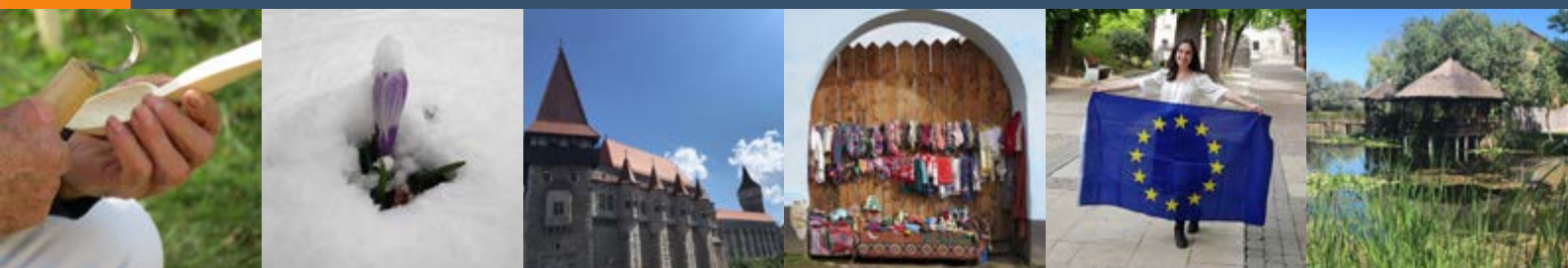


Newsletter

Spring 2023



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Dear members,

This spring brings fresh winds and new opportunities and inspiration to many interpreters. There is probably hardly any IE member that hasn't heard that all interpreters' paths lead to Rom(e)ania. The conference with a far reaching theme: Creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation, points to the opportunity of learning from heritage for the future. In fact, actors in all social spheres are encouraged to rethink their practices and attitudes and their carbon footprint, hence also heritage sites increasingly consider their role in contemporary challenges, be it environmental, economic or social. The opportunity lies not only in improving management practices and communicating the topics towards users, clients or the general public. With our Creating learning landscapes through interpretation initiative, we encourage heritage sites to go a few steps further. To cooperate and to involve stakeholders, locals and visitors, of all age groups. To co-create a fulfilling, meaningful, learning and enriching experience, for all sides that enable reflection upon the critical subjects.

If you are still undecided about whether to join us at the conference, this newsletter might be a good test for your indecisiveness. Just turn the page and read an inspiring travel memoir from one of our British members from his travels through Romania, describing some of the country's highlights.

In less than two months' time, we'll be together rambling along rolling hills full of colourful flowers, and fortresses on the hilltops, enjoying delicious local treats and admiring the picturesque UNESCO heritage of Romanian Saxons from by-gone days. Still not convinced? More than 60 participating presenters and workshop leaders are coming from 35 countries from as far as Israel, Canada and the USA. We will enjoy speeches from four keynote speakers from organisations as diverse as Nottingham University, the UNESCO Chair for interpretation and education, Global Geopark Network and the European Ranger Association. Convinced? Then act fast and don't miss the early bird deadline on 30 March! Sighișoara will also be the venue of our annual General Assembly. Participation will be provided online too so even if you can't join us live, watch out for the registration announcement.

For the last year, interpretation has a more prominent place in UNESCO's structure, not only because of our fruitful collaboration with UNESCO Venice Bureau. WHIPIC, the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation for World Heritage

Sites, under the auspices of UNESCO, has celebrated its first anniversary with a publication. You can find an inspirational story from IE in it, too.

Fresh from our oven is a new training Module on Children's Interpretation. It has been tested several times and the materials are being finalised. However, the most assured way of attending it is by inviting a trainer and to organise it in your institution! A Portuguese member rounds off this story on children with her recent test of using interpretation of arts in the kindergarten.

Graham Black, an IE member and a keynote speaker at our upcoming conference, reports about the Rebuilding lives exhibition he curated together with the communities of Ugandan Asians in UK. The most recent update on this note is its shortlisting of the project for the UK Museums and Heritage 'Temporary Exhibition of the Year' award. But, you must already be intrigued to find out about who the Ugandan Asians are and how they ended up in their third country.

Portuguese colleagues can from now on enjoy interpretive training in Portuguese and European projects once more proved to be a good platform for implementing IE courses, this time in cooperation between Poland and Croatia.

Also in other news from Croatia, you can read about an interactive interpretive exhibition on intangible heritage from the UNESCO list – a song. The description probably doesn't do justice to the real thing, but thanks to our interpretive planners in the country, and their ten years of work on the subject, digital media are being used to engage and even challenge visitors in co-creation of the content. Don't miss some tips and hints further down.

Last but not least, Interpret Europe's path have recently crossed with the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations' (WFTGA) attempt to review their own training offers. IE's Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course was organised in Armenia by the WFTGA training department for their experienced guides and trainers. Their impressions can be found in this edition.

Enjoy reading and see you soon in Romania!

Helena Vičič
IE Managing Director

Around Romania in two weeks

Dirk Bennett (UK)

Ahead of iecon23 some memories of a trip through Romania last summer, to give you a little taster of its rich history and cultural heritage.

The English have a lovely expression for my kind of trip, a “busman’s holiday”. And I am sure it sounds all too familiar: when visiting a park, a castle, a historic site, a museum abroad or at home, you immediately start looking at how the text is written, how the panels are fixed to the ground, how the interactives work (and if there are any, and why/why not?!), what is the underlying design approach... You wonder about the key messages, stories, themes. What target audiences might they have had in mind, what are the accompanying materials, does the visitor route work?

Sometimes it is hard for us to shed the professional perspective, to let go and abandon ourselves wholeheartedly to the experience, the history, the landscape. To become a real visitor, or better still: traveller, and to forget about work and interpretive principles. But when you are able to do just that, it is probably the best sign that something is at work: subtle, nudging, surprising, exciting, touching, and thus supporting the personal journey of discovery, even revelation.

The first time we set sight on one of the famous painted churches of the Bukovina, a region in the Northeast of Romania, was at the end of a long hot day travelling up from the Danube Delta. We entered the churchyard at Manastirea Voronets and stopped dead in our tracks. This monastery with its central church it is a wonder to behold, covered outside and in with vivid paintings glowing in the light of the late afternoon sun. I know this probably all sounds a bit kitsch, but there is something incredibly immediate and touching and almost spiritual experiencing those churches in the real for the first time. You can get a brief taster from this video in which we tried to capture a little of the beauty:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CgSSZbLI8On/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>

Soon we came to notice the shared architecture and iconography between the churches in the region and also their subtle differences, enhanced in each case by their individual settings. Their uniqueness lies not just in their survival as architectural and art historical gems, but also in their ongoing use as places of

worship and as spiritual centres for the surrounding communities, i.e. as pieces of living heritage. Which also sets them in the context of the often-troubled history of the wider region, from the middle ages, and the assaults from the Ottoman Empire, to the events of the 20th century.



The outside of the church at Voronets Monastery (Image: Dirk Bennett)

In the last of ‘our’ churches, in Pătrăuți we met what must be the one of the coolest nuns in the world. The site was closed when we arrived, but speaking to some passers-by – they were domestic tourists, Siebenbürgen Saxons, from down South and spoke in their ancient German dialect, in itself another fascinating chapter of Romanian history – we found out that she lived across the road and looked after the site. She offered us our very own, private tour of the tiny church. Noticing we didn’t speak Romanian, she took out her smartphone, talked into it and her explanations were directly translated back to us, even responding to our questions. It was a unique example of coexistence, survival, mutual benefit ... and so much more and hard to put into words: a coming together of medieval art, of ancient spirituality, a sense of place and modern technology, lived in and delivered by this particular person. A truly personal experience.

One of the most enchanted places in the country, to borrow from William Blacker's book about his stay in the region, has to be the Maramures. It is a landscape of almost heartbreaking beauty, especially in summer when it is all meadows, rolling hills, the air heavy with the scent of wild herbs, and vast oak and beech forests full of blueberries, sold by the punnet by old ladies along the roadside. The village of Breb is almost like living within a heritage site; ancient houses covered with wooden shingles, dirt tracks leading through the village with horse-drawn carts rumbling along, orchards heavy with fruit, every homestead guarded by an enormous dog on a chain – and little did we know when we first booked our accommodation here that this was exactly the village where the author of 'Along the enchanted way' had lived in the late 1990s. Much has changed since then, no doubt, but still it seemed to us like a step far back in time.

An unusual experience on our way southwards towards the Retezat mountains, was the salt mine at Turda, in use since the middle ages, its heyday under Austrian rule: it felt like a mix between the mines of Moria and one of the settlements on the outer rings of the solar system in "The Expanse". Considering its attraction for domestic visitors and to avoid long queues it is best to use the old side entrance. This leads you along a long tunnel into the mine and into a vast network of tunnels that run deeper and deeper inside the lodes of rock salt, the walls patterned and shimmering like polished marble. The shafts that drop downwards into the main halls are immense, some over 100 metres deep and more than 60 metres across, and down in the distance you can spot a lake with little boats bobbing on its surface. In the various rooms there are panels and displays of old machinery and tools, relics of a pre-industrial age. Using either stairs or lifts you end up on the floor of the mine, slightly incongruously filled with cafes, restaurants, playgrounds and a fun fair, neon lights flashing, music blasting – the effect like being caught in a sci-fi film by Ridley Scott. What was meant as a short stopover ended up as a several hour stay.

Corvin's Castle in Hunedoara was a contrast and surprisingly under-interpreted, considering its place in Romanian history: this was the castle of the house of Hunyadi, which – with Matthias Corvin as its most famous protagonist – played an enormous role in the history of central Europe during the Renaissance. There were signs outside of an EU-sponsored project, and the hope is that something will be done about this fairytale castle, which in its current shape and form is mostly a 19th-century take on the middle ages.



A house in Breb (above) and Corvin's Castle (below) (Images: Dirk Bennett)



The Retezat mountains, one of many of Romania's national parks, with their untamed primordial forests are a paradise for 'wild walkers', bird watchers and nature lovers – and an example of that other side of Romania that will surprise Western visitors. Used to the more sedate nature experiences of say, the Cairngorms, the Carpathian mountains or the Alps, they are rugged and undeveloped, their fauna and flora wild, rich and surprising. There are only few corners like this that survive in Europe: the Rhodope mountains in Bulgaria, the Albanian 'Accursed Mountains' and maybe parts of the Pindus.

It is about one hour's drive – 1.5 if you get lost on the way like we did – from there to Sarmizegetusa, the ancient religious and military centre of the Dacians, and razed to the ground by the Romans in the early 100s AD in that campaign that is described in some detail on Trajan's column in Rome. The journey to the site takes a bit of commitment and follows a long and winding valley through a densely forested area, distant from any major modern settlement. Its destruction was so effective that for over 1,500 years it lay undiscovered, one of the many places and sites mentioned in old manuscripts and half consigned to historical myth. It also touches on a highly sensitive part of Romanian historiography, namely the relationship of modern Romania with its ancient history, or rather: the question of a (supposed)

continuity between its Roman settlement and its ancient population, through the middle and early modern ages to the modern state. From the 19th century onwards this became a highly contentious issue, which also defined Romania's relationship with its neighbours, Hungary and Bulgaria in particular. The echoes of which can be traced in ongoing academic debates that still have political resonance and can spill over into the public domain.

All that aside, Sarmizegetusa today is an idyllic place, surrounded by deciduous forest, laid out over several terraces on a hill spur that overlooks an ancient river valley. On the plateau stretch the remains of defensive walls, of public buildings and temples. The site feels carefully chosen, for its location and how everything is arranged. Nothing much is known about the Dacians, their history, their religion, their society, rulers, military or societal organisation but the remains here – and what is kept in the national and international collections – have their very own, specific flavour and follow none of the classic layouts so familiar and prevalent in Europe from the Greek or Roman world. Not unsurprisingly, some of their artworks show a relationship to the art of the Scythians and Thracians further south and along the Black Sea. In any case, Sarmizegetusa is evidence of a sophisticated culture with a high level of organisation and social structure. You can see a short video clip of the site here:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CgpYz7OIISX/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>

The old Dacian capital was the last stage on our "busman's trip" that had started, two weeks before, in the Danube Delta. The mouth of this truly European river is probably the nearest our continent has to Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer country. Full of canals and streams, dead water pools, and reed swamps it is teeming with wildlife, holds the remains of an ancient settlement and of a failed tourist project by its erstwhile dictator. Some of its current villages can only be reached by boat on an hour-long journey – you park your car and leave from a derelict pier on the outskirts of Mahmudia (its name another reminder of the country's history of changing influences). Their population is a mix of people of Ukrainian, old-Russian, Turkish and Romanian descent; and when you stand on the edge of the land, on the shore that links the river estuary to the sea, in the distance you can glimpse ship convoys passing, moving slowly, so the locals told us, northward towards Ukraine.



View from the top terrace at Sarmizegetusa
(Image: Dirk Bennett)

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.

Soup and flowers – Interpreting World Heritage

Valya Stergioti (Greece)

IE represents Europe in a new publication celebrating global examples of interpretation.

Interpreters of the World: heads up! A new compilation of texts about interpretation from around the globe has just been published by WHIPIC, the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation for World Heritage Sites, under the auspices of UNESCO.

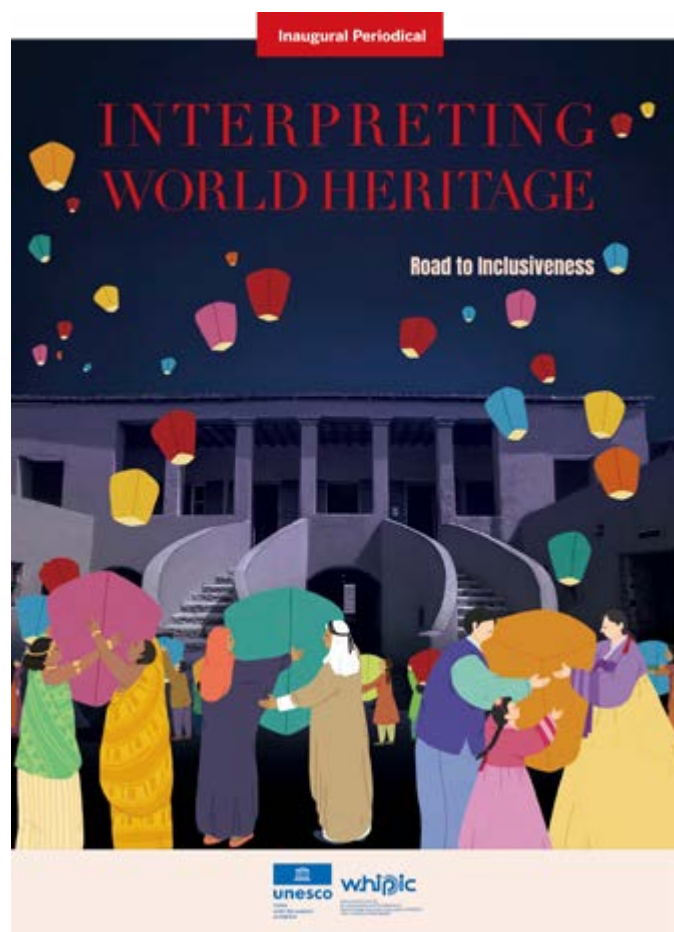
The inaugural periodical celebrates the first year of WHIPIC and showcases inspirational stories from around the world. In particular, the combined content looks at inclusive interpretation and the presentation of world heritage in a changing world.

Interpret Europe was asked to represent the continent of Europe by providing an example. We have been working with UNESCO offering training to World Heritage Site staff, following the principles of our Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) course, so we were very happy to be asked to contribute to this new publication.

You can download it here:

<https://unesco-whipic.org/periodicals>

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. Valya can be contacted at: valya.stergioti@interpret-europe.net.



If it works for children ... how the module on interpretation for children came about

Janja Sivec (Slovenia)

A new Interpret Europe training module is almost ready to launch.

It is finally time to talk about and showcase what I have been thinking about (for the last three years), what we have been working on (with an IE focus group) and have now tested (on three separate occasions); 'Interpretation for children', a new module in the IE training programme.

*Let's start at the very beginning
A very good place to start...*

I would not say I am Julie Andrews, magician with children. But I have dedicated part of my professional career to developing programmes for children and leading them. After I became an IE trainer, I started to implement the IE quality standard into my programmes. When looking back, a lot of what we incorporated into our programmes came spontaneously, but spontaneity is not the best training policy, so the goal was to develop an IE philosophy-based methodology that would help individuals who develop and lead interpretation for children to have a structure that they could follow.

So after around two years of toying with the idea of creating a course and hinting about it several times to IE management and training coordinator, I finally said (to myself) enough is enough and invited IE members to join a group that would support the development, having agreed that we would develop a training module rather than a full course on this topic. We were a colourful group at our first zoom meeting where we discussed first of all who do we perceive as children, what should interpretation for children offer and, the most important bit, what should an IE training module offer to the professionals who work with children.

Meetings with the group helped me structure the mess that were my thoughts and a fixed deadline for the test run really got things moving. It was interesting to hear different perspectives from different members of the group but the IE training philosophy helped us to stay on track. After the preliminary meetings where the structure was set, I got down to the task of bringing it together. Putting

it in time frames, shortening all the ideas for a full course into a 16-hour training module, developing exercises based on the goals we had established in the meetings and presentations where I enlisted help from other members of the group. We realised that 16 hours is not enough to touch on every imaginable topic related to interpretation for children, and two especially gave us food for thought: What do we do with interpretation for families (with children) and youth? We decide we would do an introduction to the topic. Group members Barbara Struys (looking at HI for families) and Iva Čaleta Pleša (looking at interpretation for youth) prepared presentations that offer a short overview of the topics that could/should have a module of their own.

Testing phase

When I had (almost) everything ready on paper it was time to test it in practice. On a beautiful June weekend we held our first run of the workshop 'Interpretation for children' in the open air museum in Rogatec, Slovenia. The group was a good mix of IE group members and people who were not involved in the development of the module. For the very first run it went well with quite a lot of on site changes to the programme that (probably) were not all that visible to the participants and some hiccups when an exercise sounded straightforward on paper but when we started giving instructions we saw that it was overcomplicated.

The second time I tested the workshop I had several new challenges. The programme had been tested but on previously IE trained participants and in English. So in January this year I did another run on a full group of 16 museum pedagogic officers/curators and in Slovenian language this time. Only a few of the participants had any previous experience of IE training. The programme ran even smoother with the changes I made based on the first run and I had great luck that our managing director – also an IE trainer – had time to attend and give me her very valuable insight and comments.

Since then, I have run the workshop one more time, with some more changes and adaptations, some of which work well and others not so much. Sometimes you just want to be too clever and over-complicate the simple but effective tools.

Comparing the first and the second group, I would say that the main difference was in understanding what universals are and how we can use them in heritage interpretation. The first group of mainly IE trained participants had it covered but maybe lacked in the didactic/activity phase of the development of

Interpretation for children compared to the second group where it really showed from their combined experiences of working in pedagogic programmes on some of the biggest heritage sites in Slovenia.

All the groups struggled with sticking to the structure and phases. We all want to go to the final activities and not spend too much time with the uniqueness of our heritage, universals and working on themes; these elements being less fun, I guess.

So I was really happy that I took the time on the third run to be a part of a group and be a bit pushy to follow the structure to the letter. And what would you know, we went from a fixed idea, back to heritage and its uniqueness to developing a theme and then the theme lead our activities. We spent 60% of our time on the first phase and relatively very little on what activities we will do, since we had a lighthouse and just had to follow it.

On the third run (that was done in my home town) we were deeply on our own turf so we were able to invite the strictest of evaluators (our children) and I write this with great pleasure that we were successful in making it fun but also meaningful, because we were able to convey to 4-6 year olds that we don't just drink water, but we also use it to make things, like pottery.

What is next?

The programme of this 16-hour module will be finalised and prepared for IE trainers in the next couple of months and then it will be ready to be spread Europe-wide with the help of our network. It feels good to be able to say that it is done and tested and waiting for all the enthusiasts who want to inspire enthusiasm for heritage in the next generation with the help of tools we have prepared for you.

Janja Sivec is an IE trainer and full-time interpreter from Slovenia. If you want to get in touch write to: janja.sivec@dlegende.com.



How can our individual skills within a group help to solve a problem? One of the exercises from the test run in Rogatec (above)

It's not easy when you know you have only three hours to prepare and your visitors are 4-6 years old (below) (Images: Janja Sivec)



Interpretation as the tourist guides' creative outlet

Viola Lewis (UK)

Tourist guides overwhelmed by the demands of mass tourism: Can interpretation be a path to self-actualisation for guide and guests?

I'm a newbie to Interpret Europe. Yet, as a tourist guide, I see myself as a heritage interpreter. This is what I do every day when with visitors. Or is it? Am I really up-to-date? Am I making the most of my skills? If I'm honest, I also smell a whiff of disillusion with mass tourism. I needed some inspiration on how to get back to my vision of keeping tourism a force for good in the country I love to share with my guests.

My inbox had endless invitations to online events and this is how I came across this speaker from Interpret Europe – a timely opportunity?! I got talking to Max Dubravko-Fijacko, IE's Gastronomic Heritage Coordinator and an IE trainer. Seeds were sown and plans came together. To cut a long story short, we were fortunate to gather a group of like-minded tourist guides for an IE Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course organised through the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) in heritage-heavy Armenia.

Five intensive, immersive and inspirational days later I am convinced of three things:

- Yes, I am a heritage interpreter and do a lot of it intuitively. The course gave me the confidence and substance to more fully embrace the interpretive approach.
- The course also gave me the vocabulary to communicate better with the many heritage interpreters beyond the tourist guide profession and who knows where this will take us.
- Interpretation will be my creative outlet in the harsh reality of (mass) tourism.

I realised that my training so far had given me a good introduction to interpretation, but first and foremost taught me the daily craft of functioning as a tourist guide in a commercial environment. Remember Maslow's hierarchy of needs? Tourist Guides need to satisfy guests' needs for safety, comfort, food, accommodation, toilet breaks, connectivity and create a friendly, human atmosphere with the guide, within the group and host community before they can concentrate on what we call commentaries and other interpretation professionals call 'interpretive talk'. Often the 'more basic' needs take up most of the energy of tourist guides.

It was sheer luxury spending five days purely on creating content and commentaries and experimenting with stepping stones to offer pathways to deeper meaning – for guide and participants.

Admittedly the course may appear a bit intangible, but isn't this true to the art of interpretation and guiding? How else can it be inspirational? How else can we arrive at our own meaning but through a process which includes the course. Now it is down to me to work on my own interpretive walk, to take stock and re-evaluate my current walking tours using the interpretive approach. There is no better time than now, when UNWTO urges us to re-think tourism and WFTGA encourages us to re-generate our profession. What part will the interpretive approach play in this endeavour? Time and determination will tell.

I'm immensely grateful to my WFTGA colleagues, who believed in the idea and supported the course and to Interpret Europe for providing our trainer and mentor.

Viola Lewis is a self-employed Tourist Guide in Scotland, UK, and trains tourist guides worldwide. Having worked in tourism for over 20 years she is a champion for sustainable tourism and Tourism for All and committed to keep re-thinking her relevance and approach. She can be contacted at: viola@ravingscotland.co.uk.



Feeling what the little girl in the statue is feeling
(Image: Viola Lewis)

Stimulating intellectual adventure with Muses in Zagreb

Agnieszka Kaczmarska (Poland)

From Poland to Croatia to learn how to “look with the heart”, find deeper meanings in surrounding reality and how to share it with others.

In February 2023, the first of three groups from the new Polish museum in Sulejówek attended the Interpret Europe Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course organised by Muses Ltd. in Zagreb. The Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówek near Warsaw is a modern facility, opened in 2020. It is dedicated to a leader and a statesman, who is the symbol of independence for Poles. The museum has two hearts: a historical enclave with a vast garden surrounding the house of the Piłsudski family; and a modern educational and exhibition complex. A permanent 2,100sqm exhibition presents the life, political thought and legacy of Józef Piłsudski against the backdrop of the era and conveys the values he represents, the idea of fighting for independence and working on building the state.

We became interested in heritage interpretation methods a few years ago as the idea of creating reflection in participants instead of serving a ready understanding of our heroes' achievements. Therefore, we were delighted that in 2023, 30 people from our museum could take part in the Interpret Europe training in Zagreb as part of the Erasmus+ programme financed by the European Union.

The training was well organised with theory conducted in the modern Muses office intertwined with practical exercises outside. Walking along park alleys, we drew, composed themes, described objects that we would not have paid attention to before. We practiced “looking with our heart” – finding elements that resonated with us. The presence of colleagues from Croatia in the group enriched our interpretations with different sensitivities.

We visited the Zagreb City Museum where we developed interpretive walks. We also went to the Medvedgrad Castle in Medvednica Nature Park, where we reviewed the natural and historical exhibitions. We all passed the theory test and interpretive talk in the Rokov Perivoj park, accompanied by strong emotions. We created interesting stories revealing the unknown meanings of our phenomena, some as surprising as inconspicuous daisies blooming in February.

The CIG course was intense but neatly planned and flexibly adapted to the dynamics of the group. The training turned out to be a stimulating intellectual adventure, teaching how to perceive deeper meanings in the surrounding reality and how to share it with others. I think that this course is just the beginning of our adventure with heritage interpretation. After return to Poland our task is to prepare programmes and narrative paths at the museum for participants of various age groups, and especially for the most demanding guests: adults. We hope these new skills will help us make it attractive and meaningful.

Personally, as a curator, I wish I had the chance to take this course ten years ago, before working on the permanent exhibition in our modern narrative museum. In that sense, I think that this course should be part of the programme of museology studies, or other cultural studies as groundwork for all who work in this field.

Agnieszka Kaczmarska is a curator at Józef Piłsudski Muzeum in Sulejówek in Poland (www.muzeumpilsudski.pl). You can get in touch with her at: a.kaczmarska@mjpws.pl.



Group work in the Muses office and the course participants outside in the Rokov Perivoj park (Images: Inia Herencić)

The first CIG course in Portuguese

Armandina Pina (Portugal)

New heritage interpretation skills gained amongst cultural history dating back to the Romans will unlock potential to tell Portugal's stories.

From 2-11 February, the first Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course in Portuguese took place in the Conímbriga Museum, near Coimbra, in the central region of Portugal. This unique place has been the home of several populations throughout the centuries, the most evident being the Roman civilisation, whose remains can give us today a glimpse of how their lives would have been two millennia ago. During the training, participants were able to visit several places around Conímbriga, where different practical exercises were carried out to try to reveal the deepest meanings of a great selection of cultural and natural heritage.

The course itinerary began in the past and moved us on to the future. We started with the Roman city of Conímbriga and a museum inaugurated in 1962 contrasting to the PO.RO.S Museum (Roman Portugal in Sicó Mountain), inaugurated in 2017. This museum explains the Roman occupancy of the region using new technologies to recreate the Roman legacy in an interactive and efficient way. We continued the course through the streets of Condeixa, passing by the House-Museum of Fernando Namora, a poet descendant of this land who was honoured by the municipality that created this museum. Inside his house the artistic production and acquisitions of this family doctor are displayed along with some secrets and personal objects in the small office that seems like it is waiting to be experienced by the visitors.

The School of Water, a former primary school recently converted into an interpretative centre, was visited as an example of how we can provoke thoughts about water and understand all its connections to life and the landscape. With only explanatory panels, this centre continues to stimulate visitors and the local population on how we can protect water as a source of life. The journey continued to the peaceful village of Casmilo, a place with many unnoticed heritage elements that tell us the story of the ancestors who lived there, and the presence of old ways of living that we hope can be preserved for future generations to appreciate that legacy. The course ended where it began: in Conímbriga, that magical place full of hidden meanings.

The course was based on several practical activities to keep us motivated. A strong connection was created between group participants, who before the course

only had in common an appreciation of heritage. Now we also all have in common an important tool for the development of heritage interpretation. We cannot predict the future but certainly many new projects and activities will start from this point to foster the unveiling of many Portuguese heritage phenomena that are waiting to be discovered, interpreted and above all preserved.

Armandina Pina's professional activity is very different from interpretation since she is a tax inspector, but she has always been passionate about her country's history. She recently finished a degree in History, and now heritage interpretation is a possible asset in her future professional career. She can be contacted at: armandinaandrepina@gmail.com.



The CIG course group exploring some of the cultural heritage and existing information to base our training on (Images: Ana Jervis Cunha (top) and Filomena Faria (bottom))

Congratulations to our newly certified members

Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG)

Laura Aluja Masalles, Spain
Núria Aragay, Spain
Laia Becerra, Spain
Ivo Bogović, Croatia
Ariana Brnetić, Croatia
Joan Cartanyà Martí, Spain
Enrique David César Hernández, Spain
Sylvie Claudon, France
Saakje Hazenberg, France
Sofia Konstantinova Ilkova, Bulgaria
Sandra Marcos Bonet, Spain
Shanai Martín, Spain
Elena Maselli, France
Alfons Mengod, Spain
Maria Àngels Morera Barniol, Spain
Laura Moruno Farriol, Spain
Rayna Pashova, Bulgaria
Nina Perkov, Croatia
Nina Petrović, Croatia
Eulàlia Pons Heras, Spain
Chantal Puig García, Spain
Eulàlia Puig García, Spain
Raquel Sala, Spain
Patricia Zanketić, Croatia

Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW)

Melita Trbusic, Croatia

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 and training modules available near you:

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

You can email training@interpret-europe.net for further information.

Date	Language	Location	Trainer
Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)			
31/03-02/04/2023 27-28/05/2023	German	Fällanden, Switzerland	Thorsten Ludwig
14-16/04/2023 28-30/04/2023	Catalan	Barcelona, Spain	Evarist March
24-28/04/2023	English	Fagernes, Norway	Sandy Colvine
24-26/04/2023 15-16/06/2023	German	Babenhausen, Germany	Thorsten Ludwig
Certified Interpretive Writer (CIW)			
20-24/03/2023	Croatian	Ogulin, Croatia	Iva Klarić Vujović
18-22/09/2023	English	Trollhättan, Sweden	Thorsten Ludwig
Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)			
None yet - keep an eye on the website			

Upcoming IE webinars

27/03/2023 at 18.00 CEST

Living history at the Hungarian OpenAir Museum: A case study

Presented by Zsuzsanna Nagyné Batári (Hungary)

20/04/2023

IE will present as part of the GAHI webinar series

Sign up here:

<https://www.gahi.online/global-excellence-in-heritage-interpretation-webinar-series/>

02/05/2023 at 10.30 CEST

The interpreter's role in shaping the future

Presented by Ivana Jagic Boljat (Croatia)

22/06/2023 at 18.00 CEST

Călugăreni/Mikháza Archaeological Park

Presented by Szilámér Péter Pánczél (Romania)

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

Don't forget that IE members can catch up on previous webinars if you missed them – the recordings are available in the members' area of the website.

Rebuilding Lives: 50 years of Ugandan Asians in Leicester

Graham Black (UK)

An exhibition celebrating culture, community and resilience.

Diversity is now a basic characteristic of the western world, reflected in growing racial, ethnic and cultural differences across populations. For example, it is estimated that, by 2050, some 30% of the UK population will be from minority communities.

How nation states incorporate this diversity is one of the great challenges of our age. It has major implications for museums, heritage sites and cultural institutions – access and participation by marginalised and minority groups has become a strategic objective of governmental arts and cultural policies. But access and participation are not enough. Incorporating diversity also requires representation and recognition of both community contributions to wider society and the expertise migrant communities can offer. The Rebuilding Lives temporary exhibition at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery demonstrated what could be achieved.



A diverse audience – what all museums must be working for (Image: Jim Butler)

Leicester was the first city in Europe where the majority of its population came from minority communities. Ugandan Asians, one of those communities, were people of Indian descent who settled in Uganda when it was a British Colony. Despite their small numbers, they came to dominate the Ugandan economy - resented by native Ugandans. In 1972, the then President, Idi Amin, ordered them to leave within 90 days. They could take £55 per family plus a suitcase each. Over 60,000 people had to flee, leaving behind their money, homes, businesses and

way of life. Some 27,000 came to the UK. Around 10,000 settled in Leicester, despite strong opposition and racism there. Most arrived homeless, jobless and penniless – but determined to rebuild their lives.

With 2022 marking the 50th anniversary of their expulsion, there was strong community demand in Leicester for a commemorative exhibition. Navrang Arts, a local Indian Community Arts organisation, negotiated a prominent gallery space in Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, established a volunteer team, including myself, and successfully applied for funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The entire exhibition was based on the lived experiences of those involved - oral histories and memories triggered by photographs, archive film, family cinefilms and objects they had brought from Uganda. The central themes of the oral histories (recorded by trained volunteers) provided the main exhibition themes. At 'Memory Days', held in community venues to gather material for display, people brought along their items and talked about why they were important. These conversations became object labels and image captions. Having talked with us, the people at the memory days then chatted with each other – so these days became celebrations in their own right.

We wanted exhibition visitors to immerse themselves in the exhibition. Using the height of the gallery space, we digitally printed vinyl wallpaper for our graphics and had local students produce banners. Colour and a soundscape added to the sense of occasion. A 'Reflection Zone' encouraged visitors to contribute their own memories and thoughts, which then became part of the exhibition. Many stories were told and tears shed. Hundreds of post-it notes contributed people's thoughts.



A Reflection Zone sits at the heart of the exhibition (Image: Graham Black)



Triggering conversation – key to memory and thought-sharing (Image: Jim Butler)

The focus of the exhibition was not on the Ugandan Asians as victims of Amin – rather, it celebrated community achievements since their arrival in Leicester. The community also ensured that part of the exhibition looked at the plight of contemporary refugees, feeling a close kinship to them.

The final exhibition was described by one seasoned museum professional in these words:

The Rebuilding Lives exhibition is superb – truthful, engaging, emotive, and full of people celebrating life.

More than 100,000 people visited – a large number for a community exhibition in the UK, let alone one in a relatively small city. Many were Ugandan Asians and their families, travelling long distances to visit. But the overall audience crossed racial and ethnic boundaries – and temporarily transformed the demographic make-up of users of the museum. And the project spread – eventually including four exhibitions in other towns and cities, over 90 events and a full schools' programme

The Ugandan Asian community were really proud of what we achieved. But, despite its success in showing the potential for community engagement, it is a one-off. The gallery space has been given over to contemporary art. This is phenomenally depressing. Museums must change or they are going to find themselves catering to smaller and smaller segments of the overall population.

Nevertheless, we are immensely proud that the exhibition has been shortlisted for a Museums and Heritage Award 2023 in the category of 'Best temporary or touring exhibition of the year'. I will be talking about the exhibition within my keynote paper at iecon23 in Romania and we hope to know by then whether this exhibition was the winner of that award.

Graham Black is Emeritus Professor of Museum Development at Nottingham Trent University, UK. He has worked in and with museums for over 40 years. His fascination lies in the changing nature of heritage audiences and their expectations – and what this should mean for the practice of interpretation. He has published three books: *The Engaging Museum* (2005), *Transforming Museums in the 21st Century* (2012), and *Museums and the Challenge of Change* (2021). Graham can be contacted at: black.rgraham@gmail.com.

Bećarac – A small song that tells a big story

Melita Trbušić (Croatia)

The Museum of Bećarac in Croatia opened its doors on 17 February 2023 with the sounds of tamburitza.

This new museum has already welcomed a multitude of people who came to connect to the living heritage of bećarac (becharac) in a new way. Bećarac is a traditional vocal-instrumental song that is considered an intangible cultural heritage of Croatia and is protected by UNESCO. This small but powerful song consists of only two rhyming ten-point verses but sings about nearly all the aspects of one's life, with an emphasis on love and eroticism.

Bećarac lives through its people

As intangible heritage, bećarac does not exist without the people who live it and protect it. Bećarac, in its humorous and provocative tone, is most often performed as a form of dialogue or vocal duelling. Its vitality lies in its actuality, because despite his centuries-old form (bećarac was first documented in the 18th century) it is still the favourite way of communicating a vast variety of emotions, views and attitudes in Eastern Croatia. People there also like to call it 'Šokački haiku' (Shokac haiku).

Presenting the bećarac is therefore unthinkable without connecting visitors to the bećarac heirs themselves. The Museum of Bećarac has become a medium that conveys their voices, while at the same time enabling each visitor to connect to the content in a playful, yet meaningful way.

Intangible heritage through tangible media

The permanent exhibition is organised in five large thematic units covering 426sqm of carefully designed scenography, rich with numerous interactive experiences. The exhibition shows bećarac through the stories of the wine culture of Slavonia, through all phases of human life, through the calendar year and customs, and finally through contemporary and different, sometimes technologically advanced, views.

Each exhibit brings unique experiences that encourage visitors to engage, participate and connect with the exhibition content, but also to connect with each other. The entire exhibition is interwoven with the stories of the native bećari and bećaruše who, through their personal stories in videos, share with visitors their personal connection with this living heritage. Original museum objects

form an important part of the display, also carrying their stories woven into them by their owners.

The technology used for exhibits always has a deeper cause, and that is to create a variety of interaction and possibilities for visitor participation. More than 40 multimedia and interactive exhibits depict bećarac through modern and technologically advanced methods, calling every visitor to participate and co-create. You can see and hear intimate stories of individual bećarac heirs through video presentations. Visitors can experience different customs shown in documentaries that have a strong artistic expression. Numerous green screen recordings made for development of some interactive exhibits bring the visitors closer to virtual, but very real, singing contests between the singers of bećarac, or a battle between bećar and a rapper. Visitors can vote for their preferred performance and the votes are added so they can also see who won – bećar or rapper.

Visitors can also leave their mark on this exhibition by assembling the bećarac themselves, dancing with the people of Pleternica wearing the national costume or singing the bećarac with a singing group of bećari and bećaruše. One intriguing exhibit allows visitors to meet a robotic bećaruša, who encourages visitors to question the creative power of artificial intelligence.



Introduction to the world of bećarac (above)
Bećarac in carnival customs (below)
(Images: Vedran Husremović)



The long process to develop the exhibition's rich content

Our interdisciplinary team at Muses Ltd., together with the stakeholders of the Museum of Bečarac, has been present since the very beginning. We have been working on this project for eight years, creating not only important managing documents for the Museum of Bečarac, but also the conceptual and constructional museological documentation. On this final stage, the implementation of the permanent exhibition, we also worked with an immense network of collaborators including co-authors in the areas of graphic and product design, important individuals from the local community and scientific circles, but also a number of great artists and creatives that contributed to the development of the content of this permanent exhibition – production companies, illustrators, photographers, sculptors and animators.

The permanent exhibition includes over 400 bečarac songs, written, translated to English and sung, 50 videos showing the stories of people and displays of various traditional customs, 200 illustrations and photographs, the collection of 200 original museum objects that have been restored and expertly prepared for presentation, all produced in just a few months.

This makes it one of the most comprehensive permanent museum exhibitions in Croatia and a unique home for this intangible heritage that leads every visitor to the heart of Slavonia.

Melita Trbušić has been a member of the team at Muses Ltd since 2019. She dedicates her work in the field of heritage interpretation to the development of different types and forms of visitor experiences and enjoys bringing people closer to their heritage. She can be contacted at: melita.trbusic@muze.hr.



Setting up the permanent exhibition in the Museum of Bečarac required intense teamwork (Image: Domagoj Blažević)



Bečarac is also represented through the wine culture of Slavonia (above). The personal stories of the heirs are spread throughout the exhibition (below) (Images: Domagoj Blažević)



Interactive exhibits (above) (Image: Vedran Husremović) and Pavao Pavo Kobaš (bečar) at the Restart production video recording for the interactive exhibit The Duel of a Bečar and a Rapper (below) (Image: Inia Herenčić)



Can heritage interpretation reach the kindergarten?

Ana Tavares (Portugal)

An opportunity to use interpretive techniques to bring Portuguese culture to life for our youngest art critics and budding artists.

I was challenged by my youngest son's pre-school teacher to develop an activity for the class related to the parents' jobs. As an investigator in History of Art I came up with the idea of carrying out a project involving a Portuguese artist. However, I quickly realised how huge this achievement would be: How could I catch the interest of a group of 24 children, aged three to six, in the painting techniques of abstract art using a work of art? How could I help them understand some of the key concepts and how could I approach their daily artistic practice and language in order to bring them some kind of meaning?

First of all, I chose the topic, the painting of Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso (1887-1918), a modernist Portuguese painter who held a unique style and who was simultaneously the pioneer in the use of certain plastic techniques that influenced the Portuguese painting throughout the 20th century.

Within this topic I offered a short and simple invitation: "Shall we paint like Amadeo?" The main goal was to touch the children's sensitivity to more abstractionist languages of painting by explaining Amadeo's basic techniques and to demonstrate that all of them were able to paint in freedom, to pick their own theme and colours and mix the materials as they wished – searching for the Amadeo artist in each one of them.

I selected as the main phenomenon one of Amadeo's earliest works, a still-life painting, and I posed some open-ended questions about the facts that were present in the picture: sound objects, kitchen objects, fruits and plants. As the children pointed them out I displayed several props similar to those they could see in the picture, materialising the painting before them and in this way offering a tri-dimensional tactile contact with the objects.

The children were encouraged to help me display the objects so that we could create a composition similar to the original and then they put their hands to work by colouring a picture using a variety of materials. As Amadeo used to mix sand and pieces of wood to add texture to his colours, I kept a surprise element: in three jars that were used for the reconstruction of

the painting (in the bottom right corner) I put some sand and pieces of wood that the children could touch and integrate into their works.

After the first phenomenon I showed the picture of some later works by Amadeo with elements that were similar to the first one, but now transformed: incomplete and more cubic-shaped musical instruments, more contrasting and vivid colours – thus showing the artist's evolution into more modernistic languages. The interpretation was an essential tool to the development of this activity, giving way to a guiding thread in the communication techniques and interference management.

The children were extremely open-minded to this interpretive talk and the final results were very positive and even surprising. They were able to understand that my job involves the study of works of art and artists and... who knows? Maybe this seed might someday sprout in some of these children? Yes, heritage interpretation can happen in the kindergarten!

Ana Tavares studied Music Composition and History of the Arts and spent the last ten years teaching at artistic schools. She recently paused the teaching job and is a full-time PhD student in Heritage Studies at the University of Porto, Portugal. She loves art, travels, walking by the sea and playing with her children. She seeks to learn something new every day. Ana can be contacted at: ana.ester.azevedo@gmail.com.



Using copies of Amadeo's artwork for inspiration and making our own composition of objects in his style (Images: Fátima Rodrigues)



IE announcements

IE Conference 2023: Last chance for the Early Bird booking

Tea Štifanić (Romania)

Hurry to take advantage of the Early Bird booking fee to join us in Romania on 12-15 May for our theme, 'Creating learning landscapes through heritage interpretation'.

Preparations for the conference are in full swing and the temperature is rising! Our partners at AICI Architectural Studio from Bucharest are getting everything ready for us in Romania.

We have received more than 60 abstracts for a mixture of presentations and workshops. The review team and proofreaders have been busy preparing the programme and all abstracts of accepted proposals will be available online soon so you can start to get excited about what to take part in at the conference.

The website is also the place to find out about our keynote speakers.

<https://www.interpreteuropeconference.net/programme/>

The Early Bird reduced booking fee ends on 31 March so hurry and book your place if you haven't yet done it! But don't worry, we will still accept registrations to join us up until 7 May at the standard booking fee.

Tea Štifanić is the IE Events Coordinator. She can be contacted at tea.stifanic@interpret-europe.net. You can contact the conference organising team on: management@interpreteuropeconference.net.

IE General Assembly 2023

Our next General Assembly will take place on Friday 12 May 2023 at 14:00 EET (13:00 CET) in Sighișoara (Romania) whilst we gather for the IE conference.

It will be a hybrid event enabling members to attend online as well as face-to-face, so please save this date even if you can't attend the IE conference in person.

You will receive an invitation to the General Assembly three weeks before (by 21 April), including the agenda with all attachments, the registration process and technical guidelines. If you would like to propose a motion, please send the exact wording on which the Assembly should vote, together with an explanation of its purpose no later than 13 April (four weeks before the meeting). Just as with the General Assemblies over the last three years, all registered members will be able to vote online within a 24-hour time slot. Guidelines on how to do this will be provided.

We look forward to seeing many of you, face to face in Sighișoara or online.



Registrations open

IE conference 12 – 15 May 2023
Sighișoara (Romania)

Creating learning landscapes
through heritage interpretation

#iecon23

Welcome to our new members

Business member

Margalho Paulo, Portugal

Individual members (full membership)

Xiruhaki Eftihia, Greece

Vaqueira Livia, Portugal

Individual members (entry level)

Stolero-Malihi Adar, Israel

Pogorzelska Agnieszka, Poland

Kaczmarek Agnieszka, Poland

Vila Domenech Aina, Spain

Briatico Alex, Italy

Linhares Ana, Portugal

Cunha Ana, Portugal

Tavares Ana, Portugal

Mota Ana, Portugal

Soldo Ana-Marija, Croatia

Tedeschi Andrea, Croatia

Crnčić Anita, Croatia

Rudež Anja, Slovenia

Kuntsova Anna, Ukraine

Pluta Antoni, Poland

Pina Armandina, Portugal

Kolb Arne, Germany

Marques Carla, Portugal

Asensio Carmen, Switzerland

Grünberg Claudia, Germany

Locatelli Cristina, Italy

Sousa David, Portugal

Finzi Dawid, Poland

Argyrou Viguier Demetra, Cyprus

Diaz Elisabet, Spain

Łepkowska Ewa, Poland

Faria Filomena, Portugal

Schneider Friederike, Germany

Sofia Do Vale Rodrigues Germana, Portugal

Turudic Hana, Croatia

Klintermøller Hansen Heidi, Denmark

Zeus Heidrun, Germany

Hernandez-Rodicio Ilio, United Kingdom

Cardoso Inês, Portugal

Monteiro Ivânia, Portugal

Saunders James, Canada

Marović Jelena, Croatia

Liß Jens, Germany

Villagrasa Joan, Spain

Sieracka Joanna, Poland

Kočevar Karin, Slovenia

Rus Karmen, Slovenia

Antonowicz Katarzyna, Poland

Čumbelić Lea, Croatia

Castillo Castro Leonardo, Chile

Avetyan Liana, Armenia

Individual members (entry level) (continued)

Starašinić Lidia, Croatia

Stasisin Loredana, Romania

Biličić Lucija, Croatia

Schmidt Lukas, Germany

Haraminčić Cebalo Maja, Croatia

Ferraz Marco, Portugal

Leitao Margarida, Portugal

Silva Maria, Portugal

Gentilini Maria Augusta, Portugal

Cabezas María Jose, Chile

Muhic Matej, Slovenia

Ribas Monfort Mireia, Spain

Draženović Mirna, Croatia

Ramšak Mojca, Slovenia

Durmo Najda, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Lovšin Nejc, Slovenia

Andranovici Olga, Moldova

Stader Patrick, Germany

Margalho Paulo, Portugal

Haukeland Per Ingvar, Norway

Halajian Rafi, Armenia

Farreras Roger, Spain

Roman Roxana-Talida, Romania

Castellví Rosell Sara, Spain

Schwab Sebastian, Germany

Conceição Sofia, Portugal

Žaknić Sunčana, Croatia

Rodrigues Susana Maria Dos Santos, Portugal

Bak Thomas, United Kingdom

Pfaff Timo, Germany

Reif Urs, Germany

Marelic Vicko, Croatia

Wróblewski Wojciech, Poland

Ivošević Željka, Croatia

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

Other announcements

AHI sponsored memberships

Beth Môrafon (UK)

The UK Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) is seeking to actively broaden the diversity of its members.

The AHI is offering up to 30 sponsored new memberships to people who face barriers in the sector due to ethnicity, disability, socio-economic background, gender identity or sexual orientation (LGBTQ).

Applicants must work within the museum and heritage sector (or within a suitably transferable field) and significantly benefit from the support. The sponsorships are for applicants new to AHI and not current or lapsed members of the organisation.

Forms will be processed in order of receipt until sponsored places are filled or 31 March 2023, whichever is soonest. We very much look forward to receiving applications.

You can find out more and complete the form here: <http://ow.ly/GiJ150MyKPO>

Upcoming events

Keep an eye on the IE website for details of international heritage interpretation events that we are aware of: <https://interpret-europe.net/events/categories/others/>

And finally...

Thank you for your contributions.

Warm spring greetings from your IE News Team.
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.

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 summer 2023 edition: Wednesday 31 May 2023

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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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Empowering all who inspire meaningful connections
with Europe's natural and cultural heritage
to shape our common future