

**PACKAGING THE PAST
FOR THE MEDIA
COMMUNICATING ACROSS MUSEUMS,
TELEVISION, RADIO, AND THE
INTERNET
IN A MULTI-PLATFORM ERA**

Wednesday 19 May 2010
Berrick Saul Building, University of York



www.york.ac.uk/ipup

York Museums Trust



THE UNIVERSITY *of York*
Department of Archaeology

ABOUT IPUP

The Institute for the Public Understanding of the Past is an interdisciplinary research centre that was established in 2006 and which sits between the departments of History, Archaeology, and History of Art.

Its research agenda encompasses any place where history, in the broadest sense, engages with audiences, and especially those occasions at which the past is used as a means of understanding complex or difficult issues such as identity, community, or belongingness.



Founded to promote co-operation and consultancy, IPUP aims to build a sustainable network of partnerships with heritage institutes and practitioners in the York community and beyond.



In practice, IPUP's research falls into two very broad categories. The first explores how the past is presented in the media and in the public sphere, in order that it might be used as education or entertainment for a mass audience. The second aims to research and develop methodologies to better understand how audiences perceive, engage, and interact with the past.

IPUP's expansive agenda focuses on several complementary research strands, each of which investigates an aspect of the public's understanding and consumption of the past.

For more information, see our website:

www.york.ac.uk/ipup

PROGRAMME

9:30am Pre-conference Screening Session

Programmes will be shown from a variety of media products relating to the conference's content

1pm **Keynote**

Presenting the Past as TV Entertainment in an Era of Multi-Platforming

Martin Davidson (BBC Commissioner for TV History)

2pm **Keynote**

Producing the Past as Anniversary: Henry VIII on Display, on Screen, and on Sale

Lucy Worsley (Chief Curator, Historic Royal Palaces)

3pm – Break for Refreshments

3:30pm **Panel Discussion**

A History of the World in 100 Objects: the Unity and Diversity of Multi-Platforming Material Culture in Media and Museums

Curatorial team from The British Museum in discussion, alongside representatives from the BBC's Interactivity team.

5pm **Panel Discussion**

The Impact of 'Impact': Multi-Platforming and Making a Difference Beyond Academia

Representatives from publishing, funders, and museum management in discussion, reflecting on visions of curatorial and academic practice in the future.

6pm **Post-Conference Drinks Party in the Treehouse**

Sponsored by York Museums Trust

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Martin Davidson

Presenting the Past as TV Entertainment in an Era of Multi-Platforming

Martin is the Commissioning Editor responsible for history and heritage programming at the BBC. Some of his recent commissions include Andrew Marr's *History of Modern Britain*, Dan Snow's *Empire of the Seas*, and further episodes of the internationally successful series *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Coast*.



A new era seemed to dawn at the turn of the millennium with Simon Schama's landmark series *A History of Britain*. Moving from its traditional place within factual broadcasting to become a lifestyle and entertainment product, history has been hailed as the new gardening, even the new Rock 'n' Roll. The advent of free-to-air digital television and the boom in new channels it enabled has created a newly diverse marketplace in which the available formats for programmes about the past are legion. Beyond the familiar presenter-led format, the past is now packaged as drama, "reality", travelogue, and celebrity-led emotional journey.

Series today have to fight for attention. In a multi-platform era, when audiences are increasingly fragmented, producing a set of one-off broadcasts is no longer enough: programmes are branded products, supported by podcasts, websites, books, and DVDs. Which products merit this often expensive approach? Partnerships with the heritage sector are also becoming vitally important. 1807, Darwin, Henry VIII: anniversaries seem often to be the hook for these collaborations, but is this really the case? Martin will provide insight into how the BBC selects and plans for these collaborations. How do they diversify audiences? And what do such developments mean for the public understanding of the past?

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Lucy Worsley

Producing the Past as Anniversary: Henry VIII on Display, on Screen, and on Sale

By day, Lucy is Chief Curator at Historic Royal Palaces, overseeing Hampton Court, the Tower of London, Kew, Kensington and Whitehall. By night, she is a writer, most recently author of *Cavalier*. She has also been a contributor to far too many Tudor programmes to list here.



Heritage institutions are becoming increasingly market-oriented in a world where entertainment (and educational) outlets proliferate, fighting for attention, footfall, and ticket-based revenues. In response to this competitive environment where the past is a cultural attraction, building brand-awareness has become a priority. Anniversaries are frequently the hook used to entice audiences, and Lucy led a massive, multi-platform, multi-site, celebration with *Dressed to Kill* at The Tower of London and *Henry VIII: Heads and Hearts* at Hampton Court for the 500th anniversary of the king's birth in 2009. Lucy will describe and reflect on the experience of transforming a heritage site for these events, and the impact of selling the past by promoting a Tudor monarch as a modern-day celebrity.

How does such cross-platform promotion, and the high media profile of anniversaries, affect the audience-reach of a heritage institution? Does this enable it to bring in a wider and more diverse audience? Does it attract new groups, and do they become repeat visitors? Does it enable teachers to use more of the Historic Royal Palaces' educational resources? Can the institution cope with increased demand for tickets and products? The challenge for heritage attractions is to sustain audiences beyond anniversary years and media tie-ins, to draw in and engage public attention to the multi-layered narratives of the past.

PANEL DISCUSSION

A History of the World in 100 Objects: The Unity and Diversity of Multi-Platforming Material Culture in Media and Museums

J.D. Hill (Research Manager, British Museum)

Frances Carey (Director of Public Engagement, British Museum)

Daniel Dodd (BBC Online, Head of Interactive for Nations and English Regions)

A History of the World in 100 Objects is a ground-breaking collaborative venture between two massive internationally-renowned institutions: the British Museum, and the BBC. It will surely set the standard for many years to come, and



is especially important for the verve it displays in presenting the past as human interest stories, through material culture. Not least of its achievements is the way it successfully tackles the challenging problem of a radio series based fundamentally on objects. Not only has it made a splash on Radio 4, but it also has an extensive presence beyond the national and regional airwaves: a network of exhibitions and events in local museums, and a virtual museum on the internet. It offers each of its regional partners the opportunity to reflect on global perspectives of the past, as well as on the narratives of individual objects. Bringing all of this together on the web has been a challenge for all the project's partners, not least because of its important participatory frameworks that allow audiences the chance to interact and engage with the displays, offering their own content and reflections. This panel will describe the decision-making and practical challenges along the way, and reflect on the product's legacies and the two institution's commitment to multi-platforming.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The Impact of 'Impact':
Multi-Platforming and Making a Difference Beyond Academia

Greg Neale (Founding Editor, BBC History Magazine)

Janet Barnes (Chief Executive, York Museums Trust)

Jake Gilmore (Public Affairs Officer, Arts & Humanities Research Council)

Jonathan Glasspool (Managing Director, Bloomsbury Academic)

Academics are increasingly being called upon to ensure that their research has a beneficial impact on wider society. Can the opportunities offered by a multi-platform approach to the creation and dissemination of this research be key to demonstrating the value of academic endeavour?



How can the audiences for academic

work be expanded by an increased utilisation of new media? What are the responsibilities of academics to act as beacons of research excellence within the public realm, by being engaged beyond the next monograph? In this new and developing landscape, academics see collaborative ventures as key to enacting and illustrating the impact of their work, but this demands the creation of equitable partnerships, where media and heritage partners are involved in the two-way exchange of knowledge and are allowed to direct and share in research outcomes. The contributors to this panel will reflect on the strategies and experiences of their own organisations, and map out a vision of a different future for embedding academic expertise.

PACKAGING THE PAST

Today's conference is the second of three linked events, all part of IPUP's 'Packaging the Past' research project. As part of its exploration of the ways in which stories about the past are presented and portrayed by the media for mass consumption, one-day conferences are taking place over three consecutive years, each of which examines the relationship between the media and the disciplines of IPUP's three sponsor departments in the University: History of Art, History, and Archaeology.



On 27 May 2009, in partnership with The Linbury Trust and York Museums Trust, IPUP organised a conference entitled "After Civilisation: the Past, Present, and Future of Art on TV". The day gathered together academics, broadcasters, media producers, and cultural critics, to consider the legacy of Kenneth Clark's landmark series *Civilisation* and its continued resonating impact. Contributors, including the artist and presenter Matthew Collings, also evaluated the presentation of art itself on television, and the possibilities and drawbacks of the medium. A full report on the conference can be found on IPUP's website: <http://www.york.ac.uk/ipup/report09>

On 18 May 2011, in partnership with the Department of Archaeology, IPUP will host the final one-day conference in the series, entitled "Archaeology and the Material Past in the Public Realm". Issues to be discussed might include community archaeology programmes and the links between local populations and excavations nearby, the role and meaning of archaeologists in modern popular culture, and also the relationship between the past's material remains and the present's imagination. For all enquiries relating to this forthcoming conference, please contact ipup-enquiries@york.ac.uk