

Bridging Ages. Historical Environment Education and Time Travels Seminar in Rome, June 18-20, 2006

Summary

For three sunny days in June, about 35 people from the International Network “Bridging Ages”, “Historic Environment Education and Time Travels”, together with interested people from Italy gathered for a seminar in Rome. The aim was to share experiences in Historical Environment Education and Time Travels. The participants came from museums, schools and universities in Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, USA and Italy.

The first day, a time travel was held at Farfa Abbey, one hour northeast of Rome, to the year 775, when the abbey was very prosperous. The other two days was spent at the Swedish Institute of Classical Studies in Rome with presentations and discussions around four topics: Research and Communication, Methods, Implementation and Organization, the Future.

The seminar was held in a friendly atmosphere and there were many interesting presentations and discussions. As a conclusion the participants agreed upon taking a step towards a more formal organization in order to facilitate the growth of Historic Environment Education and Time Travels.

June 18, 2006, Sunday

Time Travel to 775 at Farfa Abbey

All the participants met in Farfa on Sunday afternoon for a short time travel to 775, a crucial year for the abbey. The participants dressed up in historical costumes. Everyone got a role card with a character as a pilgrim, postulant, servant, widow etc. A real Benedictine monk, Don Massimo, led the prayer and also played the part of the abbot of the time. The time travel was held in the secluded abbey garden. After the activities – herbs, medicine, scriptorium, chanting etc, the meal was served. There were lively discussions about the future for the abbey, at the meal.

Farfa is a fantastic place to have a time travel with many historical buildings and a great scenery from the garden over the surroundings. No wonder that the time travel made a big impression on the participants. In the discussion afterwards it was also emphasized the importance of preparation and knowledge to be able to learn about the time period. The time travel made the participants more familiar with one another and also gave a taste of the Middle Ages at one of the most important abbeys in Europe at the time.

June 19, 2006, Monday

Welcome

Alan Klynne welcomed the participants to the Swedish Institute of Classical Studies.

As the coordinating museum of the network, the director of Kalmar County Museum, Sweden, **Maria Malmlöf**, welcomed everybody to the seminar. She mentioned the work that the Kalmar County Museum have been doing for twenty years and also

made a short resume of the symposium in Vimmerby 2004 and forming of the network.

Eugenia Bolognesi, Association Palatina-Istanbul, welcomed everyone to Rome. API is organizing the seminar, together with Kalmar County Museum, and has made all the practical arrangements.

Massimo De Meo, Cuore Onlus per l'infanzia made a short speech about Rome as the capital city for children

Historic Environment Education and Time Travels, the International Network

Ebbe Westergren, Kalmar County Museum, Sweden

Ebbe Westergren, the founder of the time travel method, made a summary of the principles and methods of Historic Environment Education and Time Travels: starting with the local history and environment; the students do their own research; the connection between museums, schools, universities and local communities; to freeze time; using all five senses in a time travel. The method is suitable for all ages.

He mentioned the manual for Historic Environment Education and Time Travels that Kalmar County Museum has published this year. The manual includes seven steps – a local site, research, read the landscape, teacher training, education, time travel and evaluation.

The first time travel was held at a stone age site outside of Kalmar in 1986 and there has been a 20th anniversary celebration at the same site in May this year. From 1986 the time travel method has spread to the whole of the Kalmar region, to other regions in Sweden and to several other countries and the forming of an international network.

Ebbe made a short summary of the symposium in Vimmerby 2004. He presented the report, the book, from this symposium, that just has been published. The book is called “Holy Cow – This is great” and includes most of the speeches and activities from the symposium.

He also mentioned the international projects that the Kalmar museum has been working with the last year – Finland, Minnesota (including research for a booklet “Snoose Boulevard and the Golden Mile”), New Mexico. In 2006 the Kalmar Museum is also working a lot with the Cape Winelands district in South Africa and the first time travel was held there in March this year.

Topic: Research and Communication

Research between sources and archaeology, the Romans

Eugenia Bolognesi, Association Palatina-Istanbul, Italy

Eugenia heard about the Kalmar method for the first time at a conference in Cheltenham, England in 2001. She was immediately fascinated and thought that this method could be a good way to awake the interest in history in Italy. One of the problems is that people/ the students in Rome see the historical remains every day and could get rather tired of the Ancient Times.

In the time travels in Italy certain parts have been in Latin, for instance a comedy of the Roman author Plautus. This is a way to show that Latin once was a spoken language.

Eugenia emphasized the use of the real monuments. Time travels are a way to keep the monuments alive and also to preserve them. She mentioned the importance of bringing the good feelings from the past to the people of today.

She ended her speech with saying that research makes you fall in love with the time period you are studying.

Historical knowledge and time travels

Simon Malmberg, Uppsala university, Sweden

Simon Malmberg mentioned shortly how the historical knowledge was used in the time travels in Rome, at the Palatine 404 AD and Villa dei Quintilii, 180 A.D.

Research in Historical Documents

Jon Hunner, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, USA

At New Mexico State University Jon have for some years lead a semester long time travel-course for graduate and undergraduate students inspired by the Kalmar County Museum. They have also published a manual about Time Traveling in New Mexican history, 1776. In the course the university students make research in historical documents from the chosen time period. In the end of the semester they arrange time travels for students from mostly elementary and middle schools.

Jon talked about the research for the time travel to 1937 that was arranged last year. Research is the basis for the time travel. He divided the sources in primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are manuscripts, diaries, journals, newspapers, advertisements, letters, speeches, interviews, documents produced by the government, photographs/audio recordings etc. Secondary sources are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources, for example biographies, journal articles, monographs.

Jon mentioned that historians are good at “predicting the past.”

During the research the university students find themselves a character with name, family, place to live, religion, profession etc. The characters could be real people or “composite” characters. The Census of the population is a good source for finding individual persons. Last autumn the public was also involved in the time travel at the end of the season.

Discussion

Research and communication

The discussion was focused on how to make research and communication integrated parts. The discussion started in small groups and was then summarized in a common discussion. Here are some of the things mentioned:

- Too little cooperation between museums, schools and universities
- The museums are important, many professions working together
- Time travels (research and communication) are often dependant on one person
- Several people underlined the quality of the work
- Research about everyday life is very important

- Using the real monuments
- Everyone is interested in the past (but not everyone is interested in history)

Topic: Methods in Historic Environment Education and Time Travels

Explora and the Young Peoples Involvement

Chiara Anguissola, Explora, Special project department

Chiara made a short presentation of the new Children's museum in Rome, Explora. Time Travels could be an interesting method to add to the other pedagogical methods at the museum.

Time travels, a new perspective for museums in Latvia

Agrita Ozola, Tukums museum, Latvia

Agrita Ozola, director of the Tukums museum, made a presentation about the use of the time travel method in their museum, especially at the German estate, Durbe manor. Time travels are important in creating identity. Agrita mentioned the report from the UNESCO's Commission of Education: "The Education for the 21st century" - to get knowledge, to learn to do, to learn to live together, to learn to be. Most of the museums in Latvia have static exhibitions and a one-line communication.

With sociological research they have found out that visitors prefer an informal learning process with interesting events, experience and a social occasion. With that in mind, the Tukums museum organised time travels for students: "Let's experience the year 1905". The time travel was about the agrarian revolution in Russia and a revolt in Tukums. Before the time travel the museum staff made a lot of research in the archives to find out the real stories to compare with the myths. Many people at the museum worked together. The time travel program consisted of an illegal meeting in the park of Durbe manor, producing of proclamations, planning of the revolt, reading the articles in the newspapers, an afternoon tea and storytelling.

After the time travel there were thorough evaluations made, with the museum staff, the students and the teachers. Although the students didn't have any historical costumes, everyone enjoyed the event. The students improved their knowledge and understood a complicated process, and also that this was real life. The time travels were also important for the internal communication at the museum.

As one result, lectures about the Time Travel method are now included in the Master's Program in Environmental Studies at the University of Latvia in Riga. Another result is that time travels will continue at the Tukums museum, hopefully with historical costumes and more properties.

Didactic experiences in Vimmerby and Frödinge

Lars-Åke Andersson, Agneta Regell, Anna Olausson, Gunilla Gustafsson, Vimmerby municipality, Sweden

The Vimmerby municipality and Kalmar County Museum has a formal agreement about working together in various projects. As a direct result of the symposium in Vimmerby, 2004 the municipality and the Kalmar museum has started a school

project about using the local history in the education. Four schools take part in this pilot project. They are working with different remains and time periods: the Stone Age, The Iron Age, the Middle Ages, the 17th century, the turn of the century 1900 and the 1950s. Agneta Regell introduced the pedagogical project that will continue until 2007.

Lars-Åke Andersson, Frödinge school, showed a film about a time travel to 1611 with grade four. Before the time travel the Kalmar museum had two training days for the teachers at Frödinge school, about the time period and what happened in Frödinge. The students were well prepared before the time travel. They acted as people from the area who had to flee in the woods because of the threat from Danish troops. In the woods they prepared for an “ordinary” life and how to act if the Danish soldiers came. The students learnt a lot about an important time period in Swedish history and how it affected their own neighbourhood in Frödinge.

Discussion

Time Travel methods

Here are some ideas, mentioned in the discussion, useful when making time travels:

- Staff training – in museums, universities, schools
- Repetition, the same time travel over and over again
- Time Travel as a day of positive emotions
- Some roles are difficult for students, i.e. noble persons
- Discussions of the time period and the key questions are important in the time travel
- Historical costumes are important (but Tukums museum shows that it is possible to do it anyway) as well as the properties
- The place/ the site is important
- Working together with local historical societies and the local community
- Positive teachers are needed in the time travel
- The support from the directors of the museum/ school is important
- Preparations are crucial
- The opening and the closing ceremony create the atmosphere
- Make an agreement with the students before the time travel

June 20, 2006, Tuesday

Time Travels in Estonia

Experience day as a learning opportunity

Leen Joesoo, Tallinn University, Old Town Educational Collegium, Tallinn, Estonia

Leen, history and social science teacher at the Old Town Educational Collegium in Tallinn, made a presentation of her master studies at the Tallinn University. It focuses on experience days as learning opportunities.

We are living in a global and movable world with an enormous amount of information and life is changing very quickly. What is needed is life-long learning and the creation of a learning society. For helping this process we as teachers should know how people learn and how we can support the learning process. Today we say that experimental

learning is important, no learning without an experience. The teachers should help people to be aware of their experiences, find new experiences and reflect them. The social environment and the social situation must be considered.

The time travel method is a learning opportunity suitable for a learning society. In the time travel method we use various subjects in the teaching: history, cultural heritage, working skills, handicraft, music, social abilities, science etc. The method is suitable for all ages and also for disabled people. It supports life-long learning. And as we use all five senses, the learning is long lasting. Time travels help learners to reflect their experiences in a captivate way.

Tallinn 1576, The Livonian War

Toomas Abiline and Ade Lehtse, Tallinn City Museum, Sirje Rohtla, Old Town Educational Collegium, Tallinn, Estonia

The Tallinn City Museum and the Old Town Educational Collegium in Tallinn have for four years organised time travels using the Kalmar method. Toomas Abiline made a presentation about their last experience, a time travel to 1576. The students made a lot of preparations in school. At the start of the time travel the students walked from the school to the historical site. Every step they took was nine months back in time. In the time travel the students prepared for a war against the Russians. They cast bullets and forged arrowheads. They made ropes and strings, ammunition pouches and trained for the defence of the town. The day culminated with the arrival of Moscow's Grand Duke's envoy, Kellar Terpigoryev. Everybody had a meal together and they were even some dancing for the Duke. The day ended in the same way as it started, a procession back to the school, every step nine months. Interesting to note is, that passing tourists and interesting citizens could see and enjoy the time travel.

After the event the students filled in an anonymous questionnaire. The feedback was very positive. The students liked the blacksmith work, the weapons but also making the leather pouches and the procession. They also had some suggestions for the future, like using the bow and arrow, throw a knife, make their own cookware and have a pillory. Several students thanked the organisers for the best day in their seventh grade.

Topic: Implementation and organization

Time travels in Italy

Villa Adriana: Didactic programs and archeoguides

Benedetta Adembri, Anna Conticello, Ministry of Cultural Heritage in Italy

Villa Adriana belongs to UNESCO's cultural heritage list. They have invented a video guide for children. The guide gives information about the historical place and help the users to get a good picture of the Roman Villa.

Farfa and Time Travels with students

Cristina Castiglione Humani, Association Palatina Istanbul

API has organized time travels, both 2005 and 2006, to the year 775 AD at Farfa Abbey. The students learn to write with quill pens, sing Gregorian chorals, boil soap, make medicine and cook medieval food.

Prata Sannita 1494, a late medieval castle

Lucia Daga, Association Palatina Istanbul

In Castello di Prata they have program for children, focusing on grade four-five. They are interested in developing the program and make time travels.

Time Travels at the Palatine and Villa dei Quintilii

Valerie Hughes, Core International School

Valerie presented the time travels they have made to the Roman Times, at the Palatine and Villa dei Quintilii, with the support from Eugenia Bolognesi and the Kalmar County Museum.

Future of Time Travels and the International Network

Jon Hunner, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, USA

Jon started saying that Kalmar County Museum is like Johnny Apple-seed, a mythical person in the USA, who threw seeds on the ground when he was travelling. The apple trees started to grow here and there. He left his marks- the apple trees in various places. How do we all become Johnny Appleseeds and spread our ideas and the time travel method? How do we make the organization grow?

Jon talked about professionalizing the Bridging ages network. Do we want to make Bridging Ages a more formal organization with elected officials, annually scheduled seminars and a newsletter or a magazine?

How do we spread the word? Take time travels on the road – conferences - a newsletter - media coverage - articles in professional journals –etc.

We have to collaborate with other museums and organizations within our own country.

How do we evaluate the effectiveness of the time travels? Scientific studies are needed.

Jon mentioned Vygotsky's zone of proximal development as a fundamental pedagogical theory for time travels. He talked about experienced history, multiple learnings and time travels as a way to teach wisdom, not only knowledge.

Jon said that Historic Environment Education is also for instance: oral history – historic preservation – heritage tourism – historic books.

Jon's conclusions were

- The need for the network to publicize in popular and professional journals and show the effectiveness of time travels as a learning method
- Expend the idea of Historical Environment Education
- Partner with other organizations
- Create a more formal organization

Discussion

Spreading the word, problems and possibilities

Problems

- Money – economical resources is needed, support from where? Fee for the participants
- Bureaucracy
- Curriculum of the school (or maybe an opportunity?)
- The academic world (also an opportunity?)

Opportunities

- Newsletter
- Home page – to improve the home page, publish news, presentations etc.
- Life long learning – historic environment education has no age limits, also working with adult people.
- Funds
- Unesco
- Partner with other institutions – museums, schools, universities, local historical societies etc.
- Academic research – about effectiveness, meaning-making, time travel method in a learning process.
- Theory – more talk and more research about the educational theories connecting with the time travel method
- Find interesting topics
- Teacher training
- Articles in magazines
- Conferences/ seminars – continue with annual conferences/ seminars, make presentations at other conferences
- A more formal organization of the network

Conclusions

The participants of the seminar decided the following:

1. To re-elect Kalmar County Museum and Ebbe Westergren as coordinator of the Bridging Ages network.
2. To work towards a more formal organization of the network. A planning committee of three-four persons will make a draft of a mission statement and of a future organization. This will be discussed at the next seminar in 2007. Ebbe Westergren is head of the committee and selects the others (Agrita Ozola, Eugenia Bolognesi and Jon Hunner).
3. To improve the homepage on a separate domain (www.bridgingages.com).
4. To start a newsletter, preferably four times a year.
Maria Malmjöf made the offer that Kalmar County Museum could be responsible for the web page and the newsletter until the next seminar of the network.
5. Agrita Ozola invited to the next seminar/ conference in Tukums, Latvia, in the end of September 2007. Welcome to Latvia!

Evaluation

A short evaluation of the seminar was made. Everyone mentioned something they will remember from the three days. Some examples of what people said:

- The time travel in Farfa (mentioned by several persons)
- To see that several institutions are making a great work in Historic Environment Education and Time Travels
- The friendly atmosphere
- The interesting discussions
- The decision to improve and move ahead with the network

So we all look back on a great seminar ending in an atmosphere of optimism.

Leen Jõesoo/ Ebbe Westergren