

**Ruth Taylor – Educator / Heritage Interpretation (National Trust, RHS & Artsworld)**

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013, 2pm, Costa Coffee, 3 Station Road, West Byfleet**

Freelance learning, interpretation and community engagement consultant (National Trust in 2006)

This interview will relate to Ruth's experience of working within a heritage organisation such as the National Trust.

Questions relating to how the process for curating / designing and installing interpretations within a large organisation may be different to smaller private cultural heritage sites will be asked.

Discussion regarding the importance of visitor learning via interpretation will be planned. The conversation may also discuss the educational aspect of cultural heritage applications such as Dunster and the Beaulieu Abbey kiosk app, how much is too much information, and how educators as well as cultural heritage site visitors may use interpretation to enhance experience to cultural heritage sites will be planned.

**Background information:**

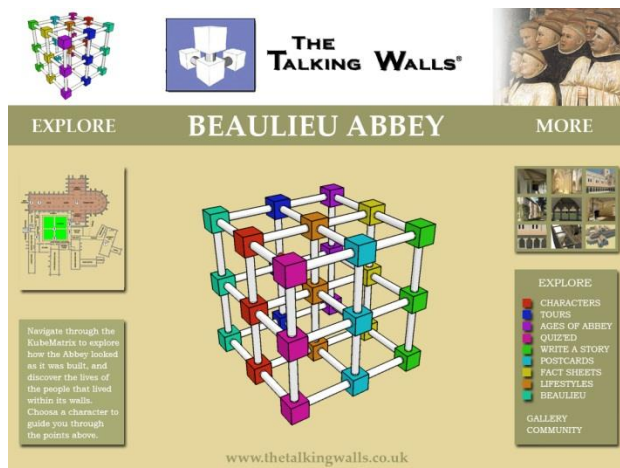
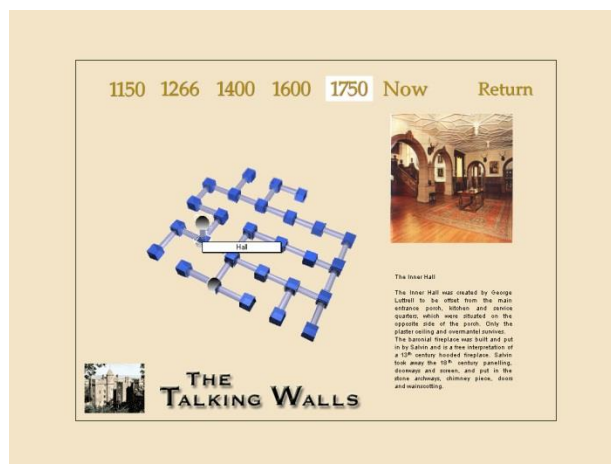
1. I would like to start by asking you about your background and your previous position at the National Trust.
2. What led you to this position? (education / work)
3. Do you have a special personal interest in this type of work? (influence)
4. What led you to move to RHS and then Artsworld – both are quite different areas to cultural heritage?
5. With your different roles at the National Trust, RHS, Natural History Museum and Artsworld, which do you feel gives you more 'freedom' with your approach to educating at different sites and interpretation?

**Learning Advisor at the National Trust:**

1. As learning Advisor at the National Trust, can you explain if and how much input you had in the interpretations at the different heritage sites?
2. What was a typical process for putting an interpretation together at the National Trust?
3. Is there a team of curators for all projects or a curator at each site?
4. Does the National Trust have an in house design team, or are projects mostly contracted out to design agencies?
5. How does this compare with the other places you have worked?

## Dunster castle and meeting with you in Swindon:

1. Taking you back in time to when I visited you at Swindon, would you be able to tell me what you remember about your initial impression of the Dunster Castle prototype?
2. With your experience of education at cultural heritage sites, are you able to remember what elements stood out the most? (educational, choice, time-slices of architectural history)
3. It is a few years ago, therefore with the technology available at the time, do you feel this was a good 'usable' way of presenting the information?
4. The Beaulieu Matrix allows for three levels of information on the Home page – Children, Adults, Professional (although only a mix of child / adult was developed for Beaulieu). Each cube then held 9 other elements within that category. Do you feel that if all the levels and cubes held information, this would give too much 'choice' for a heritage visitor?
5. In your experience, what do you feel is choice is the most important aspect of a heritage interpretation to present to visitors?



**Hampshire and Solent Alliance of Museums, Artsworld and your role as chair of the Association for Heritage Interpretation:**

1. Can we talk now about your previous as Project manager at Hampshire and Solent Alliance of Museums, your current role as strategic manager for Artsworld and your role as chair for the Association for Heritage Interpretation?  
I am interested in the variety of roles here and how they may influence each other in providing interpretation of various types for mostly young people / children. Do you find that each of the roles has helped to benefit the other, and possibly influenced other projects?
2. What were the types of projects with HSAM?
3. And with Artsworld?
4. Can you describe what influences the final concept? ( i.e. stakeholders input, budget considerations)
5. As a team, is the visitor involved in the initial concept stage (i.e. focus groups)?
6. Do you involve the visitor at other stages of an interpretation / exhibit?
7. In your experience does the finished interpretation follow the original concept / reason for the interpretation / project?
8. If not, why do you think this is the case? (budget, time?)
9. If yes, do you feel this could still be achieved in a better way or differently? (less restrictions / more time etc)
10. Which method(s) have you found to be the most successful in engaging a response from visitors?
11. What are the processes for gauging the success of an interpretation / project?
12. Finally, if you could choose, which role(s) would you prefer to relinquish (keep) or revisit / elevate above the others?

Thank you.