

# Newsletter

## Summer-Autumn 2022



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Dear members,

The time of harvest is usually the moment of enjoying the results of our efforts. Sometimes, it is also a moment of disappointment over the crops. In any case, it becomes clear whether we have nurtured the right crops? Will we have provisions for the winter? Or have mice eaten up our stock of carrots?! Autumn at IE brought us all this and even more: failed crops, good harvest and, what is most important, some extra seeds for the future.

While we had to cancel our Training days in Spain with a heavy heart, we can still be proud of several activities currently going on. Particularly important for IE's future path is our partnership with UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe. Even whilst I am writing, the second edition of the UNESCO Regional Course on Interpretive Planning at World Heritage Properties in Europe is being held in Ljubljana (Slovenia) by IE trainers. Interpret Europe was also one of the expert organisations giving advice to European Heritage Label sites in Brussels on how interpretation can help them to co-create a sense of belonging of citizens to the European idea and its founding values.

And there are crops in the form of this joint summer-autumn edition that will encourage you to seek inspiration for your interpretive themes in ancient Greek epigrams. Who thought they had such similar rules as contemporary interpreters? You will also find a recipe for a delicious autumn dish from an old Austrian tale of a lady who never made enough of it – well, the tale is basically important because it inspired a recipe for interpretive principles that has been kindly shared in this edition.

We are always happy to receive stories of our newly certified members from so diverse parts of Europe. This time we read about enthusiasm and new ideas from Norway and the Baltic region. You will also find advice on how you could use knowledge gained in the Certified Interpretive Writer's course. Earlier this year, one of the gastronomic Meccas in Europe – North Macedonia – was the venue for an interpretation workshop with local wine-makers. However, not only wines were tested. The workshop provided a taster of IE's Module on Interpretation of Gastronomy that many of us eagerly await.

Staying in the south, coordinators from BIH, Croatia and Slovenia started connecting members regionally with their first regional online panel discussion on nature interpretation. Why not take this idea and organise more cross-border meetings for members

elsewhere in Europe? Not far away from there, Albanians are establishing a new Vjosa Wild River National Park to protect the whole Vjosa River network from the Greek border to the Adriatic Sea. They call it The blue heart of Europe.

From the East of Europe though, our Ukrainian friends report on their fight on the cultural front and if you missed their online session at the Global Alliance for Heritage Interpretation, you can read the article in this issue. It is good to hear about their plans for rebuilding the destroyed monument of freedom, the Skovoroda Museum, but they also need our help. The ['save our heritage' initiative](#), recommended by our Country Coordinator Ukraine, will gratefully accept your donation no matter how big or small.

You might appreciate ideas and shared experiences from UK, Israel and Croatia. Those of you creating audio tours or engaging students in heritage can read about lessons learned from London Metropolitan University collaborating with cultural institutions on engaging students with a creative audio interpretation project during the Covid period.

Now, can you imagine how good a birthday party would be without the celebrated person? Our Israeli colleagues celebrated an annual Frog Day while the endangered species didn't show up, on purpose. You can read how the conservation notion was reinforced with other interpretive activities. And, the story about a blind water carrier from Croatia featured in our newsletter before, but this time it is continuing with successful enlisting on the Cultural Heritage in Action list. If you run a heritage project yourself, why not submit it for a similar recognition? Let's get more IE member projects on the list!

Now, you might think, what is the seed for the future? We are pleased to say it is a promising and long expected [IE conference](#) that is already being organised by our dedicated partners and we will look forward to meeting again in person in Romania next year. So, block out 12-15 May 2023 for presenting a paper or just taking time for your professional upskilling, and in the meantime, you can read about the natural and cultural beauties that we will enjoy together in Romania.

Helena Vičič  
Managing Director



**Save the date!**  
**#iecon23**

# IE conference

Creating learning landscapes  
through heritage interpretation

12 – 15 May 2023  
Sighișoara (Romania)

 **interpret europe**  
European Association for Heritage Interpretation

 **A I C I**  
ASSOCIATION OF INTERPRETATION CENTERS IN ROMANIA

Find out more on page 29

**#iecon23**



## Interpretive themes during the Ancient era?

Thorsten Ludwig (Germany)

**In Hellenistic times, epigrams were meant to add deeper meaning to the experience of heritage sites and monuments.**

The oldest surviving epigrams are inscriptions at Greek sanctuaries around 500 BC. Accordingly, the word 'epigram' is derived from the Greek word ἐπιγράφειν (epigraphēin = to write on).

Good epigrams had to be short and to the point, and they soon tended to become more poetic. So, they were not just the ancient version of KISS (Keeping It Short and Simple) but also close to what we call an interpretive theme. An epigram should catch a whole in a brief sentence that included some deeper meaning.

In 1802, Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote – in epigram style: **What is an epigram? A dwarfish whole, its body brevity, and wit its soul.**

Of course, not all epigrams fulfilled this requirement; in fact, some were rather long – as not all interpretive themes are strong interpretive themes. But one can find enough good examples to support the idea.

According to the historian Herodotus (484-425 BC), one of the most famous epigrams was placed at Thermopylae, where a small group of Spartan warriors fell in 480 BC in their attempt to repulse a massive Persian army. According to a modern translation of Herodotus' text (taken from the novel 'Gates of fire', Pressfield 1998:1), it read:

**Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing by, that here obedient to their laws we lie.**

Obviously, reading this was meant to make the place resonate with its visitors by referring to the universal concept of faithfulness, even providing the reader with a task beyond the site. This also fulfils all five requirements IE suggests in its training handout 'Creating an interpretive theme', by:

- Supporting but also exceeding the physical experience of the site
- Revealing a universal concept that is relevant to all people
- Being one short and simple sentence and including only one strong idea



Portrait from Pompeii (Image: Thorsten Ludwig)

- Exciting not only the author but most likely also getting under the skin of others
- Being suitable as a summarising statement in an interpretive text or talk.

A more in-depth investigation of the Thermopylae epigram can be found in Ziogas (2014). Since in ancient times the Spartans especially, who inhabited the region of Laconia in Peloponnese, were famous for being succinct; such phrases were also called Laconic phrases. Among the countless anecdotes around their use is one about Philipp II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, sending a messenger to Sparta with a lengthy letter. The letter announced that he would kick the Spartans out if he would get to Laconia. It is said that the Spartan letter of reply just read: "If". One can imagine that Socrates was a great admirer of Laconic phrases...

As usual, the Romans were among the first who included the Greek tradition of epigrams into their own culture, although shifting towards more satirical versions. Subsequently, one can trace epigrams throughout the following 2,000 years of European history. Most likely, you can also find good epigrams in the literary history of your own region.

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- Pressfield, S. (1998). *Gates of fire: An epic novel of the battle of Thermopylae*. New York: Doubleday
- Ziogas, I. (2014) 'Sparse Spartan verse: Filling gaps in the Thermopylae epigram'. *Ramus* 43 (2): 115–133

Thorsten Ludwig is an interpretive trainer and planner based in Germany. He has run his company, Bildungswerk interpretation, since 1993. You can get in touch with him at: Th.Ludwig@interp.de.

## A recipe for Lessismoreandmoreisless

Dirk Bennett (UK)

### Interpretive lessons learned from an old Austrian tale – and if it whets your appetite, read on for a recipe!

Does anybody know of Friedrich Torberg? Austrian critic, sportsman, raconteur, journalist, and novelist. His mother Hungarian, his father Czech; Jew and anti-fascist; writer of the 'Schüler Gerber' and translator of the satirical works of Ephraim Kishon. His writing combines irony, elegance and a turn of phrase that was the hallmark of German-language writing pre-WW2, and in my opinion has never been achieved again ever since. He stands in a proud tradition with Karl Kraus and Joseph Roth, Polgar, Molnar, Herzmanoswsky-Orlando – his writing the scalpel to Thomas Bernhard's sledgehammer ... much more could be said, but this piece isn't about Central Europe and its literary achievements in the earlier part of the 20th century.

Full of wit and wisdom, one of his best works is the hilarious and bittersweet farewell to the bygone era of 1920s and '30s central Europe: 'Die Tante Jolesch oder Der Untergang des Abendlandes in Anekdoten' – 'Aunt Yolesh or The fall of the Western world in anecdotes'. There is one story in particular that springs to mind. It describes the spectacular success of the eponymous aunt's Krautfleckerl, a classic Austrian pasta dish (it is delicious – there's a recipe below if you would like to try it). Whenever it becomes known that, say, for the coming Sunday, she is planning to cook the all-time favourite, unexpected relatives, friends and neighbours announce their visits, and make their pilgrimage from the furthest corner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to her Vienna home; turning up unexpected, uninvited, hungry. Asked about the secret recipe she only smiles, knowingly. And had she been English, she would have probably tapped her nose – becoming impatient, when pressed too much.

Finally, she succumbs to old age and sickness, and takes to her deathbed. Her family assembles around her bed, inconsolable, already in mourning. Her favourite niece takes a heart and approaches her cautiously and dares to ask the question in everybody's mind: the recipe! Isn't it time to preserve that invaluable culinary legacy? To pass it on to the next generation? And so she finally asks the question: What is the secret of her famous Fleckerl?



Krautfleckerl (Image: Kobako Kobako, CC BY-SA 2.5)

Aunt Yolesh rises one last time in her bed: "The secret is..." she whispers, gasping for breath: "... the secret is: I've never made enough!" Typical of many of Torberg's stories, this is an unexpected twist.

And when you think about it, there is a lesson here for all of us. Because it is a simple, and a brilliant concept: always to leave a little bit of appetite unsated, an empty space to be filled, a yearning to be fed. Let the imagination do its bit. Thus creating a memory of something remarkable.

Especially valid in our time, where we – until now at least – have been getting used to instant and complete gratification. Where (almost) nothing is left to the imagination anymore, where borders are persistently pushed further and further, and limits only exist to be smashed. Where everything is available at every moment. Where we are protected, guided, safe and mollycoddled in every instance of our daily lives. Told what to do, what to think, what to feel, what to say.

This applies to our work as well, to the exhibitions and displays we develop. To be clear, I am far from saying, let's skip all this. After all, this is what we do; and I am no fan of the 'let it speak for itself' school of thinking: that's just laziness. But there is an argument to be had that we let go of the visitor's hand ... just a little bit: I am sure we've all had that experience, where we sometimes wonder about the strange behaviour of visitors when they enter our sites, how they seem to switch off completely, get lost, lose all common sense – and while we feel we need to step in, in reality this is partly our fault, because we do too much of what we do:

### **Too much direction and instruction**

Our sites are full of warning signs, directions and instructions. What to do and where, to pay attention, so the effect is that many visitors don't pay attention at all. Another sign, another alert, another panel – who cares? Fewer signs might even raise awareness: suddenly they gather meaning and Impact.

### **Too many stories**

Sometimes we are trying too hard to tell everything, from every angle. Leave some of the stories only hinted at, leave room to explore and discover, leave questions open. Let visitors think, just give them food for thought, whet their appetite – and don't underestimate their curiosity and intelligence. It might encourage dialogue (with staff; amongst themselves) and personal discovery.

### **Too much noise**

Media, sound, colours: today's experiences tend to try and appeal to all senses, be immersive, interactive, virtual: the danger is an overload by technology. Hugely expensive, unsustainable and of selective audience appeal, the impact is short notice and indistinguishable rather than lasting. Reducing all that noise might lead to a calmer, more relaxing and ultimately enjoyable visit.

### **Too much teaching and telling**

Always trying to teach our visitors something, instead of entertaining them and allowing them time off. Telling them what to think, if they want it or not, instead of fostering a true democratic variety of opinions, as varied as our visitors. We don't need to spoon-feed them every issue, every opinion. Which might also be less upsetting and more inclusive than trying to convert the unconvertible and antagonise those who hold different views.

### **Too much seriousness**

A daring theory: fun and entertainment and beauty is probably why most visitors have an excursion or a day out. If we want to teach them we can do it by stealth, by not making it obviously didactic, but beautiful and fun. What about a bit of lightness and even humour? To stretch the metaphor a bit: make it taste nice – it is not supposed to be a (bitter) medicine.

### **Too many words**

Use as many as necessary, but as few as possible. So visitors become curious, and come back, or buy a book, attend a course, pick up a hobby. Holding something back leads to a more satisfying experience when that revelation suddenly comes, from within the visitors themselves, not imposed by us.

To me, this approach holds an immediate attraction: to leave some space for imagination, for initiative, to whet the appetite for more, to provoke thought and discussion. There is appeal in keeping things slightly mysterious: it can support that process that is so dear to us interpreters, personal revelation. And, like Tante Jolesch's guests, to create an indelible memory of something special, and to come back for more.

But that's (not quite?) enough from me.

### **Recipe for Krautfleckerl**

(not quite enough for 2 people)

- 250 g square pasta (Austrian Fleckerl, Italian Quadretti or Polish Lazanki are all fine – if not use Farfalle or similar)
- Small head of white cabbage, shredded
- Lardons to taste
- A knob of butter
- Salt & pepper for seasoning
- 1 tsp caraway and ground paprika for that authentic Central European flavour
- 1 onion
- 2 gloves of garlic for more flavour

Melt the knob of butter with the garlic and onion, stir in the caraway and paprika, and once softened, add the shredded cabbage and the fried lardons. Season and leave to cook until it is nice and soft (but not too soft). Add the boiled (al dente) pasta. Add a bit of the pasta water and leave it to reduce for a bit. Tip: for more flavour you can boil the pasta in a bit of stock. You can also add a bit of white wine to the cabbage mix (be careful not to overdo it), but leave it to reduce properly: you don't want the mix too wet. I also always add a sprinkle of sugar to my dishes.

They say it's better the next day, but I wouldn't know, there's never any left!

Dirk Bennett is the Exhibition Development Manager for Tower Bridge and The Monument in London, UK. Originally from Germany, he has been in the UK since 1994. He holds an MA in history and archaeology and has worked in the cultural sector for private and public bodies. He writes extensively for publications in the UK and Germany as a freelance author and cultural correspondent. He can be contacted at: [dirk.bennett@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:dirk.bennett@cityoflondon.gov.uk).



## What can European Heritage Label sites do for Europeans?

IE News Team

**Heard on Brussels' stage: "Interpret Europe's know-how can support heritage professionals connecting people with Europe's heritage".**

Imagine your local heritage having something in common with other European countries and regions. Yes, a whole human history is connected somehow, but if you think of Roman frontiers, Enlightenment ideas, the search for independence, migrations, or technical achievements that connected the continent, there are heritage sites, where you can tell a small part of a big story of Europe. Moreover, if you can link this story to who we are today, what we have learned from the past and how we want to live in future, you have all the ingredients for an impactful contemporary heritage interpretation.

The question, Can European heritage connect citizens with the European Union project?, had been asked by the European Commission four years ago for the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH). Interpret Europe had an answer, formulated by our former director, Thorsten Ludwig, and now encapsulated in the awarded publication, Engaging citizens with Europe's cultural heritage, in which Thorsten described the theory underpinned with examples behind the claim in the paragraph above.

Interpret Europe has become acknowledged by European stakeholders as an organisation providing not only food for thought but also know-how. Helena Vičič, our current Managing Director, was invited to the European Heritage Label Award Ceremony in Brussels on 14 June to provide advice and ideas for European Heritage Label (EHL) sites. During a session about the development of the EU project, she discussed the EU's founding values as a basis for interpretive services at EHL sites.

Interpret Europe's goal is not only to support the awarded locations, but to empower all heritage professionals to think what they can do for their communities in terms of our common future. How could we engage people from all walks of life to learn not only about heritage, but from heritage? Can we help people to become more mindful about societal and environmental problems and enthuse them towards action? Non-formal learning environments and tourist sites should use this opportunity to

provide engaging and thought-provoking content with a higher purpose.

Meanwhile, the Education for Sustainable Development and Education for Global Citizenship principles have been incorporated into IE's training programme, which was recognised by UNESCO, with whom IE currently partners on training for interpretive planning at World Heritage Sites.

European Heritage Labels (EHL) are milestones in the creation of today's Europe. Representing European history from the dawn of civilisation to today, these sites celebrate European ideals, values, history and integration. The EHL action highlights sites that have played a significant role in the history, culture and development of the European Union, through information and educational activities.

You can contact the News Team at: [news@interpret-europe.net](mailto:news@interpret-europe.net).



IE's Managing Director attended the European Commission EHL award ceremony (Image: European Commission)



## Why should heritage sites look towards UNESCO designated sites?

Helena Vičič (Slovenia)

**IE has again trained World Heritage Site managers from 14 European countries. Interpretive planning is an indispensable part of their future work.**

Good heritage interpretation no longer cares only for educating people about heritage.

The need for involving people – locals and visitors – in interpretation, for discussing critical subjects, and to learn from heritage for the future, has already been recognised and promoted by many international organisations (e.g. ICOM with a new museum definition). However, faced by new trends, many heritage professionals may ask themselves how could their institutions become all this: inclusive, open, participatory meeting points while fostering personal growth and thus societal advancement by inviting people into a dialogue, to encourage and embrace different narratives, offer space for critical reflection and exchange for a shared learning experience?

At Interpret Europe, this philosophy has been notable since the release of our Engaging Citizens study in 2017 and has been re-shaping our training programme, most recently in cooperation with UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Venice.

UNESCO has recognised the need to support World Heritage Sites with up-skilling, and identified interpretive planning and value-based interpretation as THE approach. UNESCO's training on interpretive planning, co-created and delivered by Interpret Europe, is incorporating all upper ideals, while embodying them in practical methodology following interpretive standards.

For the second year in a row, Interpret Europe has partnered with UNESCO on the delivery of the Regional Course on Interpretive Planning at World Heritage Properties in Europe – WH-Interp for 19 participants from 14 European countries. In the training programme that lasts several months, all participants gathered in a face-to-face five-day workshop, which took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia) between 19-23 September.

Through hands-on exercises and group work on a real example of UNESCO designated heritage, they developed draft concepts for interpretive services around the work of the renowned architect Jože

Plečnik, inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list in 2021 due to his human-centred approach.

Participants were faced with a challenge: to prepare draft proposals for interpretive plans, including values they build upon and interpretive services as a final result of a thorough review and consideration of several aspects of heritage. They analysed the values behind Plečnik's heritage, including human values that could be fostered by future interpretive services, talked with numerous representatives of local community and stakeholders, analysed visitor data and surrounding interpretation and selected the most relevant stories. The task is not easy for only five days; however, they all brought different experiences and knowledge to the table and impressed with a variety of ideas. Following this intensive on-site training, participants will be supported in developing draft interpretive plans for their own sites under the mentorship of IE trainers Thorsten Ludwig and Valya Stergioti.

The 'Regional course on Interpretive Planning at World Heritage properties in Europe' is a joint product of more than two years' lasting cooperation between Interpret Europe and UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe and is based on the IE Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course.

Helena Vičič is IE's Managing Director. She can be contacted at: [helena.vicic@interpret-europe.net](mailto:helena.vicic@interpret-europe.net).



UNESCO WH interpretation planning course in Ljubljana (Image: UNESCO)

## IE's first regional panel tackles natural heritage protection

**Edo Mešić (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**

**Members from Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina joined together online to discuss heritage interpretation and nature.**

As a result of a joint collaboration between IE's country coordinators for Slovenia (Marijaliza Fajdiga), Croatia (Andrijana Milosavljević), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Edo Mešić), together with Vida Ungar (IE's natural heritage coordinator) and Samia Zitouni (IE's former webinar officer), the first IE regional round panel was organised. It was also the first time that Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian were used as a working language for event like this. Inspired by climate change and sustainability, the main topic for this online event was: How and in which direction is heritage interpretation building connections with nature? and the event attracted attention from other countries as well, including North Macedonia.

Our panellists were: Marijaliza Fajdiga, park supervisor from the National Park Škocjanske Jame (Slovenia); Maja Vurnek, specialist biologist and ecologist from the National Park Plitvička Jezera (Croatia); and Josip Vekić, head of the supervisory service from the Park Hutovo Blato (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Due to professional commitments, Mr. Vekić had to drop out at the last moment and Edo Mešić stepped in, as IE's Country Coordinator Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our moderators were: Vida Ungar and Samia Zitouni.

Maja Vurnek started by introducing everybody to the activities that major international organisations, like UNESCO, are conducting in order to promote sustainability and protect our environment. She then explained that, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Park Plitvička Jezera faced the problem of too many visitors, which had a huge effect on the environment. This problem was solved with the introduction of an online ticketing system. Additional steps were taken in the form of establishing corporation with schools around the country.

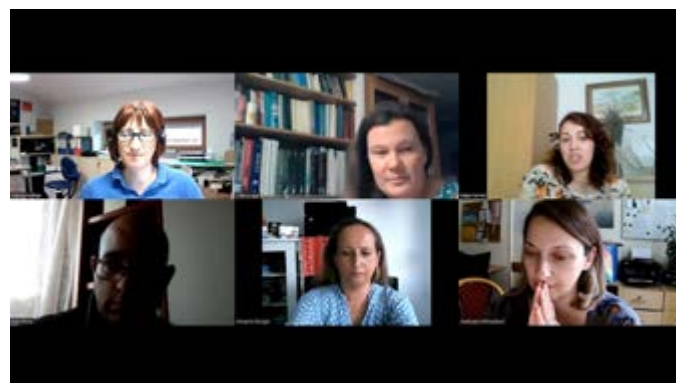
Marijaliza Fajdiga mentioned that, just like Croatia, Slovenia is also participating in various programmes organised by UNESCO. In Slovenia, there is a high level of general awareness of the importance of protecting natural heritage. Besides government agencies, there are a lot private NGOs who work very closely with the State and other parties. Through her presentation, we had an opportunity to 'experience touring around the park' in a virtual world, and we learned that the National Park is working very closely

with the European Union by participating in EU projects saving endangered species.

Edo Mešić then made a short introduction about environmental protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are certain issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve better and more efficient protection. Bosnia and Herzegovina doesn't have a huge number of visitors like Croatia and Slovenia so the protected areas are not experiencing the same problems of overcrowding from tourists. In the last few years, local authorities have made some positive steps in order to protect natural heritage in this country. Of course, there are a lot of things that must be done in order to meet European regulations, but the most important step has already been taken. Government agencies and NGOs should work even closer with the local people and primarily with schools and universities.

After the three presentations, a panel discussion was opened. Attendees were invited to share their opinions and ask questions. Some interesting issues and problems were tackled during the discussion. The event ended with the message that professionals from these countries – Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – should seek and establish closer ties and that environmental protection is not just of local importance, but of global importance too. Here's to more future collaborations!

Edo Mešić is IE's Country Coordinator Bosnia and Herzegovina. He can be contacted at: [edo.mesic@interpret-europe.net](mailto:edo.mesic@interpret-europe.net).



Moderators and panellists (Image: Edo Mešić)

## What makes good interpretation

**Brynjar Stautland (Norway)**

**Sometimes you must reconsider your qualities. It can be quite advantageous, as was the case for me when I took a CIG course.**

I work at Geopark Sunnhordland, which straddles both sides of the outer Hardanger Fjord, on Norway's west coast. We secured Norwegian Geopark status in 2019 and are now applying for membership of the UNESCO Global Geopark Network. Sunnhordland features a wide range of island arc geology exploited by humans as far back as 10,000 years ago, while our majestic mountains, fjords, waterfalls, giant potholes and moraines ably tell the story of the Quaternary period.

Applying for UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) status is a comprehensive task, not only on paper but also on the ground. The geopark must have certain operational features to meet UGGp criteria, both in terms of installations such as visitor centres with facilities, information panels and maps, and the dissemination of information by qualified personnel. As a teacher and presenter with some interpretive experience in various situations, I felt relatively qualified as a guide indoors and outdoors. Yet, the UNESCO application did not ask for my opinion on my own qualifications, only if we had skilled interpreters. In Norway there is no system for training or certifying interpreters or nature guides. So, after being inspired by Norwegian Parks Association Director, Kristian Bjørnstad, I registered to join an IE CIG course, which took place in Norway in September 2021.

With my place on the course confirmed, I drove to Aurland, a magical place at the end of Sognefjord, to participate in an intensive five-day programme, with the aim of getting an 'extra medal' for my park's UGGp application.

Happily, I passed the homework assignment some weeks later and was able to highlight our capacities in interpretation and education on the application form, but those five days in Aurland offered much more. Firstly, I spent time with a group of fine folks, all experienced and dedicated to nature interpretation. Our experienced trainer guided us through a quality-based system comprising a varied range of lectures and exercises, to find the meaning, identify with the subject and to test our newly acquired interpretive skills on our fellow trainees, with immediate feedback.

It made sense. It improved my performance. I learned from a system in which I could recognise aspects from my military education a long time ago, from theatre school, from teaching, and from storyboards in documentaries I now make. The quality lies in the system, the path to follow when planning a lesson, a path also going back to those who started the idea of a holistic form of nature interpretation. Yet, the key is, in my opinion, to identify with the issue, whatever it is, and show affection to what you interpret. That seems right. That's what good stories do and we remember good stories because they touch us, as did this CIG course.

I am now promoting the IE CIG course to others in my network and will use it as much as possible for new colleagues in our geopark, interpreting our geo-heritage for the benefit of local people and visitors in the years to come.

Thanks for having me!

Brynjar Stautland is a teacher and filmmaker. He is the CEO at Geopark Sunnhordland in Norway ([www.geoparksunnhordland.no](http://www.geoparksunnhordland.no)), which is now applying for UNESCO Global Geopark-status. Brynjar is also an IE Certified Interpretive Guide. You can contact him at: [brynjar@geoparksunnhordland.no](mailto:brynjar@geoparksunnhordland.no).



Interpretive talk (Image: Brynjar Stautland)



# Read, understand and convey the beauty of Rügen

Kim Lüdtke (Germany)

**How to motivate others to communicate with natural and cultural phenomena? Interpretation as a method of giving things an emotional meaning.**

From March to May 2022 the Landesamt für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Geologie (LUNG) in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern organised training for certified nature and landscape guides (ZNL) on the island of Rügen. The course took place over five multi-day events and the IE Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course was fully integrated in the ZNL as part of the teaching unit of management didactics and practice. This was the second time this training model had been tried out in the Baltic Sea region; last year, for the first time, it took place on the island of Usedom.

I don't know about others on the first day of their CIG course, but I wasn't very good at interpretation at first. I still remember how it took some effort to accept interpretation as a form of leadership didactics. But at some point an inner switch flipped and I understood that interpretation is a very important part of our communication. With every decision to give more or less importance to a fact, we interpret it in a certain way. By using interpretation as a method ourselves, we motivate others to enter into communication with large and small natural and cultural phenomena. We don't just give facts, we invite other people to experience places themselves and to build a connection with it. Such an emotional experience goes beyond pure factual knowledge. And for me, this is an important aspect of environmental and heritage protection.

I also met many wonderful people and saw beautiful places. The exchange with the other course participants was very inspiring and the practical exercises with the group were a lot of fun. I learned that it can be very easy to exchange ideas with people about very simple things. Many different views and opinions transform every interpretation into a unique experience.

All in all, I learned a lot about the Baltic Sea region and the island of Rügen and also how I can pass on this knowledge. Motivating people to become active themselves and to exchange ideas with the phenomenon is now an important part of my work. I believe that we can find a sustainable approach to phenomena through interpretation and thus also address aspects of sustainable development in a meaningful way.

Interpret Europe Newsletter – Summer-Autumn 2022



Top: Personal experience of how reeds withstand the Baltic Sea weather

Below: What happened to this tree?  
(Images: Thorsten Ludwig)



Kim Lüdtke is a landscape ecologist, environmental and sustainable development educator. She became a Certified Interpretive Guide in May 2022 and is interested in youth education, communication critical future utopias and alternative developments. You can get in touch with her at: [kim.luedtke@web.de](mailto:kim.luedtke@web.de).



# It happened again!

Iva Silla (Croatia)

## How we typed our way through Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW) training.

It's no secret that I am a big fan of Interpret Europe's courses. I try to seize any possible opportunity to join one. However, that's not always easy. While the CIG is often available in different parts of Europe, some courses are less common.

When I see a training announcement, the first thing I do is check out the time and the place. If it all fits, I hurry to reserve my spot. I don't even think about the content, I know it should be good. This goes so far that I once accidentally applied for an upgrade course before joining the original training.

Earlier this year, a Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW) course was announced in Slovenia. I had kept my eye on that particular course for years, desperately trying to find a chance to join it. This year, it was taking place an hour away from my hometown, and my calendar was free on those dates! A minor setback: I am far from fluent in Slovenian. Minor enough - I applied anyway. My native Croatian has a lot of similarities, after all! Luckily enough, our trainer was very flexible, and we agreed that I would do my assignments in English.

It wasn't until the day the training started that it hit me. How will I ever go through the dynamics and demands of IE training, if I don't perfectly understand the language? Was I being too ambitious? But, the second I arrived in the beautiful town of Podsreda, I knew things would work out. It felt like entering a movie set. Podsreda is a small town trapped in time, surrounded by woods, with a mighty castle watching over from a hill. Everything goes according to someone's plan in movies, I thought. I was eager to see what the director of this movie had in mind.

The director waited in our classroom. There she was, our course leader, confident and calm. The group started gathering. We prepared our computers, still not knowing what to expect.

What followed were five days full of great examples, useful tips, and challenging assignments. Teamwork, hard mental work, no tagging along. Each day, the tasks got more demanding, and our writing became more polished and reader-aware.

Part of the training is dedicated to self-guided tours. I found it particularly useful and inspiring. That is something I've been working on for a while. I was

pleasantly surprised to get so much insight from this part.



Getting inspired by an existing trail (Image: Anja Trobec)

If you're wondering whether this training is for you, I'd say that it is if you have some experience with writing. Let me tell you where I have already started applying the new findings: in interpretive trails and self-guiding tours - that's obvious. But also blogs, TikToks, social media posts, and even my CV. Furthermore, I have become more sensitive to the user experience and I've developed an eagle eye for good examples. It's always easy to spot the poor ones. But I am now constantly on the watch for good examples that I used to take for granted. I now use them as a teaching experience, and this tremendously helps me in my writing career. Last but not least, I have grown more confident about my writing skills, and strengthened my decision to work more as an interpretive writer. I am not saying that all of this will happen to everyone who joins the CIW course, but that was the effect on me.

Oh, about the language barrier... Our group was incredibly supportive and accepting. I ended up using my mother tongue. I'd say it was somewhat of an extra challenge for all of us, but it might have helped us figure out some guidelines for interpretive writing in a natural way. A person who doesn't fully understand the language forces you to use simpler sentences and wording. That's one of the lessons anyway.

Being a possible disturbance to training also reminded me how challenging a trainer's job can be. There can be so many unexpected or difficult situations, which can make some participants uneasy. Our trainer dealt with this particular one with such ease, that it didn't feel like we had an issue at all.

All in all, it happened again! I came back from Interpret Europe training bursting with new ideas and creative energy, wishing I could rewrite all of my former projects, and with a firm goal to implement the new knowledge. I felt once again like I've witnessed the perfect recipe for a learning experience. I even distinguished some ingredients:

a magical setting, a confident lead, and a group of dedicated participants.

I can't wait for new training opportunities!

Iva Silla is an IE CIG trainer and now a Certified Interpretive Writer. She is the author of Secret Zagreb walking tours ([www.secret-zagreb.com](http://www.secret-zagreb.com)) and the Croatia Underrated podcast ([www.croatiaunderrated.com](http://www.croatiaunderrated.com)). Contact her at: [iva@questoftales.com](mailto:iva@questoftales.com)



**Podsreda Castle makes a perfect backdrop for a group photo (Image: Iva Silla)**



**Exploring Podsreda (Image: Polona Brezovsek)**

# Interpretation of gastronomy as local identity

**Vasilka Dimitrovska (North Macedonia)**

## **Training and workshop about the potential of gastronomic heritage as a test for the upcoming IE Gastronomic Heritage training module.**

The project, 'Interpretation of gastronomy as local identity', supported by the EU-funded program i-Portunus was held in Macedonia between 13-18 May 2022. The host of the project in Macedonia was HAEMUS, but the project content was created by three team members: Vasilka Dimitrovska (N. Macedonia, local host), Dubravko Fijacko (Croatia, physical mobility) and Janja Sivec (Slovenia, virtual mobility), all of whom are active members of Interpret Europe.

Within the project we organised two separate events. A three-day training course, held in Skopje with around 20 participants, was focused on heritage interpretation toward sustainable development of cultural and natural tourism. Learning through the heritage interpretation, participants had the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills for creative visualisation and communication in order to create cultural and tourist products that will provoke the experience of the guests giving deeper meaning to the heritage and contributing to the sustainable development of the local communities.

The second element was a one-day workshop in the small town of Demir Kapija, the heart of the Tikvesh wine region. This was organised in partnership with the municipality itself, including more than 15 small family wineries as participants. The main aim was to discover new opportunities through interactive and creative exercises and to implement ideas for application of new tourism products, as well as to improve existing services and to present their products in a new light.

The biggest benefits were the great inclusion of the participants, the selfless sharing of their knowledge and skills, as well as the involvement of the local community in an attempt to find a common module for cooperation that can change the image of an entire region without small businesses being a direct competition to each other. Both the training and the workshop were intended for those who want to expand their circle of visitors with a new, creative and efficient approach, thus increasing their sales channels, as well as for those who are professionally engaged in a certain business which touches the natural or cultural heritage to a great extent, but

is primarily focused on local gastronomy. We were very lucky that members of the initiative 'Slow food Macedonia' recognised the potential of the project. They spread the news about it throughout their own network, so many of their members took part in both events.

In general, we introduced people in N. Macedonia to the concept of heritage interpretation, especially engaging the local gastronomic community in Skopje and in the Tikvesh wine region. We carefully managed the communication and press release with the Macedonian media and the coverage was excellent. The second event was followed by a reporter from the national Macedonian Informative Agency ([www.mia.mk](http://www.mia.mk)) producing an extensive article as an overview of the workshop in which the journalist herself participated.

Keep your eyes open for the new IE training module if you are interested in interpreting gastronomic heritage.

Vasilka Dimitrovska is IE's Tourism Coordinator. She is a professional archaeologist, heritage consultant and a director of HAEMUS - Center for scientific research and promotion of culture, based in Skopje, North Macedonia. She can be contacted at:



**Top: What training isn't made better with wine?**  
(Image: David Nedelkovski)

**Bottom: Farm cheese made by a participant, served with honey and walnuts** (Image: HAEMUS)



## Congratulations to our newly certified members

### Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG)

Vesna Backović, Montenegro  
Antonija Badurina Odrcić, Croatia  
Marija Bajković, Montenegro  
Petra Batelja Majić, Croatia  
Tamara Batinić Čulav, Croatia  
Araceli Borraz Gayán, Spain  
Fredrik Holte Breien, Norway  
Jurica Budanko, Croatia  
Lukáš Bujdák, Slovakia  
Marko Cicić, Croatia  
Sandra Criollo Morocho, Spain  
Ana Cvitić, Croatia  
Anja Czycholl, Germany  
Jörg Czycholl, Germany  
Sonia Diaz Legazpe, Spain  
Vojislav Dragnić, Montenegro  
Linda Družetić, Croatia  
Hrvoje Eljuga, Croatia  
Anita Fiket, Croatia  
Dagmar Fromme, Germany  
Alejandro García Díaz, Spain  
Jelena Hamonajec Šukara, Croatia  
Andreas Hanebrink, Germany  
Wolfgang Hintze, Germany  
Ana Hiršl Barišec, Croatia  
Aleksandra Ivanović, Montenegro  
Renate Kähler, Germany  
Jasmina Kaščelan, Montenegro  
Marija Katavić, Croatia  
Ivana Kucinić, Croatia  
Magdalena Kulka, Poland  
Martina Kušer, Croatia  
Roger Labernia Caballero, Spain  
Daïke Lehnau, Germany  
Kim Lüdtke, Germany  
Eliza Marin, Romania  
Petra Mravčić, Croatia  
Dražen Nemčić, Croatia  
Vesna Nikšić, Croatia  
Gonzalo Javier Poblete Aravena, Spain  
Jiří Popelka, Czech Republic  
Jadwiga Prokop, Poland

Javier Puentes Silván, Spain  
Iris Radetić, Croatia  
Terezija Radošević, Croatia  
Milena Raicević, Montenegro  
Igor Ravlić, Croatia  
Helma Reiß, Germany  
Julian Riemenschneider, Germany  
Ana Rodić, Croatia  
Julia Rudolph, Germany  
Trym Holt Rudshaug, Norway  
Mikołaj Schabowski, Poland  
Lenka Skoupá, Czech Republic  
Rosana Škrgulja, Croatia  
Runa Elisabeth Skyrud, Norway  
Klara Somek, Croatia  
Heide Stock, Germany  
Meri Šuljak, Croatia  
Bojana Tešević, Montenegro  
Cristina Toma, Romania  
Toni Urlić, Croatia  
Vanessa Vaio, Italy  
Maja Vidović, Croatia  
Valentin Juan Viñales, Argentina  
Alexander Vogel, Germany  
Silvana Vranić, Croatia  
Sandra Vranješ, Croatia  
Lidija Vukadin Vranješ, Croatia  
Christine Wehweck, Germany  
Mathias Wienke, Germany

### Certified Interpretive Trainers (CIT)

Gerard Costa Orriols, Spain



## Upcoming courses and webinars

**Would you enjoy an enriching course with like-minded people and to gain an IE certification?**

See below and keep an eye on the training pages of the IE website for up to date information on the next courses available near you:

<https://interpret-europe.net/training/ie-courses/ie-training-courses/>

or email [training@interpret-europe.net](mailto:training@interpret-europe.net).

Date	Language	Location	Trainer
<b>Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)</b>			
03-05/10/2022 18-19/11/2022	German	Schwerin, Germany	Thorsten Ludwig
24-26/04/2023 15-16/06/2023	German	Babenhausen, Germany	Thorsten Ludwig
<b>Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW)</b>			
02-06/11/2022	Greek	Andros, Greece	Valya Stergioti
23-25/11/2022 12-13/01/2023	German	Admont, Austria	Thorsten Ludwig
<b>Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)</b>			
17-21/10/2022	English	Trysil, Norway	Thorsten Ludwig

### Upcoming IE webinars

IE webinars are free for members and are conducted in English.

**20/10/2022 at 18.00 CEST**

**Heritage for children through storytelling**

Presented by Ivana Zrilic (Croatia)

**09/11/2022 at 18.00 CET**

**Does nature need interpretation?**

Presented by Marijaliza Fajdiga (Slovenia)

**14/12/2022 at 18.00 CET**

**Local engagement: a game of mutual trust and inspiration**

Presented by Valya Stergioti (Greece)

Keep an eye on the website for further details of upcoming webinars and how to register:

<https://interpret-europe.net/training/webinars/>

Email [webinar@interpret-europe.net](mailto:webinar@interpret-europe.net) for more information.

## How Ukrainians are fighting on the cultural front

**Kristina Bilyakovska & Nataliia Gudkova**  
(Ukraine)

**War affects us in many ways, including loss of cultural heritage. But there is some light among the destruction, making a difference.**

Since the start of occupation in February 2022, Russian forces have damaged or outright destroyed more than 450 cultural landmarks, including 34 museums (according to the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation's map of cultural losses). On 6 May, the National Literary-Memorial Museum of H.S. Skovoroda (the 18th century Ukrainian philosopher, poet, teacher, and composer) was destroyed by a targeted Russian missile in the Kharkiv Region. The Russian bombardment of the museum felt like an attack on the country's soul because the philosopher-poet Skovoroda is an important symbol for the love of freedom.

A concept and a step-by-step plan for the reconstruction of the Skovoroda Museum were presented at the GAHI (Global Alliance for Heritage Interpretation) webinar 'The Love of Freedom: Why the World Needs Skovoroda, and Ukrainian Culture' in July 2022. This event involved Kateryna Chuieva, Deputy Minister of The Ministry of Culture, and a diverse creative team consisting of museum staff, philosophers, a literary critic, an architect, etc. They presented a new concept, new spatial solutions and a new permanent exhibition for the Skovoroda Museum in accordance with current trends in the development of the museum sector.

Inna Kucher, creative leader of the Skovoroda Cultural Community and a co-founder of Pump Communications Buro, in collaboration with a Radio Skovoroda, proposed to create an online platform, where any English and Ukrainian speaking person could learn more about the problem, the redevelopment initiative, Skovoroda himself, make a donation or join the community of Skovoroda-lovers. Later the Skovoroda Cultural Society will create a form of interaction for those who, like Skovoroda, have similar views and preferences. It will engage foreign Plast's communities to learn about Skovoroda in an interactive way. The concept is 'Live a day like Skovoroda', so they can get to know the philosopher empirically.



**The National Literary-Memorial Museum of H.S. Skovoroda after the Russian bombardment (Image: National Literary-Memorial Museum of H.S. Skovoroda)**

Despite historical events that prevented Ukraine from participating in a large-scale dialogue of a free-world, now the mission is to speak and finally add the great contribution of Ukrainian artists, musicians, writers and poets to the universal heritage.

We will be very thankful for any kind of support and help.

Let's make a difference together!

Kristina Bilyakovska is strategic leader of Skovoroda Cultural Community, a sustainable communications expert, and co-founder of Pump Communications Buro (Kyiv, Ukraine). You can get in touch with her at: [kristinabilyakovska@gmail.com](mailto:kristinabilyakovska@gmail.com).

Nataliia Gudkova is IE's Country Coordinator Ukraine. She is an Associate Professor of the State Ecological Academy of Postgraduate Education and Management (Kyiv, Ukraine). You can get in touch with her at: [ngudkova@gmail.com](mailto:ngudkova@gmail.com).

# The blue heart of Europe keeps beating

Daniela Ruçi (Albania)

**An historic step by the Albanian government in June 2022 is a win for nature, the environment and Europe's heritage.**

Vjosa is my daughter's name, but it is also the name of a river in the south of Albania. It is a river that flows near the city where I grew up. I learned to swim in this river and played with my friends. Someone once told me that if you see this river from space, it is blue, unlike other rivers in Europe, which have lost their colour due to the impact of human activities. The Vjosa river and its tributaries flow freely from the mountains in Greece, where it is called Aoos, to the Adriatic coast in Albania. We in Albania say that Vjosa is the only wild river in Europe, and it is up to us to protect it as such, but this is what many scientists who have studied Vjosa say.

The Vjosa River and its tributaries at over 300km in length are home to 1,100 species of animals, including 13 globally threatened animals and two plant species. The Vjosa River and its free-flowing tributaries form an ecosystem with significant biodiversity of national and global importance, and the outstanding scenic values of the valley are the result of undisturbed natural processes. These ecological and cultural values offer great opportunities for eco-tourism and other economic benefits for the people in the region.



For years the Vjosa River fought with the human ego, with the small hydropower plants that were built everywhere along the rivers and water streams around Albania. After more than ten years of dedicated action by local communities, environmentalists, scientists and artists to permanently protect the Vjosa River and its tributaries, on 16 June 2022 the Albanian government took the historic step of signing a commitment to establish a Vjosa Wild River National Park. The Wild River National Park

will protect the entire network of the Vjosa from the Greek border to the Adriatic Sea, including the free-flowing tributaries. This is something that has never been done before in Europe.

Someone called it a victory for environmentalists, but I would call it a victory for the natural heritage of Albania. Now my children can see how a river flows freely, every European can see how a river flows freely, and you can come and feel how a heart beats in a free river. Eco-tourism in Vjosa and its tributaries is ever increasing, especially in recent years in which enthusiasts have begun to enjoy activities such as rafting, canoeing, kayaking and swimming.



The beautiful Vjosa River  
(Images: Daniela Ruçi)



Daniela Ruçi works as a grants coordinator for Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT). She has many years' experience as an environmental expert and previously worked as a manager for the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programme. Daniela is IE's Deputy Office Manager and she can be contacted at: [Daniela.ruci@interpret-europe.net](mailto:Daniela.ruci@interpret-europe.net).



# Re-imagining The Monument through sound. A collaboration

**Dirk Bennett, David Laird, Jacek Ludwig Scarso (UK)**

**Digital technology was used during the Covid-19 pandemic to give students a practical and creative insight into work in the cultural sector.**

Over the summer of 2021, teams from Tower Bridge and The Monument to the Great Fire of London, and London Metropolitan University collaborated to make use of the possibilities afforded by digital technology in a project to continue to engage students when face-to-face interaction was not possible.

## **1. Planning the collaboration and objectives**

**David Laird, Tower Bridge and The Monument, Learning Officer**

Plans for a collaboration between The Monument and London Metropolitan University MA Public Art & Performance were first mooted during the early stages of the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown. Prior to this, our formal learning programme at The Monument focused on primary school students (age 5-7) studying the Great Fire of London. With the ongoing closure of schools and The Monument, we decided to diversify the reach of our programme through a series of partnerships.

Our collaboration with the MA course utilised the summer module, 'Public Art and Performative Practices'. It provides students with an introduction to the practical journey of artistic, cultural and ethical considerations in creating works of public art and performative practices. With these aims in mind, we drafted a proposal, in collaboration with our Exhibition Development Manager, setting students the problem-solving brief of 'developing an engagement opportunity for The Monument based around the business impact parameters created by Covid-19.'

The partnership provided a fantastic opportunity to deliver against our Learning Framework and objectives for formal learning, which were to:

- Widen the reach of The Monument learning programme
- Build working partnership with local higher education institutions
- Provide an offer for The Monument during closure
- Increase collaborative internal teamworking between Learning & Exhibitions

The project was delivered in three key sessions. The first, led by the Learning team, focused on students gaining an understanding of The Monument's historical themes and stories. The second, led by our Exhibition Development Manager, focused on providing students with an exploration of why and how we develop and deliver audio interpretation, including the interpretive principles and disciplines used, parameters (including budgets) and practicalities required to create audio interpretation. The third session saw the students present their responses to the brief and receive feedback.

## **2. The practical, and creative, part**

**Dirk Bennett, Tower Bridge and The Monument, Exhibition Development Manager**

A key consideration of the collaboration was to give students an experience as realistic and practical as possible – based on a typical brief and informed by examples from the real world of heritage and museum interpretation and learning.

Having worked in the past for an audio and multimedia production company (Antenna Audio), we used audio tours to illustrate principles, approaches and processes – and limitations! – in the production of sound-based experiences for the students to use them in their own projects.

A structured, carefully planned approach with clearly defined objectives, audiences and outcomes forms the basis for a successful project: this will also help to channel creative ideas in a much more directed way.

In this case it meant helping students to define the specific aims and objectives of their commission from the outset: namely, to provide an engaging and accessible audio experience; tailored for visitors; with a focus on clear themes and stories; and the audio experience as the narrative device.

To enable students to research and then design their take on an audio experience we defined the key deliverables: to provide a summary/concept of the overall experience; and specifically design three stops including an intro and two stops based on any of The Monument's main interpretation themes: The Great Fire of London in 1666; rebuilding London in the aftermath; building The Monument between 1671 and 1677; Robert Hooke and Christopher Wren, its builders; The Monument in popular culture; Monument-related stories and anecdotes.

Over the course of a session we discussed with the students the core aspects in the planning of such a project: how to define their audience segment; the route and overall duration; how to start and end the experience; practicalities, such as help and



instructions; accessibility; the recommended length and total number of stops, which in turn relates to questions of attention span and recommended maximum number of key facts per stop (no more than 2-3); the possibility of layering information; suitable content types; the importance of the use of visual clues; creative approaches; linearity (or not); the narrative style: the emphasis on the spoken word, not literal; and, related to that: the choice of voice talent and its practicalities; the efficient use of supporting assets, such as interviews, quotes, images, music and SFX; legal considerations when using any of these and the consideration of copyright and licenses.

Altogether a mix of practical, formal and creative considerations, legal and accessibility requirements that are also transferable to any element of and in an exhibition.

Accompanying samples from tours developed for the Hampton Court Drama and Debate audio experience served as examples for these varying aspects of the planning and development process.

The final session several weeks later, in which students presented their work with supporting slides and audio files, brought an impressive range of creative responses; carefully considered and covering varying aspects of themes related to The Monument.

### 3. The view from the university

**Jacek Ludwig Scarso, London Metropolitan University, Reader in Art and Performance**

Our MA Public Art & Performance, launched at London Metropolitan University in September 2020, explores how notions of publicness and performance can continue to be reframed in an art context, producing new opportunities for social engagement. Within this vision, the possibility of collaborating with case study institutions is paramount in providing students with real-life situations, to which they can apply their creative strategies in both speculative and fully realised projects. Whilst opening a new course in the midst of a pandemic brought a range of inevitable challenges, it is through such collaborations that the pedagogical emphases of the programme not only have not been compromised, but have been usefully tailored to a changing landscape of visitor experiences.

Our collaboration with The Monument to the Great Fire of London has confirmed this potential, establishing a productive dialogue that has been both creatively stimulating and professionally relevant. Key to the collaboration have been the perspectives offered by The Monument's professional team, giving students significant insight into the workings

of such an institution, the fascinating history behind it and, crucially, the challenges that cultural sites like The Monument have experienced, particularly with the uncertainty of Covid-19.

Furthermore, the diverse expertise provided by the team has inspired the students with useful, hands-on advice on public engagement strategies, curatorial methods and interpretation tools.



The Monument Project (Image: Aikaterini Kanakaki)

In our first instalment of this collaboration (one that we hope to be the first of many more), the students engaged with particular contextual angles in the production of original concepts for audio experiences, designed both to inform the public on the history of the site and to reflect on cultural and ideological questions deriving from this. For each audio experience, students were required to actively identify suitable audiences and to make their work relevant to these, whilst keeping the experience as accessible as possible. The resulting projects reflected an impressive range of approaches: from family-friendly fictional narratives recounting the events of the Great Fire of London and the legacy of The Monument as a site of scientific experimentation, to experimental sound installations, raising questions of gender, cultural identity and social hegemony embedded in historical landmarks such as The Monument. Indeed, the notion of 'monumentality'

itself, so intrinsic to this location, provided a stimulus for discussion as to the changing connotations of this term in the 21st century.

Overall, the strength of projects like this lies in the exploration of a historical landmark as a multi-layered entity, whereby each 'layer' provides a different angle, question or approach that may be creatively explored. It is by appreciating and carefully analysing each layer, through the expert insight of the professionals who know the site inside-out but are equally open to new perspectives on this, that dynamic ideas of public engagement can originate and flourish.

In summary, this collaboration highlighted not only the importance of maintaining the link between the practical and the academic, between study and a glimpse of working in the cultural sector; it also provided both institutions with the opportunity to deliver their key objectives to their mutual benefit. And finally, it can serve as an example how, even during that period of a world in lockdown, things can still be achieved through the imaginative and creative use of technology.

Dirk Bennett is the Exhibition Development Manager for Tower Bridge and The Monument in London, UK. Originally from Germany, he has been in the UK since 1994. He holds an MA in history and archaeology and has worked in the cultural sector for private and public bodies. He writes extensively for publications in the UK and Germany as a freelance author and cultural correspondent. He can be contacted at: [dirk.bennett@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:dirk.bennett@cityoflondon.gov.uk).

David Laird is the Learning Officer for Tower Bridge and The Monument in London, UK. Born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. Having completed an MA(hons) in Scottish History at University of Glasgow, he has worked in the museums and heritage sector for the last 15 years. He currently leads on the development of learning programmes at The Monument to the Great Fire of London. He can be contacted at: [david.laird@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:david.laird@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

Dr Jacek Ludwig Scarso is Reader in Art & Performance at London Metropolitan University, where he leads the MA Public Art & Performance and is Deputy Director of CREATURE (Research Centre for Creative Arts, Cultures and Engagement). He can be contacted at: [j.scarso@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:j.scarso@londonmet.ac.uk).



**The Monument Project (Image: Anna Masters)**



## It's Frog Day, but where are the frogs?

Eyal Mitrani (Israel)

**Sensitive interpretation of endangered species seeks to raise awareness in their absence – in order to help protect them.**

The importance of wetland habitats – lakes, streams, swamps, winter pools which are flooded annually or seasonally – is indisputable: The species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates, and plants that develop in these habitats are specific to flooded areas and saturated soils, making these areas essential for biodiversity and this to benefit humans all over the world.

Wetland habitats are very sensitive to changes. In fact, since 1900, at least 64% of them have disappeared due to construction, diversion of water, pollution and other causes, and thus many of the species that call them home have become endangered. Amphibians are a prime example of an endangered wetland habitat species. The presence or disappearance, increase or decrease, of the amphibian population is an indicator of the health or fragility of the entire ecosystem. And therefore, this group of animals has attracted great attention in keeping track of the stability of wetland habitats.

In the winter of 1971, an international convention for wetland conservation was signed in the city of Ramsar, Iran. Known as the Ramsar Convention, it represents global cooperative efforts to preserve wetlands and utilise their resources wisely. The signatories – which now number 163 countries, including Israel from where I send this report – face the challenge of mitigating severe damage to these special habitats all over the world.

February 2 – the date the convention was signed – was declared International Wetlands Day, with the goal of raising public awareness of wetland habitats.

### The Israel Nature and Parks Authority

The Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) is a government agency tasked by Israeli law with responsibility in two main realms. One is the management of protected areas – nature reserves and national parks. There are some 500 reserves and parks in Israel covering about 23% of the country. The second realm is nature conservation, which includes setting policy, conducting research, enforcing relevant laws, implementing international conventions, and education.

One of the INPA's tasks is to protect and support wetland habitats and create new ones. The INPA is responsible not only for the land itself, but also for the flora and fauna at such sites, especially endangered species, including all the native amphibians: water frogs, tree frogs, toads, eastern spadefoot toads, newts and salamanders. All of these creatures are protected by Israeli law, prohibiting their capture or injury.

As part of its nature conservation work, every year the INPA sponsors activities to better acquaint Israelis with nature conservation and to encourage them to participate in these efforts. Some events also further other goals associated with international conventions whose implementation also falls under the INPA's remit. For example, Bat Day in Israel was originally started to also urge the Israeli government to sign EUROBATS, the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats ([www.eurobats.org](http://www.eurobats.org)) – there are 28 bat species in Europe and 33 in Israel and all of them endangered; although Israel is not part of the European continent, the conservation of bats in Israel is important for the conservation of bats in Europe. World Migratory Bird Day ([www.worldmigratorybirdday.org](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)), held in May, also forms part of the educational obligations outlined by the international convention on this issue. Thousands of people of all ages come to these events.



Amphibian warning road sign  
(Image: Eyal Mitrani)

## Yarkon National Park

Yarkon National Park covers four square kilometres in central Israel, near Tel Aviv. Until about 100 years ago, water was abundant in the area, in the form of the Yarkon River, its springs and swamps. Today, there are signs that the wetland habitats of the old days are returning; some are small, conserved segments from the past and some have been recreated by the INPA. And so, in addition to heritage sites, the national park is home to a stream, a small lake, pools with a variety of fish and endangered plants, swamps and seasonal winter pools.

### Frog Day

As part of the INPA's educational work on conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna, the Yarkon National Park team has marked the annual Frog Day for the last 15 years to help people realise the importance of protecting these habitats and the plants and animals that thrive in them. Activities focus mainly, but not exclusively, on the likeable creature of legend (and real life, too) – the frog, as an ambassador for all amphibians. Every year, on the Saturday (Israel's weekly day off) closest to February 2, World Wetlands Day, between 3,000 and 5,000 people take part in the activities at the park.

Among the numerous visitor attractions are terrariums containing models of amphibians to introduce them to visitors; a 'wheel of fortune' that people can spin to land on a question to win a small gift; a large tent with an exhibit and a speaker or film on a relevant topic; actors who regale visitors with frog tales, a Ropes and Ladders-type game, where the ladders lead to conditions that are good for frogs and the ropes to harmful ones; a competition to create posters and slogans; guided views of the winter pool; listening to croaking; fashioning origami frogs; an aquarium with a magnifying glass and a species identifier to identify animals in the winter pool (the aquarium overlooks the pool); and informative signage. Visitors can play leapfrog, and there's also an exhibition of sculptures and paintings of frogs, tours, and more. The event closes with a ceremony in which the winners of the poster and slogan competition are announced, and amphibian egg chains that have been moved from sites outside the national park where they are endangered, are placed in park's lake or winter pool.

And yet, among all these many and varied activities one key element is invisible – the frogs themselves. In fact, visitors don't see any of the other amphibian species native to Israel either. The organisers made the decision to do things this way since the first Frog Day to make a clear statement – we'll introduce you to amphibians, you'll get to know what's good and bad for them and how to protect them, but...you



Leap frog and Frog Prince stories  
(Images: Eyal Mitrani)

won't be able to see them because Israeli law deems them "protected natural values", and we won't harm them, even for the sake of education. We designed all the activities described above – interpretive elements, models, stories and many other means of teaching and inspiring – but without the animal itself – based on this prime directive. I believe that the very absence of the 'star of the show' conveys the message that we seek to convey.

Eyal Mitrani is the visitor and community unit manager at the central district of Israel Nature and National Parks Authority (INPA), and one of the founders of the National Transmission Forum in Israel. You can get in touch with him at: [e.mitrani@npa.org.il](mailto:e.mitrani@npa.org.il).



# Recognition for the blind water carrier

Sonja Jelušić Marić & Iva Silla (Croatia)

## Cultural Heritage in Action enlists the Bakar Water Carrier in its catalogue of good practices. Could your project also be eligible?

We have already written about the Bakar Water Carrier project in previous editions of this newsletter. This time, we would love to share some wonderful news with you! Cultural Heritage in Action recognised the project, and it is now a part of its catalogue of good practices.

If you haven't read about our project before, let us share a few words.

Bakar Tourism Board initiated the project to tell the story of a historical personality – a 19th century water carrier called Ivan Čop. Private and public entities sponsored the project, while local schools created the content. The community gathered and published an illustrated book, Pebbles of Tears, that works as a self-guided tour about Ivan Čop.

The book is available in Croatian and English. It can be found online, in printed form, or as an audiobook. Almost 100 people, including dozens of children, helped the book come to life. All of the illustrations and every word are the children's work.

Ivan Čop's life story is one about resourcefulness, recovery and resilience. It so happens that the project is chosen as an example of 'Recovery and resilience', and is still the only representative of that section. Other entries from all over Europe were selected for other sections: Participatory governance, Governance and financing, Sustainable development, Quality of interventions, Adaptive re-use.

Do you have a project that could fit well under one of those themes? We are sure that Interpret Europe has more examples to share. Cultural Heritage in Action's call for good practices is still open. We enjoyed sharing the story about our project. We also enjoyed reading about other projects that made it into the catalogue. That is why we encourage you to apply, too. It would be nice to be in the company of some more examples by Interpret Europe members.



Above: Cultural Heritage In Action: Excerpt from the document about Bakar Water Carrier

Below: Workshop with Emil Mandarić from the regional association of the blind (Image: Miljenko Šegulja)



Read the book about the blind Bakar water carrier here:

<https://www.tz-bakar.hr/bakarski-vodonosa/>

More information about Cultural Heritage in Action's good practices:

<https://culturalheritageinaction.eu/case-studies/>

Sonja Jelušić Marić is the manager of Bakar Tourism Board, and the project manager for the Blind Water Carrier project. Contact her at: [info@tz-bakar.hr](mailto:info@tz-bakar.hr).

Iva Silla is the author of Secret Zagreb walking tours ([www.secret-zagreb.com](http://www.secret-zagreb.com)) and Croatia Underrated podcast ([www.croatiaunderrated.com](http://www.croatiaunderrated.com)). Contact her at: [iva@questoftales.com](mailto:iva@questoftales.com).

# What's going on elsewhere

## Young European Heritage Makers

### IE News Team

**Are you an ambassador of heritage? Be a storyteller, show what heritage means for your generation and share it with the rest of Europe!**

This competition, run by European Heritage Days (EHD), is open until 31 December 2022.

Check if your country is participating and join the competition!

You can find more details of how to apply and some examples of other winning projects on the link here: <https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/Young-European...>



European Heritage Makers Week 2018  
(Image: European Heritage Days)

# IE announcements

## Welcome to our new members

### Institutional members

Roanne Rose Anne O'Donnell, Spain

### Individual members (full)

Silvia Canuti, United Kingdom

Rolf Gruber, Switzerland

Lili Mahne, Slovenia

Tomasz Włodarski, Poland

### Individual members (entry level)

Yael Bamberger, Israel

Bianka Barabás, Hungary

Polona Brezovšek, Slovenia

David Cano Giménez, Spain

Alder Costabel, Italy

Lana Domšić, Croatia

Maricar Donato, United States

Gail Fernández, Costa Rica

Rebeka Gergács, Hungary

Barbara Gołębiowska, Poland

Serena Grassia, Italy

Martin Hagemann, Germany

Marta Flora Hegedus, Hungary

Zsafia Huszár, Hungary

Robin Johnson, Romania

Katarina Juras, Croatia

Martin Kaiser, Germany

Jana Kajnarova, Spain

Dimitra Kalogeropoulou, Greece

Alexandra Kovács, Hungary

Zsuzsanna Kovács, Hungary

Montse León, Spain

Sergio Lozano garcía, Spain

Emir Medanhodžić, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Marta Montserrat Mestres, Spain

Víctor Monzonís, Spain

Beatrice Morelli, Denmark

Francesca Moretti, Italy

Xavier Muñoz Cañadas, Spain

Dijana Pita da Costa, Slovenia

Dankovics Rita, Hungary

Josefine Schulz, Germany

Anđela Šormaz, Serbia

Dov Winer, Israel

Jason YUAN, Taiwan

Lila Zámbó, Hungary

**We currently have no members from the following countries: Cyprus, Iceland and Moldova.**

**Do you have any personal contacts in these countries who would benefit from being a part of IE? If so, introduce them!**



## IE Training Days cancelled – Help us learn from this

### IE Management

**It was with great regret that we cancelled IE Training Days. Have you taken the survey to help us learn some of the reasons?**

Following our announcement of the need to cancel the Training Days event, due to take place in October, we launched a survey to try to understand some of the reasons and barriers to a live event going ahead at this time.

It was a difficult decision to take, but despite the time and effort put in by our organising partner, Group de Natura Freixe, our trainers and the IE management, we fell short of a sufficient number of registrations to make the event financially and logistically sustainable.

Of course, we were hugely disappointed that this first face-to-face opportunity to meet after Covid could not go ahead. The survey was designed to identify the reasons so we can act on the findings to ensure such future thematic events are better tailored to the expert needs and personal circumstances of heritage professionals Europe-wide.

If you have not done so yet, please take a few minutes to complete this survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/training\\_events](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/training_events)

It is anonymous and it will only take five minutes of your time. We will leave it open for just a few more days as the link has already been sent in a newsletter to all members.

Thank you.

## Searching for a Social Media Officer

### IE Management

**Are you keen on developing and posting content on several social media channels? If so, IE is looking for you!**

The tasks of the Social Media Officer entail:

- Communication with the IE Management, IE News Team and native English proofreaders
- Managing publishing and engagement on Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter with compelling content and diligent community management
- Creating engaging text, images and video content
- Posting and sharing announcements on heritage interpretation from other stakeholders

If you feel that you are ready for this call, speak English fluently and you can contribute up to five hours per week voluntarily in supporting the office team, why not join us?

Contact us with a short motivation letter by 20 October: [mail@interpret-europe.net](mailto:mail@interpret-europe.net).

## iecon23: You don't want to miss it

**Adina Popa (Romania)**

**Join us in Romania where a UNESCO-designated, still inhabited, patrimonial estate in the heart of Transylvania will host our next conference.**

If you consider coming to the IE conference, Creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation, from 12-15 May 2023, here is what you will experience first-hand. Sighisoara, the conference venue, is a jewel, as well as old traditional Saxon villages of Transylvania in the surrounding area. While we'll discuss how heritage sites can adopt UNESCO principles for value-based interpretation, we'll be visiting Romanian UNESCO-designated sites and other initiatives, where participation and community involvement is at the heart of their endeavors for presentation and interpretation of heritage. You certainly don't want to miss an opportunity to visit the most authentic and renowned treasures of natural and cultural heritage in Romania.

Sighisoara is a small town in Transylvania whose historical centre preserves, as in a time capsule, the traces of German craftsmen and merchants known as the Saxons of Transylvania. It was included on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1999 and is the only inhabited medieval fortress in Romania, and one of only a few of its kind in Europe.

The uniqueness of the place is given by how Central Europe's culture is integrated into Eastern Europe's culture. The city's history began in 1367 when the village was declared a city. At that time, the town was defended by a powerful fortress with 14 towers and four bastions. A simple walk through the city gives you the feeling that a time journey is possible. Narrow streets paved with stone, winding among the imposing, colorful buildings with medieval air from the time when the fortress was filled with the bustle specific to guild shops and workshops.



Turnul Croitorilor - The Tailor's Tower gateway to the ancient citadel (Image: CNIPT Sighisoara)

Does Dracula sound familiar to you? Well, it was inspired by a Wallachian voivode, Vlad Țepeș, born here in 1431, that turned the fortress into a well-known place on the map. One more reason to discover the area and the real history behind a famous character worldwide.

It was a growing city until the 19th century. Due to its geographical position and architecture, it has earned the reputation of the 'Pearl of Transylvania'. To give you an idea, the towering fortress stands watch over the valley of the river Târnava Mare and the hilly landscape of a unique charm. Moreover, the surrounding localities, small villages among the hills, also bear traces of the rational way the Saxons knew how to organise and defend themselves from invaders. The fortified churches of Biertan, Viscri and Valea Viilor also appear on the UNESCO Heritage list, providing an overview of the style of construction and organisation of life in the medieval period.

The beauty of the area, with its architecture, landscape and nature, impressed even the monarch who, in this period, caught the attention of the whole world. Prince Charles bought a house in the village of Viscri and used to spend a few days there from time to time.

Today, Sighisoara remains a multi-ethnic city. Romanians, Hungarians, Saxons and other nationalities continue to live here, imprinting a multicultural atmosphere. An evening in Sighisoara old Citadel offers an atmosphere similar to the great European capitals. But it also has that Balkan fragrance that you can find in the traditional food served in restaurants, or in souvenirs inspired by traditional Romanian art.

We look forward to welcoming you all to this special area to discover more about and discuss learning landscapes. We will have more details of the conference available soon.

Adina Popa is a member of the team responsible for organising the Interpret Europe conference 2023. She is a PR and communication specialist for Hateg Country UNESCO Global Geopark in Romania ([www.hateggeoparc.ro](http://www.hateggeoparc.ro)). You can get in touch with her at: [adina.popa@unibuc.ro](mailto:adina.popa@unibuc.ro).

# Other announcements

## Upcoming events

For up to date information on upcoming events in Europe and the rest of the world, keep an eye on the events page of the IE website:

<https://interpret-europe.net/events/categories/others/>

03-07/10/2022

**Interpretation Canada Conference 2022 - Storytelling: Making people care since... forever**

Halifax (Canada)

<https://interpretationcanada.ca/event-4823274>

05-07/10/2022

**EUROPARC Conference 2022 - Climate change; Resilient parks**

Argelcs-sur-Mer (France)

<https://europarcconference.com/>

09-11/10/2022

**NEMO European Museum Conference: Innovation begins within - Resilient museums in times of disruption**

Loule (Portugal)

<https://www.ne-mo.org/about-us/european-museum-conference.html>

12-14/10/2022

**AHI Conference 2022 - Y Cysylltiad/ The Connection**

Snowdonia, North Wales (UK)

<https://ahi.org.uk/ahi-event/ahi-conference-2022-y-cysylltiad-the-connection/>

19-22/10/2022

**Relaunching European Tourism, ECTN conference**

Krk (Croatia)

<https://www.culturaltourism-network.eu/conference-2022.html>

31/10-04/11/2022

**9th International Euro-Mediterranean Conference on cultural heritage**

Cyprus

<https://euromed2022.eu/>

16-18/11/2022

**2nd Festival of the Diversity of the World's Cultural Expressions**

Florence (Italy)

<https://www.lifebeyonddtourism.org/the-world-in-florence-second-edition/>

16-19/11/2022

**CULTUROPOLIS & BtO - the 2022 edition of Beyond the Obvious**

Barcelona (Spain)

<https://cultureactioneurope.org/events/culturopolis-beyond-the-obvious-2022/>

29/11-03/12/2022

**NAI Conference 2022: Interpretation Rocks**

Cleveland (USA)

<https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/NAIConference>



# And finally...

## Thank you for your contributions.

Warm greetings from your IE News Team and apologies for missing out the summer 2022 issue. We hope you enjoyed this double Summer-Autumn bounty!

Marie Banks (UK) – News Coordinator, supported by Anna Carlemalm (Sweden), Abby McSherry (Ireland), Elisabeth Nübel-Reidbach (Germany), Sarah Wendl (Austria) and Ivana Zrilić (Croatia).

### Any news, projects, thoughts or adventures in interpretation that you want to share?

Send a report and some photos to:  
[news@interpret-europe.net](mailto:news@interpret-europe.net).

Please consider that we like to promote best practice examples in the field of heritage interpretation and follow the guidelines for newsletter authors:

<https://interpret-europe.net/news/guidelines-for-authors/>

**Deadline for contributions for the Winter 2022 edition: Wednesday 30 November 2022**

The articles, news items and event announcements reflect the views and opinions of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of Interpret Europe or other organisations.

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<https://www.facebook.com/interpreteurope>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/1227939/>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDbwylo-tJugfsKXIEI21fQ>

As a member you can also join our [closed Facebook group](#) or our Facebook country groups for more regular, informal interpretation chat.

Albania: [Interpret Europe Albania](#)

Bosnia & Herzegovina: [Interpret Europe Bosnia & Herzegovina](#)

Croatia: [Interpret Europe Croatia](#)

Greece: [Interpret Europe Greece](#)

Italy: [Interpret Europe Italy](#)

Kosovo: [Interpret Europe Kosovo](#)

North Macedonia:

[Interpret Europe North Macedonia](#)

Poland: [Interpret Europe Poland](#)

Scandinavia: [Interpret Europe Scandinavia](#)

Slovenia: [Interpret Europe Slovenia](#)

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with Europe's natural and cultural heritage  
to shape our common future

