

Feedback about the Kiosk from the Visitor Services Manager Jon Tee

(Excerpt from interview held on July 3rd 2013)

Debs So what was your, because I know your staff had to turn it on and turn it off of an evening – did you get any feedback when you were doing your walking around with anybody using the kiosk?

Jon I saw a lot of people using it. I think the information and the way it was portrayed was fine. I think it worked quite well. It was a bit, well we know it wasn't massively robust was it. It couldn't stand up to our sort of French visitors the computer didn't like it at all.

Debs Well the computer didn't like it much.

Jon So I think the danger of anything like that is – I mean one of my friends went to the Bovington Tank Museum and the first thing he said to me was, "Well they've got loads of audio visual but half of it didn't work." I think it can look a bit funny if a lot of the things don't work and these things do break down but I think we got over that didn't we and it was okay. So I think as a format it was fine really. I think they understood it, they did understand it, which is important because they don't always understand these things so I think that worked okay. It was just things like the French kids were getting onto the Internet and stuff like that weren't they?

Debs Yes, we managed to lock that down I think but yeah, you will get children, well they are not children are they, but they will always push how can we break this? We've got students who do that, who say, "How can we make this do something it shouldn't do?"

Jon Yes, I think we should just discount from our thoughts really because are a bit out there on their own. Watching kids on it, I mean I don't stand there all day watching it but I think the character side of it is good and that side of it appealed to the younger generation certainly.

Debs It is the story again.

Jon Yes, definitely, definitely.

Debs Because you had events going on in there as well didn't you? So upstairs or downstairs?

Jon Yes, the corporate functions and they kept wanting to move them didn't they? Yeah, but I think we got into a position in the end where it didn't need to be moved.

Debs No, I wasn't worried about that. I was wondering if anyone, was all the Abbey stuff turned on at that time?

Jon It would be during the day but it wouldn't be in the evening, it would probably be turned off by then.

Debs It would be really interesting to see whether that had any impact on other events but probably if it was turned off?

Jon Probably not for the important functions, no.

Debs So what would you like to see in there then? If you had your own way what would you like to see in there if money was no option?

Jon I would probably think the way to go is to have some sort of wireless Internet that they could use on their smart phones with something they can download there and then, some sort of App, that they can download and just look at different bits and bobs. As I think we said, so that they could tap into what was interesting for them for one bit. I'd probably like to make it a bit more interactive in terms of silly things like dressing up clothes and that sort of stuff and maybe a monk talking to people, I think that works quite well for the younger generation.

They have a simple thing in the motor museum – a pope car and it is constantly rammed with people just literally all you do is sit on the car put an old hat on and take a photograph and it doesn't cost anything, you just get on and do it. The museum put a donation box down and it made like £1,000 a month in donations, it's ridiculous really, but constantly in use.

So people just like these hands on kinds of things and I think we need to display the information in a way that is going forward so lots of people will be able to get to it. I think we definitely need to make it a bit more interactive with things to do in there, so maybe dressing up boxes and maybe more hands on stuff like -

Debs Make their own bottle of mead?

Jon Absolutely or even just having things that you can touch and feel that they would have used – like tools on a chain or something like that. So I think there are certain simple things we could do very quickly to spread it around and make it more interesting for sure. And then I do think that conveying the information would work on the iPhones.

Debs

I think it is becoming so much part of people's lives to have these things; it is a lot more acceptable format. Again I think one of Mary's earliest thoughts were the fact that looking at the screen in bright sunlight and stuff because you are going outside but I think there are, most phones have got over that. I know I've got a Galaxy S3 and sometimes you have to look, to do this, in order to see it properly.

Jon

But even if its audio, I think, the MP3 description of the Abbey on the website is good, it's interesting and it brings the place to life and tells a story so again that sort of thing is, that you can easily download there and then can't you rather than, because at the moment they would probably have to download it before they came to probably having just a sign saying 'download the MP3 and it will tell you all about it' – that type of thing. So I think it is a collection of all kinds of things that just raises it up. I don't think we could rebuild the wall. It would be nice if we could but we can't.

I think certainly landscaping it so that the orientation, this is definitely Mary's idea, something so that if you see the film, you know what you are looking at and go from there.