



Newsletter No. 1, 2013, May

Report from Bridging Ages Conference in Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA April 15 – 18, 2013

The Bridging Ages “Crossroads in History” conference in Las Cruces was a great success on many levels. People from Finland, India, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Turkey, South Africa, Sweden, and twelve U.S. states participated.



Participants in the 1912 Time Travel at the conference

Papers and workshops were presented on a variety of topics from museum interpretation to classroom instruction, from water wars in New Mexico to reconciliation in South Africa, and from language preservation to Manhattan Project exhibits. From early morning to late evening, the attendees to Bridging Ages 2013 in Las Cruces had a packed week of presentations, workshops, networking, excursions, and Time Travels.

The Time Travel to 1912 at Fort Selden had us making adobe mud bricks, picking cotton seeds out of cotton, doing needle point embroidering, shopping at the Women’s Improvement Association store, and debating whether women should have the right to vote. Our excursion to the plaza of Mesilla allowed us to visit the Taylor Historic Site and participate in the trial of Billy the Kid, followed by a Mexican dinner at La Posta restaurant.

The Western dinner and Blue Grass music at Fort Selden saw us whirling to a Virginia Reel from the 18th century as well as other dances. At Fort Selden, the light failed before our energy waned. Our all day excursion on the last day of the conference to Lincoln, a Wild West town where we saw Billy the Kid escape from jail, to Three Rivers petroglyph site with 21,000 examples of rock art, and to the White Sand National Monument had us dancing once again, this time on top of the white sand dunes.

Jon Hunner, *History Department at New Mexico State University, USA*

“Confronting Controversy in the U.S. National Parks”

How to interpret the American Civil War 1861-1865

Keynote speaker, Dr. Dwight Pitcaithley’s talk about the National Park Service and Civil War battlefields was a high point of the week. He explored how the National Park Service has changed the way that it interprets the causes of the U.S. Civil War by emphasizing the role of the protection of slavery as the main reason that the nation went to war. Confronting slavery as a cause of the war was traditionally avoided by park managers until 1998, when battlefield superintendents decided to incorporate explanations of slavery as a reason for the secession of eleven southern states from the Union in 1860-1861. The presentation detailed the resulting public outcry and the efforts of the NPS to deal with it.



Arguing at the Time Travel to 1912: Marisa Sprowles and Jon Hunner, USA, Steven Labarakwe, Kenya, Cecile Franchetti, Italy, Radikobo Ntsimane, South Africa, Kerstin Lönnberg and Berit Roos Johansson, Sweden.



The Escape of Billy the Kid in 1881.

Comments from participants:



Participants resting and enjoying White Sands.

It was a useful and fascinating conference. It indeed constituted a bridge between the different people, different cultures and their stories. It was such a conference that not only created new ideas but also strengthened the Bridging Ages organization. We got a lot of experience and energy to make it better from the conference.

Ebru İltenmis, Turkey

The Conference was an amazing experience of life, cultures, history and the very special people and places that forms part of it. We are richer for having been able to share this experience with all the participants and organizers and to gain more insight from other countries on how they are implementing historic environment education and related projects. It has been a life-enriching experience, both professionally and personally and we trust that the relationships and networks built, new knowledge and insights gained will help us on our path of developing and implementing the Landscape Education Programs within the Western Cape of South Africa. We look forward to keep in touch and share as we Travel through Time.

Sunet Basson, South Africa

All the topics of the conference were intriguing: most especially for me, water in the natural history of the land. I encountered a contrast between Venice located in the lagoon of the Adriatic sea where I live, and New Mexico located in a desert. The presentations helped me to better understand this land, its history and the way these people lived. The conference offered us the opportunity to share our activities and experiences with friends and also discuss new projects.

Cecile Franchetti, Venice, Italy

It was a very interesting conference and great to have it located at an open air Museum. Since there have been few Americans attending the conferences in Europe and Africa it was interesting to hear their stories this time and their history is so different from Europe! As always it was great to meet new and old friends and for us from Kalmar its fantastic to see that Time Travels in different shapes works all over the world!

Emma, Linda, Eva, Kerstin, Kalmar läns museum, Sweden

The Conference was really inspiring for offering a wide choice of different kinds of history, e.g. natural history, new perspectives on nuclear weapons, American and New Mexico history, which I knew very little of, the Far West and the Native Americans History, Mexican stories, the Spanish Conquistadores etc. etc. coming real for us in their own immense land. The Time Travel to 1912 was most intriguing and White Sands unforgettable. Particularly, Margaritas and Tequila Sunrise at the end of the day in the bar of the Ramada was an excellent way to be together after the conference with old and new friends. Thanks Jon!

Eugenia Bolognesi, Rome, Italy

All of us found the conference and the surrounding program extremely rewarding and memorable. Our warmest thanks to the whole crew for doing a marvellous job in making us feel so welcome and satisfied. Words that come to mind when thinking back on the days in New Mexico are: open-mindedness, happiness, time travel, friendship, sandstorm, white sands, Billy the Kid, history, cultures, happy birthday in many languages... and people getting together! It was nice meeting you, hope to see you again!

Tack / Kiitos Thank you from the Finns!

The Bridging Ages International is more of a circle of friends with interest in history and heritage than an academic body of scholars with interest in theories and abstracts. Although there is a limit on academic debates but more reports on various projects each presenter is involved in, the whole conference papers were informative.

The conference programme was over-subscribed to an extent that one had to choose among three sessions which one to attend. Although this arrangement limits the participation of one, it was obviously based on the many people who were interested in speaking at the conference.

Radikobo Ntsimane, South Africa

The concept of living history through Time Travel was absolutely new and fascinating to me. My knowledge of history was broadened by an assortment of archaeologists, museum curators, environmentalists, academicians, and above all performance artists. My sincere appreciation to the organizers who chose the apt venue for the conference-New Mexico Ranch and Farm Heritage Museum that is a repository of a particular historical knowledge. Unlike other intellectual and academic oriented conferences, the focus of this conference was more practice-based events and activities than mere exchanges of theoretical and ideological scholarships that are often tinged with ego and pseudo-intellectualism.

Bhavesh Kumar, Hyderabad, India



Chuck Wagon dinner
at Fort Seldon in 1912.

Human Rights and Tolerance; Time Travel project in Serbia

In 2012 Kalmar County Museum started a partnership with the Serbian civil society organizations Fund B92 Media Company and C31-Centre for Developing Children's Rights Culture. The aim is to develop innovative pedagogical approach in human rights education based on the use of history and the Time Travel method. Developed approach deals with sensitive issues of human rights and tolerance in an unstable post-conflict Serbian society, combining experiences of both Swedish and Serbian partners. During February 2013 the method was successfully piloted with a group of elementary school children and pedagogues in Fund B92's Cultural centre REX in the 1930s Jewish charity building situated in the oldest part of Belgrade.



The participants in the Time Travel classify clothes for the needy in the bombed and destroyed city of Belgrade 1941.

The students "stepped into the shoes" of their neighbours – Jews, Serbs and Roma people – discussing who they should help first in the destroyed city, whether Jews should register or hide, if this German order will divide them. Issues that are connected with present day problems that burden the community.

In the evaluation many students clearly stated that this method is more likely to raise awareness on questions of discrimination and tolerance and foster respect for cultural diversity in the past and nowadays than traditional methods of common teaching in schools.

They also stated that preparatory and Time Travel workshops made them re-think concepts of tolerance, cultural diversity and social cohesion in relation to their everyday life, and that they would like to participate in more similar activities as they found them very important for further development of democracy.

This gives project team members, both from Sweden and Serbia, reasoning to further finetune the project and turn it into a regular program for school visits that will use Fund B92 building as a learning place – inspired by Kalmar läns museum concept of Historic Environment Education combined with other methods developed through Fund B92 and C31 educational projects.

Masa Avramovic, Maja Cecen

The program complements school curriculum in a multidisciplinary manner – using the Time Travel method followed by workshops, discussions, films etc. to provide better insight in the concept of tolerance and pluralism, encourage students for critical thinking, respect for "the others" and solidarity.

The project team decided to travel back to April 16th 1941, 10 days after Belgrade was heavily bombed by Nazi Germany and on the day that German occupational forces announced that all Jews must register or they will be shot.



The announcement of registration for Jews, Time Travel to 16 April 1941. What am I going to do as a Jew, Roma or a Serb?

Saturday afternoon braai in the township of Promosa, South Africa in 1971

Time Travel Scenario, March 1971

"13-year old Winstonia Hendricks moved to Promosa only some months ago and still most of her friends are in Ikageng. She hopes they will show up for a braai in her garden. Maybe also some of her new neighbours will come and they will have a nice time together. Promosa is like a settlers' village. Two years ago the first trucks arrived with people from the old location, Wilhelm Klopperville. The authorities want people to be separated, one place for whites, one for blacks and one for coloureds. This is hard to understand for most. There are many frustrated and disappointed people coming to the new houses in Promosa. Why do we have to settle here?"



Do we accept to be divided? What is the way to promote togetherness and fellowship? The participants in the Time Travel to 1971. In the middle in the red headscarf Winstonia Hendricks and to the left of her the girl who played Winstonia Hendricks in the Time Travel.

Facts, Apartheid

Apartheid was a way of dividing people in South Africa. Group Areas Act was first taken by the South African parliament in 1950 and implemented over several years. The acts assigned racial groups to different residential areas, the most developed areas were restricted for whites only and other racial groups were moved to different locations. In Potchefstroom one location was set up for the "blacks", Ikageng, one for the "coloureds", Promosa, and one for the "Asians", Mohadin.

Goal

- Promote fellowship and unity between different areas of Potchefstroom, in this case especially between the townships of Ikageng and Promosa
- Increase the knowledge of the forced removal and how it affected people in Potchefstroom

Comments from learners taking part in the Time Travel:

- Awareness campaigns are needed to inform the youth about their past and how the past could be bridged with the present to shape the future.
- The youth and community members in general should be encouraged to make use of organisations as the Tlokwe Heritage Foundation and Bridging Ages to better equip themselves and the generations still to come.
- Today we enjoy freedom to do anything we want.

Floyd Dipale, Potchefstroom and North West Time Travel Committee

Reclaiming the church and reconciliation in the community

A Time Travel to 1968 with elderly centres and schools in Montagu, South Africa

On 28 February 2013, a touching Time Travel ceremony was held at the Old Dutch Reformed Mission Church in Montagu (now the Montagu Museum). The Time Travel took participants and visitors back to an important historic event in 1968, when the congregation was informed that they had to sell their church and build another church in the area designated to them by the South-African Apartheid regime; that would separate “Coloured” people from “White” people. On the day of the Time Travel, the beautiful historic building took centre-stage for a powerful reminder of a rich tradition as the emotional, yet joyful scene was re-enacted of the last Holy Communion and Church Bazaar held at the old Missionary Church.

Working together and bridging the historic divide between White and Coloured communities, elderly members from Huis Uitvlucht Old Age Home and Springroses Service Centre for the Elderly, organized everything necessary to make this Time Travel back to 1968 as authentic as possible.

Scholars from Montagu Primary and W.A.Rossouw Primary enthusiastically joined the elderly in preparations for the Time-travel, learning how to make old-fashioned gingerbeer, bake biscuits, pancakes, vetkoek, milk tart, koeksisters and lamingtons to sell at the “Church Bazaar”. They were also taught by the elderly to knit and crochet and made baskets full of old-fashioned sweets, exactly the way it used to be.



Singing the old church songs was an emotional experience.



Discussion about leaving the church or not. How do we promote cohesion instead?

After the opening of the event by the Speaker of the Cape Winelands District Municipality; Rev. Reggie Boesak gave a touching speech on reconciliation. As so many of the elderly present, still have very clear memories of growing up with Apartheid, it was very emotional and for the children present, very informative as they realized the humiliation and loss of dignity that was suffered. The authenticity of the Time Travel were so convincing to some visitors who were unaware that it was an act, that they made enquiries afterwards on the latest developments regarding the proposed ‘removal’ of the congregation!

With approximately 275 participants and visitors at the Time Travel, this first-time event was surely a huge success as the Montagu Museum came alive. A huge thank you therefore to the Cape Winelands District Municipality, Bridging Ages SA, Kalmar Läns Museum and the delegation from Sweden who made it all possible through their financial and administrative support. It was a memorable and special event indeed!

Cheronica Lando du Preez

Education and Community Building Learning in the Local Environment

**Bridging Ages Conference in
Ngurunit, Kenya, 26-28 August
2014**

We invite everyone who has an interest in Learning and Education, History and Community Building, people from museums, schools, universities, cultural organizations and municipalities, educators in all subjects; academics as well as engaged community members. This is a similar but different conference, something you will remember and learn from.

Organizers: BANK, Bridging Ages Northern Kenya, together with Kenyan and Swedish partners.

**Check the Bridging Ages website:
www.bridgingages.com**

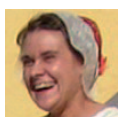
Next conference!



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