

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

CURATOR, DESIGNER AND VISITOR INTERACTION IN  
CULTURAL HERITAGE INTERPRETATION DESIGN PRACTICE

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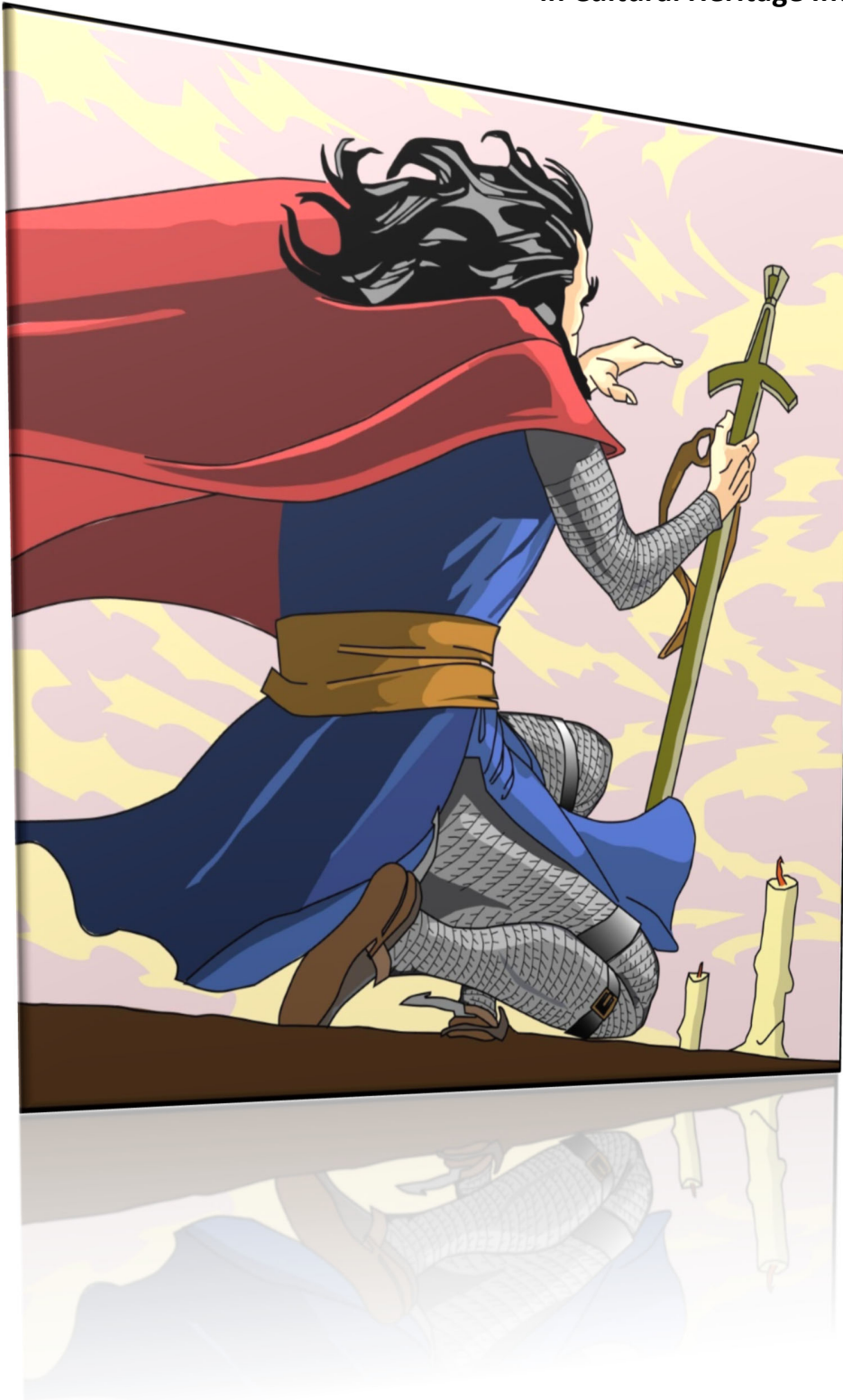
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# Curator, Designer and Visitor Interaction

## in Cultural Heritage Interpretation Design Practice



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ABSTRACT

This thesis forms 60% of my practice-led doctoral submission and provides an in-depth account of a collaborative and inclusive approach in the professional design of heritage site interpretation. Reflecting on my practice as a professional heritage site interpretation designer, I wanted to understand whether the gaps in curator/designer/visitor communication I experienced was the same for other heritage site interpretation design practices. This initial reflection led to my thesis focus and research question. My design practice in crafting the 3D interactive, kiosk-based, heritage site interpretation for the Cistercian Abbey at Beaulieu in Hampshire is presented as 40% of my doctoral submission. This is portrayed through my 'Talking Walls- Reflection on Practice' website. A series of galleries, posts, including the kiosk interpretation, forms the online exhibition submission which can be explored through this [link](#).

The new model for 'Collaborative Heritage Site Interpretation Design' developed through Action Research, Practice-led design and Design Thinking approaches, contributes to the field of heritage interpretation design for historic houses, as a business model as well as academic contribution. The model extends a user-centred design and participatory design process to include a consistent curatorial, design and visitors team for the design and development of heritage site interpretation, with the intention of enhancing visitors' engagement and experiences at heritage sites. The literature review focused on analysing existing heritage site interpretation design practice definitions and theories across three themes: curation, designing for interpretation, and the

importance of visitors' experiences in shaping heritage interpretation. A lack of heritage site interpretation design literature meant this needed to include literature for interpretation design at museums. Museums are generally more advanced than heritage sites in their participatory/co-design interpretation approaches, yet can be considerably different in the context of space, storytelling and interpretative portrayal of historic sites. This includes the use of digital technology, for which the kiosk interpretation was an early advocate in the use of 3D reconstructions and choice of content on mobile platforms at heritage sites.

Recommendations for future research include potential impact in the use of the Collaborative Heritage Site Interpretation Design model and design process for heritage site interpretation design. New technological developments for heritage sites and museums can build upon the collaborative and multi-disciplinary nature of the model. The thesis and model adds value to the field of heritage site interpretation design, providing a method and process for smaller heritage sites and academic research to follow. The growth in practice-led and practice-based design research PhDs is notable, for which this thesis may also be of value to future design students.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	3
TABLE OF FIGURES.....	7
GLOSSARY.....	11
1. STAGE 1, CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION, METHOD & CONTEXT.....	12
INTRODUCTION.....	12
1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION, AIM, OBJECTIVES & CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE.....	17
1.2. RESEARCH APPROACH, RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS.....	32
1.3. BACKGROUND (PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC) & CONTEXT.....	63
2. STAGE 2, CHAPTER 2 – HERITAGE SITE INTERPRETATION DESIGN IN PRACTICE.....	77
INTRODUCTION.....	77
2.1. DESIGN CHALLENGES & OUTCOMES.....	78
2.2. HERITAGE SITE INTERPRETATION IN PRACTICE: CASE STUDY COMPARISONS.....	101
2.3. CURATOR~DESIGNER~VISITOR – SHAPING HERITAGE SITE INTERPRETATION.....	142
3. STAGE 3, CHAPTER 3 – EVALUATION & REFLECTION.....	181
3.1. EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION.....	181
3.2. REFLECTION ON PRACTICE AND PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH.....	209
4. CHAPTER 4 – CONCLUSIONS.....	216
4.1. CONCLUSIONS.....	216
4.2. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE.....	225
4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND APPLICATIONS.....	232
REFERENCE LIST & BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	235
REFERENCE LIST.....	235
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	257
APPENDICES.....	279
APPENDIX A: KIOSK INTERPRETATION, MUSIC DVD AND STORYBOOK &.....	281
APPENDIX B: STAGE 1 MATERIAL.....	288
APPENDIX C: STAGE 2 MATERIAL.....	317
APPENDIX D: STAGE 3 MATERIAL.....	330

APPENDIX E: SPECIAL VISIT SHEET (SVS) .....	355
APPENDIX F: LAUNCH QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANT SHEETS (17) .....	356
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SHEETS .....	361
APPENDIX H: ENGLISH HERITAGE STRATEGY 2005-2010 .....	398
APPENDIX I: NATIONAL TRUST’S 2004 STRATEGY – VISION FOR LEARNING .....	400
APPENDIX J: UK HERITAGE LOTTERY FUNDS’ AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (BLACK, 2005).....	401
APPENDIX K: SET OF CARDS FOR THE CHSID PROCESS .....	402
APPENDIX L: DESIGN PROCESS MODELS .....	403
APPENDIX M: HERITAGE SITE CASE STUDIES.....	404
APPENDIX N: INITIAL ANALYSIS OF DATA SOURCES USING KEY WORD FREQUENCY IN NVIVO FORMING A DRAFT OF THE HERITAGE INTERPRETATION DESIGN WHEEL. ....	409
APPENDIX O: THEMING - SECOND ITERATION OF DATA NODES .....	410
APPENDIX P: FINAL ITERATION OF THEMED GROUPS AND HIERARCHIES, BASED ON THESIS CHAPTERS 2 & 3 AND INCORPORATING SUBJECT DISCIPLINES AND CATEGORIES. ....	411



## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Research Aim Model (Wilson, 2013 ©).....	20
Figure 2:- Illustrative mind map of the roles of a curator and a designer, and the visitor forming the basis of this thesis. ....	22
Figure 3: Beaulieu Abbey kiosk’s HSI design existing model resulting from primary data (Wilson, 2018 ©) ...	24
Figure 4: A 3D render from Autodesk Revit of Beaulieu Abbey. (Wilson, 2009 ©) .....	27
Figure 5: Thesis Structure showing the 3 Main Stages and Cycles.....	28
Figure 6: Participants and indication of subject area for in-depth interviews in relation to their experience of the Beaulieu Abbey Kiosk interpretation (Wilson, 2013).....	33
Figure 7: Comparative formats of PB/PL completed theses (Wilson, 2020) .....	37
Figure 8: A Sample Range of Current Design Roles (Wilson, 2020).....	38
Figure 9: Design PhDs - 'Formula' based on Vaughan (2019), Smith & Dean (2014), Grocott (2010) and Candy (2018) .....	41
Figure 10: Micro View showing the 3 cycles of Stage 3. (Wilson, 2013 ©).....	43
Figure 11: Diagram showing a ‘Macro View’ of the 3 cycles and chapters of each Stage. (Wilson, 2013 ©)...	43
Figure 12: IPA & NVivo Cycle (Wilson, 2018) .....	44
Figure 13: Lawson's suggested design process (Lawson 2006).....	46
Figure 14: Beaulieu Abbey Practice – Cycle 1 (Wilson, 2013) .....	48
Figure 15: Beaulieu Abbey Launch – Cycle 2 (Wilson, 2013).....	48
Figure 16: Beaulieu Abbey Post Launch – Cycle 3 (Wilson, 2013).....	48
Figure 17: Beaulieu Abbey Practice – Cycle 1 using a Reflective Design Process (based on Ellmers’ Reflective Framework (2006)).....	49
Figure 18: Purpose and Schedule of Fieldwork Interviews (Wilson, 2014) .....	56
Figure 19: Sub section content overview for each main section (Dissemination of Knowledge and Experience, Assumptions in the Design of Heritage Interpretation, The Importance of Visitors’ Experiences in Shaping Heritage Interpretation) of the literature .....	57
Figure 20: Research Methods Summary (Wilson, 2018).....	60
Figure 21: Research Overview providing the links and connections between the research focus and objectives with the research methodology, methods and analysis. (Wilson, 2018).....	61
Figure 22: Time line of personal development and practice in interpretation design. (Wilson, 2020) .....	63

Figure 23: The KubeMatrix navigation device, one 'level' showing up and down 'jumps' to a previous or later time-slice of architectural change (Wilson, 2004 ©) .....	64
Figure 24: The KubeMatrix navigation device, Dunster Castle project (Wilson, 2004 ©) .....	64
Figure 25: Kiosk Page for Beaulieu Abbey's Abbot Sulbury. (Wilson, 2010 ©) .....	65
Figure 26: Kiosk page for Tours of Beaulieu Abbey. (Wilson, 2010 ©) .....	65
Figure 27: Simplified KubeMatrix design for use on the PDAs available for the Launch in 2010 (Wilson, 2010 ©) .....	66
Figure 28: Beaulieu Abbey Cloister Ruins (Wilson, 2010) .....	68
Figure 29: Pilot kiosk/Web/DVD Characters Postcard (Wilson, 2008 ©).....	70
Figure 30: Rendered still of Beaulieu Abbey Apse with scaffolding in the Nave (Wilson, 2008 ©) .....	71
Figure 31: Kiosk Home Page for Beaulieu Abbey. (Wilson, 2010 ©).....	73
Figure 32: Research Design Strategy. (Wilson, 2018 ©) .....	79
Figure 33: Beaulieu Abbey Kiosk Practice Research Methods & Curated Data. (Wilson, 2018 ©).....	80
Figure 34: Beaulieu Abbey Project Journey, Processes & Methods Used. (Wilson, 2018) .....	82
Figure 35: Example of Blog Style posting of development timeline of the practice element of the thesis. (Wilson, 2018 ©).....	84
Figure 36: Fly-through Animation Mock-Up of Beaulieu Abbey for Presentation to Beaulieu in Dec 2006. (Wilson, 2006 ©).....	86
Figure 37: 'A Conjectural reproduction of the buildings of [Beaulieu] Abbey' illustration (Brakspear, in Fowler, 1911) .....	87
Figure 38: Ground Plan of the buildings of Beaulieu Abbey showing date information of the remaining ruins and the layout of what was once the Abbey Church and infirmary (Brakspear, in Fowler, 1911) .....	87
Figure 39: Sequence of development interpreting archival sketch information (Fowler, 1911) to a draft 3D interactive model for a presentation to Beaulieu in December 2006. (Wilson, 2006) .....	88
Figure 40: Launch event with me (left), Mary Montagu (middle), and Lord Montagu (right) at Beaulieu on 19th May, 2010 (Wilson, 2010).....	91
Figure 41: Press photograph with the Beaulieu live history abbot looking at the new kiosk and application on the 10th May 2010 (Woodcock, 2010).....	93
Figure 42: Invitation 'postcards' designed (front and back) to reflect the kiosk interface with event information (Wilson, 2010 ©).....	94
Figure 43: Example of a completed 'Experience Questionnaire' by one of the Launch Event guests (Wilson, 2010) .....	96

Figure 44: Beaulieu Abbey Kiosk (Wilson, 2010).....	98
Figure 45 Lacock Abbey 2013 Interpretation Infographic (Wilson, 2018).....	101
Figure 46: Bolsover Castle 2011-2012 Interpretation Infographic (Wilson, 2018) .....	102
Figure 47 KensingtonPalace 2012-2013 Interpretation Infographic (Wilson, 2018).....	102
Figure 48: Scriptorium Monk at Work, (from Lacroix) .....	106
Figure 49: Room scenes at Lacock House (Selman, 2012) .....	112
Figure 50: A detailed C17th drawing of Bolsover Castle (Ptolemy Dean Architects, 2013) .....	114
Figure 51: Bolsover Castle seen from the west with the Little Castle on the left and the Terrace Range on the right hand side (copyright: Martin Bignell Abipp, Ptolemy Dean Architects, 2013) .....	114
Figure 52: One of Cabinets of Curiosity (Leach, 2015b) .....	115
Figure 53: Interpretation Design Crafts and Task - (Leach, 2015a:p.1) .....	117
Figure 54: UCD Process Diagram (Otto & Schell, 2016, p.18) .....	118
Figure 55: Design Thinking (Teo Yu Siang & Interaction Design Foundation, 2016) .....	119
Figure 56: The Enchanted Palace – Kensington Palace (Scotcher, 2013).....	121
Figure 57: Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire on a frosty morning (The National Trust, 2016).....	125
Figure 58: Visitor Numbers between 2010 and 2012 at the case study sites: Lacock, Kensington Palace and Bolsover Castle (ALVA, 2010, 2011, 2012; National Trust, 2012; Jenkins, 2013; Mills, 2010; Derbyshire County Council, 2014; National Trust, 2010).....	128
Figure 59: Trip Advisor Ranking Indicator (Puorto, 2016) .....	129
Figure 60: Age ratio of Trip Advisor Reviewers for the Case Study heritage properties (Wilson, 2017) .....	130
Figure 61: A: Gender ratio of Trip Advisor Reviewers for the Case Study heritage properties (Wilson, 2017) .....	130
Figure 62: Classification of Visitor Samples using the Trip Advisor ‘Tags’ for each of the case study heritage sites (Wilson, 2017).....	131
Figure 63: Back of Flyer for the 2012 Enchanted Palace Exhibition (blog.travelmarx.com, 2012) .....	134
Figure 64: Literature Review components map (Wilson, 2015).....	142
Figure 65: Hyde Abbey Gatehouse Interpretation Panel (Wilson, 2014) .....	145
Figure 66: Beaulieu Abbey Domus Interpretation Panel (Wilson, 2014) .....	145
Figure 67: English Heritage Interpretation Panel at Kenilworth Castle (Furse, 2017).....	146

Figure 68: National Trust Hysterical Historical facts Children's Book (The National Trust, 2014) .....	146
Figure 69: The National Trust's Children's Dunster Castle Guide Book (The National Trust, 2003).....	146
Figure 70: Rhondda Heritage Park Museum, Black Gold Experience (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, 2014) .....	149
Figure 71: Rhondda Heritage Park Museum, Black Gold Experience (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, 2014) .....	149
Figure 72: User Centred Design Diagram. (Wellings, 2013) .....	155
Figure 73: Design Disciplines and their Process. (Wilson, 2017).....	156
Figure 74: Designer role: summary of meaningful text segments from practitioner interviews.(McWeeney, 2016) .....	158
Figure 75: Design driven culture model developed by McKinsey & Company. (Kilian, Sarrazin & Yeon, 2015) .....	159
Figure 76: Designer role: summary of meaningful text segments from practitioner interviews. (Roberts, 2014: p.196) .....	160
Figure 77: National Trust Survey for Lacock Abbey Question 1, Section 2 of 6 Sections (National Trust, 2015b) .....	166
Figure 78: Lego's Designing the Experience (Mears, 2013).....	169
Figure 79: Overbeake's Planning Rules Adapted for HSI design (Overbeeke et al., 2003:pp.11–13).....	170
Figure 80: Satisfaction Diary of a visit to Leeds Castle (Laws, 1998:p.550).....	172
Figure 81: Visitor Satisfaction Management Response (Laws, 1998:p.551) .....	172
Figure 82: The relative strengths and challenges of traditional marketing research and social media research methods .....	173
Figure 83: The Participatory Museum (Simon, 2010 cited in Weaver, 2010) .....	179
Figure 84: Interview Participants .....	183
Figure 85: A Broad Categorisation of Participants' Qualifications (Wilson, 2018).....	194
Figure 86: A Broad Categorisation of Participants' Current Career Areas (Wilson, 2018) .....	195
Figure 87: <i>Collaborative HSI Design Proposed Model (Wilson, 2020)</i> .....	225
Figure 88: <i>New 'Collaborative HSI Design Process' (Wilson, 2020)</i> .....	230

## GLOSSARY

2D – Two Dimensional

3D – Three Dimensional

AR – Action Research

BAKA – Beaulieu Abbey Kiosk interpretation

CHSID – Collaborative Heritage Site Interpretation Design

DCMS – Department of Culture, Media & Sport

EF – External Influences

EH – English Heritage

FoH – Front of House

FSE – Finance South East

HCD – Human Computer Design

HRP – Historic Royal Palaces

HSI – Heritage Site Interpretation

IF – Internal Influences

IPA – Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis

NT – National Trust

PDA – Personal Digital Assistant

SEEDA – South East Enterprise Development Agency

SVS – Special Visit Sheet (Beaulieu)

UCD – User Centred Design

UGC – User Generated Content

UI – User Interface

UX – User Experience

UXD – User Experience Design

VT – Visitor Team

XD – Experience Design