

Interpret Europe web conference



Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation

1-4 October 2021

Conference proceedings

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Interpret Europe's Conference 2021, **Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation**, was due to be held in Sigüenza, Spain, but for the second year running, Interpret Europe took the decision to hold the annual conference online due to the coronavirus pandemic. It was held as a web conference on 1-4 October 2021.

The web conference included 27 presentations and workshops from participants, in addition to a selection of other activities. Four keynotes were each followed by a panel discussion, including one featuring the leaders of each of the main international interpretation organisations: the US National Association for Interpretation (NAI); Interpret Europe; and the UK's Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI). The programme also included a series of thematic round table discussions and a workshop delivered by a special guest. For the first time, a three-hour 'open doors' programme was presented by IE's Tourism Team, which was a free addition to the conference programme and allowed participants from the wider tourism field to explore the theme of recreating tourism in more detail through panel debates, thematic round tables and presentations from members of the Tourism Team and IE certified members and trainers. Attendees were invited to contribute to a programme of additional entertainment and informal ways of participating, including taking a slot in the speaker's corner.

Interpret Europe is grateful to the four keynote speakers and for the special guest workshop:

Ben Lynam, The Travel Foundation (UK)

Gianna Moscardo, James Cook University (Australia)

Iulia Nicuica, European Travel Commission (Belgium)

Albert Salman, Green Destinations (The Netherlands)

Kate Clark, Western Sydney University (Australia)

The following participants submitted full papers to be published:

Stuart Frost (UK)

Michael Hamish Glen (UK)

Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)

Esther Suissa (Israel) and Sabine Steindl (Germany)

The abstracts of the other presentations and workshops are included after the full papers.

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Contents

Welcome address

Helena Vičič, IE Managing Director	6
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Keynotes

What does 'authentic' and 'local' actually mean in the context of 'building back better'?	
Ben Lynam, The Travel Foundation (UK)	8
Think locally, Act globally: Interpretation stories for tourism sustainability	
Gianna Moscardo, James Cook University (Australia)	13
Towards the sustainable tourism sector of tomorrow	
Iulia Niculica, European Travel Commission (Belgium)	21
Do heritage destinations need better sustainability interpretation?	
Albert Salman, Green Destinations (The Netherlands)	24

Special guest workshop

What matters, and why and to whom? Putting what other people value at the heart of interpretation	
Kate Clark, Western Sydney University (Australia)	30

Full papers

Building back – Volunteer-led interpretation at the British Museum	
Stuart Frost (UK)	32
If you know ... you can tell – Empowering local people to share the story of their heritage	
Michael Hamish Glen (UK)	39
How can interpretive experiences make people more mindful?	
Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)	43
Recreating a pragmatic friendship: A joint live virtual tour of the houses of David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer in post-Covid times	
Esther Suissa (Israel) and Sabine Steidle (Germany)	66

Abstracts of other presentations

Bridging parks, UNESCO-areas and tourism through heritage interpretation	
Kristian Bjørnstad and Trym Holt Rudshaug (Norway)	80
Interpretation performed by certified tourist guides in Lisbon during the pandemic	
Luís Miguel Brito (Portugal)	80
Augmented reality and gamification elements for multiperspective, interpretive apps	
Anna Chatel (Germany)	81
Sharing the wonders of World Heritage Wadden Sea	
Renate de Backere (Netherlands)	81
Join the discussion: Heritage interpretation and sustainable tourism – match or clash?	
Laila De Bruyne, Barbara Struys and Helena ten Berge (Belgium)	82

The 'Martinki Custom' – Managing, learning, living, giving and receiving heritage Vasilka Dimitrovska (North Macedonia).....	82
Co-creating tourism experiences through interpretative storytelling Jacqui Doyle (Ireland)	83
Land, stories, people and place: The ups, the downs – and the preparations for a new climate future Murray Ferguson and Clare Cooper (UK).....	83
Contemporary interpretive architecture and landscape architecture in Europe Angus Forbes (Germany).....	84
Recreating post-pandemic tourism through the use of travel texts Margarita Ioannou and Katerina Gotsi (Cyprus).....	84
Art prints as an interpretation tool Vincent Jacot (Estonia)	85
Re:start! Product/ market/ consumption changes for a more sustainable and participatory heritage tourism Daniela Angelina Jelincic (Croatia).....	85
Recreating tourism on the Greek-Albanian borders through oral history and tradition Angeliki Kita (Greece) with Vassilis Nitsiakos, Ioannis Fudos, Christos Bellos, Thanos Kotsis, Spyridoula Kolovou, Persefoni Ntoulia, Dafni Patelou, Konstantinos Stefanou, Georgios Stergios and Georgia Tsamadia	86
Unravelling the mountain layer by layer: Heritage interpretation for a story that lasts Mateja Kuka (Croatia)	86
Disgust is in the mouth of the beholder: Using distasteful foods to interpret culture Lucy M. Long (USA)	87
Discovering heritage interpretation from the other end Simana Markovska (Bulgaria).....	87
Interpretive plans for Czech protected landscape areas Michal Medek with Ladislav Ptáček (Czech Republic)	88
From visitor to guide: How changing the roles can improve the impact of heritage interpretation Pedro Morais with Catarina Magalhães and André Coelho (Portugal).....	88
CLIP is linking heritage interpretation across continents Pedro Morais and Carla Silva (Portugal).....	89
The music of nature: Interpreting nature for the benefit of a Romanian geopark's small communities Adina Popa and Dan Horațiu Popa (Romania).....	89
'Interpretive Stories' project revives tourism in mountainous Greece Valya Stergioti (Greece)	90
Mouth- and eye-opening gastronomic heritage interpretation: Entrepreneurs become heritage ambassadors Jeroen Van Vaerenbergh (Belgium)	90
Bringing people and nature together: Inspiring action through wetland centre interpretation Anna Wilson (UK)	91

Welcome address

Helena Vičič, IE Managing Director

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

Welcome to our second Interpret Europe web conference. We should have met in the medieval castle in Sigüenza in the middle of Spain. However, after watching the global situation this spring, we decided not to take any unnecessary risks for you and the organisers.

We will obviously not contribute to the tourism economy in monetary terms. But, on the other hand, we haven't yet adapted our travelling habits and the tourism and travel industry is still to implement a response to the climate emergency. So discussing new tourism trends and innovative solutions for the future from the comfort of our sofas is maybe a good compromise.

Many agree that the crisis is an opportunity to re-think tourism success, especially in terms of benefits for local communities and the environment. The European Travel Commission's paper, 'Tourism and climate change mitigation', suggests that business as usual is no longer possible and that tourism can become part of the global solution, rather than part of the problem. Interpreters consider themselves to be stakeholders that could contribute to this end.

According to the European Commission, culture represents the main interest for 40% of tourists in Europe. If we add natural heritage to the equation, it is clear that heritage in all forms inspires the vast majority of travellers. We have gathered here to discuss how interpreters could help tourism professionals and what lever effects such a marriage between tourism and

interpretation could have for a more sustainable future.

During the conference, we will explore important concepts such as co-creation, fostering communities, sustainability, empowerment, common values and mindfulness. We believe that mindful people perceive themselves as an integral part of the world's society and they consider the whole planet as being their home. Mindful people take responsibility for their acts and are aware of the interconnectedness with others and with nature.

We believe that heritage interpretation can offer an approach to make people more mindful towards heritage and towards our common future by fostering values and encouraging critical reflections. This approach is an empowering and meaningful experience in their leisure time, a holistic experience of heritage, that can reach to the hearts and souls and spirits, not only to the brains. It is also a dialogue about values and lessons that we might have learned from the past for the future. It is co-creation with locals as well as with visitors in order to empower them to take ownership over processes and outcomes.

I'm curious to find out what skills and knowledge we will share. What should collaboration between tourism and heritage interpreters look like? What effective ideas and experiences can you all show? What successful stories could we build together?

I am very honoured to welcome several inspiring speakers and panellists from European and world organisations, each sharing their experiences and ideas.

This conference will host more than 100 attendees from 34 countries and five continents, 12 keynote and guest speakers, 28 presentations and workshops, and many other discussions, tables, evening activities, networking opportunities and spaces for your spontaneous interventions.

You are also welcome to join us for a special IE tourism initiative 'Open doors' session, where you can meet destination managers, our certified members and trainers, and tourism experts that have undertaken the interpretative approach and are now yielding results.

I'm very happy to welcome you all in the name of the entire conference team who has been working over the last several months: our Conference Manager, Max Dubravko Fijačko; Events team member, Ivana Jagić Boljat; our Technical Manager, Adi Kasumović; Marie Banks, our News Coordinator, who collected and edited your contributions for the conference proceedings; and many more who helped to make this conference happen.

Wishing all of us a rich and enjoyable four days!

Keynotes

What does ‘authentic’ and ‘local’ actually mean in the context of ‘building back better’?

Ben Lynam, The Travel Foundation (UK)

I hope to convince you that tourism needs a new business and operating model, a new mandate, a fundamental reset. And I also hope to inspire you. Because we need facilitators, interpreters like you: to empower, listen and learn from local people, to jointly develop sustainable tourism offers – authentic local experiences that create true value for communities.

First, let’s check out why there is no place for the old model of tourism...

It’s not just about overtourism – that was one symptom of the old model when put under stress. Regardless of whether or not a destination might be described as suffering from overtourism before Covid – and of course many outdoor places have experienced overtourism during Covid too – the same challenges can be found all over the world. Destinations and businesses alike, struggling with major vulnerabilities exacerbated by tourism:

- Seasonality
- Economic leakage
- Low margins
- Overcrowding, overconsumption, overdependence
- Fragile environments
- Exclusion and inequity
- Threats – e.g. from future pandemics and, of course, climate emergency

In 2019 we published a report with Cornell University and EplerWood International: ‘Destinations at risk – the invisible burden of tourism’. There is lots of information out there about the economic benefits of tourism – 1 in 10 jobs etc – but very little on the costs to a destination. We just don’t know if tourism truly pays – whether there is a net benefit. If we don’t know the costs, we are kind of saying that we want tourism no matter what the cost.

So, we highlighted an invisible burden of tourism. The unaccounted for impacts particularly on common pool resources which make up the essence of a destination – beaches, parks, built heritage, intangible heritage and culture. As well as public infrastructure and natural resources and biodiversity.

Here’s an example from Rhodes:

\$1.35 per tourist night

Each tourist night is costing Greek citizens \$1.35 or a total of \$23 million in 2013 to subsidize the expensive oil-dependent power generation system of Rhodes. In addition, the new oil-fired power plant has now locked-in the island to another 20 years of fossil-fuelled power generation. (Fotiadou, 2013)

But, all of us I’m sure will feel that tourism offers so much potential for making often vulnerable places and lives better. It can be a force for good to deliver against sustainable development goals and to improve quality of life. And perhaps now is the time for change.

The external drivers for change are:

- Climate (agreements include: IPCC report, public opinion, budget, European Green Deal, COP, GLASGOW DEC <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sustainable-tourism/glasgow-declaration>)
- Black Lives Matter (raising fundamental questions about equality in tourism, the relationship between outbound and inbound, visitor and host – which is at the centre of interpretation)
- Residents – Overtourism and now questioning the return of tourism
- Customers – single use plastic

Covid has already changed supply and demand – providing an opportunity to reshape the visitor economy as its 'hashtag' builds back better. This is, perhaps, not simply an empty platitude. Tourism moved higher up the agenda, with more public-private cooperation and new finances. But what does Build Back Better really mean? Better means different things to different people.

So, last year we joined forces with five other global tourism NGOs to seek to unite the industry around a set of 13 guiding principles that can guide tourism recovery efforts., with a goal of reframing how success is measured beyond traditional growth metrics, while putting destinations and communities at the centre of tourism's future. These 13 guiding principles are a framework for aligning the great sentiment behind 'build back better' into something tangible and actionable.

But this is not just a vision shared by five NGOs. More than 600 organisations – destinations and businesses, big names and small – have become signatories, and the principles have already served to inspire tourism plans and strategies.

I'd encourage you to find out more and join this growing movement at: www.futureoftourism.org, where you will find an

online community as a forum for exchange of ideas., inspiration and experiences amongst those who share a vision of 'building back better'. A genuinely unique, global community.

When seeking to rebuild tourism, we need a new model or else we will just fall back to the old and broken ways of doing tourism. We have to tackle five issues with the current model:

1. Limited mandate – given mostly by tourism businesses, to ensure growth and vitality of the visitor economy.
2. Limited KPIs – linked to growth and volume. If value (e.g. economic) then very limited.
3. Limited structures/influence – not engaging with the wider placemaking world.
4. Limited skillset – DMOs (destination management organisations) remain marketing and promotional organisations. Can only adapt a certain amount, e.g. now promote out of season, or for more responsible travellers.
5. Limited resources and funding – the funding sources and policies and levers aren't adequate.

So, now let's look at the enablers, the ways we can fundamentally reset how things are done. There are three reset buttons:

1. Resident and community priorities – giving a voice to those who aren't directly involved in the visitor economy, but who are impacted by it.
2. Inclusive and localised – looking at the make-up of the visitor economy and being intentional about being more equitable and local – unleashing local talent and creativity.
3. Low impact experiences – driven by the science and data in areas such as climate, heritage asset management.

Let's explore these reset buttons in a little more detail...

We are seeing a growing trend in destinations seeking resident engagement – but in fact this is often just an attitudinal survey aimed at minimising risk rather than changing approaches.

But the simple question, “Why do we want tourism?” can be transformational. What do we value from tourism? What is tourism for? – There has never been a better time to ask this question! With ‘we’ being first and foremost the local residents, community groups, businesses, tourism-related businesses, visitors, destination asset managers. It’s a good representation of diversity. Seek areas of consensus as well as identifying areas of conflict. We need to develop a shared agenda.

As interpreters of people and place, you can help ensure that an understanding of the authentic DNA/values of place remain at the core. Use a Net Promotion Score for residents – What are they proud of? What about the place makes a difference to their lives? It might be a cherished restaurant, a green space, the outlook of the people... Understanding the need to manage destination assets – both tangible and intangible – is key.

This means we need a much broader understanding of value – not just economic. And you will know that what communities value most will differ from place to place.

Of course, as well as the invisible burden, there are invisible benefits too: added value for the destination and residents. It’s important to get a hold of these impacts if tourism is going to be truly valued by the destination. For instance:

- Sense of pride – living somewhere that matters to the world
- Access to more amenities and events
- Enhanced infrastructure
- Protected assets, e.g. historical, natural

- Attract new businesses/talent

You need to understand what it is about tourism that is most ‘valued’, and what kind of visitor economy is most likely to bring this to your destination.

Resetting with resident priorities is much more than a resident survey.

Did you know...?

... that the city of Barcelona established a tourism council in 2016 as a representative body of community groups, industry, academia and city council members? The council is a forum for discussing and planning the future of tourism in the city. The council also puts forward recommendations to City Council on allocation of tax revenues.

... that Greenland is seeking to implement a law that requires all destinations to carry out annual surveys on resident sentiment towards tourism?

... that cities like Helsinki, Reykjavik and Bordeaux are working with participatory budgeting, where citizens decide how part of the city’s budget is spent?

... that Amsterdam aims to earmark part of tourism tax revenue to community funds? ... to empower local citizens and businesses to influence investment in neighbourhood development.

Even before Covid there was already some momentum behind the shift from Marketing to Management, from Volume to Value. For instance, in late 2019 and early 2020:

- Netherlands Perspective 2030: “More is not always better” and “From tourism as a goal, to a means”. Talks about attracting “quality tourists”.
- Edinburgh 2030 “From driving growth to managing growth”

And Covid has accelerated many of the drivers behind this.

But we can't expect destinations – and DMOs in particular – to go from being marketing to management organisations overnight, without changing the model, as highlighted already – the mandate, the skillset, the organisational structures.

So, we worked with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and European Tourism Futures Institute on a report, freely available on the WTTC website, to look at how aspects of governance might help or hinder in the pursuit of destination stewardship.

We have created a framework for analysing the governance of tourism and this can be applied at any level – national, regional, destination, district, attraction. And it can be applied broadly or to a specific issue and how that is managed. It is intended to be a facilitated approach with all relevant stakeholders included.

There is a big focus on public-private-community collaboration and I'd be interested to explore what you feel the role of interpretation is within this. We talk about engaging with communities and those responsible for managing assets. We need to identify those who can represent the voices that are currently not heard. Because actually words like 'local', 'community', 'authentic' can be tricky and are even open to abuse – local-washing as a form of green washing. Just because something is apparently local may not actually mean that real, solid benefits are being provided to local people.

At the Travel Foundation we do a lot of work aimed at localising tourism products and supply chains. For example, the Taste of Fethiye cucumbers are grown within a few miles of the hotels serving them in Turkey. But there is no consensus on what 'local' means. Locally-owned businesses? Locally produced? Locally distributed/purchased? Not imported? This is a

problem for organisations – such as the big hotel chains of Marriott and Hilton, who have targets relating to local sourcing.

So, we worked with small-scale farmers who were interested in diversifying their markets to benefit from tourism demand. It provided a spark for local talent and creativity – from chefs changing their menus to reflect more traditional or local cuisine, to new excursions to enable visitors to explore the journey from farm to fork.

This is, I think, interpretation demonstrating that localising means more than proximity. It needs interpretation of a vision, of the DNA of a place, and we need to understand local as also meaning equitable. Allowing communities to determine their own future, and supporting marginalised groups to be heard.

Low impact tourism means we must understand and prioritise future risks – from climate, from overconsumption etc. We also need to understand the impacts of visitor demand on destination assets – the invisible burden.

We should follow the science and data – and introduce new technologies and infrastructure to enable a circular economy and green transition, and to facilitate a more regenerative relationship between visitors and the sites they visit. Consider the costs being borne by national parks, ancient sites, public spaces, etc. with very little benefit to offset this.

Low impact tourism is likely to mean more intentional management of visitors – with an understanding of capacity and flow – and using smart technology to influence this.

Again, there is a role for interpreters here. Can you help to be the 'barometer' of a destination – to identify issues before they become problems? Can you be the facilitator that brings about collaborations – such as voluntary codes

of conduct? I'm very much looking forward to hearing your views on this!

Ben Lynam is Head of Strategic Communications at the Travel Foundation, a sustainable tourism charity based in the UK, which works with businesses and destinations across the globe to improve tourism's impacts. He has been at the Travel Foundation for nearly nine years and has been involved in projects such as developing the influential 'Destinations at Risk: The Invisible Burden of Tourism' report in 2019 and setting up the Future of Tourism Coalition in 2020.

Think locally, Act globally: Interpretation stories for tourism sustainability

**Gianna Moscardo, James Cook
University (Australia)**

A popular contemporary online game is the creation of a six-word story. The aim is to put together six words that encourage the reader to imagine and create a whole story. Examples such as "The universe is big, she's lonely"; "Painfully he changed is to was"; "I saw and I stayed quiet"; and "You and I almost made it" offer both a challenge and an opportunity for the reader.¹

The challenge is to imagine a whole story world and the opportunity is to take someone else's story and make it your own. I used this activity at the start of this keynote to both encourage the audience to be mindful and because this activity highlights several of the ideas that come together in this paper. The idea that stories are present in all aspects of human existence; that stories are important for tourists, especially their own personal stories; that humanity needs to begin telling different stories if we are going to be able to face the global challenges of sustainability; and that interpreters are critical in meeting this challenge.

The power of stories

The oldest known written copy of a fairytale, dating back more than 12 centuries, is the Chinese story of Yeh-Hsien (Philip, 1989). In this

story a cruel stepmother, jealous of her late husband's beautiful and talented daughter from a first marriage, treats the hardworking and virtuous young woman as a slave. The spirit of a golden fish who the girl befriends creates a beautiful green silk gown and golden slippers for our heroine, Yeh-Hsien, to wear to a local festival. She loses one slipper, and the King of a neighboring region vows to find and marry the woman that the slipper fits. After various trials and tribulations, eventually Yeh-Hsien and the King are married and she lives happily ever after. European, British, and North American readers will recognise the tale of Cinderella.

This is one of three fairy tales that appear both across time and culture (Philip, 1989). The other two being Beauty and the Beast – or the animal husband – and the Blacksmith and the Devil (Pagel, 2016). These fairy tales make explicit some of the basic human values² that support our social existence. The longevity and the widespread commonality in these and other fairy tales speaks to the importance of stories for humanity.

Gottschall (2013) has argued that stories may be the one thing that distinguishes humans from other species based on evidence from neuroscience, psychology, anthropology, and sociology, suggesting that stories are literally hardwired into our brains. Stories are a core way we communicate with each other, store memories and organise information, educate other people, create personal and social identities, build and support groups, and maintain and share cultures (Barnes, 2012; Gottschall, 2012; Standage, 2013). Stories allow

¹ See <http://www.sixwordstories.net/category/subject/sci-fi/> ; <https://www.wired.com/story/six-world-sci-fi-save-the-planet/> ; <https://www.buzzfeed.com/anjalipatel/six-word-stories-that-will-take-you-on-an-emotional-rolle> for sources and further examples.

² Values can be broadly defined as things that are important to us, but what these things are differs across the level of analysis we are interested in and who it is important to. Psychologists and sociologists recognise the existence of basic human values including things like wisdom, self-respect, social recognition, honesty obedience and courage (Manfredo, et al., 2017).

us to learn things without having to directly experience them and to imagine, plan for, and move towards different possible futures.

What is a story and what makes a good story?

Stories have always been an important element in both tourism and interpretation. Telling tourists the stories associated with the destination they visit has long been a major and valued role for guides and a central element in the interpretation of heritage sites and attractions. Seeking adventures and experiences that can be told to others as stories of adventure, hardship, wonder, love or discovery has also been central to both tourist motivation and action. The rise of digital, mobile social media has made this element of tourist actions even more prominent and explicit (Moscardo, 2020a; Pearce and Moscardo, 2021).

In response, many destination marketers and tourism organisations have begun to explicitly talk about the opportunities that their destination offers visitors to hear, experience, create and retell stories. While the importance of stories to tourism is not new, there is an ongoing major shift from tourists being told stories to tourists having story-based experiences and cocreating new and personal stories (Moscardo, 2020a).

So, what is a story? A review of definitions of story can be summarised by stating that a story is a description of an event or set of causally linked events, often challenging or unexpected, the emotional reactions and actual responses of characters to these events, their decisions and the consequences of these reactions and decisions (Moscardo, 2018). It is clear from this definition that a story is not just a description of an event. In some areas a description of an event is called a narrative and a story is a particular type of narrative, while in other areas a narrative is a larger theme that can run through and link

several stories (Moscardo, 2018). For this paper I will use 'theme' to refer to the larger message, lesson or idea that can link multiple stories.

The crime novels of Carl Hiaasen provide an example of stories connected by a theme. Each novel is set in Florida and, while a few characters appear in more than one novel, each novel is a standalone, complete story. They are all, however, focused on the theme of corruption and environmental and social damage associated with unregulated and excessive tourism development. Stories can also be linked together in story worlds where stories can also be embedded in other stories, like *Russian Dolls*.

The detective novels of Arthur Conan Doyle focused on Sherlock Holmes are at the centre of a complex and extensive story world. The novels themselves create a compelling story world across the different stories, but this has been extended by television series and movies often reinterpreting the stories into different places and times and introducing new characters connected to the central detective. Additionally, this story world includes stories told about events in the primary novels but from the perspective of other characters, stories that expand upon individual minor events as their central features, themed tours and attractions where visitors can reenact parts of the story and/or create new stories built around the characters and the events from the original stories, and so on.

Research in psychology, sociology and anthropology consistently concludes that stories are powerful tools of communication, education and persuasion (Dunn, 2017; Polletta, Chen, Gardner & Motes, 2011). A good story generates what is called narrative engagement and perceived realism. Table 1 provides definitions of these and related psychological terms.

Narrative engagement includes emotional engagement with the story, narrative transportation where the audience member becomes immersed in the world of the story, cognitive elaboration or mindfulness, and a shift in attentional focus from the setting to the story itself. This shift in attentional focus results in a reduction of counter-arguing thoughts because the audience member does not see the experience as a persuasive communication situation. It also encourages a desire to emulate the actions of likeable and aspirational characters in the story, and post story reflection and retelling which supports continued mindfulness about the story and sharing of the story's messages.

Four features of stories are critical to supporting narrative engagement and perceived realism – building stories around universal themes; creating plausible, likable characters; focusing

on emotions; and creating more engaging and participatory storytelling contexts. There is clear evidence that stories focused on the themes of death and survival under difficult circumstances, love, belonging, and family, heroism and altruism, and fighting against injustice are more likely to produce both mindfulness and narrative engagement (Moscardo, 2010 & 2017). Evidence also suggests that highlighting emotional aspects of the story, especially by specifically describing the emotions of characters at various points in the story and by using literary devices that create suspense, is also an important element of narrative engagement and mindfulness (Nabi & Green, 2015). Finally, there is growing evidence that engaging audience members in stories through reenactments, co-creation and immersion in story worlds across multiple media also encourages mindfulness and narrative transportation (Moscardo, 2020b).

Concept	Definition
Narrative engagement	When a story audience becomes involved with the story and engages in cognitive elaboration about the story (Hamby, Brinberg and Daniloski, 2017)
Mindfulness	Mindfulness is a state of active cognitive engagement characterised by focused awareness of the present situation that allows for development of new and appropriate responses to external events and conditions. Mindfulness is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for learning and attitude and behavior change (Moscardo, in press)
Narrative transportation	When a story audience becomes completely immersed in the story and is cognitively engaged with vivid thoughts and emotional reactions (Shrum and Lee, 2012)
Counter-arguing	Occurs where people believe that a communication is attempting to change their minds and so they begin to develop counter arguments against the perceived persuasive intent (Krause & Rucker, 2020). Stories rarely trigger this cognitive reaction

Table 1: Defining psychological terms in storytelling for education and persuasion

Professional stories – Interpretation, tourism and sustainability

All of us can easily identify stories in history, fiction, drama, film, song, poetry and games, from the simple make-believe games of children

to the more complex story-based games of the mobile, online, digital world. But stories exist in many places even if they are not always recognised explicitly as stories. For example, all of us have a life story made up of specific incidents that we believe define our personal

identity and all of us have a social identity linked to the collective groups (including cultures, neighbourhoods, sports teams, political affiliation groups, and professional communities) we are members of. These collective groups both share common stories that set out and affirm the group's values, rules and social norms; and create stories about what group members do, the challenges they face, and which identify the group members as the heroes and those in opposing or threatening groups as the villains. We can see examples of these types of professional stories in the discussions amongst tourism academics about the impacts of Covid-19 on global tourism patterns.

Within these professional discussions there are two contrasting stories which reflect a growing division within this particular professional group (Higgins-Desboilles, 2020). In one story, for those that align themselves more with tourism providers and businesses, Covid-19 is presented as the monster attacking the tourism industry and preventing the collective from moving forward. In this professional story, tourism academics must fight to defeat the monster as quickly as possible so tourism can return to its pre-Covid manifestations as quickly as possible

and continue its march towards growth and prosperity. The alternative story, for those that are more focused on tourism and sustainability and who typically align themselves more with destination communities, portrays Covid-19 as a prophet warning against continuing down the current path without question or concern. In this professional story, tourism academics must find an alternative path to the future.

In the same way that different groups have chosen to tell different stories about Covid and tourism, we can outline different professional stories about tourism and sustainability amongst interpreters and tourism providers. Table 2 contrasts the differences between these professional stories. While the two stories are not exactly in conflict, they are not very complementary either. Interpreters see the story of the interpreted place as their story and view tourists and tourism providers as resources to support the interpreted place, while tourism providers and their tourists, are seeking an opportunity to create their own personal story and view interpreters as resources for tourism. Of course some interpreters span both worlds in practice, but at a collective professional world the two groups remain mostly separate.

Story element	Interpreters	Tourism providers
Role of the professional	Narrator/keeper of the stories of the interpreted place	Producers of opportunities (sets, props, support cast, locations) for tourists to create their own story
Role of the tourist/tourism	Audience for the stories of the interpreted place Source of resources to protect the interpreted place	Main character in their own story Source of resources for the tourism providers
Goal of the story	Make the audience love the interpreted place as much as the interpreters do by sharing the 'official' story/story world of the interpreted place	To help tourists to have an experience that will make a great story to share with others
Main challenge	To get the resources necessary to keep sharing the interpreted	To find a good story in an unfamiliar place and make it their own

Story element	Interpreters	Tourism providers
	place whilst also keeping the interpreted place safe from harm, including harm from tourists	
Role of the alternative profession	Tourism providers bring tourists and support for interpretation	Interpreters provide opportunities for tourists to cocreate their own stories
Where is sustainability in the story?	Sustainability is a place we might want to get to but it's far away on the distant horizon	Sustainability is mostly invisible or is a grumbly old ghost trying to make them feel bad

Table 2: Key elements of professional stories of tourism and interpretation

A new story of interpretation and tourism

Despite having very different professional stories, both interpreters and tourism providers are coming under increasing pressure to focus their attention on sustainability, especially sustainability beyond the interpreted site and beyond travel itself. For tourism providers this is becoming a significant force with rising calls for degrowth, or at a least a slowing of growth, in tourism, especially long-haul international travel. A common claim made in the professional world of tourism to justify why tourists should continue to be allowed to travel without too many restrictions, is that tourism opens up the minds of these travelers, exposes

them to the wonders of the world, and thus encourages them to be more sustainable in their lives in general. If this were true for even a significant minority of tourists it might be worthy of praise. **I would argue though that if it is true for any tourists it is because of the power of interpretation. I would also argue that tourism without interpretation is never going to make much progress towards sustainability. Finally, I would argue that interpretation is the key to encouraging sustainability both in tourists and locals. To achieve that though interpreters need to change their professional story as shown in Table 3.**

Story element	Old story	New story
Role of the professional	Interpreters are the narrator/keeper of the stories of the interpreted place	Interpreters are wise warriors who help visitors to rewrite their personal life story and work together in the fight for sustainability
Role of the tourists/visitors	Audience for the stories of the interpreted place Source of resources to protect the interpreted place	Apprentice sustainability warriors learning new skills and creating personal stories that are positive ones of sustainability success
Goal of the story	Make the audience love the interpreted place as much as the interpreters do by sharing the 'official' story/story world of the interpreted place	To support experiences that encourage everyone to be more sustainable beyond the holiday Help the visitors to learn sustainability skills and guide them to create their own new stories of sustainability
Main challenge	To get the resources necessary to keep sharing the interpreted place whilst	How to find those new sustainability stories in the interpreted place and

Story element	Old story	New story
	also keeping the interpreted place safe from harm, including harm from tourists	make them personal for all the different visitors that will come – to build a story world about human values and universal story themes linked to the heritage values that are most relevant to the interpreted place and that can guide action beyond the place
Where is sustainability in the story?	Sustainability is a place we might want to get to but it's far away on the distant horizon	Sustainability is the shared goal for all

Table 3: Changing the professional story of tourism interpretation

Think locally, Act globally – Ideas for co-creating new stories for sustainability

Interpreters need to find ways to connect their interpreted places to core human values through place-based stories and story creation opportunities. Then interpreters need to use these new stories to present a sustainability message beyond the site. Interpretation must move from a focus on why this place matters to what this place teaches us that matters for the world as a whole. This means creating local stories that encourage global action.

While this is easy to state it is not so easy to do. One way to do this is to see interpreted places as story worlds with multiple stories, not just a single or limited set of stories, linked to one or more of the universal themes. These universal themes can then be used to link the stories of the interpreted place to sustainability. For example, the heritage town of Charters Towers located southwest of where I live in northeastern Australia, has long relied on its 19th century gold rush heritage to attract visitors. The town has multiple historic buildings and heritage sites that are interpreted in various ways to visitors but focused on a small set of stories of the 1800s gold rushes. As part of workshops run to develop a new tourism plan for the area, I ran a one-day workshop on story-based visitor

experience design and we began by getting the participants to think about the stories that they don't tell visitors to build a larger story world and to then search for universal themes that might link these stories. This exercise revealed the existence of many more stories, including stories of the continued mining that drives the local economy, the Indigenous history of the area and how Indigenous people were involved in the discovery of gold, and the stories of how the community works together to survive in a remote and very harsh environment.

When we went to the universal themes, two emerged very clearly that tied together many of the stories: survival under difficult circumstances, and love, belonging, and family. When we began to explore how we might connect these to wider social and environmental issues, a set of new stories began to emerge. Stories about how the town has always had an extraordinary mix of people from different parts of the world, different religions and cultures and has found and continues to find ways to be inclusive and celebratory of this diversity. These stories link the specifics of this place through the universal theme of belonging to broader issues of social justice and equity that form part of sustainability. Stories about survival under difficult circumstances became linked to environmental sustainability through the

ongoing need to manage water resources very carefully and to be independent of traditional carbon-based fuels for energy. In turn, this led to ideas of story-based tours/experiences linking visitors to locals demonstrating how it is possible to live comfortably in a very harsh environment with renewable energy and limited water. While these have yet to be developed into practice, the change in focus generated a new set of local stories linked to sustainability.

Before concluding this paper, it is important to include some words of caution. In 2015 an image was captured by photographer Eric Smith of a young man sitting on a yacht looking at his mobile phone while a whale breaches next to the yacht. After the original post (see: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CPQ38xAgV8t/>), it was widely shared through online news media and social media platforms where it was presented with captions suggesting that young people are so obsessed with their digital media that they are missing out on the wonders of the world. When I show this image to older groups, without any context, they typically respond with this trope about the evils of mobile digital devices assuming that mobile devices get in the way of real-world experiences. When I show this image to my students they respond very differently. Instead of assuming that the young man has not and will not see the whale, they assume he has seen it, photographed it, shared it and is now looking to identify it, to learn about it, to find out how to act so as to minimise harm to it, and to report the sighting to some local whale conservation group. These people assume that mobile devices enhance real world experiences.

The lesson for interpreters is that we should always be careful of our assumptions and work on recognising when we are judging before thinking. We also need to think carefully about whose personal/cultural values are most important in our stories and whose are being

excluded or devalued? We need to remember there are multiple pathways to sustainability and we need to keep them all open and accessible. Finally, there is evidence that the growth in public discussion of sustainability issues, often framed in fear, is contributing to a rise in what has been called eco-anxiety, eco-fatalism and eco-fatigue which can lead to avoidance and inaction (Moscardo & Pearce, 2019). To counter this, our sustainability stories need to be hopeful and about success.

Returning to my challenge to the audience to tell a six-word story that links their place to sustainability. I was not able to see all the responses but those that I did see were creative and inspiring. One stood out as particularly apt to conclude with: "Creativity and unity beat the drought".

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Towards the sustainable tourism sector of tomorrow

Iulia Niculica, European Travel Commission (Belgium)

The presentation started with the latest research on 'Monitoring Sentiment for Domestic and Intra-European Travel – Wave 8 (data collected in July 2021)' by the [European Travel Commission \(ETC\)](#) in the framework of a project co-funded by the European Union. This research provides timely insights on Europeans' travel intentions and preferences during the Covid-19 pandemic. Responses were collected from Europeans in ten high-volume source markets, in light of the Covid-19 crisis: Germany, United Kingdom, France, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Poland and Austria.

Among the main findings of Wave 8 were:

- **Europeans' intention to travel** slightly decreases, but remains high; 67.9% of Europeans state that they will travel in the next six months (up to the end of January 2022) compared to 70.3% in the May 2021 survey (-3%).
- **The top five markets that are most likely to travel in the next six months are: Poland, Spain, Germany, Italy and Austria.**
- The Covid-19 vaccine remains an essential prerequisite for traveller confidence and booking behaviour. Recent vaccination rollouts allowed more than half of Europeans to feel much more optimistic regarding trip planning within the next months. **Furthermore, one in two Europeans plan to book a trip as soon as they are vaccinated.**
- **56.8% of European travellers feel that the introduction of the EU Digital Covid certificate will facilitate planning their next trip and crossing borders,** while only 18% doubt that this certificate will ease and simplify their travel experience.
- **Italy (8.9%)** now becomes the first option for Europeans that plan to take an outbound trip, with **Spain (8.1%), France (8.0%), Greece (6.8%),** and **Croatia (6.4%)** completing the top five of preferred destinations.
- Europeans with short-term travel plans shared preferences for spending their next holiday out in the fresh air, whether on **sun & beach (23%), coast & sea (15%) or nature & outdoors trips (13%).**
- **Enjoying life in a relaxing environment (16.5%), escaping from routine (15.7%), and spending quality time with friends and family (13.8%)** are the top three things that Europeans have missed the most about travelling and cannot wait to experience again.
- **The preferences of 'early-birds' for family trips (39.4%) and travelling with their partner (35.6%) remain stable.** 11.2% of them are most likely to travel with their friends and 10.2% will be travelling solo.
- The preferred types of accommodation for more than half of the 'early-bird' travellers are either **hotel/resort chains or independent hotels/resorts (53.5%).**
- According to Wave 8, **34.3% of respondents who are most likely to travel in the next six months will take a 4-6 night trip.** At the same time, 27.6% will travel for 7-9 nights and a smaller 14.0% will opt for trips of 10-12 nights. Finally, 12.8% plan to travel for 12 nights or more.
- Vaccine rollout, flexible cancellation policies and fully lifted travel restrictions are the factors enhancing Europeans' travel confidence the most.
- However, some concerns still hamper travel planning despite higher travel intentions. **Europeans with short-term travel plans remain anxious about quarantine**

measures (18%), rising Covid-19 cases within the destination (16%) and changes in travel restrictions during their trip (15%).

- When it comes to European travellers' personal health, **air travel remains the most worrisome part of the journey (17.3%)**. In-destination transport is now at 14.6%, while visiting bars and restaurants (13.0%) follows.

The full presentation of the research results can be downloaded from the ETC website: <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/monitoring-sentiment-for-domestic-and-intra-european-travel-wave-8/>

The second part of the presentation introduced the **ETC Handbook on Encouraging Sustainable Tourism Practices**, which is a practical guide for European National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) on how to work with partners in the public and private sectors, to encourage businesses and visitors to make more sustainable choices. The handbook covers key sustainability trends in demand and supply, together with key takeaways and recommendations. The 20 case studies included in the handbook highlight the ways in which European and other worldwide destinations are embedding sustainable approaches into their travel and tourism sector, together with key takeaways for NTOs and DMOs.

After a long period in which sustainable or responsible tourism was largely perceived as a form of tourism, sustainability practices are steadily becoming widespread. Destinations are increasingly developing strategies and actions in order to protect the assets on which they depend to attract visitors and build a successful industry for the long-term.

Even before the pandemic, consumer concern about sustainability was growing, particularly in

relation to climate change. During 2020, the pandemic, climate change and social movements made consumers more aware of global issues and their personal responsibility about addressing them.

The **key trends that demonstrate consumers' increasing interest to embrace sustainable tourism practices** are:

- Seeking authenticity
- Enjoying nature and the outdoors
- Embracing 'slow travel'
- Travelling closer to home
- Awareness of climate change
- Long-distance walking and cycling
- Replacing air travel with rail travel
- Expecting responsible business behaviour
- Supporting SMEs and 'local heroes'
- Moving to plant-based diets
- Off-setting the impact of travel
- Reducing waste whenever possible

The **key trends that demonstrate increasing interest among public and private sector organisations in embracing sustainable tourism practices** are:

- Developing a shared vision for destinations
- Building sustainability into tourism planning
- Integrating tourism into a broad-based economy
- Putting communities at the heart of decision making
- Applying regenerative tourism practices
- Creating sustainable financing mechanisms for tourism
- Setting new measures for success (e.g. value and wellbeing over volume)
- Identifying and addressing climate risks
- Protecting and conserving natural and cultural sites with tourism income
- Forecasting visitor demand to manage growth
- Helping travellers to make responsible choices

- Building responsible and inclusive supply chains

The full handbook can be downloaded on the ETC website:

<https://etc-corporate.org/news/everyone-has-a-role-to-play-in-sustainable-tourism-etc-publishes-handbook-on-encouraging-sustainable-tourism-practices/>

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Do heritage destinations need better sustainability interpretation?

**Albert Salman, Green Destinations
(The Netherlands)**

Introduction

There is little doubt that heritage destinations in general would like to be sustainable, especially since surveys indicate that an overwhelming majority of travellers expect the tourism and travel offer to be sustainable. In this presentation the question of whether heritage destinations would benefit from the work of Green Destinations was addressed. To this end, the idea of 'destination sustainability interpretation' was introduced as a new theoretical concept in which tourism destination management is enriched by tools and approaches from heritage interpretation. The presentation gave an indication of the kind of opportunities that can be based upon the tools Green Destinations has developed for better communication of tourism sustainability. There is a need to communicate better about tourism sustainability since there is no common definition of it and many travellers have different ideas when talking about sustainability.

Overcoming overtourism and the pandemic

Since the 1950s, we have seen tourism develop in different stages. In the first decades until the 1980s, we saw mass tourism emerge, especially in Europe. Then in the 1990s we saw mass tourism continuing to grow, not only in Europe but also along coastal sandy beaches, iconic cities and world heritage sites in other continents. In parallel, we also saw an increasing interest in ecotourism, wildlife tourism, conservation tourism and slow tourism. Since 2010, however, we have seen overtourism

encroaching upon iconic places and cities, mostly in North America, Europe and Asia, driven by globalisation trends like cheap flights and social media. Ever-increasing numbers of social media addicts were driven by Facebook and Instagram to go to 'hot' and iconic places, mainly to make selfies of themselves with unique heritage as a background. The nuisance that groups of tourists caused to local communities has in some of these places led to tourismophobia and to concerns about undertourism in many other destinations that were less iconic or not connected to cheap flights.

With the Covid-19 pandemic this trend came to a sudden end. Local communities in overtourism places like Venice, Barcelona and Amsterdam, took the opportunity to talk with their local councils and decide upon a different future for tourism. In the global North there was major interest in staycations and domestic holidays, which saved many leisure and tourism businesses. The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) encouraged the tourism sector to better understand the opportunities of domestic tourism. While overtourism disappeared from tourism city centres, it became a huge problem in many of the national parks in Europe and the United States. In the global South the situation was different, with fewer opportunities for domestic tourism. In view of the near-total tourism collapse, and considering the possibility that Covid could never really disappear, many have been talking about the end of tourism as we know it.

It is not only the Covid-19 crisis presenting a threat to the future of tourism. The climate crisis will also have its implications to travel, and thus to tourism, urging us to fly less and travel less far. The climate crisis is closely connected to the air pollution crisis and the biodiversity crisis, and also to global deforestation. All this makes many destinations less attractive. The plastic pollution

crisis, global inequality, and controversies on diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) are also relevant to tourism.

With the creation of the Future of Tourism Coalition, the six founding NGOs (Travel Foundation, CREST, the Destination Stewardship Center, Green Destinations, Sustainable Travel International, and Tourism Cares) aim to inspire a recovery of tourism based upon a fundamental reconsideration of our approaches. More than 600 businesses, organisations, tourism boards and destinations have already signed the coalition's guiding principles.

We hope that destination development into the future will re-direct tourism growth, from overtourism and no tourism to a more sustainable tourism and regeneration. While rethinking tourism for the future, priorities for tourism destinations are a better consideration of the evolution of demand, health and safety, digitalisation, resilience and recovery, and not least, sustainability. We need to enhance destination management, strengthen the sense of place, prioritise community over visitors, and uphold quality over quantity.

Do heritage destinations need better sustainability interpretation? In the title of my presentation, I have assumed that interpretation is important for heritage as well as for destination sustainability. Both heritage and sustainability are concepts that may not have the same meaning to everyone. In the context of this conference an interesting question is: are heritage destinations sustainable destinations? I actually think many are not. However, considering the sensitivity of heritage to tourism, the question is: what is the benefit for heritage destinations of adopting sustainability principles and practices?

The Green Destinations Standard

The most important sustainability principles and practices for destination management have been brought together in the 75 criteria of the Green Destinations Standard, which consists of six different themes: Destination management, Nature & Scenery, Environment & Climate, Culture & Tradition, Social well-being, and Business & Marketing. Our standard is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which means that all elements of GSTC's destination criteria are incorporated in the GD Standard.

It could be useful to give some examples of criteria of the GD Standard to illustrate its relevance to heritage destinations.

For a proper destination management, it is crucial that:

- the destination has a system for visitor management
- action is taken to manage the volume and activities of visitors
- tourism impacts to natural and socio-cultural assets are optimised
- guidelines are adopted for appropriate visitor behaviour at events and sensitive sites
- indicators are used to monitor the impacts from tourism.

For the theme Nature & Scenery, the Standard requires that:

- the destination has a system to conserve ecosystems, habitats and species
- natural and rural scenic views are protected
- landscape degradation and urban sprawl into scenic landscapes is effectively avoided.

In the field of Environment & Climate:

- the destination must have targets to reduce emissions from travel

- there is a low-impact mobility strategy to minimise air pollution and congestion
- risks and opportunities of climate change are identified
- there is a climate change adaptation strategy.

Finally, some requirements in the field of Culture & Tradition:

- the destination must evaluate, rehabilitate, and conserve cultural assets
- tourism is carefully managed to avoid negative impacts to cultural sites, built heritage, culturally important landscapes, and land use
- sale, trade, display or gifting of historical and archaeological artefacts is adequately regulated and enforced
- intangible cultural heritage is adequately protected and celebrated
- tourism is sensitive and respectful of the living culture and traditions and not interfering with its practice.

The certification process

When destinations participate in the Green Destinations Award & Certification Programme, these are the basic steps that are part of the process:

1. Green Destinations makes the award and certification criteria available, with a guidance for all criteria, all on an online platform. The guidance not only specifies the reporting requirements, but also clarifies the background and importance of the criteria, specifies what systems or programmes the destinations should have in place for full conformity (compliance), and what more can be done to further improve.
2. The destination manager or the destination management and marketing organisation (DMMO) provides evidence of compliance to all relevant criteria, on the platform, with summary texts and documents.
3. Green Destinations hires an independent (third-party) expert to audit the destination's compliance to the relevant criteria. They can approve, disapprove, or confirm partial conformity.
4. Based on the audit report, the Green Destinations Certification Committee takes the certification decision and issues a list of necessary and or recommended actions to be taken to ensure a better conformity to the Standard. The decision will specify:
 - Certification in case of (nearly) full compliance
 - The Award level in the programme the destination is participating in connection to the certification, either the Green Destinations or the QualityCoast Awards: Bronze (min. 60% overall compliance), Silver (min. 70% compliance), Gold (min. 60% compliance), or Platinum (min. 60% compliance).

Every year at the Global Green Destinations Days (GGDD), there is a global award and certification ceremony where the award certificates are presented. In addition, there are national or local award events.

Green Destinations is the only destination certifier focusing on making sustainability certification transparent and understandable for all stakeholders, with stories on good practices, scorecards and dashboards showing the sustainability efforts that were among the reasons for certification. This is extremely important against the overwhelming trend of greenwashing. Several commercial tourism certifiers sell certification without an appropriate audit, which heavily undermines the credibility of tourism certification.

So what we do is not only explaining why a business or destination is certified or awarded,

we in fact focus more on the good practice cases, scorecards and the dashboards than on the certification or label itself. Some examples can be seen in:

- Green Destinations' annual Top 100 competition, in which selection is based upon the most effective and innovative good practices enhancing destination sustainability
- the scorecards that are created by the Good Travel Guide to show the results of destination and of business certification
- the comparison of certified destinations for travellers, e.g. in the Good Travel Guide pages of the Netherlands
- the comparison of certified businesses for travellers, e.g. in the Good Travel Guide page Bonaire.

This is a completely new approach and I very much hope this will create a big change in tourism certification.

However, the interest in greenwashing appears to be very strong. In view of the emerging interest of travellers in a sustainable travel offer, many destinations are interested to claim they are green or sustainable. Some destinations do so on the basis of simply one example or story. Others refer to global sustainability indexes. The only widely agreed definition of what is a sustainable destination is the GSTC Destination Standard, and the Green Destinations Standard makes that operational in practice, through its recognition and accreditation by GSTC. Unfortunately, every company can create a sustainability definition or index with indicators and create a benchmarking programme.

But consider what happens in practice with indicators and indexes in an example of wastewater treatment. In Finland we would see that a particular destination has 83% treatment, the same as the country average. In Slovenia, a particular destination has 67%, which is more

than the country average of 56%. In a global index, the Finnish destination would be the winner. This is already an issue within Europe for two highly developed countries. In most global rating programmes for destinations the winners are those in the north because their country standards are higher and unbeatable for destinations in the global south. But is that really fair? Differences in standards and performance between countries can be huge. This is what we illustrate in the Global Maps in the Good Travel Guide website. Even in one and the same country, comparing destinations can be flawed. Can we really expect a small remote island to have the same performance as a capital city?

Measuring Destination Sustainability

Measuring the sustainability level of destinations can be done with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), with indexes (a mix of indicators) and with certification with policy principles. We have experience with all three approaches, and we compared the pros and cons of each of them.

As part of the GSTR-programme, Green Destinations has been using indicators and indexes for global ranking, but this appeared only beneficial for destinations in countries with very high social and environmental standards, like Scandinavian countries. Then your destination is more likely to top the list. This is why Green Destinations stopped using indexes for global ranking. Indexes should only be used to compare countries or to monitor progress over time, in one region or destination.

Destination certification is the preferred option in case of a holistic approach; The Green Destinations Standard enjoys sector-wide recognition, is not influenced by country standards, does not require frequent reporting, and is objective due to a rigorous independent (third-party) audit by an expert in destination

sustainability. In view of the latter, it is strongly recommended to avoid generic certification or audit companies. These companies often employ their own auditors who are less independent and also cannot be an expert in a whole range of products as well as in tourism destinations.

Key performance indicators have several advantages compared to the two other options: they are very transparent, and usually easy to understand, not expensive and not time consuming. Therefore, we now recommend destinations to combine a Green Destinations criteria-based assessment (like certification) with an indicators-based monitoring.

Support Tools for Assessment and Reset of Tourism (START)

Based upon the above experience, Green Destinations has recently developed a comprehensive toolkit with the name Support Tools for Assessment and Reset of Tourism (START). This is the best way to kickstart your own sustainability roadmap. The toolkit includes free as well as affordable tools using indicators connected to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Guiding Principles of the Coalition and the Green Destinations Standard. The toolkit currently includes more than 30 non-complex and efficient tools and will be further extended depending on demand.

Five thematic toolkits are offered:

- Green Destinations Interactive Assessments, based upon the Green Destinations Standard
- Benchmarking & Reporting, including monitoring tools, a destination-level benchmarking reporting and sustainability dashboards
- Climate Reset, with five tools: Climate Footprint Assessment (carbon calculators); Climate Mitigation Planning; Climate Risk

Assessment (e.g. projecting risks of flooding, heat stress and precipitation in the future); Climate Adaptation Planning; and START Greening Your City (enhancing green infrastructure and green buildings)

- Destination Sustainability Assessments, e.g. with tools making use of spatial data
- Exchange, Education & Learning, a toolkit with training courses and workshops.

Because of the sheer number of tools, we have created a discovery tool, which serves as a pathfinder to all START tools, which also helps identify the main strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of destinations. Because it is structured according to the Sustainable Development Goals, it is called the SDGs & Tourism Assessment & Reset Tool (or START Survey). It can be done as a survey in which destination managers are invited to self-assess the destination on around 60 SDG-subgoals and to indicate the subgoals on which the destination would like to learn more. Green Destinations will provide destination managers with a free feedback report on the destination's tourism sustainability performance for the SDGs and a list of suggested tools.

Because the START survey is a free and universal tool, suitable for every destination, destination managers are encouraged to use this tool first, rather than engaging in expensive and time-consuming options such as global assessment programmes. The feedback to the destination manager can help make a better-informed decision on how to move forward.

Albert Salman is a sustainable tourism expert from the Netherlands, with an academic background in coastal ecology and environment. After a career in European coastal and marine conservation and management, during which Albert established the QualityCoast Awards program (2007), he

founded Green Destinations (2014), a non-profit organisation supporting destination managers in 60 countries. In 2014 he also initiated the Sustainable Destinations Top 100 competition and the Top 100 Sustainability Stories Awards at ITB Berlin, the world's leading travel trade show. In 2020 Albert initiated a business sustainability programme including a unique transparent certification (Good Travel Seal) and the Good Travel Guide, the first travel website featuring only independently-checked sustainable travel offers. In 2020 he also co-founded the Future of Tourism Coalition with five other international NGOs for tourism sustainability.

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More information

Green Destinations: <https://greendestinations.org/>

START Program:

<https://greendestinations.org/programs-and-services/start-program/>

START Survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DVZVKKZ>

Good Travel Guide: <https://goodtravel.guide/>

Good Travel Seal: <https://goodtravel.guide/good-travel-seal/>

Special guest workshop

What matters, and why and to whom? Putting what other people value at the heart of interpretation

Kate Clark, Western Sydney University (Australia)

Heritage is all around us. It is the things that we want to keep and hand on to the future – it might be our mother's recipes or an inspiring building, a local park or the language we spoke as children.

As heritage interpreters you help bring heritage to life. You know better than anyone that heritage is much more than a history lesson. You know that encounters with heritage tell us about ourselves, they connect us with other people, and they help us remember – when sometimes it would be so much easier to forget. Heritage is not always, nice, or easy, or beautiful – but it is always important.

I've been working with people who care for heritage for over 40 years, and in that time, they have taught me that the one thing that underpins everything we do is value – what matters, and why and to whom.

There are many, many different ways that people value heritage. But for me those multiple values fall into three different groups.

The first group are the meanings that we place on the natural, built and cultural environment around us – including objects, places, landscapes and even intangible heritage such as language. These can be 'official' values that you

find in heritage legislation – but they also include the experiences that we have when we encounter that heritage, and the way that it affects us.

The second group includes the wider social economic and environmental benefits that flow from caring for heritage. These include the wellbeing benefits that flow from engaging with heritage, which can be connecting with others, new skills and mental health benefits. There are the environmental benefits of caring for existing sites and buildings, such as reducing waste and decarbonisation. There are also the economic benefits that flow from caring for heritage, such as the jobs in repairing existing buildings or the wider visitor economy.

And finally, the third and perhaps most important group are our own values that we as practitioners bring to our practice. Are we trusted or accountable? Are we respecting all of the different stories of a heritage place? Have we dug deep into our own personal biases to find the stories we are missing? Are we providing the best possible 'service' to our visitors and others?

Understanding these three different kinds of values is, for me, the starting point of all heritage practice. If we do that well, we can do our jobs well. But if we fail to understand the different ways people value heritage, we will fail as heritage practitioners.

And the most important thing is that this is not about our values – it is about other people's values. This can be difficult for many of us – it requires new skills and ways of working.

To help heritage practitioners understand the different ways people value heritage, I have just

published a book of around 80 games and activities that help you to understand other people's values, called *Playing with the past – exploring values in heritage practice*. The book includes some ideas about interpretation, but I am sure as creative interpreters you will be able to develop your own much better ones!

In this workshop I talked about how important it is for heritage practitioners to explore and understand what matters to people. Using available technology, attendees had a taste of two of the activities that I use to explore other people's values. Finally, we explored the three different groups of values that heritage practitioners need to understand, and work with, in order to put people at the front and centre of what we do.

Kate Clark is an industrial archaeologist, who has had a career in museums and heritage in the UK and in Australia. She worked with Ironbridge Gorge Museums, with English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, before returning to Australia as Director of Sydney Living Museums. She was CEO of Cadw, the organisation who cares for heritage in Wales as part of Welsh Government. She 'retired' last year, and is currently beginning a PhD in heritage practice with the University of Canberra. Kate has published widely on topics such as industrial archaeology, heritage management, sustainable development and different approaches to understanding the value of heritage, including ideas around public value. Her latest book, [*Playing with the past – exploring values in heritage practice*](#), contains around 80 games and activities to help heritage practitioners understand other people's values as part of their work.

Full papers

Building back – Volunteer-led interpretation at the British Museum

Stuart Frost (UK)

Stuart Frost is Head of Interpretation and Volunteers at the British Museum, London. He co-curated *Desire, Love, Identity: exploring LGBTQ histories*, an exhibition at the British Museum during 2017 that subsequently toured to five UK venues (2018-19). Prior to commencing his current role in November 2009, he spent almost eight years at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

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Abstract

The pandemic has had a profound impact on heritage sites across Europe. Volunteers have an important role to play in helping heritage sites recover, and to adapt to a post-pandemic world in innovative ways. This paper focuses on recent initiatives at the British Museum to develop volunteering to attract and engage more people from different backgrounds in sustainable ways, and to offer a more varied programme that better caters for the needs of a wider range of audiences. These approaches have all involved new ways of working, internally for staff and volunteers, and externally with community partners. This paper will focus on three examples of new volunteer-led programmes: i) touch tours for visually impaired visitors; ii) LGBTQ tours of the collection; and iii) 'Walk and talk' tours developed for small groups from Mind in Camden, London – a local organisation that supports people coping with mental distress.

Keywords

museums, interpretation, volunteers, inclusion, access, accessibility

Aims of the presentation

The presentation on which this paper is based provided a practical case study of the ways a mainstream museum has developed new volunteer-led programmes to improve accessibility, to highlight previously underrepresented histories and to better support under-served local people in the community. It also aimed to provide useful, practical insights that might be applied by attendees at their own organisation, and to highlight the important role that volunteers can play in helping the heritage sector recover from the pandemic.

Introduction

On 18 March 2020 the British Museum closed to the public, most staff began to work from home and all volunteering was suspended. The museum was able to reopen on 27 August 2020 with a limited offer and a one-way route. However, on 16 December the museum was compelled to close again, only reopening on 17 May 2021. On 19 July the UK government lifted restrictions and gradually more visitors have begun to return to the museum, and more of the public programme has been able to resume. But, needless to say, it has been a very difficult 18 months or so, and we're a quite a long way from the visitor figures and income levels we had before the pandemic.

The British Museum currently has over 500 volunteers; people who freely give their time to support almost every department. Over half of

that number are involved in public engagement. The volunteers meet and actively engage arguably more visitors than anyone else in the museum, helping visitors from around the world make sense of its collection. They have a vital role to play in changing the public face of the museum and are a crucial part of our interpretation strategy. The contribution our volunteers made before Covid-19 was hugely significant. As we – hopefully – emerge from the pandemic, the volunteers have an important role in helping the museum recover, deliver meaningful and relevant interpretation and to build back from one of the most difficult and challenging periods it has faced.

Building back volunteer-led interpretation

Volunteering on-site recommenced during July 2021. We prioritised initially the resumption of income generating volunteer programmes for several pragmatic reasons. Our volunteer-led Out-of-hours and Highlights tours are ticketed which means it is easier for us to control the numbers of visitors who attend, and therefore to safely manage the experience.¹ Additionally, the income generated through these programmes supports staff posts in the Volunteer office that allows us to run a larger number of free talks and activities enjoyed by a wide range of audiences, including those who have often been marginalised in the past. Generating income through volunteer-led tours is part of our strategy in building back from the pandemic. However, it is also a priority for us to ensure the public programme delivered by volunteers is diverse, cosmopolitan and inclusive – the majority of our tours and activities are free. This paper focuses on three new volunteer-led programmes which have been developed to help us make the British Museum more

accessible, equitable and welcoming for a range of communities and individuals.

Touch tours

The British Museum, like most museums and heritage sites, has historically privileged sight over other senses. However, we are striving to make the building and collection more accessible for blind and visually impaired audiences, and making a visit more 'hands-on' is central to the museum's current approach. During 2016 a new touch tour was launched for blind and visually impaired audiences focussed on ancient Egyptian sculpture in one of the museum's most spectacular and popular displays.

This touch tour focusses on nine large, sometimes monumental, ancient Egyptian statues in Room 4. The Egyptian sculpture in these displays dates from about 2686 BC–AD 396. These artefacts are visited in chronological order and are made from types of stone that can withstand repeated touching, in controlled and carefully managed circumstances. The touch tour is available in different formats to support people making a self-guided visit, including:²

- A large print guide
- A book with tactile drawings of the nine objects with Braille descriptions and information (developed with RNIB)
- Audio-descriptive content that visitors download or stream on their own mobile device

Additionally, some of the museum's most experienced volunteers were involved in developing a booked-in-advance guided touch tour for visitors. Developing this programme involved intensive training with input from the

¹ For more information about Out-of-hours tours visit: www.britishmuseum.org/visit/out-hours-tours and for more information about Highlights (Around the world in 60-minute tours) visit: www.britishmuseum.org/visit/tours-and-talks

² These resources are available online here: www.britishmuseum.org/visit/accessibility-museum

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), one of the UK's leading sight loss charities.³

These tours have proved to be a particularly popular option for visually impaired visitors. The volunteer meets the tour attendees at the information desk, and then facilitates the whole visit. These touch tours offer a more conversational and social experience than the other available options, one that last around 90 minutes.



Figure 1. A volunteer-led touch tour in progress in the Egyptian sculpture gallery at the British Museum (Image: Trustees of the British Museum)

The Egyptian sculpture touch tour won a Discover Heritage Award in 2017⁴ from the UK's Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI). This encouraged us to expand the touch tour approach to another of the museum's most popular displays, the Parthenon sculptures (Room 18, 18a, 18b). Unlike the Egyptian sculpture tour, visitors on the Parthenon touch tour cannot handle the real sculptures on display for conservation reasons – marble is more easily damaged by touching. Instead, the tour makes use of a series of modern casts derived from historic moulds displayed in Room 18b.

The final part of the tour ends in the main Parthenon displays, but audio-description is

used there, rather than touch. As with the Egyptian sculpture tour, information is available in large print, a book with tactile drawings and Braille, and as an audio-descriptive tour. Again, we have developed a booked-in-advance volunteer-led touch tour for people who prefer a more social or supported visit.

Wow! I cannot tell you what an incredible experience I had with your team yesterday...outstanding! The touch tour exceeded any expectation I had. Because the guides took time to describe each item in great detail, I still felt like I could "see" each statue. The story that accompanied each item...put them into context.

Egyptian Sculpture Touch Tour attendee

These resources and tours were developed in partnership with consultants from RNIB and VocalEyes, a charity that provides blind and visually impaired people with opportunities to experience and enjoy arts and heritage.⁵ The touch tours have attracted overwhelmingly high praise from visitors, and the volunteers find them extremely enjoyable and rewarding to deliver. This approach is one that the museum is continuing to develop with a view to applying it elsewhere in the building. Following the lifting of government restrictions in July 2021 we are now planning for the resumption of on-site touch tours in the near future.

Desire, love, identity: Volunteer-led LGBTQ tours of the British Museum

The British Museum started running volunteer-led LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) tours of the permanent gallery displays during the summer of 2019. These tours, along with a self-guided audio tour, were developed to create a lasting legacy for *Desire, love, identity: exploring LGBTQ histories* (May–October 2017), the first exhibition at the British

³ <https://www.rnib.org.uk/>

⁴ <https://ahi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AHI-BPG-Diversity-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ For more information, visit: <https://vocaleyeyes.co.uk/>

Museum to focus on same-sex love and desire and gender diversity (Frost 2018a, 2018b).⁶

The exhibition, audio-trail and volunteer-led tours were inspired by Professor Richard Parkinson's award-winning book, *A Little Gay History – Desire and Diversity Across the World*. Richard's book highlights 40 objects in the museum's collection from around the globe, from 11,000 years ago to the present day (Parkinson 2013). All of the 'Desire, love, identity' LGBTQ programming demonstrates that same-sex love and desire – and gender diversity – have always been an integral part of human experience, whilst acknowledging that the way they have been expressed culturally has varied widely over time.

The volunteer-led LGBTQ tours have been shaped by a collaborative, community-driven approach (Frost 2020). We want the LGBTQ tours to become an ongoing, self-sustaining programme that is driven by the volunteers themselves, with input and support from staff and LGBTQ community members and groups.

The volunteers' first tours for the public took place during July 2019 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, events in Greenwich Village, New York, which inspired ongoing global campaigns for LGBTQ rights (Vo 2019). We implemented a free booking system for the LGBTQ tours to ensure that the volunteer wasn't faced with an unmanageable number of attendees. The initial tour dates were all fully booked almost immediately.

Although the tours have strong appeal for those who identify as LGBTQ they are intended for everyone who visits the museum. The objects that are highlighted include some of the most significant in the collection – both the objects and the LGBTQ themes they encapsulate are relevant to all of us. A volunteer-led tour allows

for more depth, discussion and dialogue than can be encompassed in a standard object label.

The volunteers are encouraged to identify and research other LGBTQ objects currently on display, adding them to the tour. During the pandemic some of the team have been involved with an online collaborative project with community partners to identify and research Asian objects in the museum with LGBTQ connections. Working with LGBTQ history for the tours has helped us open up very fruitful ways of thinking that can be equally applied to other programmes and to the interpretation of other subjects. Developing volunteer-led LGBTQ themed tours is encouraging us to evolve the way we work, driving further change in the creation and management of volunteer-led tours.

Our first LGBTQ tours since the pandemic began took place on Friday 10 September 2021 and the tours are part of our permanent regular offer once again.



Figure 2. A volunteer-led LGBTQ tour in progress at the British Museum. The group are discussing Ishtar, a Mesopotamian deity who had the power to assign gender (Image: Trustees of the British Museum)

⁶ For more information about the audio and tour trail visit: www.britishmuseum.org/visit/object-trails/desire-love-identity-lgbtq-histories

Walk and talk tours: Supporting people with mental distress

Our volunteers have played an important role in developing 20-minute relaxed and informal 'Walk and Talk' tours for small groups of participants from a local organisation called Mind which supports people living with mental distress. Attendees include people experiencing extremes of mood, anxiety, unusual beliefs and post-traumatic reactions. Created in partnership with Mind in Camden, London, and the British Museum's Volunteer, Interpretation and Community Partnerships teams, the informal tours are designed to support small numbers of people who might lack confidence in – or experience barriers to – visiting. The Walk and Talk tours – like the LGBTQ tours – represent a step-change for our volunteer-led tour programme.

Recognising that the museum can often be a busy, intimidating, place for newcomers due to its scale, vast collection and crowds, the tours provide a low-key, relaxed, conversational introduction to the museum. Volunteers meet attendees at the information desk and provide a short friendly welcome, before walking to the gallery where the tour will take place. Each tour takes place in a quieter, more accessible gallery. The tours have an open, informal and conversational approach, exploring themes often relating to well-being and daily life. Recent tours have focused on diverse subjects such as the five senses, music, masks (relating to people's experience of wearing face coverings during the pandemic), and cats.

Each tour is followed by a staff-led session in a quiet room where participants talk about the experience, or take part in a creative activity or object handling. The volunteers also participate in this part of the session.

Most Walk and Talk attendees live locally but have not been to the museum before. Staff from Mind in Camden support participants with their journey to the museum. Once there, the

volunteers talk to the group about one or two objects. The tour is a relaxed conversation rather than a formal one-way presentation or lecture. For example, the volunteers might ask attendees questions such as whether they have seen anything similar before or what they think an object might have been used for. This frequently generates discussion between participants. The programme aims to build participants' confidence so that after a tour they feel a little more comfortable about visiting the museum independently. This has been successful to date, with some attendees returning autonomously afterwards.

During lockdown the tours took place online using Zoom. Tours were recorded in advance and subsequently edited by the museum's audio-visual team. On the day of the tour, museum staff and volunteers would welcome attendees online, then share the video of the tour. Afterwards a Q&A took place with the volunteers, followed by a creative session delivered by staff. Delivering the tours online encouraged a more creative use of the museum's collection as a volunteer's choice of objects was no longer constrained by their physical location in the museum. It also allowed connections to be drawn across different parts of the collection, making links between different cultures and periods, showing what people have in common. Although we have now been able to resume tours onsite, we're keen to continue to use Zoom where appropriate.

I find places like [the British Museum] overwhelming & quite daunting but the tours eased us nicely in by showing us a section of an area which was a favourite of the guides.

I enjoyed it. I feel more hopeful now.

Comments from Walk and talk tour participants

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Covid-19 has irrevocably changed many people's lives around the world. The pandemic has had a profound impact on museums and heritage sites across Europe. The museum sector faces huge challenges and undoubtedly it will not be the same as it was pre-pandemic (ICOM 2021). Volunteers have an important role to play in helping the British Museum recover, and to adapt to a post-pandemic world. All three of the programmes briefly outlined here – the Touch Tours, the LGBTQ tours and the Walk and Talk sessions – are part of an ongoing drive to diversify volunteer-led interpretation programmes at the British Museum, and to help people from a wider range of backgrounds to enjoy the collection and to make personal connections with it.

One major consequence of the pandemic is that staff, volunteers and the public have acquired new digital skills and behaviours. The public have learned to engage with cultural content online in new ways. Although volunteer-led programmes like the Touch Tours can only really take place on-site, the pandemic has shown that others – like 'Walk and Talk' tours – can be adapted to work effectively online. We are keen to retain and develop online volunteering – and online volunteer-led programmes – going forward.

Although the pandemic has caused massive disruption and huge challenges for museums, it also has the potential to be a catalyst for change and innovation. In recovering from the pandemic our ambition with volunteer programmes at the British Museum is to try and build back better where we can, and to strike an effective balance between income generating tours and free programming. The fact that the British Museum is quieter at present – and is likely to remain so for some time given the sharp reduction in international visitors – provides an opportunity born of necessity to reach out and

encourage more local audiences to discover (or rediscover) the British Museum through targeted volunteer-led interpretation.

Acknowledgements

The recent volunteer initiatives at the British Museum have been highly collaborative endeavours, involving large numbers of people, too many to list individually. However, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the incredible team in the Volunteer Office at the British Museum who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the volunteer programme: Francesca Goff (Volunteer Manager), Jess Starns (Volunteer Coordinator), Megan Ryder, Lisa D'Agostino (Volunteer Coordinator) and Lizzie Northcott (Volunteer Administrator). I would also like to thank everyone who has contributed directly and indirectly to the development of the LGBTQ tour programme, especially Professor Richard B Parkinson whose innovative work made the development of the volunteer-led tour possible. And finally, a particularly large debt of gratitude is owed to all of the incredible volunteers who continue to contribute their time so enthusiastically and generously to support the British Museum.

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If you know ... you can tell – Empowering local people to share the story of their heritage

Michael Hamish Glen (UK)

Michael is a wordsmith. He was introduced to interpretation in Scotland in 1969. An intensive week of learning to be an interpreter proved to be a Damascene experience! It convinced him to follow this new path and since then he has enjoyed a long, wide, fascinating and rewarding involvement with interpretation. He began by integrating as much of what he had absorbed on that initial course when working in tourism, industrial training and conservation. Michael then spent 35 years as an interpretive consultant and creative writer for clients across the UK and elsewhere. He was a founder member of the UK's Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) in 1975 and subsequently an office-bearer at various times and part-time administrator for a period; he is now an Honorary Fellow and, currently, the Treasurer. Michael was also a founder member of Interpret Europe in 2010 and the first chair of the Supervisory Committee. He is now an honorary – but still active – member.

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Abstract

Interpretation is a powerful tool in communicating with visitors. Empowering communities to use interpretive activities and media is a powerful means of linking local people with visitors and helping them to enjoy their visit more, to understand why their destination is special and to appreciate its importance. All local people can play a part in the simplest way – by telling at least parts of the heritage story themselves. But they need to know what to tell. This paper advocates the preparation of a very simple tool – a pocket-

sized summary of answers to many of the basic questions visitors ask and reasons why they should value and help to protect what they have come to see. It will, in effect, imply a call to support sustainable tourism through what I have called storysharing. It will embody the belief that interpretation can help to safeguard the heritage of a place. That heritage is the 'goose that lays golden eggs' for visitors and hosts.

Keywords

communities, tourists, local heritage, sustainable tourism, storytelling

If you know, you can tell

The idea for this paper began when Max Dubravko Fijačko, Interpret Europe's conference manager for 2021, quizzed me about my 'interpretation' of interpretive terms. In trying to respond to his searching questions, I was forced to think again about how interpretation can work best, particularly within the context of tourism and, within that, of tourism as it impinges on places of great heritage value, whether that be natural, cultural or intangible heritage.

As a starting point, I reflected on the conference theme: *Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation*, which opened up opportunities for ideas. So, I then wondered how I could respond to the question in the brief: *Can heritage interpretation empower communities and make them more resilient?*

This got me to thinking about how to develop greater mutual respect between host communities and tourists. So often each ignores the other except for obvious points of contact as suppliers and customers. I began wondering how we could use interpretation to increase appreciation of, and concern for, local heritage.

I then questioned how the use of this appreciation and concern could help tourism to become more sustainable, more acceptable to host communities and more satisfying to visitors. That led to considering ways of linking local people and tourists.

It seems to me that many local people don't know and understand much about the natural, cultural or intangible heritage of their own surroundings. They will probably be aware that it has a value but not fully understand or appreciate why. That's a generalisation but those who really know about it are, inevitably, a minority. Therefore, it follows, many local people need encouragement and facilities to help them develop real awareness and useful knowledge of their heritage. That led to suggesting that many local people need support in developing confidence when it comes to sharing with visitors their newly acquired awareness and understanding.

So, can local people help to create the necessary support mechanisms to provide this support? Yes, of course they can, in many ways, from evening classes to guided walks, talks and discussions led by those with appropriate expertise. Trained interpretive guides can play a valuable part and here is an opportunity for local people to benefit from IE courses and blue-badge training to learn to be interpretive guides and hosts themselves.

The obverse of this is that many tourists are often ill-prepared for their visits to see, enjoy, understand and appreciate local heritage – despite all the opportunities offered on the internet. In many cases, they don't know what they could find out about, leaving them perhaps slightly bereft after a visit. If you don't know what questions to ask, you can't get the answers you need. Many tourists – often given insufficient time, with inadequate briefing or from a background lacking in awareness of the

relevance of heritage – think that heritage is for 'other people', does not relate to them, has little meaning and therefore doesn't 'connect'.

For that reason, many tourists also need encouragement and help to develop awareness, understanding and care for local heritage. And they need confidence to ask the right questions as I suggested above.

Therefore, if communities are given confidence to share their heritage – and their care for it – with visitors and if visitors are also given confidence to find out, can this lead to behaviour – on the part of both hosts and visitors – that helps to safeguard the heritage? And is there a simple way of helping both groups to do this?

When considering this, I wondered if it was worth modifying an idea I put to a client a long time ago and, more positively, something I created for another client 15 years ago? Is the following idea – open to all kinds of adaptation to suit local circumstances – a viable proposition? Will it work? Well, that's up to you to decide.

Talking with Max had got us discussing how words, when 'translated', don't always convey the original meaning. They need their own dose of interpretation. The word 'interpretation' itself is a case in point. For me, adopting a Slavic word, interpretation is a *tkanina*, a weave, a fabric with many strands and cross-threads in its delivery. At best, interpretation – when it's done well – is storytelling. I would consider a story to have both a warp (the lengthwise threads) and a weft (the transverse threads) to provide continuity on the one hand and necessary digression (or context, explanation, additional colour etc.) on the other. I illustrate this later.

But isn't storytelling more effective if it embraces *storysharing*? This allows visitors to

contribute, comment and question. I have to credit Max with instilling this thought in my mind when examining interpretation in practice. That, I believe, should be the approach when developing interpretation. It could form the basis of a local community's credo: *"We'd like to share with you why we think our place is special – tell us what it means to you. And please help us to look after it."*

That led to what I have called my 'pocket-docket'. A docket lists the contents of a package for delivery etc. and, sadly, the rhyme works only in English!). What I envisage is a simple document or downloadable pdf, easy to produce on paper at home, in an office or by a local printer, and easy to distribute and use. Equally, it would be easy to upload it to a website for anyone to download.

In my presentation, I included graphics that indicate the sort of 'publication' I envisage, along with some examples of similar concepts that other organisations have used. My thanks go to Marie Banks for supplying images of a Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust summary of its approach to visitors and At-Bristol Science Centre's key messages, a simple prompt to staff.

My approach would probably be only four pages across, folded to A6 in size, and therefore eight A6 pages in total. It would provide brief and helpful explanatory answers to a series of obvious questions under the overall title of *Our place – Sharing it with visitors*. This would expand the idea of a pocket-sized 'reminder' of an organisation's 'message' and become an encouragement to hosts to explain, and visitors to understand, the heritage and to engage with each other. It's basic, old-fashioned possibly, very low-tech and unsophisticated – but simple! It's a sort of crib-sheet, an easy way in to the story.

My proposed, and very basic, questions relating to the local heritage are, on the inner four pages: *What is our story? Who are the players? When has it happened? Which are the key bits?* On the outer four pages, in addition to the title, the questions are: *Why is it special? Where can we learn more?* and, importantly, *How can we all play a part?* I will come back to this last section but all these headings give a flavour of the approach rather than being set in stone! I'm a great believer in the traditional 'seven questions for seven answers' – *what, when, where, who, which* and especially *how and why* – in whatever order is most helpful in posing questions to elicit straightforward answers of explanation.

There would be a parallel production for visitors with only one change to the text. The title would be *Our place – Share it with us*. I see these publications available online of course but also in printed form in places a visitor – or local – would go, from cafés and restaurants, hotels, pubs and guest houses to filling stations, shops, libraries, local gathering places and, of course, visitor attractions of all kinds.

The text must be expertly written – you would expect me, as a wordsmith, to say that – in order to provide that cross-weave of shared storytelling that I referred to earlier. I did consider a single version, for simplicity, and that may be possible but I believe two versions are necessary to reflect differing needs and emphases.

The last section, *How can we all play a part?*, is crucial to this concept of 'sharing'. Hosts and visitors must share both responsibility and accountability for sustaining the local heritage. For hosts, it implies 'conservation' in every sense; for visitors, it means being 'mindful tourists', being sensitive, caring tourists. I'm grateful again to Max for questioning me on 'mindful tourism' which is what I am talking about. Both hosts and visitors need to consider

the impact of tourism on the community and its natural, cultural and intangible heritage which comes back to the credo I introduced earlier: *"We'd like to share with you why we think our place is special – tell us what it means to you. And please help us to look after it."*

In summary, my interpretive *tkanina* looks something like the illustration shown in figure 1, below. The blue threads, the warp, carry the main story about the phenomenon, the brown threads allow for digression to introduce context and helpful detail, and of course, the essential storysharing that relates to the audience, local or visitor. I do believe this interpretive *tkanina*, carefully considered and constructed, can help to safeguard the special

heritage of a place – or thing or event or belief or person – using a mechanism like my 'pocket docket'. Storysharing can – and should – lead to shared stewardship.

That local heritage – whatever form it takes – can be considered as the 'goose that lays golden eggs' for visitors and hosts. Local people can benefit in many ways, including economic benefit, and visitors can gain much more satisfying experiences. But that heritage has to be nurtured and protected – as well as being promoted – because we need to remember what Mr Aesop warned us about: *If you kill the golden goose ... you'll get no more eggs. Damage the heritage and its value will disappear.*

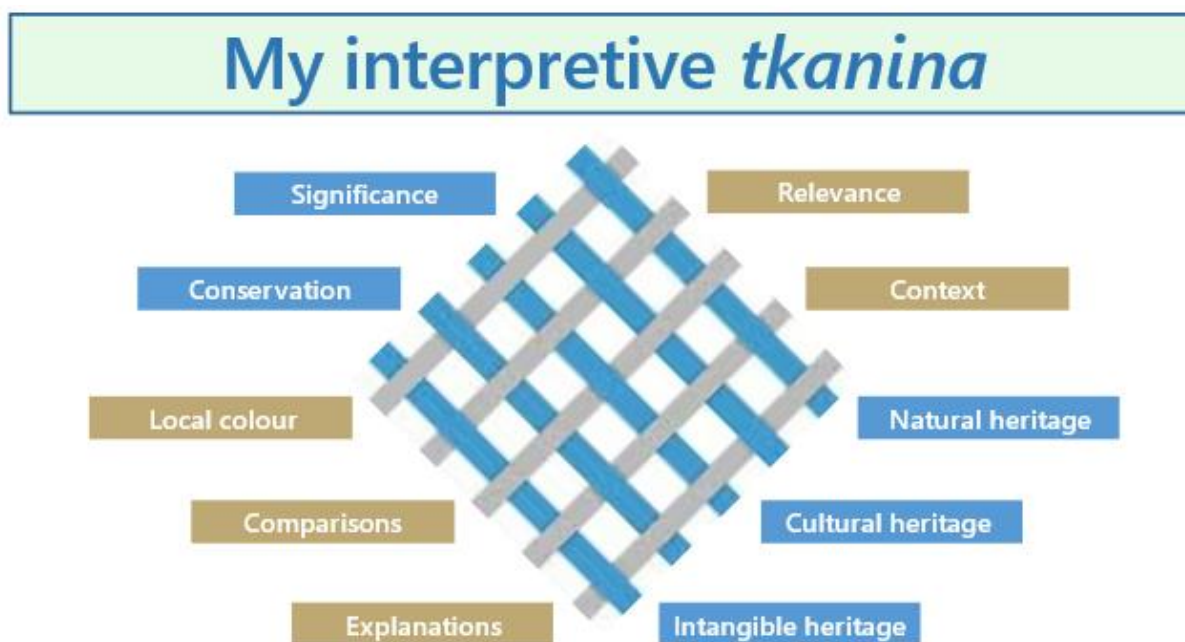


Figure 1. My interpretive *tkanina* (Michael Hamish Glen)

How can interpretive experiences make people more mindful?

Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)

Thorsten Ludwig holds an MSc in Interpretation. He studied archaeology and worked at a German national park until 1993, when he founded Bildungswerk interpretation as his own consultancy. From May 2015 to April 2021, he was Managing Director of Interpret Europe. In that context, he was awarded the EU Altiero Spinelli Prize 2017 for launching the initiative, 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage'.

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Abstract

As part of their 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations agreed upon substantial goals for learning. Heritage interpretation can play a role in this. However, in tourism in particular, heritage experiences are often limited in time, and in-depth learning is not necessarily on top of people's agenda. This paper suggests that the degree to which insights become relevant depends on the immediacy, wholeness and reflection of interpretive experiences. It explains what characterises a whole interpretive experience, what helps to memorise, recall and apply its conclusions, and what it means for contemporary interpretive planning, to make people more mindful towards our common future.

Keywords

heritage interpretation, whole experience, memory, mind, mindfulness

HI: heritage interpretation

IE: Interpret Europe

Background and relevance of this paper

The world is confronted with outstanding challenges and, as far as democracies are concerned, individual learning and decision-making are playing an essential role in overcoming them. Considering scientific findings (IPCC 2021), it is no exaggeration to state that the future of humankind depends on the question of how qualified world citizens are to interpret their current situation in a responsible way. In terms of learning, ambitious goals were defined by leading world organisations (UN 2015, OECD 2019, UNESCO 2020), most focusing on the year 2030. This underlines the urgency of the matter as well as the relevance of the decade we just entered. What does this mean for HI?

Freeman Tilden defined HI as "an educational activity" (Tilden 1957:8) for which he considered three possible ways:

1. People interpret for themselves
2. Interpreters interpret for people
3. Interpreters communicate the interpretation of others to people.

Working on behalf of the US National Park Service, Tilden put special attention on the third way, while during recent decades, the first way has almost been lost from sight. It was emphasised that "interpretation is simply an approach to communication" (Ham 2013:1), and sometimes this approach was even defined as "mission-based" (NAI 2007). While Tilden considered HI "a broadly educational, ethically informed and transformative art" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:209), the profession seemed to develop more towards destination-marketing, focused on catchy messages and stories to provide visitors of places a good time, while it made less progress regarding purposeful and participative learning.

However, ‘interpretation’ and ‘communication’ are two different concepts. As a profession, HI should be based on its own ethic, instead of serving the mission of any employer or client (Lehnes 2017:73). Against this background, IE considered a new paradigm where citizens – visitors as well as local people around heritage properties – are encouraged “to interpret their experience themselves in searching for their own meaningful context behind the facts” (IE 2017:7).

Based on a review of European trends and developments affecting HI (IE 2016) and in preparation for its 2016 conference, ‘Heritage interpretation – for the future of Europe’, IE underlined people’s need for purpose as well as the political relevance of HI. In order to strengthen that paradigm, and extending the established idea of a “provocation endgame” (Ham 2013:61), IE advocated for “making heritage more meaningful to people, and people more mindful towards our common future” (IE 2020).

While more and more organisations and institutions see the need to foster experiential self-learning, formal education in Europe still stays tailored to learning objectives that more help to secure employability. There are reasons for this, but competitive market-based thinking is barely sustainable. It needs a corrective, if it shall not lead to persistence in the unsustainable current system.

By sharing different interpretations of heritage, and by encouraging people to learn through them, HI might become a promising approach to provide this corrective and, therefore, a critical non-formal supplement to formal learning, where responsible interpretation should also play a more important role.

Interpretive literacy should be grown into an iconic key feature for people and organisations inside and outside the heritage community to cope with the challenges of our time.

Looking at European intellectual history, the idea of enabling people to interpret is not new. Even if we skip the cornucopia of inspiration that Ancient Greek and Renaissance philosophy provide and stick to the principles of Enlightenment, philosophers like Kant and Hegel had this concept in mind when they discussed what it meant to interpret. Also, in the early 19th century – the era of Idealism, Romanticism and New Humanism – the Humboldt brothers favoured lifelong learning to become autonomous world citizens (*‘Weltbürger’*). This became known as *‘humboldtsches Bildungsideal’*. Hermeneutics, the general theory of interpretation, took off around the same time and much later culminated in Gadamer’s seminal work *‘Truth and method’* (Gadamer 1975, first published in 1960). It has been suggested to take a closer look explicitly at this concept “to reinvigorate Tilden’s holistic, ethically informed and transformative art of heritage interpretation” (Ablett and Kyer 2009:225).

If we look at HI “in the *Bildung* tradition, the goal of education is self-determination and autonomy based on reason, combined with mutual respect between human beings” (Carter 2016:10). HI could be much more focused on facilitated self-learning. John Muir stated in 1871: “I’ll [sic!] interpret the rocks [...] to get as near to the heart of the world as I can” (Wolfe 1978:144). “As an educational activity, it reflects the principles of progressive education, aiming to stimulate thoughts and ideas rather than communicate a defined syllabus of facts, and to help individuals find their own understanding and meaning in heritage” (Carter 2016:17).

HI's 'unique selling proposition' is to foster this through first-hand experience of natural and cultural heritage. What we should actually practice is "experiential coaching" (Van Matre 2008:2).

In this paper, the term **professional interpreter** refers to a person whose role is to offer paths to deeper meaning, but to the same degree to encourage and facilitate interpretation by the people.

So, how can we support the people themselves to interpret in a more responsible way. How can we inspire them to reflect upon their values and to get into an exchange about them. How can we provide some sort of 'shaping competence' ('Gestaltungskompetenz', Transfer-21 2007:12) to help in "transforming our world" (UN 2015)?

The crucial role of direct experiences

Immediate experiences of heritage sites are significantly different from virtual experiences, because the individual is exposed to a combination of physical, intellectual, emotional and, at its best, also spiritual and social challenges. There is no interference that would hinder giving one's full attention, which is often the case if someone just watches or listens from a distance. People do not need to be forced to remain focused, they necessarily are focused. The more intense such a whole experience is, the more it will resonate, become meaningful and foster the general idea of stewardship.

Tourism especially lives from such whole experiences. What makes travelling an outstanding opportunity for individual learning is that people are not caught in routines but confronted with new situations as a whole person. Tilden recommended "to put your visitor in possession of at least one disturbing idea that may grow into a fruitful interest" (Tilden 1957:91).

It is mainly unexpected experiences that provoke learning. Once they are considered relevant, they grab our attention, require some sort of active alignment and tend to stick in our brains. This is mirrored when we tell others about our journeys, mentioning at least as many 'negative' as positive experiences, since the first often leave more significant memories. Some of them will even be available as 'inner films' from our episodic memory until the end of our lives. From the neurobiological perspective this makes perfect sense (Hüther 2006).

For general understanding, some basic facts about the brain:

1. The brain has different regions that have different functions. There is no absolute separation, and some functions can change if needed. Depending on the way information is perceived, it can be saved in more than one region. Information is generally better accessible (for storage as well as for recall), if it is stored in multiple regions.
2. The brain is changing (neuroplasticity). It mainly consists of brain cells (neurons) with branches (dendrites, axons) through which impulses are sent. Through flexible connections (synapses), those branches link to branches of other cells. Neural pathways that are used more grow stronger, information is easier to access and can be better stored – opposite to pathways that are less used.
3. There is a sensory memory, a working (short-term) memory and a long-term memory. In the sensory memory, information remains only for up to five seconds, in the working memory slightly longer. If it shall be stored to be later recalled, it needs to go into the long-term memory, which requires an intellectual or emotional response, signalling that this information is needed.

Expected experiences are less deep learning experiences. If travellers already know a heritage site from pictures, receive some information on the bus, hop off to take those same pictures and just travel on to visit another site, they might not

be disappointed (because what they got is what they expected), but from the interpretive point of view, the value of the experience is more limited, the less the individual was exposed and engaged. This means that it matters what kind of information someone received in advance, and what role that information plays during the experience on site.

Additionally, people's prior life experience and the level from which individuals feel provoked can vary significantly. Someone who is used to all-inclusive tours might feel challenged by the need to approach a local person, while this could be considered routine by someone used to travelling off the beaten track. Accordingly, local people might be first reserved, then become more interested and open-minded towards visitors – but 'shut down' if they feel overwhelmed, especially if they lack the skills to deal with strangers. Experiential learning mainly happens within the flow channel between boredom and anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

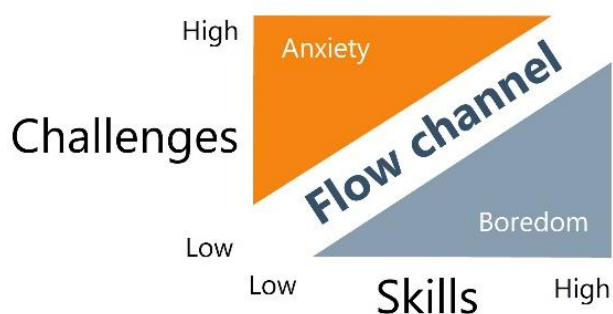


Figure 1. Flow channel according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990)

Despite all that unpredictability, we should not forget that one key advantage of facilitated heritage experiences is that heritage offers every level of challenge and connection without being subject to any curriculum or learning objective. Learning around heritage can be rather 'natural'.

According to Medina (2014:4), the brain appears to be designed to:

1. Solve problems
1. related to surviving
2. in an unstable outdoor environment, and
3. to do so in nearly constant motion.

As Medina (2014:5) added, somewhat sarcastically: "If you wanted to create an education environment that was directly opposed to what the brain was good at doing, you probably would design something like a classroom".

We do not remember every day in life – our mind has to select. However, turning heritage experiences into whole interpretive experiences significantly increases the chance that they will stay.

What makes a whole interpretive experience?

A whole interpretive experience should include the whole person – or in Tilden's words: "address itself to the whole man" (Tilden 1957:9). In addition to the outer (sensory) experience, this includes an inner (mental) experience. An interpretive site experience is always subjective, individual and unique – which is important not only for its memorisation and application, but also for its critical reflection.

That people listen to or look at the same information does not mean they process and store, and that they are therefore able to recall and to use it, in the same way. All individuals have differing background knowledge, received different information in advance, recall personal experiences, are often driven by prejudices (in the neutral sense of the word), and this results in judgements (e.g. condemnation or glorification of sites, objects, customs,... symbolising particular ideas). If we expect

people to not just store facts or messages, all of this plays an important role.

Several 20th century authors on progressive learning underlined the value of experiential approaches (including Dewey, Neill, Freinet, Decroly, Hahn, Montessori, Korczak). They were supported by research from authors such as Vygotsky or Maslow. Inspired by the work of Lewin, Kolb (1984) developed an experiential learning model for adult education that was completed by Honey and Mumford 1992 and was recently revived (UNESCO 2017).

In classical terms, a whole experience means that a person is engaged with head (intellectual), heart (emotional) and hand (physical), an approach that is usually ascribed to Pestalozzi (Brühlmeier 2010). As mentioned above, such an experience can be significantly intensified if it includes a spiritual aspect (making deeper meaning), and if it is shared with others as a social experience.

Hence, five properties can be assigned to a whole interpretive heritage experience. It should be:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Social

Although those aspects are closely interwoven, they shall briefly be reviewed one after the other.

Physical aspect

The long-term memory consists of procedural memory (for routines), semiotic memory (for facts) and episodic memory (for events). The episodic memory is the memory of our personal experience.

We remember almost exclusively physical experiences as if they were yesterday, and only through episodic memory can we re-experience a site. We can sometimes re-experience it if any of the memories that were part of the whole experience (a smell, a sound, a space impression) are triggered. In comparison to most other learning approaches, the physical or "direct experience" (Carter 2016:8), is characteristic for HI, and it is especially critical since it is the only property of a whole heritage experience that cannot be replaced by off-site media.

By definition, HI is considered to take place "by firsthand experience" (Tilden 1957:8). Freeman Tilden claimed for any individual experiencing HI "a kind of elective education that is superior in some respects to that of the classroom, for here he meets the Thing Itself – whether it be a wonder of nature's work, or the act or work of man" (Tilden 1957:3).

According to Lehnies 2016:26: "First-hand experience is the *most basic and fundamental way to relate* heritage and history to a person's reality. This is one of the assets heritage interpretation contributes to the wider field of general education". "This deep sense of being a part of and witness of a real situation does not occur when watching a TV documentary or surfing the internet" (Lehnies 2017:78). Within IE, original heritage sites, objects or sensations are summed up under the term "heritage phenomena", and "turning phenomena into experiences" (IE 2017:10) is defined as one out of four essential qualities of HI.

All physical heritage experience is sensational. Simply spoken, sensation means that our organs collect stimuli and transform them in a way that they can be processed in the brain. The sensory element is at the core of any direct experience. "Experiential learning activities are by definition multisensory because they stimulate two or

more memory systems in separate brain regions” (Willis 2007:116). “...each sensory system has a separate storage area in the brain. Multisensory input travels to memory storage along more than one pathway resulting in enriched, reinforced information transit. This redundancy of pathways and storage regions leads to better memory retention, faster and more accurate recall and increased ability to retrieve stored memories through a variety of stimuli” (Willis 2007:111). Multisensory experiences “speed up responses, increase accuracy, improve stimulation detection, and enrich encoding at the moment of learning” (Medina 2014:175).

Traditionally, our external senses include:

- Sight
- Hearing
- Touch
- Taste
- Smell

And our internal human senses are usually considered:

- Position (proprioception)
- Balance (equilibrioception)
- Temperature (thermoception)
- Pain (nociception)

(Of course, there are many more signals that regulate the internal state of the body – e.g. body temperature, heartbeat, respiration, digestion – of which we are only partly aware.)

When considering the value of direct experiences, we need to remember that our key aim is not that people learn facts about a heritage site. They should build a deep and personal relationship and appreciate the site as a memorable place with an individual character or ‘personality’ that plays a role in their own human development. In neurobiological terms:

We like them to build neural pathways that grow a mental map in their brain, where the heritage phenomena are then located, in order to let new insights not starve in isolation, but to make them subject to future activities in other areas of interest. “Stimulating more than one memory system with more than one type of sensory input significantly increases the likelihood of creating a long-term memory of the information” (Willis 2007:117).

While all senses contribute to those neural maps, some are fairly underrated. For example, among our external senses, smelling and tasting can result in very strong memories. This is mainly relevant for the interpretation of gastronomic heritage. Because taste is so immediate and individual, it can also be subject to spontaneous exchange by everyone. Odours help to retrieve experiences, especially if people are emotionally aroused, which is sometimes used with people who suffer from dementia. Considering, for example, the contact between local people and visitors, gastronomic heritage is an excellent bridge. (Alas, interpretive services are too often separated from experiencing gastronomic services.)

Among our internal senses, our senses for position and balance are especially interesting when it comes to the impact of heritage sites on our memory. They influence how we perceive and remember a place as “a qualitative ‘total’ phenomenon, which we cannot reduce to any of its properties, such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight” (Norberg-Schulz 1980:8).

Considering that people are rather more limited to the two senses of sight and hearing, the more they approach the world through screens, we can assume that the value and impact of initiating direct experiences is growing, the more technological developments take hold in our lives. Even if people move for some time

before learning, it has a positive impact on their brain activity (Fig. 2).

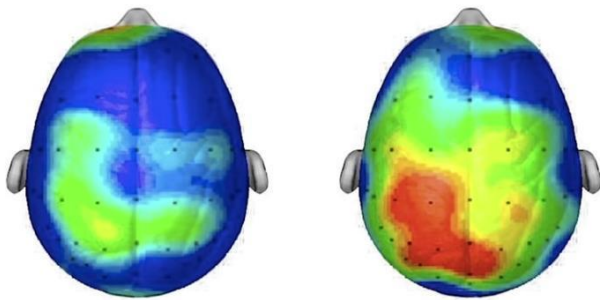


Figure 2. Composition of the brain scans of 20 students taking the same test after sitting quietly (left) and after 20 minutes of walking (right) (Behling 2016:8:30)

To intensify direct experiences, it does not always need someone sharing their story through whatever media. In some cases, ready-made interpretation could even stop active engagement with heritage and limit the perception of the individual.

The more people move around, the more they use their senses, and the more they communicate their perceptions, the deeper the traces that the experience will leave in their brains. This means that professional interpreters should more provoke and facilitate such experiences and sometimes more follow the people's own connections than letting them follow theirs or those of their client or employer (which they, of course, must be able to explain).

Intellectual aspect

However, if physical experiences shall have an impact on our consciousness, they need to be intellectually processed. As Kant wrote: "Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (Kant 2011:108, first published in 1787). HI links "the perception of concrete heritage phenomena, as

well as pieces of factual information related to this heritage, with ideas and values" (Lehnes 2017:84).

Different from the interpretive approach, formal learning is often focused on facts that become subject to semantic memory. "Because these facts and their presentation are isolated from meaningful or emotional content, they have limited connections to relational memory or positive emotions and are therefore less likely to be patterned for storage in long-term memory" (Willis 2007:114).

There are excellent publications from within the HI community that describe how this issue can be overcome at heritage sites (e.g. Ham 2013). For example, neuroscience confirmed that individuals learn more through narratives than by facts (Spitzer 2009). People often think metaphorically, connecting facts to inner images (Hüther 2006) that have meaning for them (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Interpretive themes help to tell such stories (Kohl 2018).

However, if we think of HI as a facilitated process mainly done by the individual, some skills become more critical than others. Lehnes (2017:86) explicitly describes the relevance of "disturbing ideas and reflective thinking" to overcome the simplification that is characteristic for populist movements. If we consider HI as a means to deal with such issues, heritage sites need to equip people with the particular skills and support them in looking at places from different perspectives.

If, for example, Columbus is seen in an interpretive performance as the person who discovered America, there is not much space for another perspective (e.g. that other Europeans reached America before, that there were already inhabitants – more or less happy to see Columbus, that for many, 'discovery' meant submission for centuries). Celebrating Columbus' discovery of America allows just one

interpretation. Following the idea of recent decades (in many cases until the heritage community was shaken by the 'Black lives matter' movement) the interpreter's job was mainly to make sure all got caught by the same touching theme and received the same message in an organised, relevant and enjoyable way (which in most cases worked because those who would interpret the case differently rarely showed up). That the meaning of the heritage was considered to be "inherent in the resource" (NAI 2007) meant that the content was not the responsibility of the interpreter, whose task was only to communicate it in a convincing way.

However, several authors (including Buchholtz et al. 2015, Carter 2016, Lehnies 2017) underlined that meaning is always created by people. This even increases the significance of HI because it means nothing less than: "Even the decision to value and to preserve something as an inheritance necessarily requires an act of interpretation" (IE 2017:10). There is no heritage without previous interpretation.

In terms of the intellectual aspect of whole interpretive experiences, juggling with different perspectives might be one of the biggest challenges HI is currently facing. This also reaches into the emotional aspect of the heritage experience.

Emotional aspect

"Episodic memories are recollections of events, along with the times, places and emotions associated with the events. In episodic memories, people see themselves as actors in the events they remember and therefore memorize not only the events but also the context surrounding them. The emotional charge experienced at the time of the event influences the quality of its memorization, so connecting important event memories to

positive emotions can increase retention" (Willis 2007:114-115).

Although different sections of the brain influence each other, primal emotions are mainly assigned to the limbic system. This is deep inside the brain, which means that it is quite old in phylogenetic terms, and only partly subject to conscious control. Emotions trigger the amygdala that is directly linked to the hippocampus. The hippocampus has the important function to let information pass into the long-term memory or not. Information that comes with an emotion that is considered to be critical can travel on the 'fast lane'. Such memories can also be best recalled if people are in a similar state of mind or at a similar place. This is one argument for including emotion into learning and one more to relate it to the individual's own life world.

Episodic memories are organised by the limbic system but also emotions that trigger affective feelings allowing mammals to adapt to environmental challenges. According to Panksepp (1998), such primal emotions include seeking, rage, fear, lust, care, panic and play. From our own experiences we know to what degree we can steer them – and to what degree they might steer us. Under certain circumstances, people can be carried away by such emotions, which makes the emotional aspect a challenging issue. (The more sophisticated emotions are subject to the pre-frontal cortex and will be discussed later.)

Emotions can bring people into a constructive motion – but they can also move people against other people. For example, emotions that forge communities can make people blind to the habits and needs of those that are not part of their own narrative.

HI that promotes just one 'unifying' story (e.g. regarding heritage that has been designated to

foster the pride of one nation state) always carries the risk of supporting an emotionally charged 'us-versus-them' pattern.

Spiritual aspect

Spirituality is defined as "the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things" (Oxford UK Dictionary 2021a). "Approximately 20 percent of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List have some sort of religious or spiritual connection" (UNESCO 2021), among and beyond them numerous sacred natural sites (Wild and McLeod 2008).

It might sound confusing to put so much emphasis on this aspect, but Freeman Tilden frequently referred to the spiritual aspect of heritage experiences which distinguishes HI from many other formal and non-formal learning approaches.

Tilden wrote: "To stand at the rim of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado is to experience a spiritual elevation that could come from no human description of the colossal chasm. Thousands of naturalists, historians, archaeologists and other specialists are engaged in the work of revealing, to such visitors as desire the service, something of the beauty and wonder, the inspiration and spiritual meaning that lie behind what the visitor can with his senses perceive. This function of the custodians of our treasures is called interpretation" (Tilden 1957:3-4). "The true interpreter (...) goes beyond the apparent to the real, beyond a part to a whole, beyond a truth to a more important truth. (...) Interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact (...) for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit" (Tilden 1957:9). "Generally speaking, certainties contribute toward human happiness; uncertainties are a source of spiritual loneliness and disquietude.

Whether or not he is conscious of it, man seeks to find his place in nature and among men – not excluding remote men. Primitive parks, the unspoiled seashore, archaeological ruins, battlefields, zoological and botanical gardens, historic sites – all happen to be exactly those places where this ambition is most likely to be satisfied" (Tilden 1957:13). "...true Interpretation deals not with parts, but with a historical – and I would say spiritual – whole" (Tilden 1957:25).

One significant characteristic of HI is that it actively encourages individuals to search for personal meaning in heritage (Larsen 2011). It can be subject to debate at what point this meaning is experienced deep enough to be considered spiritual, but it is clear that there is a significant difference between understanding facts and experiencing a larger truth behind the facts. "This search for the larger truth is essentially a hermeneutical exercise, in which the interpreter moves constantly from the interpreted to its broader contexts and back again" (Ablett and Dyer 2009:217).

Professional interpreters often trigger deeper meaning by linking heritage to universal concepts (Brown 1991) that activate values and frames. The degree to which ideas are accepted by people mainly depends on how they are framed (Entman 1993). It is important to distinguish between surface frames and deep frames (Darnton and Kirk 2011). At the surface, for example, the frame of 'home' might consist of a bed, a kitchen, a garden, etc. but it is obvious that the personal meaning of 'home' is much deeper. (Fig. 3)

Frames touch the "spheres of resonance, recognition, and the axes of our relationship to the world" (Rosa 2019:195), because they refer to the individual's own purpose, values and beliefs. In HI, they are often used in the context of care and stewardship. Professional interpreters use strong interpretive themes to

create situations in which people are touched by particular revelations. Within IE, themes are understood as offers (IE 2017) because “the chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation” (Tilden 1957:9).

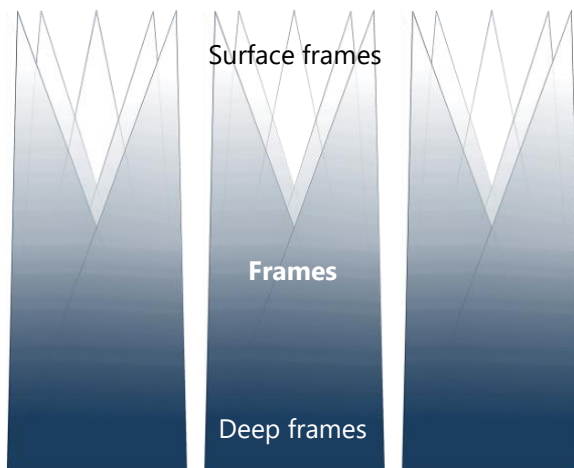


Figure 3. Deep frames and surface frames
(Darnton and Kirk 2011:78)

Framing interpretation through themes is a strong tool, but it always tends to be manipulative and, therefore, requires some awareness of responsibility, towards the heritage phenomena as well as towards the individual. The idea should not be to mystify the past but to use heritage to provoke thinking about the future.

Especially at heritage sites that are sensitive because they can be interpreted in conflicting ways (e.g. battlefields or other places where people suffered at the hand of other people), framing can easily get not only a spiritual but also a political dimension (Lakoff 2008).

Social aspect

The social part of a whole heritage experience is the only part that necessarily includes other people. It becomes critical if we understand HI as a way to bridge gaps and develop visions towards a more sustainable world that is not “compromising the ability of future generations

to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987:37). HI can foster Europe’s shared values that are dedicated to this goal by creating conditions that encourage people to explore “a safe and just space for humanity” (Raworth 2012) while practicing participation, cohesion, tolerance, justice and solidarity in a culture of dialogue.

In the past, the role of the professional interpreter was often seen as presenting basic information in an enjoyable way. Today, such information becomes not only more available to everyone, it is also easy to access through social media. On the other hand, professional interpreters need to know about popular (mis)conceptions and (mis)understandings regarding the heritage they feel responsible for, and they should offer the space and acquire the skills to deal with them. This includes the ability to encourage and to facilitate “dialogue for difficult subjects” (Schircht and Camp 2007) to open people’s minds towards each other. It also means to reconsider not only their own role but also the roles visitors, local people or other parts of a heritage community could take in the interpretive process. As Deufel (2020) pointed out, heritage sites should be discussed against the background of third places (Oldenburg 1989) where people can meet each other, and third spaces (Bhabha 1994) where individuals can get into an exchange about issues that are critical for themselves and for their shared future.

This is not easy to achieve. In fact, it requires a shift in the self-understanding of many professional interpreters. Local people often became used to ‘their heritage’ while visitors seem to be encapsulated in their experience – as individuals, together with their partner, family or friends, or within their tour group. They are usually in a holiday mood and not necessarily keen on educational activities, and they don’t expect to be approached in this concern. This reluctance is supported by heritage authorities

underlining the 'sacred' character of heritage ('Do not touch').

To a certain degree, the latter is justifiable to preserve the sheer existence, especially of tangible heritage, but also to increase the awe towards something that their own generation had no part in creating. It challenges the general belief of consumer societies that is at the heart of unsustainable behaviour: that everything can be reproduced, and that innovation (which includes throwing away what is out of fashion) is an end in itself.

However, one of the four qualities IE defined for HI is "provoking resonance and participation" (IE 2017:10), and Tilden (1957:73) wrote: "To me, it is elementary that participation, in our sphere of interpretation, must be physical". In a world where people get more and more focused on screens, HI provides this huge advantage of direct social participation, which can be seen as the pre-stage of 'unfreezing' people's convictions (Lewin 1947).

Of course, today participation should be seen in much broader terms than in Tilden's time. HI might receive general impulses from many authors (including Rogers, Havelock, AtKisson, Kotter, Laloux) that are dealing with change management and with change agents in different contexts and at different levels. There are valuable publications on resonance (e.g. Rosa 2019) and, from within the heritage community, especially on participation (e.g. Simon 2010).

One key requirement is empathy towards people who are not part of their own peer group. In the human brain, empathy is assigned to the pre-frontal cortex (behind the forehead), and according to Siegel (2017:30:35) it includes:

- Emotional empathy (Feel what someone else feels)

- Perspective taking (See the world like someone else)
- Cognitive empathy (Understand what something means to someone else)
- Compassion or empathic concern (Feel someone else's pain and the need to do something about it)
- Empathic joy (Share the happiness of someone else)

Again, there are considerable impulses from the museum community regarding the encouragement of empathy (e.g. Krznaric 2014), which is one critical challenge in times where the empathy deficit seems to be on the increase.

There is also a need to delve deeper into subjects such as collaboration, cocreation and cohesion that could inspire research and foster the development of interpretive planning for some years.

Bringing mindfulness into the picture

What is mindfulness and what kind of mindfulness is most relevant for HI?

The word 'mind' is often used synonymously with consciousness, psyche, spirit or soul. The Oxford Advanced American Dictionary (2021b) suggests that the mind is "the part of a person that makes them able to be aware of things, to think and to feel".

According to the popular psychiatrist Daniel Siegel from the University of California: "The human mind is a relational and embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information" (Siegel 2011a:52). 'Relational and embodied' means that it develops in relation to the whole body as well as in interaction with the surroundings of the body (including impulses from other people). So, the mind is not the brain, but: "The mind uses the brain to create itself" (Siegel 2011a:269). It is also described as self-

organising and emergent (Siegel 2011c:36:48), which means it is continuously changing.

Mindfulness, one central idea of Buddhism, became more significant in the western world when neuroscience found out that the neural connections of an adult brain can be changed on purpose through meditation within a rather short time. "Neuroplasticity is the term used to describe this capacity for creating new neural connections and growing new neurons in response to experience" (Siegel 2011a:5).

Different research strands on mindfulness

Currently, the most prominent use of the word 'mindfulness' refers to individual resilience. 'Mindfulness based cognitive therapy' (MBCT) can counter e.g. depression through meditation. One well-known programme in that context is 'Mindfulness-based stress reduction' (MBSR), which had been developed since the 1970s, mainly by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center (Kabat-Zinn 2013). Especially in the USA, this programme became so successful that the Time magazine proclaimed 'The mindful revolution' (Pickert 2014). After the U.S. Army launched their first mindfulness programmes (Reivich et al. 2011, Johnson et al. 2014) and MBSR became subject to the World Economic Forum, it was criticised that individuals are rather trained to adapt to social grievances than being encouraged to change their causes (Purser 2019). Of course, this is welcomed by companies who seek to increase stress resistance of their staff without fostering too much thinking about its reasons. Research has shown that, under certain circumstances, mindfulness training can actually reduce empathy (Schindler et al. 2019). Programmes are even promoted through the competitive advantage individuals gain on the job market by proving they are more stress-resistant than their colleagues. Such 'mindfulness' might result in individual

meditation without too much interest in the common good. Some authors claim this to be better than the previous ignorance towards meditation as a notable way of healing (e.g. Lieberman 2017) while others criticise that this has little to do with original values of mindfulness (e.g. Rosa 2019).

In any case, this kind of mindfulness is not what helps to develop the interpretive profession.

To be "more mindful towards our common future" (IE 2020) means being mindful towards others and, in the end, towards the planet. Protecting "the just and safe space for humanity" (Raworth 2018:44 inspired by Rockström 2009) is only possible if human rights are not neglected and planetary boundaries are not exceeded (see Fig. 4).

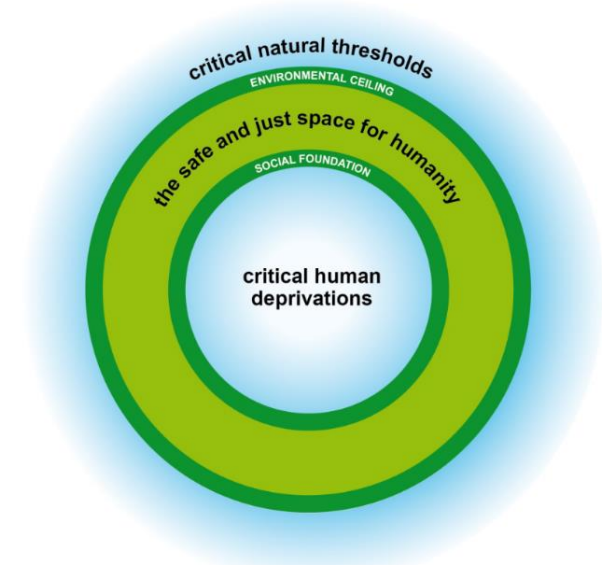


Figure 4. Envisioning a space for sustainable development (Raworth 2012:7)

The bulls-eye model for sustainability that IE uses in its training programme (see right illustration in Fig. 5, following Ludwig 2015:24) suggests that economic development should be embedded in the social and ecological world.

Against this background, IE could also foster a model of mindfulness not only of ourselves but

also of others and of the planet (see left illustration in Fig. 5), in order to interpret the past for the future and to support a general ethic

of stewardship. This wider scope of mindfulness might become significantly relevant for interpretive literacy.

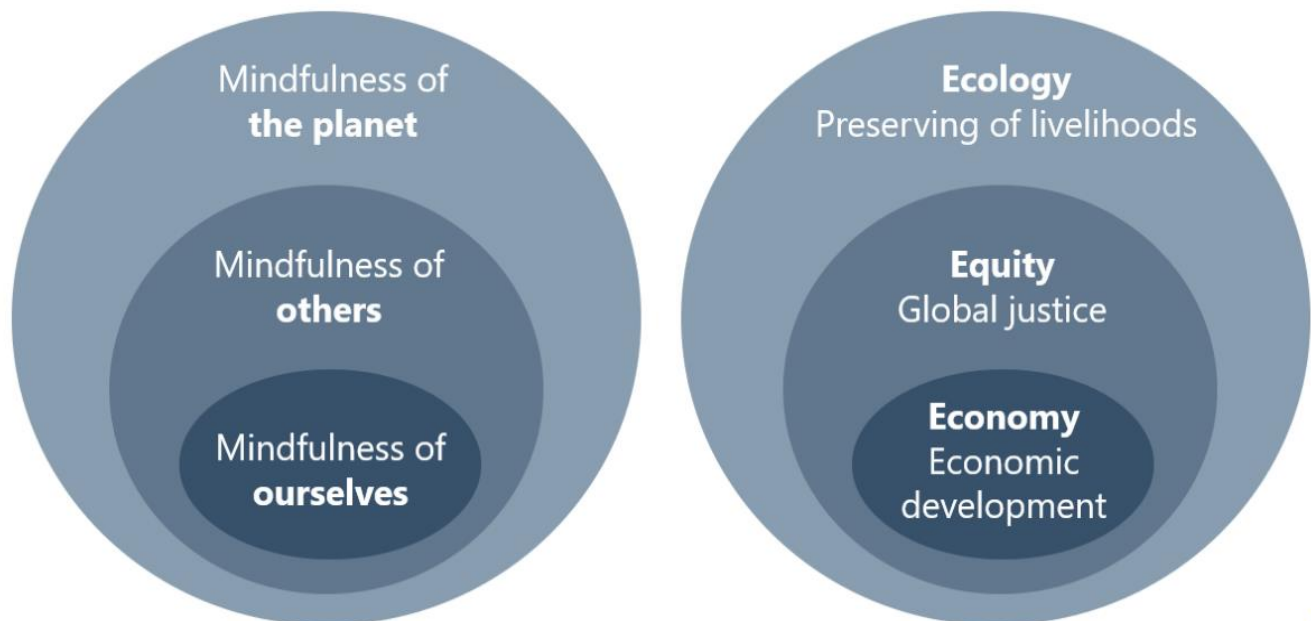


Figure 5. Stages of mindfulness (left) in comparison with the bulls-eye model for sustainability (right)

Mindfulness	Mindlessness
Being situated in the present Sensitive to context and perspective Rule and routine <u>guided</u> Phenomenological experience of engagement	The past over-determines the present Trapped in a single perspective, insensitive to context Rule and routine <u>governed</u> Typically in error but rarely in doubt

Table 1. Mindfulness over matter (according to Langer 2013: 6:17 and 6:53)

In his article, 'Mindsight – the aim of interpretation', Tilden suggested that the interpreter should "lure the vacationer to become *pleasurably thoughtful* [...] His job is very little to instruct, but rather to provoke the desire to know. He plants this seed of provocation, and will not know the harvest, nor need to worry about that, if it be that he has demonstrated that the beauty that lies behind what the eye sees is far greater than that which is so seen. [...] Interpretation, [...] promotes that mindsight" (Tilden 1968:12).

The term 'mindfulness' itself was first introduced in the HI community by Moscardo (1999), referring to Langer (2014, first published in 1989). This was at the time that Larsen's 'Meaningful interpretation: How to connect hearts and minds' (Larsen 2011) had first been drafted. During Langer's studies at Harvard University, she characterised mindfulness as an open and active state of mind, while mindlessness would basically follow established routines. (See Table 1 above)

Both, mindfulness and mindlessness, represent different approaches of the brain, and although mindlessness is considered to be rather negative (with skilled meditators claiming they can almost always be in a state of mindfulness), we might also need to be 'mindless' to cope with all our daily routines. For example, we learn to ride a bicycle in a mindful state. While doing so, we are not able to watch our surroundings or talk to someone. After cycling becomes a routine, we start doing it in a more mindless state – which means we do not need to give it our full attention and don't learn anything new, but we can now deal with other things in parallel.

During their daily lives, ordinary people are urged to do many things in a state of mindlessness. However, when people experience heritage, especially during holidays, they might be able to free themselves from routines and become more mindful, which means to free themselves to learn. "Mindfulness is the process of actively noticing new things" (Langer 2017:4). It is "nonjudgemental, present-moment awareness" (Congleton et al. 2017:29). "Mindfulness is likely to occur in novel or unfamiliar situations where no script exists, when a script is interrupted, or where considerable effort or cost to the individual is involved" (Moscardo 1999:25).

"Sustainable tourism and recreation are most likely to result from visitors who are active, interested, questioning, and capable of reassessing the way they view the world" (Moscardo 1999:26).

A visitor "being content with looking and restlessly moving on" (Tilden 1968:12) "may become mindful in a setting with a variety of experiences and the opportunity to interact with exhibits" (Moscardo 1999:26). In that context, Moscardo also underlines the need for a "care ethic" (Moscardo 1999:16).

Siegel mainly focuses on the role mindfulness can play in terms of relationships (Siegel 2011a). He highlights the interdependency of people and people, of people and community, and of people and planet, and he suggests that the mind develops from the brain as well as from the relationships of a person, that it is "coming from the betweenness as much as the withinness" (Siegel 2017: 6:42) in order to achieve "a deeper sense of meaning and connection" (Siegel 2009 1:11). This was also the assumption of many humanistic psychologists, including Maslow, Rogers or Cohn, whose TCI (Theme-centred interaction) also influenced the development of the interpretive triangle (Cohn 1992). A "deeper sense of meaning and connection" might sound quite familiar to professional interpreter.

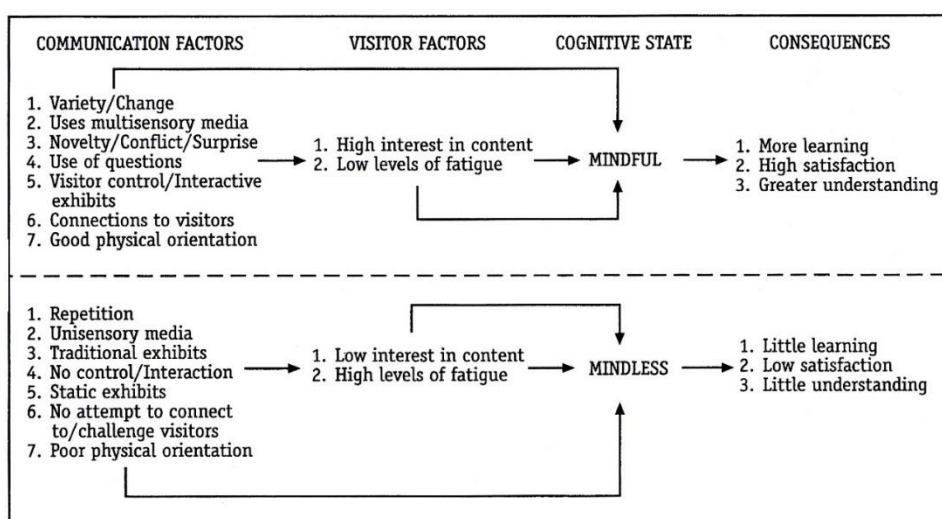


Figure 6. Factors leading to mindful or mindless site experiences (Moscardo 1999:27)

To illustrate Siegel's thesis: The boy shown in Image 1 found a roe deer antler which he holds in his hands. The antler itself and the sensation of viewing and touching it has an impact on this experience, but also the trail where the boy just picked it up, the surrounding forest and the summer breeze. Furthermore, the second boy peeking perceptibly over the first boy's shoulder and taking part in the experience. If we consider where those boys' minds might be, they are obviously much broader than their brains. Siegel might suggest that they are constantly developing not only in their embodied brains but in the betweenness.



Image 1. Boy with antler in a national park (Ludwig 1992)

However, research has shown that mind functions are mainly located in the pre-frontal cortex, which was already mentioned above. They include:

- Regulation of the body
- Attuning one's communication (to resonate with someone else)
- Balancing the emotions
- Modulating fear
- Responding flexibly (e.g. by throwing the plastic bottle in the right bin)

- Insight (making a neural map from oneself across past, present, future) (me)
- Empathy (making a neural map from someone else) (you)
- Morality (we)
- Intuition

Interestingly, education in some indigenous societies is focused heavily on those points. Children don't learn reading, writing and arithmetic the way we do, they mainly learn how to live with other people. Of course, children in Europe also do this, but if we look at European school curricula and what students' exams deal with, it becomes clear that other things are seen to be more relevant in our civilisation. Probably none of the functions from the pre-frontal cortex are subject to any of the countless exams children and adolescents have to deal with in their early career. Arts, music, handcraft, theatre, sports, etc. are considered more 'nice to have' than essential learning. Manfred Spitzer, one of the most popular neuroscientists in Germany, says that in fact the mind functions would be the most important school subjects to develop the brain (Spitzer 2009).

The mind against the background of human values

The original Buddhist idea is that mindfulness needs to come from the inner self, and if one is not in peace with oneself, one cannot be peaceful towards others. However, according to Buddhist beliefs, a self that is separated from its surroundings just does not exist, because the self is only seen as a temporary manifestation of its surroundings. As the popular Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh explains:

"The flower cannot exist by itself alone; it has to inter-be with soil, rain, weeds and insects. There is no being; there is only inter-being. Looking deeply into a flower, we see that the flower is made of non-flower elements. We can describe

the flower as being full of everything. There is nothing that is not present in the flower. We see sunshine, we see the rain, we see clouds, we see the earth, and we also see time and space in the flower. [...] The whole cosmos has come together in order to help the flower manifest herself. The flower is full of every-thing except one thing: a separate self, a separate identity" (Nhất 2003:47-48).

John Muir's intention from 1871 to "get as near to the heart of the world as [...he] can" (Wolfe 1978:144) might be no complete transcendence of the present, but it seems to have a lot to do with mindfulness and in-betweenness, and the fact that IE put 'deeper meaning' at the centre of any interpretive activity (Fig. 7), resonating with the experience of the heritage phenomena, the people and professional interpreters as stewards, facilitators, or even "middlemen of happiness" (Tilden 1957:12) can be linked to this idea.

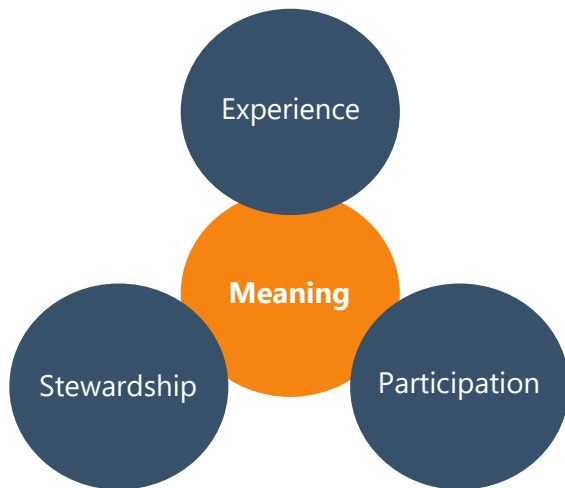


Figure 7. Interpretive triangle (IE 2017:10)

A professional interpreter's role in the interpretive triangle is to make people grow as humans through their heritage experience. "Fostering stewardship for all heritage" (IE 2017:10), as one of the four HI qualities IE promotes, is not just picking up litter and not spoiling the particular site but opening for the

idea to cherish the heritage of all people as a means to explore our shared future.

"The study of positive psychology suggests that being involved in something larger than a personal self creates a sense of meaning and well-being – an essential part of the experience of 'happiness'" (Siegel 2011a:259). While mindlessness means to separate from and not really attend to one's surroundings, according to Siegel mindfulness means to modify one's own internal world in order to integrate it with the internal world of others towards more compassion and wellbeing – like harmoniously tuning in to a jam session or an improvised choir.

When societies become wealthier (which so far has always meant they became less sustainable), they often do not become happier (Heliwell et al. 2021). On the other hand, Siegel suggests that people who are interconnected and engaged are in general happier than others, and therefore several ways of integration are key in his approach. One of them is "narrative integration" through stories (Siegel 2011a:73).

The idea of inter-being, of 'I am more than me', offers some interesting aspects, especially against the background of strengthening self-transcendence values through HI, as it was highlighted within the award-winning initiative 'Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage' (IE 2017).

The value circle (Fig. 8) was originally developed by Schwartz (1992). He and his team found that there are a number of universal values, which means that humans are usually driven by them, although to rather different degrees. All values appear in relation to each other, and they therefore can be arranged in groups across a 'value map' (Holmes et al 2011:67). The circle is a reduced version of this map.

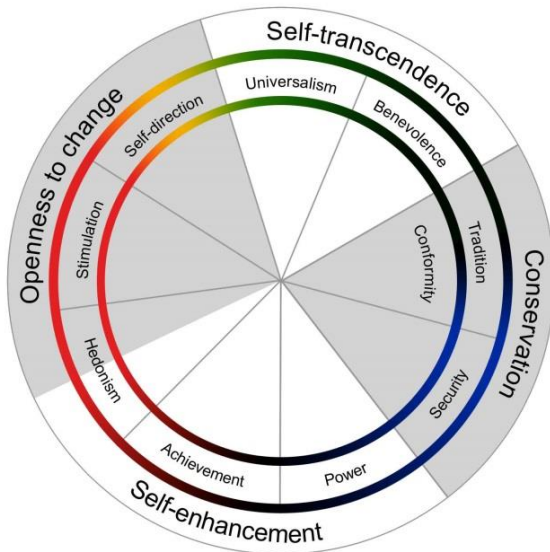


Figure 8. Value circle (IE 2017:10 based on Holmes et al 2011:16)

The self-transcendence values in the upper part of the circle include the values the EU stands for: “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail” (EU 2016:17).

In the value circle, self-transcendence values oppose the value groups of power and achievement in the lower part of the circle – although in political debates it sometimes seems the latter are more important. If EU politicians talk about Europe’s economy, it is mainly about competition and growth. Even the European Green Deal (EC 2021) doesn’t question those concepts.

Consequently, formal learning is also strongly focused on achievement. Since values “convey what is important to people in their lives” (Bardi and Goodwin 2011:271), the question which

values are primarily fostered in Europe is quite essential.

If formal learning systems don’t foster self-transcendence values, could non-formal learning (including HI) trigger some progress regarding this essential role? And in the longer term: Would it even be possible to encourage the formal learning sector (maybe starting from individual ministries and schools in selected countries) to establish ‘interpretive literacy’ towards more mindfulness in their curricula?

As the ‘Engaging citizens’ study suggested, this might also help to overcome some of the more serious divisions within Europe (IE 2017:20-23).

Conclusion

This paper intended to show that whole heritage experiences (that include physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social aspects) can encourage individuals to interpret heritage in a way that fosters mindfulness towards themselves, towards others and towards the planet.

If multiple senses are included in an experience, if people see, hear, smell and move at a site, if they are encouraged and have an opportunity to interpret and to share their personal conclusions with others, they link more information to different areas of their brain. Therefore, people will better recall this information and apply it to different situations. The reasons are that:

- Through multiple senses, information is stored in many parts of the brain
- Information selected by the people is linked to more previous information in the memory
- Previous information can be connected if people are offered opportunities to participate
- Emotions and deep personal meaning foster memorisation

In general, neuroscience supports HI beliefs that have been commonplace for decades, although more needs to be done to interpret those findings and to make them accessible for the HI community.

However, some findings suggest that there is considerable potential in HI to fill gaps in terms of more progressive learning, including search for meaning and active participation. There is no doubt that well planned information and communication technology could intensify first-hand experiences, but ironically, neuroscience seems to confirm what Freeman Tilden observed more than 60 years ago: “No device of the kind we here consider is, other things being equal, as desirable as interpretation by direct contact with the person” (Tilden 1957:96). Moscardo (1999:32) also found that in terms of fostering mindfulness, “a guided tour or presentation was the most effective option”. This does not mean that the future of all HI should be in interpretive walks, but it suggests that, in general, personal interpretation should play a more prominent role in interpretive planning than non-personal approaches.

The following principles could support people, visitors as well as local people, to better unfold the potential of heritage and to become more mindful:

- Motivation to be awake and engaged
- Encouragement to be open-minded and to ‘inter-be’
- Opportunities to strive for resonance and integration
- Offer to exchange different experiences and perspectives
- Stimulation for sharing meaning and compassion for the common good

Mindful learning requires “an implicit awareness of more than one perspective” (Langer 2016:4). It means to deal with uncertainties which also

makes sense if we want to enable people to succeed in a changing world. Therefore, professional interpreters should offer opportunities to transform through interpretation.

However, most people around heritage sites, especially tourists, just want to have a good time at a special place, sometimes alone, more frequently with their family and friends. People should become more mindful through their heritage experience but not feel educated. This requires some creativity in the development of new approaches.

Heritage sites are excellent learning places with numerous opportunities that formal settings just do not offer. The key questions is: How can professional interpreters create whole interpretive experiences that people will recall years later to shape our shared future in a mindful and responsible way?

Acknowledgements

This paper grew from exchange with many friends and colleagues from inside and outside IE. Among IE members, I owe special thanks for their inspiration to James Carter who called for “progressive interpretation” as an approach to individual learning (Carter 2016:8), to Willem Derde who emphatically highlighted the role HI should play for the European project, to Nicole Deufel who advocated for “agonistic interpretation” (Deufel 2016), and to Patrick Lehnies who considered different focus areas to be given more attention, including “multiple-perspective heritage interpretation” (Lehnies 2016:21) and “provocative heritage interpretation” (Lehnies 2017:90). Furthermore, I’m grateful to Valya Stergioti and to all those IE trainers and members who never get tired of discussing and testing new approaches to HI.

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Recreating a pragmatic friendship: A joint live virtual tour of the houses of David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer in post-Covid times

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Abstract

In the world of museums in general, and heritage museums in particular, the Covid-19 pandemic has created disruption and chaos on the one hand together with opportunities and the flourishing of new ideas, on the other. One result has been the creation of a live virtual tour of the Ben-Gurion Desert Home for groups from overseas, which has developed into a joint virtual tour with similar home museums of

leaders who had connections to David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel. This fruitful cooperation has eliminated geographical and cultural barriers, providing students and the general public a window into the heritage of different leaders around the world. During the Covid-19 pandemic, live joint virtual tours were created with the Gandhi Home at Sabarmati Ashram in India, the Ho Chi Minh museum in Hanoi Vietnam, the U Nu museum in Myanmar, and in particular the Konrad Adenauer House in Rhöndorf, near Bonn, Germany. The creation of the connection with the Adenauer Home is the focus of this paper, however, the methodology can be replicated in other heritage sites as well. The background of these two leaders, David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer, the two nation builders, will be examined. Their unique friendship given the complex history of the two nations which was symbolised by the Reparations Agreement of 1952. The joint virtual tour can shed light on heritage interpretation of each leader, as well as similarities and differences. This 'thinking out of the box' perspective can interpret heritage from a new angle and incorporate sustainability by a virtual visit to two countries, without the need to travel physically. It can be used as an educational and enriching tool. The virtual tour of both houses, in Sde Boker in Israel and in Bonn in Germany, facilitates a study of history and leadership in a meaningful and experiential way. The target audiences are school students, families, and the elderly.

Keywords

David Ben-Gurion; Konrad Adenauer; joint virtual tour; Israel and Germany diplomatic ties; Reparation agreement

First, a short biography of the two leaders

Konrad Adenauer

Konrad Adenauer was born at the end of the 19th century in imperial Germany (European Parliament Think Tank site). Growing up in relatively humble surroundings, he adopted Prussian values and a Christian faith that guided him throughout his life. Adenauer first took up political office in 1906, as city councilor of his hometown of Cologne. In 1909, he became president of the city council. He was then elected Lord Mayor of Cologne in 1917 – at the age of just 41. With the end of the First World War, Adenauer made efforts to promote transnational cooperation with Germany's neighbours to the West on several occasions – a progressive move at that point in time. When, in February 1933, the newly elected German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, visited Cologne, Konrad Adenauer refused to receive him – a decision that saw him removed from his position as Lord Mayor. Forced into political exile, he spent the following 12 years with his family at his home in Rhöndorf. His situation became really dangerous twice when, in 1934 and 1944, he was held prisoner by the Gestapo for several months as an enemy of the regime after the so-called 'night of the long knives' in 1934 and after the assassination attempt on Hitler failed in 1944.

After the defeat of Nazi Germany, Adenauer was determined to establish a political platform that would unite people around core Christian and democratic values, and it was on this basis that he was elected as the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany in September 1949. Throughout his 14 years as Chancellor of Germany, Konrad Adenauer remained determined to integrate Germany into a value-based European political system. Therefore, reconciliation, rapprochement and cooperation with France became the central goals of

Adenauer's foreign policy, ultimately shaping German policy up to the present day. His groundbreaking decisions in foreign politics included the German Israeli reparations. In domestic policy, he was responsible for the integration of refugees and displaced persons as well as the construction of social market economy. He died aged 91 on 19 April 1967 and was buried in Rhöndorf.

David Ben-Gurion

David Gruen was born in Plonsk, part of the Russian Empire (and later Poland) in 1886, the sixth child of Avigdor Gruen, a form of local lawyer and Schimel.¹ His mother passed away when he was 11 years old. In 1900 he established the Zionist organisation 'Ezra' with fellow Jewish youth in order to enhance the status and youth of the Hebrew language in the town. In 1906, Ben-Gurion emigrated to Eretz Israel and worked initially as a farmer in Petach Tikva, the Rishon Le'Zion vineyard, and Kfar Saba. He quickly immersed himself in politics and became a journalist in the left-wing periodical, Poalei Zion, signing his first article with his new surname: Ben-Gurion. In 1912 he moved to Istanbul, the capital of Turkey, to study law in order to represent Jews against the Turkish authorities. He was expelled by the Turks with the outbreak of the First World War and travelled to the US to recruit Jews to the Zionist cause. He met Paula Monbazz there and they married. Ben-Gurion then recruited to the British Army as part of a Jewish battalion.

Between 1919 and 1939 he created the Socialist party in pre-Israel and the General Trade Union. During the Second World War he fought for Jewish immigration to pre-Israel whilst supporting the British government and their people in their fight against the Nazi regime. In 1948 he declared the establishment of the State of Israel, becoming the head of the Provisional

¹ See the Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute internet site: <http://www.bgh.org.il/Web/En/Default.aspx>

government in Israel, Defence Minister, and was elected as Prime Minister in the first official general elections in 1949. During his time of office, he brought hundreds of thousands of Jews from all over the world to Israel, doubling the population in just three years. In 1953 he resigned as Prime Minister and moved to Kibbutz Sde Boker in the Negev. He finally resigned in 1963, remained in Sde Boker and continued to be involved in political activity. In 1968 his wife passed away and on 1 December 1973 he passed away and was buried alongside Paula at the Midreshet Sde Boker burial site (later renamed Midreshet Ben-Gurion).

A pragmatic friendship: The Reparations Agreement and similarities and differences between Konrad Adenauer and David Ben-Gurion

Seven years after the end of the Second World War and the Holocaust, negotiations took place between the State of Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany, culminating in the Reparations Agreement on 10 September 1952 (which came into force on 27 March 1953). According to this Agreement, West Germany was to pay Israel for the costs of "resettling so great a number of uprooted and destitute Jewish refugees" after the war, and to compensate individual Jews, via the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, for losses in Jewish livelihood and property resulting from Nazi persecution. In 1952, the first Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, argued that the reparation demand was based on recovering as much Jewish property as possible "so that the murderers do not become the heirs as well". His other argument was that the reparations were needed to finance the absorption and rehabilitation of the Holocaust survivors in Israel.

Konrad Adenauer was convinced that the Federal Republic had a moral obligation to make

reparations in view of the horrific crimes committed by the Germans under National Socialism. Moreover, the Reparations Agreement made it easier for the Federal Republic to return to the international stage – especially in the West. The restitution policy was controversial and met with resistance even within his Cabinet. Nearly half of all Germans (44%) believed it was superfluous.

Despite the protests, the agreement was signed in September 1952, and under the terms of this 'Israel Treaty', West Germany paid Israel the sum of 3 billion Deutsche Marks (the equivalent of about € 1.764 billion) in goods deliveries over the next 14 years; 450 million Deutsche Marks were paid to the World Jewish Congress. The payments were made to the State of Israel as compensation for those victims who had no surviving family. The money was invested in the country's infrastructure and played an important role in establishing the economy of the new state. At the time, Israel faced a deep economic crisis and was heavily dependent on donations from foreign Jews, and the reparations, along with these donations, would help turn Israel into an economically viable country. It was a treaty between two states without diplomatic relations (Honig: 1954, 564). Much has been written about this tumultuous historical event, whose scope exceeds the boundaries of this particular paper.

The Reparations Agreement was and remains a controversial topic in both Israel and Germany. The personal influence of the two leaders, David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer, was crucial in its success (Witzthum 2019: 223). As national 'patriarchs' they succeeded in shaping the paths of their respective countries, both internally and externally (Witzthum:223). Shortly after taking office, both men realised that their paths would inevitably intersect and understood the importance and uniqueness of that convergence. By reinterpreting German history

and framing the story in their own countries and on the world stage, Adenauer accepted Ben-Gurion's view of Israel's role as representative of the Jewish people, while Ben-Gurion accepted that Adenauer had voluntarily shouldered the moral responsibility of his 'new' state, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), toward the Jews. The negotiations between the two countries were run by representatives of the two leaders and they only met for the first time in March 1960 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. Their conversation was both formal and casual and the famous photograph from that meeting shows a friendship and closeness. "It looked like a meeting full of friendship and affection", reported the daily Maariv Hebrew paper. Ben-Gurion agreed: "Yes, I have a high esteem for Adenauer. If I ever in my life was going to do a good deed – this was it...One has to aim only for the future. I live in the future. The past does not interest me" (Witzthum: 234).

Diplomatic relations were soon established between Israel and Germany and the last visit between the two leaders took place in June 1966, when Adenauer was a private citizen and visited Ben-Gurion's Desert Home in the Negev. Adenauer died a year later and Ben-Gurion attended his funeral. It can be said that their efforts for reconciliation between the two countries was a result and led to a pragmatic friendship. "Against all odds, the common legacy they left behind has stood the test of time" (Witzthum: 236).

Regarding their traits, one can say that both came from modest backgrounds in Imperialist Europe at the end of the 19th century. Their family backgrounds were similar: both their fathers were clerks. Both started law studies; Adenauer completed his studies, Ben-Gurion did not. Both were inventors. During the First World War Adenauer developed a form of cornbread to help the food shortage in the city of Cologne. In the early 1950s, a severe food

shortage in Israel stemming from mass immigration and lack of resources induced Ben-Gurion to request from the central food company to develop a food supplement similar to rice but made of wheat. Thus the 'ptitim' were created and are still popular today. Both leaders greatly influenced the political systems in their respective countries. Towards the end of their political careers both saw highs and lows. After the General Elections of 1957, Adenauer's party won an absolute majority of 50.2% of the votes cast – a unique achievement. In 1959 Ben-Gurion's party, MAPAI, won 47 out of 120 possible mandates, also an unparalleled achievement. Their pragmatic attitude to the past and present connected them and allowed them to overcome obstacles and create a new reality in the relations between the two countries.

Adenauer House Foundation

The Foundation Federal Chancellor Adenauer House is one of six political memorials of the Federal Republic of Germany. It attracts people from all over the world to Rhöndorf, a small village near Bonn. Since it was established as a museum in 1970, it has received 3 million visitors, and on average it receives 35,000 visitors per year.

The Foundation commemorates the life and influence of the first post-war German Chancellor and dedicated European Konrad Adenauer in three main fields:

1. Visitors can explore the private house and the garden of Konrad Adenauer preserved in original condition. Guided tours give an insight to the lifestyle and the political thought of Adenauer.
2. The permanent exhibition, 'Konrad Adenauer 1876-1967. Rhinelander, German, European', which was reopened with a new design in April 2017, is located

in the modern foundation building and provides detailed information about Adenauer's long life and his influence during four epochs of German history.

3. The archives preserve and make accessible the extensive and significant estate of Konrad Adenauer. Publishing primary sources and conferences make a contribution to historical research.

The original residence and the permanent exhibition provide an opportunity to time travel into German and European history in the 19th and 20th centuries. They allow visitors to discover the politician and statesman Konrad Adenauer as well as the private man: Adenauer was one of the founding figures of Europe, who promoted Franco-German reconciliation. But he may also be discovered as a husband and father of a family, a friend of gardens and lover of roses, inventor, admirer of religious art and classical music, enthusiastic reader of Agatha Christie's detective stories and a passionate boccie player.

Strategies to attract a wider audience and increase visibility during the lockdown

With thematic guided tours and special event days, school class projects and activities for children, the foundation offers a broad programme, with a focus on Franco-German reconciliation and European integration. Since 2020, the educational programmes have also been offered online, as a video conference or virtual tour.

Jewish life in Germany and Konrad Adenauer's relations with Israel is one important focus of the foundation's work. The first contribution on the occasion of 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany, an event for Adenauer's birthday on 5 January, had to be postponed due to the lockdown. As an alternative, short speeches on the topic were given online. Since the historic

site has reopened, visitors of Adenauer's Garden can explore a small special exhibition on Konrad Adenauer and Jewish life. In the meantime, events for guests are also possible on site again. The foundation is offering two special tours of the garden on the theme of Adenauer and Judaism.

The site is only partially re-opened. The interiors of the original preserved residence of the first German Chancellor are unfortunately still closed to the public for infection control reasons; only the exhibition and garden are accessible. Virtual tours are the only way to present the historic rooms to those interested.

The Ben-Gurion Desert Home, Kibbutz Sde Boker, Israel

Ben-Gurion's Desert Home is part of The Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute, established in 1976 following the passing of The David Ben-Gurion Law in order "to memorialise Ben-Gurion's work and perpetuate his heritage through the subsequent generations".

In 1953 Ben-Gurion decided to resign from office and move to Kibbutz Sde Boker in the Negev with his wife Paula, becoming members of the new Kibbutz. Ben-Gurion believed Sde Boker was a "pioneering enterprise", which fulfilled his Zionist vision to settle the Negev and "make the desert bloom". While returning to office in 1955 required him to spend most of his time in the centre of Israel, following his final resignation from office in 1963, he returned to his home in the desert.

Paula and David Ben-Gurion's home has remained as it was left in 1973, fulfilling Ben-Gurion's will, in which he instructed that their home should be open to the public: "I ask that the home in Sde Boker, which was my home until the day I passed away, shall be kept in its

current state, including all furniture, books and magazines that are in it”.

The house reflects Ben-Gurion’s personality and world views, and the exhibits demonstrate how his personal and public lives intertwined. Visitors can enjoy a close encounter with Israel’s founding father and iconic figure, exploring different aspects of his personality and life. His library includes Over 5,000 books in nine different languages on a variety of topics. The guest room includes artifacts of different symbols of the State of Israel: a map of Israel, Israel’s flag, Israel’s declaration of independence, and other national symbols, as well as pictures of his family and memorabilia from the east and from Jewish communities around the world. His slippers and the pile of books which were by his bed at his final days, remain exactly where he left them.

Right next to his desert home, additional exhibitions have been put in place in order to provide visitors with additional activities and information regarding his vision for the Negev Desert, while shedding light on Ben-Gurion as a leader, a husband and a member of the Kibbutz.

A new methodology of interpretation: Joint live virtual tours. Adenauer House and Ben-Gurion Desert Home as a case study

On 15 March 2020, with the first major lockdown in Israel and immediate closure of all museums and heritage sites, the staff of the Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute understood that a major change was happening, and quick action was required. The Programme Development Unit immediately prepared a rationale for a virtual live tour of the Desert Home. This required technical purchases and arrangements: Wi-Fi in the home and surrounding areas was improved (this took a while) and an iPhone and special selfie rod called ‘gimbal’ were purchased. In addition to the guide who walked around the

home, an additional worker ran the virtual session and made sure that all technical issues were covered.

Within days, live virtual tours of the home began. Audiences have varied from school students in Australia, Canada and France to elderly women in the US (Hadassah Organisation). Our insistence on a live tour, as opposed to a pre-recorded tour, has made the tour both unique and challenging. Due to time zone differences, our guides can guide at 5am in order to host a group from the US or Australia and other times at 10pm.

Since March 2020 over 200 live virtual tours have been given. It has become a fixed feature in the ongoing activity of the Heritage Institute even after the heritage site reopened to the public. This has opened endless possibilities: There will always be audiences interested in visiting the Desert Home of the founder of the State of Israel but geographical and physical limitations may prevent this. Thus, virtual tours become an integral part of the work in the Desert Home and will continue even post-Covid-19.

Very early on in the pandemic, the idea of running a joint live tour with additional museums or heritage sites also arose. On the local level, this was done together with the Ben-Gurion House in Tel Aviv (Ben-Gurion had two homes in Israel and they are separate entities). An additional tour was given with the Chaim Weizmann House in Rehovot (the first President of the State of Israel).

On an international level, we reached out to museums and organisations representing world figures with a connection to David Ben-Gurion, either through a physical presence in the actual home or a historical one. A photograph of Mahatma Gandhi hangs in the bedroom of David Ben-Gurion, the only one there. The two leaders did not meet or exchange

correspondence, but Ben-Gurion admired the Indian leader. After many efforts, we connected to Sabarmati Ashram, one of Gandhi's homes and currently a museum in Ahmedabad Gujarat, and developed together a live virtual tour run by local guides which has run five times already to school children, both Indian and Israeli, and the general public. Connection was made with the Ho Chi Minh Museum in Hanoi, Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh, the founder of modern Vietnam, met David Ben-Gurion at a chance meeting in Paris in 1946. Cooperation is ongoing. Initial attempts to connect to the U Nu Museum in Yangon, Myanmar, ceased due to recent violent clashes there. Ben-Gurion and U Nu established a friendship, visited each other in their respective countries and discussed philosophy, Buddhism and religion together. Attempts to contact the Abraham Lincoln Museum in the US were unfruitful (Ben-Gurion has a picture of Lincoln in his living room).

The connection with the Adenauer House in Germany began in March 2020, with an immediate mutual will to make it happen. An immediate rapport was made with Dr Sabine Steidle. The cooperation began with Zoom sessions, preparing the joint tour, and deciding which elements should be highlighted. Two virtual live tours were provided for the staff of both organisations. Future plans to provide live tours for school students, both German and Israeli, and to the public, are in preparation. With this new approach, the joint project with Ben Gurion's Desert Home offers an excellent opportunity to engage in conversation about the history of German Israeli relations, the personalities of the two statesmen and their mutual friendship. A partner school of the museum, the Apostelgymnasium in Cologne, is expected to participate in the programme with graduating classes and the German Israeli student exchange committee.

The actual tour lasts around 45 minutes and is run from the two locations: Sde Boker and Rhöndorf. Two local guides introduce themselves alternately to the audience with a general description of the house. They stand at the entrance to the house and provide a panoramic view of the surrounding area. The geographical contrast is immediately felt. From there each guide enters the house and simultaneously visits each relevant room: living room, kitchen, bedroom, garden and patio. In each room the guide describes objects belonging to the leader, his way of life and thinking and, again, the spectator can compare in real time between the two houses, seeing both similarities and differences. Participants can ask questions through the chat or by unmuting themselves. The tour usually ends with a picture of the games area in the Adenauer Home (Boccia) and the statue of Ben-Gurion at his home as he stands on his head (he would stand on his head daily for medical reasons). The guides will sum up the tour whilst on the screen together, will answer any remaining questions and will leave the spectators with suggestions for further reading and an invitation to come and visit in person in the future.

We see these joint live tours as advancing the premises of 'Interpreting our Heritage' on different levels. First of all, the guidance of each museum is a local one. This is essential in order to transmit the authentic sense of the place. The contrast of the different types of guidance is in itself an interpretation. Each guide visits a similar room, for instance the kitchen or the living room, describes it, and in that way the spectator learns about the character of the leader living in the house. There are both similarities and differences between the houses and these shed light on the uniqueness of a seemingly impossible friendship and its historical significance.

The idea of concentrating on 'home museums' and reconstructing the atmosphere through the place and through objects allows the visitor to be an integral part of the visit and find similar objects in his/her own home (Dekel and Vinitzky-Serussi 2017: 336-362).

"Home museums thus offer a new way of understanding the sociological meaning of the intangibility of atmosphere. The past is no longer a foreign country. Nor is it perceived as fully mediated. On the contrary, the past is presented as felt, close, familiar, and shared, leaving the ghosts of what is not sharable or known as part of the story of home" (Dekel and Vinitzky-Seroussi 2017: 358).

We believe that by touring the houses of two nation builders who forged a friendship against all odds, we can achieve so much more than a lecture on Israel German ties and the Reparations Agreement. We awaken the senses of the visitor, connect to the visitor by showing household objects found in every home and, by local guidance, show the passion of the guide to share the site with others. Thus, recreating a pragmatic friendship through a joint virtual live tour is a new interpretation of heritage which can bring added value to people's lives and foster human values.



Image 1. Historic visit of Konrad Adenauer to Ben-Gurion Desert Home, Kibbutz Sde Boker, March 1966 (Image: Israeli Government Press Office)



Image 2. Visit of President of Federal German Republic, Frank-Walter Steinmeier to the Ben-Gurion Desert Home, 2 July 2021 (Image: Bundesregierung/ Thomas Imo)

WELCOME TO BEN-GURION'S DESERT HOME

This map will assist your visit at the site so that you can explore Ben-Gurion's heritage and its relevance today.

- "Ben-Gurion hosting" - A 12 minute introductory film on Ben-Gurion's connection to the Negev.
- Gypsum house - An exhibition on Ben-Gurion's vision of the Negev and his connection to Kibbutz Sde Boker.
- The test of time - Interactive tables examining three areas of Ben-Gurion's thought against the test of time: The Negev, the IDF and the role of youth.
- "Who is a leader" - A 17 minute film on different aspects of Ben-Gurion's leadership.
- Ben-Gurion's Desert Home - Paula and David Ben-Gurion's original home.

- Topographical map of the Negev.
- Activity Rooms and Temporary Exhibitions.
- Map of the Negev in a sand table- family activity area.

Visiting hours: Sundays to Thursdays: 08:30 - 16:00,
Fridays and Holiday Eves: 08:30- 14:00,
Saturdays and Holidays: 10:00- 16:00
Last entry: about one hour before closing time



Figure 1. English brochure on the Ben-Gurion Desert Home (1)

Ben-Gurion's Desert Home:

The house of Paula and David Ben-Gurion has been preserved in its original state in accordance with his will.

Ben-Gurion and his wife Paula lived in the desert home from the time they became members of Sde Boker in 1953.

The visit in the house teaches us about his personality, characteristics and views of life.

The presents and souvenirs on show in the house reflect all that was close to his heart: the picture of the emblem of the state with the picture of his friend, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (the second president of Israel), the declaration of independence, the Chanukia playing the national anthem "Hatikvah" and the map of Israel.

The heart of the house is Ben-Gurion's study with a library of 5,000 books covering his fields of interest: Judaism and the Bible, philosophy, history, geography, the IDF and security issues. There are special photographs and sculpture which Ben-Gurion placed in significant places: Moses, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Berl Katznelson, his soul mate partner in leading the socialist party in the land of Israel.

These reflect his world view, which integrates national and universal value.



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Internet site: www.ben-gurion.co.il



Photography - Hanan Epstein

Ben-Gurion milestones

David Ben-Gurion was born in Plonsk, Poland (Czarist Russia) on October 16th, 1886. Paula Ben-Gurion was born in the Russian city of Minsk in April, 1892.

- 1906 - Immigrated to the Land of Israel (then under Ottoman rule).
Worked as a laborer in the first Hebrew settlements.
- 1912 - Studied law in Turkey with aim of representing the Jews in the Land of Israel in the Turkish Parliament.
- 1915 - Exiled from the Land of Israel due to his Zionist activities and Russian roots. Travelled to the United States to recruit Zionist youth.
- 1917 - Met and married Paula Munbaz in New York.
(David and Paula Ben-Gurion had three children – Geula, Amos and Renana).
- 1918 - Enlisted in the Jewish Battalion of the British army.
Returned to the Land of Israel as a soldier.
- 1921 - Elected secretary of the Histadrut (Jewish Labor Federation).
- 1935 - Elected Chairman of the Jewish Agency.
- May 14, 1948 – Proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel.
- 1949 - Elected as the first Prime Minister and first Minister of Defense.
- December 1953 - Resigned from office to become a member of the Sde-Boker community.
- 1955 - Returned to office as Minister of Defense and later as Prime Minister.
- 1963 - Resigned from office and returned to live in Kibbutz Sde-Boker.
- 1968 - Paula Ben-Gurion passed away and was buried at the Ben-Gurion College.
- 1 December 1973 - Passed away and was buried at the Ben-Gurion College, next to Paula.

Figure 2. English brochure on the Ben-Gurion Desert Home (2)

GUIDED TOURS AND PROJECTS

- Standard tour of the house
45 minutes
- Standard tour of the exhibition
45 minutes
- Combined tour of the house and exhibition
80 minutes
- Special tours and themed seminars
1.5 – 3.5 hours
- Pre-school projects
2 hours
- School projects
2 – 6 hours

OPENING TIMES MUSEUM AND HOUSE

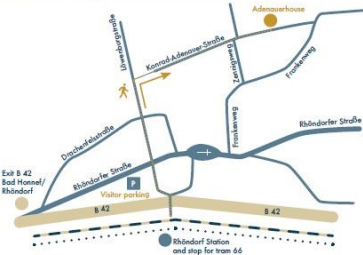
1 May – 30 September:
Tuesday – Sunday: 10am – 6pm
Tours through the house and garden
from 10am – 5pm every hour on the hour

1 October – 30 April:
Tuesday – Sunday: 10am – 4:30pm
Tours through the house and garden
from 10am – 4pm every hour on the hour

Closed: Mondays (open on Whit Monday),
24, 25, 26 and 31 December, 1 January as well as the
days of the Carnival celebrations

Free admission! Visiting the house is only possible on a
guided tour. Groups of 10 and above are requested to contact
the Visitor Services in advance:

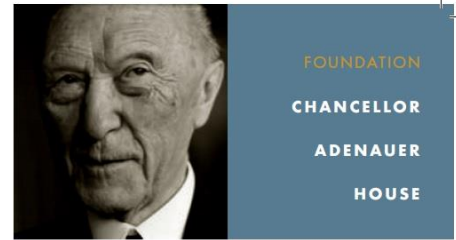
Tel 0049 2224/921 – 234
Email besucherdienst@adenauerhaus.de



Getting there by car or bus B 42 (exit Bad Honnef-Rhöndorf).
Visitor parking and bus bay at Rhöndorfer Straße 30 next to the fire station.
From there, Adenauerhouse is ten minutes' walk.

Getting there by train Köln-Koblenz line on the right bank of the Rhine: Rhöndorf
Station. Or tram line 66 Siegburg-Bonn-Bad Honnef: Rhöndorf tram stop. From there,
Adenauerhouse is ten minutes' walk.

STIFTUNG BUNDESKANZLER-ADENAUER-HAUS
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ADENAUER HOUSE RHÖNDORF



Permanent exhibition –
Room on Adenauer's chancellorship

copyright photos: Adenauerhaus: Daniel Stauch, Will McBride,
Roland Breitschuh, Dirk Hagemus; KAS: Peter Bausearth

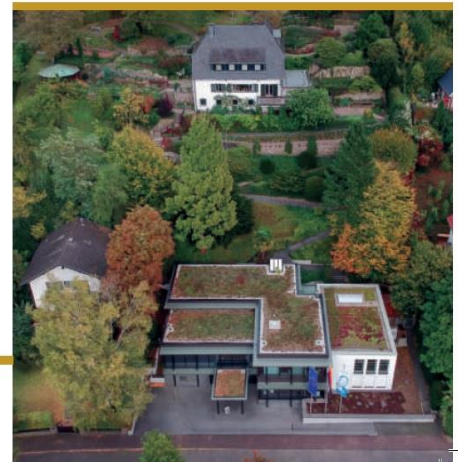


Figure 3. English brochure on the Adenauer House (1)



Figure 4. English brochure on the Adenauer House (2)



Image 3. Insight into the permanent exhibition on Konrad Adenauer's life and work. The photograph of the meeting with Ben-Gurion in New York in 1960 is also on display

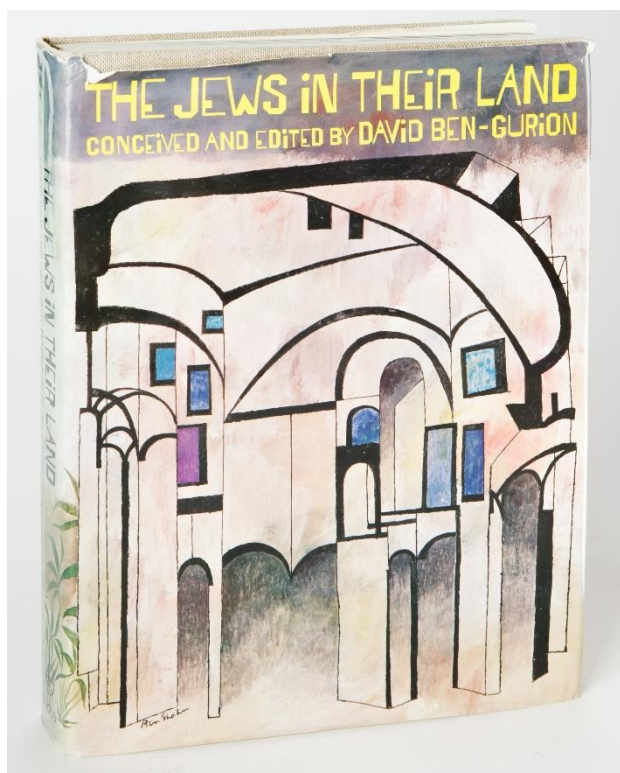


Image 4. Ben-Gurion gave a copy of his book to Adenauer on the occasion of his visit to the Kibbutz Sde Boker, March 1966. It is on display in the Adenauer House exhibition

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European Parliament Think Tank site:
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2018\)628309](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2018)628309)
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Abstracts of other presentations

Bridging parks, UNESCO-areas and tourism through heritage interpretation

Kristian Bjørnstad and Trym Holt Rudshaug (Norway)

The relationship between national parks and the field of heritage interpretation is close. However, there are other types of parks and UNESCO-areas using interpretation today. We see it in the Nature-Regional-Landscape (NRL) parks and in the many UNESCO-areas. Since the first wilderness oriented national parks, there are now a great diversity of parks and UNESCO-areas working with both natural and cultural values. This is likely to increase the need for interpretation. Tourism is also important in these areas. In this presentation we explore how interpretation can be used to strengthen more integrated approaches in parks and UNESCO-areas. We also explore how interpretation can strengthen the connection with tourism. We draw on fresh experiences from developing interpretation in regional parks in Norway as well as in a new network for interpreters in parks and UNESCO-areas. First results show that the field can serve as a bridge, or common platform, between parks and UNESCO-areas.

Kristian Bjørnstad is the managing director of the Norwegian Parks Association. He is a human ecologist and educator by training, specialising in regional park development. He has been active in establishing regional parks in Norway during the last 15 years and integrates interpretation in this work. He is also active in Interpret Europe as the Country Coordinator Norway.

Trym Holt Rudshaug is project manager for nature and landscape management in the Norwegian Parks Association. He is trained as an applied ecologist and nature interpreter. He coordinates the junior ranger programme in the association.

Interpretation performed by certified tourist guides in Lisbon during the pandemic

Luís Miguel Brito (Portugal)

Interpretation quality distinguishes tourist guides. According to an investigation carried out by the author in 2008 (Brito, 2013), tourists who travel with a guide claim that, although guides have many different, relevant and complementary roles, interpretation is, no doubt, the most important one. The idea of conducting this study arose from the fact that, from March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic left more than 90% of the guides unemployed. Many of them changed profession, others live very much below their usual standards – sometimes facing serious issues, and some of them decided to face the situation by creating their own walking tours in Lisbon and started selling them on social media. The methodology used in this paper to obtain data on the interpretation of guides was a questionnaire, which was sent to all 24 licensed guides who were active in the last 11 months performing several different walking tours in Lisbon.

Luís Miguel Brito is a senior lecturer in Estoril, Portugal. He teaches heritage interpretation, communication techniques and Italian. In 2012, he completed a PhD in Tourism, entitled: 'The

tourist guide: Facilitator of cultural tourism'. He has written several scientific articles, book chapters and also a book on tourist information.

Augmented reality and gamification elements for multiperspective, interpretive apps

Anna Chatel (Germany)

Smartphones provide enormous resources for learning about our local environment. We can see phenomena from different perspectives or update the environment with augmented realities. Gamification elements can make this learning process for some target groups even more attractive. With students, we have developed innovative outdoor interpretation apps for the public. Evaluation showed us clearly that exploring and interpreting our environment and communicating the findings to others via apps can contribute to seeing phenomena from different perspectives. We have initiated some empirical research projects to learn about how effective the implementation of smartphone-apps is for outdoor interpretation for nature parks and biosphere reserves. More and more different tools are being developed to create your own apps very easily.

Anna Chatel holds a PhD in Biogeography. She had two scholarships for her thesis, 'Heritage interpretation for nature tourism in the Black Forest', and won the Instructional Development Award (€ 70,000) – an innovative teaching prize for her course, 'Heritage interpretation mobil'. She is a lecturer for heritage interpretation at the University of Education Freiburg and University of Freiburg.

Sharing the wonders of World Heritage Wadden Sea

Renate de Backere (Netherlands)

In 2009 the Wadden Sea was assigned World Heritage status by UNESCO. A title to be proud of! However, as there are many governments and companies involved in the Wadden Sea area, this status wasn't actively promoted. Hence, we started Wadden Sea World Heritage excursions to show the uniqueness of the Wadden Sea. The more you know about this apparently flat and sometimes grey area, the more you value this place. As a rule, we work together with local and involved entrepreneurs and companies. This way we give a positive impulse to the nature experience on a small scale and the local economy. Our guides are very passionate, experienced, and know how to transfer their passion to various audiences.

Renate de Backere has lived and worked in the Wadden Sea area for more than 15 years. As an ecologist, photographer and outdoor person, she is always eager to share her passion and wonder with others by guiding on the mudflats and training entrepreneurs about the special features of World Heritage Wadden Sea. She also co-trains the nature guides of the Waddenvereniging.

Join the discussion: Heritage interpretation and sustainable tourism – match or clash?

Laila De Bruyne, Barbara Struys and Helena ten Berge (Belgium)

At this conference you'll get loads of inspiration about the connection between heritage interpretation (HI) and tourism. But how do you feel about this theme? Let's discuss and use the strength of the network to exchange views and connect through reflection. The following questions will form the starting point of the conversation: What makes HI a suitable tool to recreate tourism after the Covid-19 crisis? What do we mean when we talk about sustainable tourism? Are there any pitfalls we should avoid? Should we take conditions into account when we want to use HI as a tool for more sustainable tourism? How can an individual HI practitioner contribute to sustainable tourism? With interactive digital tools we will collect information and open a lively discussion. We will share the output of the session with all members after the conference (in a newsletter article or webinar). By joining this interactive session, you will contribute to a small but meaningful inquiry on heritage interpretation in relation to tourism.

Laila De Bruyne is IE's Country Coordinator Belgium and leads a small team of ambitious heritage professionals in researching and furthering heritage interpretation in Belgium. When not volunteering for IE, she consults in community building for cultural and heritage projects.

Barbara Struys works as a freelance consultant in heritage interpretation for families and coaching groups of guides.

Helena ten Berge works at Herita vzw and combines community building with the coordination of a big crowdfunding project.

The 'Martinki Custom' – Managing, learning, living, giving and receiving heritage

Vasilka Dimitrovska (North Macedonia)

Many years before the Martinki Custom was officially inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Representative List, HAEMUS created 'Grandma March Day' to support the ongoing multinational application about this tradition, thus preserving it. The Martinki Custom is the Balkan tradition of exchanging handmade amulets in red and white colours. They are given to a loved one on 1 March to celebrate the beginning of spring with wishes for health, love, luck, and prosperity for the coming year. Amulets are worn until nature starts to bloom when they are then hung on the trees. The traditional manifestation, 'Grandma March Day', is an annual event with wide social inclusion, during which people – regardless of nationality, religion, gender, or age – educate, interpret, share and transmit this heritage through practice and interactive approaches. This interactive workshop will provide the methodology to create an amulet as well as opportunity for questions and live discussion. At the end, we will vote on the best interpretive handicraft.

Vasilka Dimitrovska is a professional archaeologist, heritage consultant and a creative director of HAEMUS – the Centre for Scientific Research and Promotion of Culture. She has considerable experience in the interpretation and creative industry sector, founding several

long-term sustainable projects, such as Scupini Romani, Grandma March Day, Educative Skopje tours, and HAEMUS Travel.

Co-creating tourism experiences through interpretative storytelling

Jacqui Doyle (Ireland)

How are stories used between the guide and tourist? How can the guide and tourist co-create an experience? This presentation will look at co-creation of experiences between guides and tourists at Historic House Tourist Attractions (HHTA), using data from a broader ethnographic study of guided tours at Huntington Castle, Ireland. We will explore the Story Enhanced Tourism Experience (SETE) – the practice of interpretive storytelling to conceptualise a more immersive tourism experience, and how understanding the tourist/guide interactive process can help to co-create better experiences. While co-creation offers a theoretical foundation and strategic guidelines for implementation, storytelling is the tool to create the experience, and thereby dominates from an operational perspective. It requires looking beyond the parties involved to see what other factors influence the experience, particularly what dimensions influence the state of mind of the tourist. Most importantly, it will determine how the SETE results in a pleasurable and more memorable experience.

Jacqui Doyle holds a degree in Marketing, a Master's degree in Business and Tourism and a Master's degree in Historic Houses. In 2018, Jacqui completed her doctorate on How to design, develop and deliver co-created tourism and heritage experiences through storytelling in Ireland's Ancient East. As a tourism consultant with over 20 years' experience, she uses this knowledge and expertise to help tourism

enterprises and destinations enhance their visitor experiences. She is currently a full time lecturer in Tourism at TU Dublin.

Land, stories, people and place: The ups, the downs – and the preparations for a new climate future

Murray Ferguson and Clare Cooper (UK)

Two place-based projects, each with different roots, set out to do remarkably similar things over the last three years on opposite sides of the Cairngorms National Park – the largest National Park in the UK. To the west, the Badenoch Great Place Project was borne from a combination of opportunities and threats in the historically rich Badenoch area and a desire to make it a renowned place for telling stories about the connections between people and the land. To the east, the Cateiran Eco-museum has created an outstanding new cultural destination, based on the principle of a 'museum without walls'. Designed to reveal the hidden heritage of this captivating area by the community who live there, the Cateiran Eco-museum tells the story of its people, places and landscapes. Now, drawing on the all experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, these two areas are looking forward and making exciting plans to use interpretation-based approaches to tackle climate and biodiversity challenges.

Murray Ferguson has worked on collaborative management of the Cairngorms National Park for more than 20 years and currently oversees work on rural development, sustainable tourism, visitor services and community development. A geographer by training, he has worked on many projects using interpretation-led approaches

and has worked internationally in South America and presented at conferences internationally, including in the USA and Scandinavia.

Clare Cooper was Winner of the Scottish Women in Business Innovator Award. She works across the fields of tourism, environmental regeneration and culture. She is a founding director of the Cateran Eco-museum and co-initiator of Bioregioning Tayside, which is spearheading Scotland's first 'Museum of Rapid Transition'.

Contemporary interpretive architecture and landscape architecture in Europe

Angus Forbes (Germany)

Is there such a thing as interpretive architecture? Perhaps the best place to look for an answer to this question is through studying the designs of purpose-built interpretation or visitor centres. Aiming to find at least one example from every country in Europe, IE's Architecture Group collated interesting-looking projects and wrote to the architects asking for insights into their design approach. This presentation will look at highlights from this survey and share some thoughts on what makes for good interpretive architecture.

Angus Forbes is the IE Architects Coordinator. He holds degrees in three-dimensional design and landscape architecture. Having grown up in Kenya and Scotland he currently works in Berlin as a landscape architect.

Recreating post-pandemic tourism through the use of travel texts

Margarita Ioannou and Katerina Gotsi (Cyprus)

Travel writing was a hybrid, fluid and "highly adaptable form" (Thompson, 2016: 196) long before the digital era. For this study, we examined travel memoirs, travelogues, guidebooks, coffee table photobooks, as well as online newspaper and magazine articles, travel blog posts and travel website articles, travel TV shows, YouTube videos and documentaries, travel vlogs and podcasts. These travel texts are an exceptionally rich source of information covering all aspects of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as defined by UNESCO. The study of the travel texts, whether synchronically or diachronically, may prove a valuable tool when it comes to getting to really know a place, its culture and its people. The outcomes of the study of travel texts may be perfectly used in tourism, helping create meaningful and memorable experiences – especially for post-Covid era tourists, in need as they are of the healing power of travelling and culture after a long period of isolation and social distancing. Interactive maps, educational games, guided walks, talks and exhibitions – all based on material provided in travel accounts – may be designed to suit different age group needs. The information, ideas and insights they communicate can be addressed to and received by locals and tourists alike, making them feel like members of the same community instead of separating them.

Margarita Ioannou holds multiple degrees from the University of Cyprus and is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation. She works on the research

programme EXCELLENCE/0918/0190: Re-inventing age-old Travelling Paths of the Levant in the Digital Era: the example of Cyprus (ReTraPath).

Katerina Gotsi holds multiple degrees and is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Center for Scientific Dialogue and Research (Cyprus). She also works on the research programme EXCELLENCE/0918/0190 Re-inventing age-old Travelling Paths of the Levant in the Digital Era: the example of Cyprus (ReTraPath).

Art prints as an interpretation tool

Vincent Jacot (Estonia)

Art has been used to interpret history for centuries. Art prints are inexpensive to produce, easily reproducible, and transportable. With these benefits it is difficult to understand why art prints have not been widely adopted by the heritage sector as an interpretive tool.

This presentation will use real-world examples to explore the many ways in which cultural institutions can use art prints to engage audiences, enhance their exhibitions, generate revenue, and create touring exhibitions.

Vincent Jacot has worked in the heritage tourism industry for a decade. Influenced by his knowledge of interpretation and his experience working with art stores, Vincent founded Historiart, a vendor dedicated to the museum store sector. They create art prints and curate experiences that feature history, heritage, tradition, and culture.

Re:start! Product/ market/ consumption changes for a more sustainable and participatory heritage tourism

Daniela Angelina Jelincic (Croatia)

The Corona crisis substantially affected heritage tourism, which resulted in three types of change in business operations: changes in the market, product and consumption. Changes in the market are seen in the promotion of 'staycation' (focus on domestic destinations) and low tourist density locations. The shift from over-tourism to soft tourism (e.g. creative, nature, well-being and experience tourism) characterises the product change, the greatest one being remote tourism (tourism performed without physical travel). Consumption type also changed: de-seasoning is encouraged to avoid the masses, with shorter trips and digitisation. Heritage interpretation is a powerful, although not almighty, tool reflecting those changes. Good practice examples (e.g. Tocati Festival, Verona; English Heritage's Agile Interpretation Programme; Faroe Islands' Remote Tourism product) show how interpretation may impact resilience, sustainability and empower communities to participate in heritage interpretation.

Daniela A. Jelinčić holds a PhD and is a senior research adviser/ full professor at the Institute for International Relations, Croatia, and the adjunct professor at different universities, business schools and UNESCO Chairs. Her research interests include cultural tourism and cultural heritage management. As a fruitful author and project coordinator, she served as the Council of Europe expert for cultural tourism.

Recreating tourism on the Greek-Albanian borders through oral history and tradition

Angeliki Kita (Greece) with Vassilis Nitsiakos, Ioannis Fudos, Christos Bellos, Thanos Kotsis, Spyridoula Kolovou, Persefoni Ntoulia, Dafni Patelou, Konstantinos Stefanou, Georgios Stergios and Georgia Tsamadia

The cross-border area in the Southeastern Europe, Permet, Gjirokastra and Konitsa, has a unique cultural heritage that could provide the basis for tourism development. The memories of people are the interface between past and present and could relate the common past cultural characteristics with the very different present and contribute to the sustainability of tourism. This perception led to the creation of the Exploral and VirtualLand projects, which were co-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund – ERDF) and Greek national funds through the Interreg Greece-Albania 2014-2020 Programme. Through these projects, touristic information relates to information acquired from oral and written sources in an interactive map and a virtual reality (VR) interactive platform, in the form of a customised documentary. Users not only 'consume' information but also 'travel'. The result is to turn the Public Library of Konitsa into a reference point for tourists.

Angeliki Kita is an MA archaeologist (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) specialising in prehistoric archaeology in northern Greece. For the last three years she has been working as a researcher in projects of oral history and cultural heritage, both in the Central Public Library of Konitsa and the University of Ioannina. For the

last two years she has also been training as a mountain tourist guide in the region of Konitsa.

Unravelling the mountain layer by layer: Heritage interpretation for a story that lasts

Mateja Kuka (Croatia)

Symbolically and in reality, our team of creatives recently climbed the mythical Croatian mountain of Učka, devising the most appropriate way of conveying its complex heritage story. Učka is a powerful mountain, massive and compact, yet to those who truly surrender to it, it dissolves into countless harmonised layers. Unravelling this unique story of natural heritage that connected the mountain, nature and man has been woven into a stimulating interpretive experience. In the Poklon Visitor Centre in Učka Nature Park, we created an exhibition that – through extensive interpretation – contributes to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of biodiversity, and the building of meaningful emotional connections with local people. With over 1,000 illustrations, photographs, videos, models and other media, the senses are flooded with stories of customs, language, music, culture, biodiversity, the cohabitation of people and the environment around them, and much more.

Mateja Kuka is an art historian and anthropologist who joined the interdisciplinary team at Muses in 2018. She found her interests in the practical protection of cultural and natural heritage through its interpretation and sustainable use, often with the approach of contemporary curatorial practices. She is a member of the association SF: ius, Dragodid, Interpret Croatia and Interpret Europe.

Disgust is in the mouth of the beholder: Using distasteful foods to interpret culture

Lucy M. Long (USA)

As interpreters, we often present a 'foreign' food culture by emphasising foods that will appeal to audiences' tastes, assuming that if they try the food and like it, they will also like the culture. However, 'disgusting' foods that seem inedible or distasteful offer an opportunity to explore the culture behind the food and the meanings of the food itself. This workshop will discuss examples and offer a framework for interpreting taste as a cultural, social, and personal construction, asking participants for illustrations from their own experiences.

Lucy M. Long directs the independent non-profit Center for Food and Culture (www.foodandculture.org) and teaches at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, USA. She holds degrees in Folklore and Ethnomusicology, and certification from the US National Association for Interpretation (NAI). She has conducted research on food, tourism, heritage, music, and dance with ethnic communities in several regions of the USA, and in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Spain. She has published widely on food, culture and folklore and is currently conducting a virtual oral history on Finding Comfort/Discomfort Through Foodways During the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Discovering heritage interpretation from the other end

Simana Markovska (Bulgaria)

How can a local community escape stagnation? If tourism is the answer, how can they develop it sustainably and pack their own competitive product? We will discuss the case study of Razlog Municipality in southwest Bulgaria. It has several villages located on the southern slopes of the Rila Mountains, just below the border of the biggest national park in Bulgaria bearing the same name. Together with the local communities, we searched for creative paths towards tourism development – paths that would make the destination stand out and gain competitive advantages.

Simana Markovska has been a sustainable tourism expert for nearly 25 years, promoting heritage interpretation in Bulgaria through her work as both the chairperson of the association Pirin Tourism Forum and a freelancer. She is an IE trainer for the Certified Interpretive Writing (CIW) course. Simana recently started the informal community of Interpret Bulgaria.

Interpretive plans for Czech protected landscape areas

Michal Medek with Ladislav Ptáček (Czech Republic)

The first interpretive plan for a protected area in the Czech Republic was created in 2010, but the real boom started with the decision of the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic to create interpretive plans for all the 26 protected landscape areas that comprise about 14% of the country. The presentation sums up 12 years of interpretive planning for the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic. What led to the decision to create interpretive plans, what planning methods have been used, how the plans translate to everyday operation of the agency and where we can see weaknesses to be dealt with in the future plans. The contribution also shares a critical reflection of the planning methods and outcomes.

Michal Medek teaches Heritage Interpretation at the Masaryk University in Brno and he is pioneering the field in the Czech Republic. He is a director of the Czech Association for Heritage Interpretation. Michal holds a postgraduate certificate in Interpretation: Management and Practice from the University of the Highlands and Islands, UK (2013) and has co-authored several books and papers in the field.

Ladislav Ptáček introduced the field of heritage interpretation to the Czech Republic in 2004. He is founder and chairman of the Czech Association for Heritage Interpretation. Ladislav has authored most of the interpretive plans in the Czech protected landscape areas to this day.

From visitor to guide: How changing the roles can improve the impact of heritage interpretation

Pedro Morais with Catarina Magalhães and André Coelho (Portugal)

In May 2021, at Vila do Conde, Portugal, we carried out a heritage interpretation (HI) workshop: 'There are hidden secrets at Cividade de Bagunte'. The main purpose of this activity was to take two different groups on a visit at Bagunte's archaeological site. The first group, composed of people with different backgrounds, some without any experience at guiding, was subject to a five-day online workshop, to prepare each participant to guide a specific point at the visit on the sixth day; the second group was made of regular visitors, who evaluated the outcome. We will present the development of the activity's design and how simplicity was needed to create clear contents suitable for the workshop's short length.

The main results indicated that this is an efficient, alternative, and recreational strategy to attract people to understand HI, thus raising awareness about the importance of HI for both visitors and tourism stakeholders involved, enhancing the value of natural and cultural heritage.

Pedro Morais is a consultant and trainer in ecotourism and sustainable tourism. He is the President of Interpretare and is the deputy Country Coordinator Portugal for IE.

Catarina Magalhães is an archaeologist. She is the vice-president of the Association for Protection of Heritage, Archaeology and Museums of Vila do Conde and her work includes providing a local heritage educational

service as well as organising and guiding cultural walks. She is the Secretary of Interpretare – the Portuguese Association for Heritage Interpretation.

André Coelho is an illustrator and a former art teacher. He is a member of Interpretare.

CLIP is linking heritage interpretation across continents

Pedro Morais and Carla Silva (Portugal)

We will present CLIP: Comunidade Lusófona para a Interpretação do Património (the Portuguese-speaking community for heritage interpretation). Created in 2020, this is an informal network that joins associations, work groups, or individual professional members from Brazil, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Portugal, and São Tomé e Príncipe. It is a bottom-up initiative, raised on genuine needs of individuals from different countries, that realise the small development of heritage interpretation in Portuguese-speaking countries and the importance to cooperate in this field. Both national and multinational tourism policies grew during the pandemic, leading to an increase in the level of sustainability in tourism experiences. To accomplish this objective, the use of natural and cultural heritage interpretation is fundamental, to promote educational impacts on visitors, local communities, and other tourism stakeholders in order to encourage them to defend endangered heritage.

Pedro Morais is a consultant and a trainer in ecotourism and sustainable tourism. He is Director of Interpretare – the Portuguese Association for Heritage Interpretation, and is the deputy Country Coordinator Portugal for IE.

Carla Silva works on nature conservation and environmental education in Azores Protected Areas, Biosphere Reserves, UNESCO World Heritage Landscape of Pico Island Vineyard Culture and Azores UNESCO Global Geopark. She is IE's Country Coordinator Portugal and is Vice-president of Interpretare.

The music of nature: Interpreting nature for the benefit of a Romanian geopark's small communities

Adina Popa and Dan Horațiu Popa (Romania)

Natural elements, such as stone, water and wood, are given value on a thematic trail in Peștera village from Hațeg Country UNESCO Global Geopark Romania. The aim is to offer resilience for a small and isolated community, revealing the link between humans and Earth. About 100 years ago, stone, water and wood represented the primary resources of the locals. They put them to work for community benefit. A watermill, a lime kiln and an ancient laundry washing machine using the three natural elements now represent a part of the vernacular heritage of the geopark. We added eight land art installations (including a lithophone, wooden bar-chimes, and a 'Community Tree') to interpret the local geodiversity, biodiversity, and to facilitate discovery through direct interaction, observation and games. Now, the thematic trail is one of the geopark's main tourist attraction points. The small community has the opportunity to preserve and promote its identity, to make it more resilient instead of disappearing.

Adina Popa is a member of the Hațeg Country UNESCO Global Geopark team, in charge of PR

and communication and educational activities, with experience in communication to the general public and development of educational materials for students and tourists. She has been involved in more than ten national and international projects related to interpretation of cultural and natural heritage, nature conservation, geoparks, and education.

Dan Horațiu Popa holds a Master's degree and is a member of the Hateg Country UNESCO Global Geopark team, in charge of relations with the local communities. He has expertise in the small communities of geoparks and was involved in more than ten national and international projects related to natural and cultural heritage, education and geo-conservation.

'Interpretive Stories' project revives tourism in mountainous Greece

Valya Stergioti (Greece)

This is the story of a small project with great results that proves that local people can be persuaded that heritage interpretation is the future for a new kind of tourism and reveals a simple yet effective recipe to achieve this. Join this presentation to hear more about the past, present and future of Interpretive Stories.

Valya Stergioti is a certified interpretive trainer and planner, collaborating with NGOs and institutions to promote heritage interpretation in Greece and the Balkans. She has been Interpret Europe's Training Coordinator since 2016. She is the consultant for the Interpretive Stories project, on behalf of the Mediterranean Centre of Environment-Greece, under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Culture.

Mouth- and eye-opening gastronomic heritage interpretation: Entrepreneurs become heritage ambassadors

Jeroen Van Vaerenbergh (Belgium)

Getting local entrepreneurs to (co-)create meaningful and memorable heritage experiences for visitors is not obvious. Often the two supposedly opposite sectors of business and heritage refer to each other as speaking another language. They get lost in translation. How can local entrepreneurs be real heritage ambassadors? Gastronomic heritage interpretation can be an eye and mouth opener... The story of a place goes through the stomach. Using Belgian examples, we reflect on the dos and don'ts of involving and enabling local entrepreneurs in hospitality and food craftsmanship to create sustainable touristic heritage experiences. Food connects us with the place and each other. A recipe of trial and error with a mouthwatering climax.

Jeroen Van Vaerenbergh (alias De Foodarcheoloog) is a Belgian archaeologist. He supervised several excavations and is now an archaeological consultant. He is inspired by the material evidence of food habits in the past to create contemporary taste experiences with a message for a sustainable future. He works in close collaboration with chefs, scientists, artists and creatives.

Bringing people and nature together: Inspiring action through wetland centre interpretation

Anna Wilson (UK)

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) has been bringing people together with nature and delivering wetland interpretation for 75 years. But in 2021 our challenges are greater than ever. As well as the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world is facing a climate crisis, a nature crisis and an emerging wellbeing crisis. Our interpretation has to work hard to inspire people to take action, to become ambassadors for the environment and to drive a 'blue recovery'. By presenting case studies, from the latest interpretation at our own wetland centres to our international community-based ecotourism projects, plus the work we do bringing networks of wetland interpreters together, this presentation will explore how wetland centres can be an effective way of raising awareness, creating a learning environment and inspiring action.

Anna Wilson has an MA in Museum and Heritage Management and over 15 years' experience delivering visitor experiences, exhibitions, projects, events and learning programmes internationally and in the UK, both as a consultant and whilst working for a variety of museum, heritage and environmental organisations, including the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the British Museum and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.