith, Economic & Social Development Manager on the Pontcysyllte sustainable tourism project*

# Building on superlatives

**Carolyn Lloyd Brown** discusses the issues facing Kielder Water and Forest Park and how the project and client team worked together to create a master plan for the site that has 'water' as its focal point

10



Above: The sheer scale of Kielder is exhilarating and slightly daunting  
Below: Interior of Skyspace

## A great big challenge!

If you are full of superlatives as a destination, where do you go next? Kielder Water and Forest Park are facing that challenge and seeking innovative solutions to give them a revitalised competitive edge. They are planning to achieve this through a range of investments in interpretation, infrastructure and marketing.

But let's start with the superlatives. Kielder Water is the largest man made lake in Europe and Kielder Forest is the largest man made forest in England. Together they are located in north-west Northumberland, adjacent to the Northumberland National Park. Kielder is a stunning and dramatic landscape that attracts over 400,000 visitors each year and contributes over £6million to the local economy alone.

The key to unlocking its potential lies in those superlatives – its sheer scale and the fact that it is a robust, artificial landscape that is managed for the commercial supply of water and timber.

The key stakeholders for Kielder have formed a Partnership that works hard to build a range of appealing recreational and cultural product offers that enable visitors to enjoy the tranquillity of the landscape. The Partnership has also sought to develop a strong synergy between the environment and contemporary art and architecture. As a result, Kielder provides something for everyone: the opportunity for both quiet and active recreation, coupled with hospitality, educational activities and some stunning and intriguing art installations, including the internationally acclaimed *Skyspace* by James Turrell<sup>1</sup>.

## What are the issues?

Why the need for new ideas? Well, despite its success, the Partners are aware that competition for visitors is intense and that Kielder's relatively remote location means that it must offer something distinctive to attract new visitors, in particular the family market. Within one and a half hours travel time, Kielder has a potential market of 2.8 million residents and 0.5 million tourist trips to Northumberland each year.

Kielder had suffered from piecemeal development over 25 years and subsequently has three visitor centres strung along the southern shore of the lake, all of which are competing for business and confusing visitors in the process. The Partnership agreed that they wanted Kielder to be bigger, bolder and better – a 'must visit' destination capable of attracting and managing 1 million visitors a year by 2010.

Kielder has a number of issues directly relating to its waterscape:

- The lake is a reservoir and is therefore subject to extensive changes in water level. This means that access directly onto the water via pontoons, for example, can be difficult and costly
- The lake is very deep and therefore supports a limited amount of flora and fauna. This is compensated for by a smaller reservoir, Bakethin, which lies adjacent to Kielder and which is a nature reserve
- There is currently limited access around the lake perimeter due to lack of infrastructure and commercial logging operations



**'Kielder is a stunning and dramatic landscape that attracts over 400,000 visitors each year and contributes over £6million to the local economy alone'**



**The Kielder Partnership's Vision Statement:**

Kielder Water and Forest Park offers Europe's finest water and forest experience on a grand scale, providing visitors with year round ever-changing adventure within a peaceful and stunning location. Kielder provides high quality facilities night and day, winter or summer, all with a distinctive Northumberland flavour and warm welcome. Whatever visitors are seeking, whether tranquillity or exhilaration, Kielder is the place to be inspired by nature.

- There is a ferry service that operates as a pleasure boat tour but which is intermittent and under-promoted
- There is very little interpretation about the lake and much is confined to corporate messages about water treatment
- There is little opportunity for casual visitors to engage directly with the lake or with water and enjoy it for the emotional return that waterscapes typically provide.

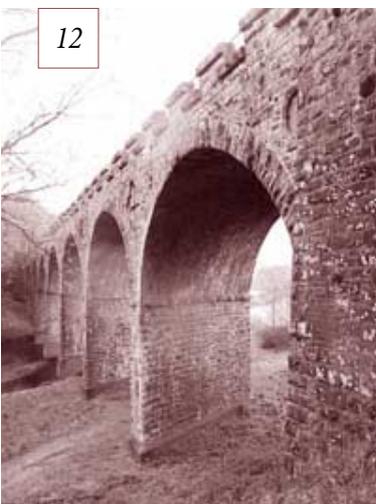
Our approach endeavoured to address all of these challenges (and many more!) by turning them into new opportunities for visitors to gain insight into this stunning landscape of vast skies reflected in still water.

**The role for interpretation**

Interpretation is to be an important and integral part of the visitor experience to engage both regular, repeat visitors as well as one-off visitors. A lot of work has been undertaken on branding and market placement, and PLB were able to build upon this to inform the team's thinking. A 'brand essence' had been created for Kielder that was: *The Freedom to be Adventurous, Wild, Creative*. However, at that stage the Partnership had not crystallised their vision for Kielder as a visitor destination. We therefore worked closely with the client team to clarify their thinking and thus move forward to create a long-term plan that was ambitious yet achievable. It was interesting to see that Sam Ham referred to the process of 'brand-synergy' in a recent article<sup>2</sup> and I realise in retrospect that this was very much what we were trying to achieve!

Right: 'Big Sky Country' – the Kielder landscape





Above: Kielder is full of historical and archaeological interest, yet to be interpreted  
Below: The courtyard and artwork at Kielder Castle, a former hunting lodge

The principles of development at Kielder are based upon the premise that visitors will experience the complete Kielder environment. By taking a site wide approach instead of looking at individual component parts and operators, a strategic, integrated visitor management and interpretation scheme has emerged.

### Water at every opportunity

The final document contains a comprehensive series of recommendations and we have selected the key aspects to briefly describe below.

The future plan is to ensure that visitors are reassured of their arrival at Kielder (usually after a fairly long drive) with welcome signage and a dramatic artwork that is a fitting counterpoint to the huge structure of the dam. There will be a visitor facility that will perform an important gateway and orientation function. This will introduce the landscape and all that it offers with the opportunity to create and book a personal itinerary for the day. This facility will also operate as a transport hub with a 'park and go' approach strongly encouraged so that visitors can leave their cars for the day and explore on foot, bicycle, and horse or shuttle bus.

Water will be a key focus for activities and

interpretation. Investment in infrastructure around the lake will offer a circular route and better access via footpaths to the lakeside. Most excitingly and ambitiously, the plan is to create a new footbridge as part of the art and architecture programme to link the lake perimeter walks.

Interpretation about and involving water will be extensive. New interpretive viewpoints (complementing current art pieces) will be created that invite visitors to look more closely at the landscape and understand its hidden past, for example the extensive archaeological remains that include early cairns and standing stones and the drowned village under the reservoir. Kielder's rich social history and tradition, evident through local place and family names will be interpreted through guided walks, in an audio commentary on the ferry boat and in graphic form as leaflets and on the website.

At Bakethin Reservoir the focus will be on wildlife in, on and around the water and a ranger is already working with schools and special interest groups. Near to Bakethin is Kielder Castle, a former hunting lodge converted to a visitor centre by Forest Enterprise and here there is the opportunity to provide interpretation through simple interactive



**'The Partnership has also sought to develop a strong synergy between the environment and contemporary art and architecture'**

**'The principles of development at Kielder are based upon the premise that visitors will experience the complete Kielder environment'**



Above: Cat Cairn, with Skyspace in the foreground and the lake to the centre  
Below: Interpretation will provide insight into the landscape from current and new viewpoints

and sensory displays. These will feature wild birds of prey, particularly goshawks, and can be linked to exterior features such as timber walkways and wildlife play habitats.

**Interpretation is forecast to be wet, wet, wet**

At another site close to the water's edge there will be an opportunity to interact with water, whatever the weather. A watery play area that takes its inspiration from the management of water from rain clouds and stream to household taps, via the reservoir, will explain a complex 'corporate' story through play. Water squirts, pipes, water balances, chutes and a myriad of other features will give children every chance to do what they all dream of – deliberately get really wet. Supporting simple graphics will provide key messages about the importance of water in the landscape and to our everyday lives, presenting a chance for families to learn together in their leisure time.

A large water maze (using pressure activated stepping stones) adds another dimension and will be designed as a 'quest' with a central feature that

may be a waterfall or cascade. Here, the story of the creation of Kielder Water through the maze and various route options can be told. Successful arrival at the central feature may reveal the source of Kielder's water, thus linking to the river and the wider landscape.

The art programme at Kielder has already led to the creation of a popular trail with bronze relief images that provide a collection of rubbings in a special booklet. A second trail is proposed on another lakeside peninsula that will use local stories and the extensive folklore of the area to create a walk with a purpose. Sculptural elements and new environments that provide visitor interactivity is envisaged inspired by local features. The 'mystery trail' is intended to reinforce Kielder's sense of magic and to emphasise the elements of water, wood and stone, their importance to life at Kielder, its history, and the key to its future.

The Partnership's interpretive aims for Kielder are to emulate the ethos of Turrell's masterpiece, which sits at the highest point in the landscape, superbly crafted from stone, providing a circular chamber within which one can contemplate the ever-changing light and cloudscape through a ceiling aperture. The human hand has created a means by which everyone can be drawn into and engage with the essence that is Kielder.

*Carolyn Lloyd Brown is Managing Director of PLB Consulting Ltd, a long established interpretive planning and design practice based in the Howarian Hills AONB*

<sup>1</sup> For more information see [www.Kielder.org/art/skysp.htm](http://www.Kielder.org/art/skysp.htm)

<sup>2</sup> AHI Journal Spring 05 Volume 10 Number 1

# Gone fishing

**Yves Delmaire** explains the interpretative techniques used to forge links between the fishing trade of Boulogne-sur-mer and French school children

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## A fishy business

The Atlantic, the Channel, and the North Sea are among the most productive and heavily exploited seas and paradoxically their coastline is one of the most industrialised, the most inhabited, and the most overused. Overfishing is responsible for the almost total disappearance of the cod. The fishing industry, which suffers from a poor image, is accused of pillaging a natural resource. Fishermen declare that they are only interested in making a living and it would seem that most children don't care much about fish either.

The fisherman has to resist storms, unexpected damage, collisions and a spartan regime of short nights. Yet each year in December, the fisherman must face an even greater danger – the TAC (total admissible captures), which lays down quotas for fishing, on which his future and livelihood depends.

The Conseil Regional du Nord pas de Calais (local government) is well aware of the economic, environmental and social impact of the fishing industry and as a result, became interested in exploring fundamental questions of sustainability and protection of the resource.

Atelier Z was commissioned to carry out a feasibility study to look at ways of putting professional fishermen and school pupils together to discuss the question, 'How can we all share the sea?'

## Fishermen as communicators

I am accustomed to finding the best interpretation in the social fabric of French life – at the baker's shop for example, but I had some difficulty in imagining the fisherman as a storyteller and dream guide. Even so, we believe that it is possible to communicate an effective environmental message.

Fishermen have without doubt qualities of solidarity, courage, energy and practical skills, but recognise that they are not necessarily good at communicating and see themselves as being less attractive than farmers with the added disadvantage of not owning their own 'land'.

Assuming that the fishing community could be persuaded to work with school children, it was soon apparent that interpretive techniques were needed to create direct links between the child and the resource. Techniques were needed that would illustrate the

practical everyday economics of the fishing industry, show the brutal reality of personal choices made by those involved and could be explained to a young audience without diluting the relationship with too many constraints.

The project presented the opportunity to give a real social role to the child through a series of carefully designed learning objectives and tasks. Throughout the development and testing of the project teachers were encouraged to manage their groups and to facilitate exchanges, but not to take an active part in the discussion. The co-operation between schools and the project team was made easier by the choice of 'open school'<sup>1</sup> to take part in the tests.

## A big black hole

However in reality things are never that straight forward. The first problem to be overcome was the mental picture of the region which seems to draw a big black hole in the position of the Channel. The coastline is ever present and the sea is used to cross from one country to another, but no one actually looks into the sea and even less into the maritime economy. Moreover, it is easy to cross Boulogne-sur-mer, the biggest fishing port in France with the largest fish processing industry in Europe, without being aware of the town's vocation – a factor which no doubt contributed to regional support for the project.

Secondly, I considered learning through action to be imperative, and it seemed essential to put hands and feet on the seashore at the intertidal zone to allow children to have a primary contact with the world under the sea. A session of fishing from the shore (shellfish, prawns, crabs) was an important key to understanding the sea as a living environment. But in France contact with nature is not easy to arrange. Children at 'school' are not allowed to go barefoot on the beach and few seem to have access to boots, so wet trainers (and plastic gloves) had to be used to test the programme... fortunately nobody seemed to mind!

## The rhythm of the fishermen lives

Emotion was another springboard I wanted to use to explore the theme. Why not bring the subject alive for my young explorers with an adventure that would in

## 'In France contact with nature is not easy to arrange. Children at 'school' are not allowed to go barefoot on the beach'

Right: Children are encouraged to explore the intertidal zone  
Below: Only a professional fisherman can open doors to experiences rarely available to the general public

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some way allow them to connect with the rhythm of the fisherman's life – notably the unloading of the catch in the middle of the night? The idea of total immersion in the subject by spending a 'night at sea' visiting the port and going aboard a fishing boat began to take shape. The idea of visit was exciting: it would allow children and teachers to experience at first hand the equipment used and to understand technical information about fishing and the sale of the catch.

A visit to the nautical college to see simulations of instruments, a trip to the aquarium to learn about ecosystems and time spent at the Maritime Museum at Etaples to look at the structure of fishing boats and the different types of nets, helped to prepare children for the experience and made sure that they would understand the real life situations they found on board. Importantly the project linked the existing elements; aquarium, nautical college and the Maritime Museum together and integrated into the programme of exploration.

It became clear that to link the diverse elements together in a cohesive way, it would be essential to create a special learning tool. A reporter's notebook with a series of activities is currently being developed and a copy will be given to each child taking part. The illustration shows how the child is encouraged to interpret, at his or her own level, the pressures that surround the Channel.

### Colourful language

It is the human approach of putting children in direct contact with fishermen that is the strength of

the project. The tests showed that the fishermen had not fundamentally changed their way of communicating or their behaviour. The fishermen who took part in the study learnt how to use their role to explain technical information and the importance of maintaining authority. The training, which lasted a year and culminated in taking children on board a fishing boat in the harbour and afterwards breakfast at the port cafe with the captain of a fishing vessel, helped them to present themselves and their profession in a positive way – as witnesses to, and not victims of, what could become an ecological crisis. One of the small problems, perhaps still to be overcome, is the use of language – fishermen traditionally have a liking for colourful (i.e vulgar) stories particularly as there are no women aboard the coastal fishing fleet!

The feasibility study took place over a year and involved a dozen active and retired fishermen, two schools and about 100 children at a summer camp. The study culminated in a programme of activities and visits to be carried out over a number of weeks or as a continuous 24 hour sequence. The success of the programme tested has resulted in the establishment of the project in the school curriculum. The programme will start running for real in September 2005 and all those involved with the project are impatient to see what effect the experience will have on attitudes to the fishing industry and the environment. The ambition to have a fishing boat equipped for educational use permanently at the quayside has still to be realised.

**'The ambition to have a fishing boat equipped for educational use permanently at the quayside has still to be realised'**

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Above: Technical tools show the versatility of the sailor. The visit to the nautical college gave the girls the desire to become fishermen! Right: A shark is unloaded on the quayside



#### **Module 1 Meeting the sea (primary schools)**

*Style: discovery by sensations during day time*

- Collecting on the beach (looking for traces left by man, observing and collecting marine creatures)
- Picnic on the beach
- Visit to the Nausicaa aquarium

#### **Module 2 A night at sea (secondary school)**

*Style: discovery by adventure, 24 hours from 12.00 -12.00*

- Picnic on the beach and exploration of the intertidal zone
- Visit to the Maritime Museum at Etaples, accompanied by a fisherman
- Dinner of fish and preparation for the night ahead
- Get up at 05.00, leave for the port of Boulogne
- Experience the unloading of the catch, breakfast at the port cafe with the captain of a fishing vessel
- Visit to the nautical college

#### **A bet on the outcome**

We have made a bet that an innocent question about the size and provenance of a cod, asked of a fishmonger by a group of children, will lead to a closer inspection of the 'fridge at home and some of the images seen on the television will 'make waves'. The project relies heavily on the effect of reverberations to measure and not to increase the consumption of fish stocks.

The other regions involved in the European programme SAIL<sup>2</sup> ( Kent, Medway, West Flanders, Zeeland) have been observing the development and results of the initiative. It is hoped that in 2005 a complementary study to look at the potential of a cross-border project to 'Learn about the sea' will be carried out.

*Yves Delmaire is co-director of Atelier Z, an Anglo/French consultancy carrying out interpretation and design for cultural, educational and cross-border projects*

<sup>1</sup> community school – an education establishment which runs environmental and social educational projects during the school holidays

<sup>2</sup> SAIL : integrated seashore management scheme

# 'The Spark in the Park'

**Tim Edwards** looks at the guidelines laid down for the interpretation of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, Scotland's first National Park



Above: One of the two images developed by Mountain Creative

## Creating the park

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs is Scotland's first National Park. It covers an area of 1,865 square kilometres (720 sq miles) and was given official National Park status in July 2002. Its boundaries embrace a diverse landscape from the high country of Breadalbane to the sea lochs of Argyll. In the centre of the area is Loch Lomond, the largest expanse of fresh water in Great Britain. To the east are the Trossachs, an area of glens, forests and lochs and often described as the Highlands in miniature. The mighty peaks of Ben Lui, Ben More and Ben Vorlich, three of the 14 Munros (separate mountain peaks over 3000 feet in height) in the Park, dominate the northern section, while the wooded slopes and sea lochs of the Argyll forest to the west complete the patchwork that is the National Park.

## Igniting the spark

Interpretation is a means of helping people to understand and appreciate the significance of a place and, through this, encouraging them to support its conservation. Interpretation provides the inspirational spark in presenting and recounting the story of Scotland's first National Park in all its guises and manifestations.

This vision led to the Interim Committee, the forerunner to the National Park Authority (NPA), ensuring that interpretation was treated as a priority. It was recognised that the new NPA could fulfil many of its responsibilities to visitors and the community, as well as to the landscape and economy of the area,

future interpretive plans.

'The spark' arose through a programme of early actions devised by the Interim Committee aimed at achieving an improvement to signage, orientation, interpretation and information prior to the inauguration of the National Park. The co-ordination of the interpretation for the programme was carried out by Touchstone Heritage Management, and provided a basis for the development of the strategy by determining the interpretive approach and defining the 'essence' of the National Park. Consequently, the development of the interpretive strategy to guide, advise and describe the context for interpretation was an essential element arising from the programme of early actions. The 'essence' was further developed by Mountain Creative into a set of corporate identity guidelines which have been reflected in all our publications, signs, panels, uniforms and much more.

## Guidelines for good practice

The strategy is a comprehensive and evolving document augmented by more detailed plans for individual or linked initiatives. It embraces words and graphic images and extends into visual elements such as colour, shape and materials as well as relating to the overall style and tenor of approach. The strategy is concerned, on the one hand, with the underlying philosophical approach, and on the other, with the practical output of interpretive planning, infrastructure and programmes. In this

**'Interpretation provides the inspirational spark in presenting and recounting the story of our National Park in all its guises and manifestations'**

by developing and implementing an effective strategy for the interpretation to widen visitors and local people's appreciation, understanding and sense of belonging. From this basis the interpretive strategy, *The Spark in the Park*, was borne with the aim of co-ordinating our approach to interpretation by providing the strategic framework for past and

way the strategy has established our approach and provides guidelines for good practice.

The strategy comprises three main parts, an overview and summary from which the reader can understand the philosophy, ethos and principles. For those with responsibility for implementing interpretation, the main text provides comprehensive



Above: Free standing and three sided information panels located at sites around the Park  
 Right: Inchcailloch Island National Nature Reserve and Balmaha



**'The Spark in the Park, was borne with the aim of co-ordinating our approach to interpretation by providing the strategic framework for past and future interpretive plans'**

Below: Ben Lomond by Mountain Creative



guidance. A series of appendices provide details of specific elements and examples of implementation.

**Good graphics**

The strategy employs a graphic device, effectively a cube in plan turned through 45 degrees, with the base representing the Park itself and the top representing the factor in question. The four sides represent each of the constituent elements that constitute that factor of thinking. This diagrammatical representation enables the messages and co-dependencies to be easily understood and in this way the text is minimised. The 'diamond' shape is reflected from the strategy into the shape of the infrastructure developed for the early action programme.

The strategy, which will be completed and published summer 2005 following publication of the draft park plan, has been extensively used by the NPA and partner agencies. An example is the European trans-national funded project called 'Mopark' where interpretive journeys have been developed using hand held IT displays. Based at

the Balmaha community on the east side of Loch Lomond, but also interpreting the nearby Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve, the development of the interpretive plan was firmly based on the principles and practices set out in the strategy.

*The Spark in the Park* will succeed best as an integral part of management thinking and operational activity. It will not be regarded as a bolt-on accessory, as simply useful but not essential. Rather it is a working part of the whole machine of park governance without which the NPA would not achieve all its objectives.

*Dr Tim Edwards is Director of Visitor and Operational Services of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority*

# A lake in the landscape

**Ruth Taylor** and **Paul Wynne** look at how restoring the Serpentine Lake and Cascade at Prior Park, in Bath, is involving the local community

## Unlocking secrets

In the past, within the National Trust and other heritage bodies, many restoration projects have happened behind closed doors. There are very good reasons for this including health and safety considerations, access issues and the presentation of the site or property – as it may not look very attractive while the restoration is underway. But a lot can be learnt from seeing restoration in progress. The National Trust is moving more and more towards unlocking the secrets behind the work that goes on in restoring houses and gardens. Key recent projects have been, the restoration of Ightham Mote, Kent which demonstrated repair techniques used on 14th century stone and timber structures to the public; opening Tyntesfield only ten weeks after its acquisition enabling visitors to see work in progress and bringing alive the ongoing conservation work and public access through learning opportunities such as work placements, apprenticeships, events, guided tours, ‘taster’ sessions and volunteering over the coming years and the restoration of Uppark, Sussex, after fire damage as shown in the exhibition. The latest in this gradual opening up of restoration and conservation projects is Prior Park Landscape Garden in Bath.

## Prior Park

Prior Park is a beautiful 18th century Landscape Garden in Bath given to the National Trust in 1993 by Prior Park College and the Order of Christian Brothers, having fallen into a state of disrepair. The garden was created by Ralph Allen an entrepreneur and philanthropist who came to Bath from Cornwall

Above right: A plan showing the Serpentine Lake and Cascades in the wilderness area  
Right: A view of the Palladian Bridge down the garden



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**‘The National Trust is moving more and more towards unlocking the secrets behind the work that goes on in restoring houses and gardens’**

in 1710. He made his first fortune from reorganising the postal system and his second from the stone quarried in Combe Down used to build the city of Bath. The Palladian Mansion above the garden (now part of Prior Park School) was designed by John

Wood around 1734 to advertise the use of Bath stone and as a statement of prestige. The garden was commissioned by Ralph Allen to provide a setting for the mansion and was designed first by Alexander Pope and subsequently Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown.

Above: The Sham Bridge across the Serpentine Lake

### The landscape, lake and cascade

In 1996 the Trust opened the gates having completed an initial programme of work including; planting a mixture of 18th century shrubs; restoration of the Palladian bridge; reinstatement of footpaths; surveying and recording of archaeological work; installation of handrails and other visitor facilities including toilets and benches; and uncovering the elaborate grotto. Restoration has been ongoing ever since in line with the conservation plan written by Matthew Ward (head gardener) and consulted upon widely. One of the major pieces of the jigsaw is to restore the wilderness area significantly influenced by Alexander Pope. This involves restoring the Serpentine Lake and Cascade which form basic structural components of the wilderness, also the diversion of various water channels and repair of culverts and the creation of a grass cabinet.

### Access for all

There will be increased access on graded paths suitable for pushchairs and people using wheelchairs. This will enable physical involvement with the elements of light and shade, the sound of water and the smell and feeling of grass beneath your feet. The project itself aims to be a lifelong learning experience and an internal learning project with access

events and guided walks. People will also be able to take part in the project as volunteers, in either physical tasks such as helping with the archaeological dig of the Serpentine Lake, reconstructing the paths and planting the new shrubs around the grass cabinet or in producing and distributing leaflets and explaining work to visitors.

### Community involvement

Local schools and training colleges are linked into the project. The City of Bath College students are designing a virtual tour of the garden which will show the restoration work in progress. The local secondary school has linked their science work to the project and has already seen the ground penetration radar survey work in action, undertaken as part of the feasibility study. They will be helping create some of the interpretation – interactive 'Tracker pack' trails for families and building a model of the Palladian bridge for blind and partially sighted people to use.

### Interpretation philosophy

In this project the National Trust is declaring its commitment to broadening interest in the past, to inspiring audiences in the present and to using the superb asset of Prior Park as a vehicle through which those who wish to do so can pursue self-discovery in many different ways. The interpretation philosophy of the Trust is to do more than just open the gates to the garden. Our aim is to be open to new ideas about what is significant, to share that significance in

**'The National Trust is moving more and more towards unlocking the secrets behind the work that goes on in restoring houses and gardens'**

opportunities incorporated at every stage, aiming to embed inclusive ways of working as the ethos for the ongoing management of the property. What this means in practice is that the garden will remain open over the two years the project is in progress. The public will be able to view the work going on and at each stage the project will be interpreted to the public through exhibitions, demonstrations, handling items,

new and exciting ways and to actively engage people in the process of caring for places rich in history. This requires constant dialogue with those who want to be involved in our work and sharing lessons learnt.

*Ruth Taylor is Learning Adviser-Interpretation for the National Trust; Paul Wynne is Property Manager for Prior Park*

# Bloaters, kippers and red herrings

*Time and Tide*, The Museum of Great Yarmouth Life, opened in 2004 and was shortlisted for a Gulbenkian award. **James Steward** explains



Above right: Fishing and the interpretation of the herring curing process are at the heart of the museum

## Introduction

Great Yarmouth has been a popular holiday destinations in Britain for well over a century. It was also one of the richest towns in Mediaeval Britain, one of the busiest continental trading ports on the east coast, and, in living memory, home of the largest herring fishing fleet. However, in recent years the town has suffered an economic decline that has affected many areas of the community. One area that has been subject to local authority scrutiny, and regenerative evaluation, is the heritage sector.

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service worked with the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust to develop *Time and Tide* a museum located in an area of social deprivation and economic need, in a town with poor educational achievement and one of the highest unemployment figures in England. The development of *Time and Tide* was identified as a key element of the town's regeneration. Specifically, the establishment of the museum is part of a long-term strategy to reposition Great Yarmouth as a competitive heritage tourist attraction.

## Tower Curing Works

In 1993, the Great Yarmouth Museums Working Party agreed to investigate alternative sites for the Maritime Museum situated on Great Yarmouth's seafront. Reasons for seeking an alternative site included a need to improve physical access to the collections, existing poor environmental conditions for storage of reserve collections and the location on the seafront, where tourists to the town were looking for seaside type of amusements, and not a museum experience.

In 1996 focus group research indicated strong local interest in the Tower Curing Works<sup>1</sup>. This consultation showed that local people cared passionately about the history of the town and that they felt angry at the way the town's heritage had been lost beneath its popular seaside image. It was clear that the local community regarded museums as places that could help restore some of Yarmouth's pride. In particular they wanted the Tower Curing Works to be rescued and turned into a celebration of the once great fishing industry on whose reputation the town had been built.

In 1997 a development study concluded that in order to create a critical mass of heritage attractions in Great Yarmouth, and make the town a heritage destination for tourists, there needed to be something more than was currently on offer. Tower Curing Works was identified as filling this requirement, as it could be developed to provide a two to three hour visit with visitor services such as a café, which the other museums were unable to provide.

The unique selling point of the museum is the building itself. It is the only large scale curing works to survive from the late Victorian heyday of herring curing. As such it is a building of regional significance (Grade II listed). The building helps visitors to think historically and, particularly for local people, helps to put their own lives in context with their environment. The buildings have been modified over the years to suit changing needs and these changes are part of the unfolding history of the site. The impact of the museum depends largely on the successful meeting of the challenge of integrating the exciting visual display of museum artefacts and informative building interpretation.

**'A guiding principle was the challenge of integrating the interpretation of the building, and its original purpose, with the museum displays on more than one level'**



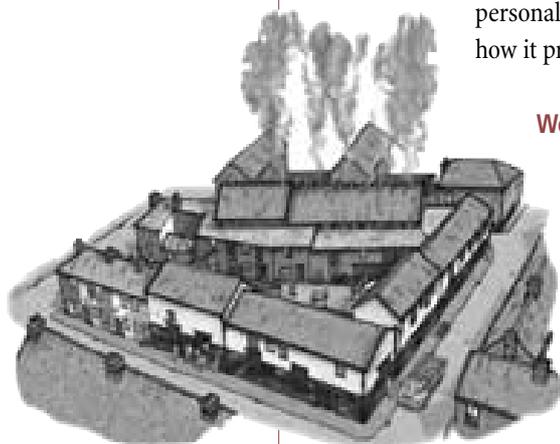
Above: The Yarmouth Rows were considered to be the key to the town's identity. Local people wanted the museum to re-create a typical Row to walk along

**Interpreting the curing process**

The interpretation of the building and the curing processes was aided considerably by the involvement of a local family who had lived on site and managed the herring curing operation for many years<sup>2</sup>. Some of the family and their stories of life at the Tower Curing Works are featured at various points around the building. These interpretive features piece together the processes and bring to life the characters that were employed there. The heady mixture of smoke and herring that can still be sensed in places is a genuine reminder that history is part of the very fabric of this building.

The gallery displays feature around two thousand artefacts and draw on the strength of the Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Services' collection. The museum was eventually divided into zones with clear themes. Acknowledging the fact that visitors like to choose their own route around the museum, all the display areas are capable of standing alone, and the interpretation provided takes this into account. In the museum, each space has its own 'personality', creating a change of mood that, in some areas, is quite dramatic. Variety is very important to the museum. A guiding principle was that every visitor is different, and that by strengthening the individual personality of space would strengthen the

personality of what it contains, and how it presents itself to the visitor.



Above: An artist's impression of how the Tower Curing Works would have looked during the 1960s

**Working together**

The Great Yarmouth museums staff divided responsibility for overseeing and leading on these individual areas. This created a valuable dynamic in a team that included education and curatorial staff, as well as museum management. Each individual undertook the academic research, drafting information for text panels, selecting suggested illustrations for the panels, providing information for labels, provided research for the audio wands and contributed ideas for story lines. In addition these display area co-ordinators ensured that key stories

and themes were told by a variety of interpretation methods and that they provided a coherent overview of information.

**Bloaters, kippers and red herrings**

At *Time and Tide* there are four main display areas on the ground floor including reconstructions of a Great Yarmouth Row<sup>3</sup> set in 1913 and the Fish wharf<sup>4</sup> set in 1955. There is also a fishing gallery featuring a reconstruction of a steam drifter's wheelhouse in which visitors experience the hazards of bringing a full load of herring back to port in the midst of a North Sea storm. Displays in the former smoke houses provide interpretation of the building and its former curing processes, including how to tell the difference between the famous Yarmouth bloater, kipper and red herring (it's all in the amount of additional salt and smoke).

On the first floor there are eight galleries that together tell the story of Great Yarmouth over time. Themes include The Early Years, Shipwreck and Rescue, Seaside Holidays, Port and Trade, Maritime Trades and the Century of Change. A temporary exhibition gallery features a programme of displays that draw further on the museums' permanent collections as well as hosting contemporary touring shows that complement and further aid the interpretation of the main display areas.

**Different techniques**

All the display areas contain a variety of display techniques in order to support people's different learning styles. The majority of focus group participants disliked traditional display cases. General history was not popular either. Groups unanimously asked for the 'real thing' to be displayed in an entertaining way, with emphasis on family enjoyment (and not too much hard work). To achieve this many of the displays include exciting audio-visual elements, including a variety of archive film, sound effects, animation and specially commissioned film.

One of the challenges for museums today is to create displays that express emotional, not just factual, content. The combination of first person monologue, on the audio wands, and artefacts, placed in context in the surroundings of the period,

## 'The consultation work challenged the way in which the staff and design team thought about the displays'

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Above: The museum has created a new landmark on the cultural map in Norfolk

help to reconstruct the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of a variety of people in the town's past. Through the recreation elements in the museum, particularly in the Rows display, the visitor is encouraged to visualise the way artefacts worked and were used in their original environment. Each artefact in the display scheme was subject to a criteria of selection that included the question, 'does it enhance the interpretation?' In this way the museum has departed significantly from a display of wealth in numbers to one of true meaning.

### Different layers

*Time and Tide* provides information layers through a variety of media. Traditional methods of interpretation are used with effect also. Our consultation showed that people wanted real history, more specifically real Great Yarmouth history. They did not want it 'dumbed down' and articulated a need for a clear distinction from the traditional seaside amusement to be found elsewhere in the town. Text panels were therefore written that contained scholarly summaries of key Yarmouth history topics. Interpretation in the museum is a symbiotic act, of dialogue and negotiation, between those values held by museums and those that are

brought by the visitors. Panels and labels were edited to ensure that the text was not obscure but they were not over simplified. Based in a seaside resort one of the challenges for *Time and Tide* is to respond to the visitors' seasonal profile and to enable visitors to obtain information at the level they prefer. Those who require it can find additional information from curatorial staff, specialised guides, and access to reserve collections or collection databases.

### Re-setting the course

Museums are rightly being challenged to demonstrate their social relevance. Consultation is at the very centre of the museums forward plan and at the heart of the social inclusion process that continues in many areas at Great Yarmouth. *Time and Tide* has opened up the museum's relationship with its community and made it relevant again. Some visitors are confessing their first experiences, and exposure, to the heritage merits of the town, despite having lived there for many years. Museum staff now have a greater understanding of the ways in which people locally understand their museum and what they expect from it.

*James Steward was formerly the Project Curator for Time and Tide Museum, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service. He is now Maritime Development Officer, working on the strategic development of the museum (NMA)*

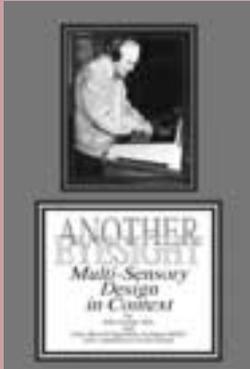
<sup>1</sup> *Time and Tide* was formerly known as the Tower Curing Works. This was the name under which it traded as a herring-curing factory between c. 1880 - 1988. The naming of the museum was itself subject to a public consultation exercise.

<sup>2</sup> In 1955 Swanstons, a local curing family, bought the site. The Chaplin family moved into the site to run the curing operation. There were fifteen in the family, including eight girls and five boys. All of the men worked on site, the last one leaving in 1988 when the site was sold.

<sup>3</sup> A Row is a long narrow lane or alley, with houses on each side. At one time there were 145 of these Rows in Great Yarmouth each named after some notable person living in it, or after some peculiar character it possessed. It is not known why this unique street pattern developed at Great Yarmouth.

<sup>4</sup> The Fishwharf, built in 1869, is where the fishing boats unloaded their catch of herring

<sup>5</sup> Using Focus Groups, *The Great Yarmouth Experience*, Dr S. Watson, 1999.



Cambridge University  
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## **Another Eyesight – Multi-sensory Design in Context**

Julia Ionides MA, Peter Howell DiplArch Architect  
RIBA and friends

At the age of just 11 weeks my son Archie has discovered the effectiveness of sound for attracting and maintaining his mum and dad's attention. My reading of this complex and insightful work was regularly punctuated by his use of this discovery! As he lay reaching for the toy animals hanging above him; I began to see the links between Archie's soft toys and the principles in this book. The tactility of these play things is far more rewarding than their appearance. The crackles, squeaks, jingles and whistles add another dimension that delights far beyond the visual.

This is the essence of *Another Eyesight*. It champions the need for a multi-sensory approach to interpretation to inspire and delight. It quotes

'If more than one sense is used in communication or design, then it will reach more people and perhaps everyone.'

The book covers some complex issues and theories and as such would be well placed within many educational reading lists. Its greatest strength however is that it provides insights that are of great benefit to the interpreter. These are backed up by case studies, references, examples of on-site media and the contact details of manufacturers.

*Another Eyesight* is the culmination of 20 years of experience at the cutting edge of multi-sensory communication. It is a must have, must read tool box of ideas to help us ensure our messages reach the widest audiences.

I know my son would approve!

*Nigel McDonald*  
Interpretation Manager,  
Shropshire County Council