PRISONERS, PUNISHMENT AND TORTURE:

Developing new approaches to interpretation at the Tower of London

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1: OVERVIEW

In July 2012, the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) in the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester was approached by Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) to undertake a small piece of research exploring the interpretation of prisoners, punishment and torture at the Tower of London. Visitor evaluation undertaken at The Tower had revealed that visitors were not fully satisfied with their experience; visitors to The Tower expressed a wish for more (and perhaps more gory) interpretation. Based on this finding, Alex Gaffikin, Interpretation Manager at Historic Royal Palaces, began to think about how staff at The Tower might incorporate more interpretation around the themes of prisoners, punishment and torture. How could the team at The Tower generate a more engaging and interpretive experience around the themes of prisoners, punishment and torture, but without recourse to waxworks and horror? How could they navigate the complexities of a shared site which offers visitors access to a range of collections and historic structures, in order to generate a coherent visitor experience? In line with the principles and priorities of Historic Royal Palaces, how could they develop interpretation around such a challenging topic within an ethical framework?

Following detailed discussions with RCMG, a research question and a project methodology were developed which fused qualitative visitor research and research around visitor experience and learning, with an interpretive process where design thinking and design practices would become part of the research process. Drawing together a multi-disciplinary team, the project ran for a 4 month period between January and April 2013. The project culminated in the development of a framework for ethical decision-making around the interpretation of prisoners, punishment and torture at The Tower of London.

At the time of compiling this report (January 2014) Historic Royal Palaces are undertaking a series of interpretive experiments in order to test out the Framework. In addition to this, and as a direct outcome of the research project, plans are developing for a major redevelopment of the basement of the White Tower as a hub for the interpretation of prisoners, punishment and torture. In RCMG, the project is providing a model for a whole series of new research projects which respond directly to the research needs of museums, galleries and heritage sites and which are offering a route to exploring the research potential of design thinking and design practice in supporting the future development and shaping of visitor-centred institutions.

2: THE PUZZLE AND THE PROCESS

Following a period of discussion with RCMG, the research puzzle was conceived as:

How might the Tower of London take forward their interpretation of stories of imprisonment, punishment and torture in ways that take account of and reconcile:

i) visitors' expectations, motivations and interests and;

ii) HRP's commitment to interpretive practice underpinned by ethical values and the standards of museological and curatorial practice?

The interpretive puzzle was recognised as emerging from a number of issues:

1. evaluation suggested that visitors were strongly motivated by a desire to encounter stories of torture and punishment but many appeared to leave disappointed by aspects of their visit to the Tower, expressing a wish for more (and perhaps more gory) material;

2. the Tower was interested in exploring ways to enhance visitor satisfaction that were not in conflict with the organisation's commitment to ethical values, curatorial standards and the needs, wishes and interests of diverse stakeholders.

As the research plan developed, RCMG felt that the site-specific puzzle could be understood in relation to a suite of broader international (scholarly and professional) debates in the field, all of which could help to inform the research.

Similarly, underpinning the research plan was the idea that emerging innovative practice in the field of interpretive design and interpretive design research, held the potential to develop an approach that would offer visitors to the Tower emotionally engaging, authentic and rich experiences that reconciled some of the apparent tensions inherent in the project.

As a result, RCMG drew together a multi-disciplinary research team including interpreters, designers and researchers with a range of expertise relevant to the solving of the research puzzle. The team (Jocelyn Dodd, Tom Duncan, Alexandra Gaffikin, Ceri Jones, Suzanne MacLeod and Richard Sandell) worked together over a period of 4 months and through a research process which:

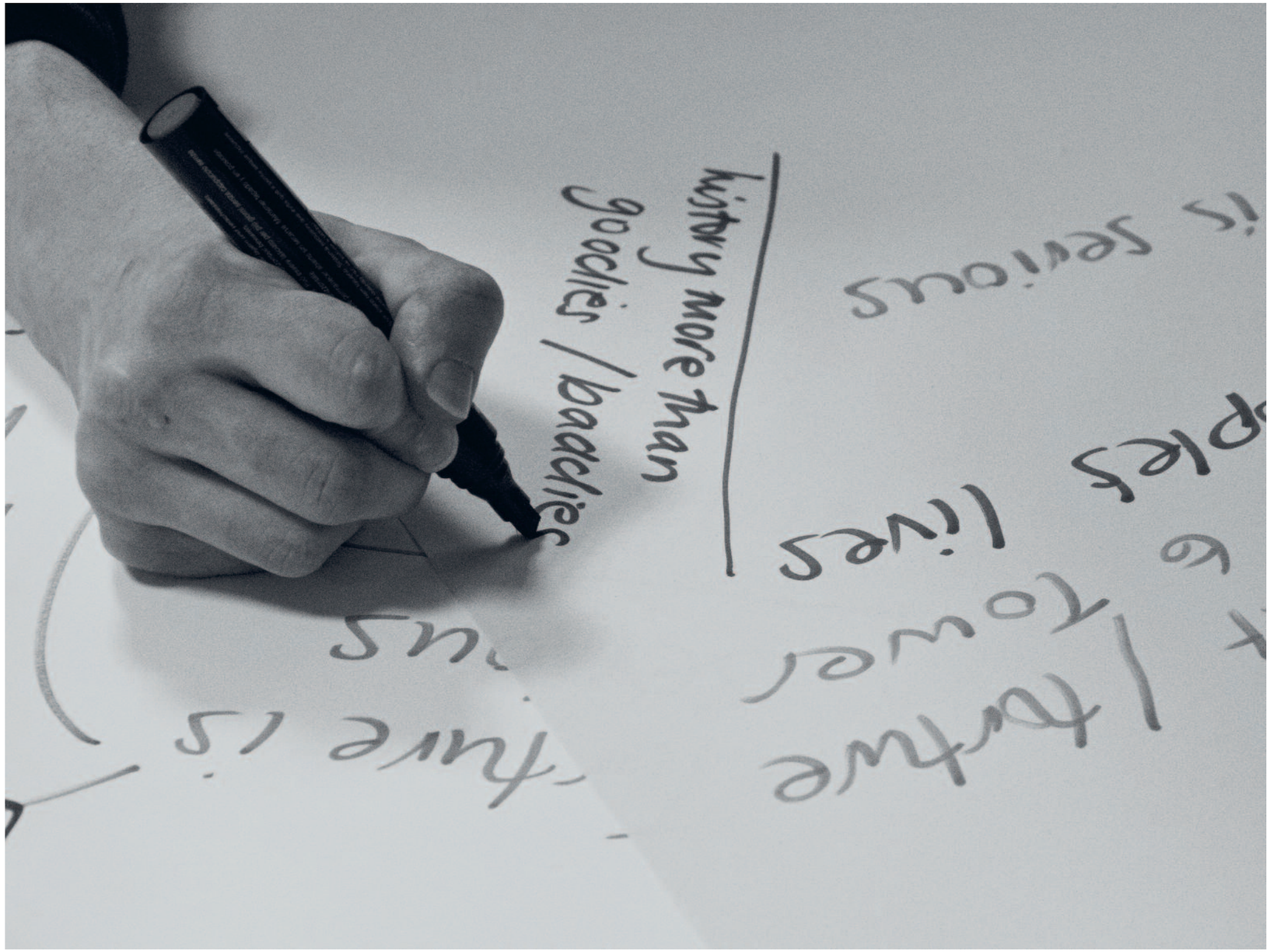
• reached across a whole range of specialist areas from learning and emotional engagement to 'challenging history', narrative and embodiment;

• involved undertaking focused, qualitative visitor research;

• and utilised interpretive thinking and team-based interpretive design approaches as part of its research methodology.

3: RESEARCH: THE WORKING PAPERS

Three working papers – unpolished, 'quick and dirty' papers which drew together relevant sources and approaches - were produced independently of one another around three themes (1) the ethical treatment of 'challenging' or 'dark' histories in historic sites and museums, (2) emotional engagement and learning and, (3) embodied narrative experience. The papers are reproduced in full in the following pages.



WP1: THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF 'CHALLENGING' OR 'DARK' HISTORIES IN HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS

1. This working paper draws on recent literature in museum studies, heritage and tourism studies and related disciplines to consider the ethical concerns and tensions around the presentation of what might be termed 'dark', 'difficult' or 'challenging' histories. It is worth noting that much of the debate in this area is concerned with more recent 'difficult histories' (than those we are exploring at the Tower), where the emphasis is on how that history can be presented in ways which support visitors in appreciating its contemporary significance and implications (e.g. Holocaust related sites). Nevertheless, this review of literature helps us to consider with greater clarity and precision why the interpretation of torture, imprisonment and punishment is potentially challenging for the Tower and points towards principles that might be used to guide future practice.

Terms and definitions

2. A review of recent literature related to dark tourism and challenging histories is helpful for understanding where our current project sits in the broader landscape of debate surrounding the presentation of histories perceived to be problematic in some way or to raise ethical concerns for museums and historic sites.

3. Although Lennon and Foley (2000) take a narrow view of '**dark tourism'** as a phenomenon that refers to sites of recent death, disaster and atrocity in living memory (and make a distinction between these and historical sites) Sharpley (2009) uses the term to refer to a wider phenomenon of visiting or attending sites of death, murder, suffering, violence and disaster including gladiatorial games, public executions, battlefields and cemeteries. His broader definition includes more specific phenomena such as 'grief tourism', 'atrocity tourism' and 'fright tourism' and accommodates a range of sites from actual places where trauma, death and misery took place to reconstructions of trauma and misery away from the site (such as many Holocaust museums and the London Dungeon).

4. The term 'challenging history' (as used in the Challenging History conference at City University, 23-25 February 2012) is also helpful since it refers to a series of dilemmas that are potentially challenging in relation to both **subject matter** (which, for us, might refer to the violent, gruesome character of torture practices which simultaneously hold the potential to be both appealing/intriguing but also upsetting/repellent) and **approaches** to their presentation (the methods which are used to engage visitors).

5. '**Difficult heritage'** – as defined by Sharon Macdonald in her exploration of the contemporary presentation of the Nazi past is perhaps rather less fitting for our project as it refers to the past which is 'meaningful in the present but that is also contested and awkward for public reconciliation with a positive, self-affirming contemporary identity' (Macdonald 2009: 1).

What motivates visitation to sites of dark/challenging history?

6. The demand for dark history - why the public are choosing to visit these sites and the apparent growing interest in these sites - is little understood (Sharpley 2009) and has received limited empirical investigation.

7. Lennon and Foley (2000) connect the growing appeal of these sites to the 'modern condition' where death and disaster are more private and hidden in the everyday compared to previous centuries, but where death is present in popular culture and global news media 24/7 (also see Stone 2009).

8. Sharpley (2009) Macdonald (2009), Stone (2009) and Walter (2009) suggest a wider range of reasons for visiting sites of 'dark tourism'. The following is a selective list highlighting those that are felt to be most relevant to the Tower;

Desire for experience

• Curiosity or entertainment

• Interest in the meaning or significance of the site or the event (rather than an interest in the manner of death)

• Contemplation of mankind's capacity for evil or the vulnerability of the human condition (see also Stone 2009)

Interest in death and disaster

• Morbid curiosity

• the desire to celebrate crime or deviance

• Bloodlust or revelling in horror and misery

• Death as the last taboo – an opportunity to encounter death in a safe, 'socially sanctioned' manner (Stone 2009)

Emotional and/or cognitive

• Remembrance (Walter 2009)

• 'Ontological security' – coming to terms with or making sense of darker side of human experience e.g. criminality, death and sexuality (Stone 2009)

9. With relatively limited evidence for why visits are made to sites of dark tourism or challenging history, the general literature on museum and historic site visiting may be helpful. Much of the literature during the 1980s was pessimistic about the popularity of historic sites and museums, seeing it as evidence of an obsession with the past to avoid thinking about the present or future (e.g. Wright 1985; Hewison 1987). Some have argued that the public has become disengaged with or disconnected from the past and has therefore become vulnerable to a simplified, superficial and highly subjective history presented by museums and historical sites, which is potentially exploiting the past for political, commercial or other gain (Merriman 1991; Lowenthal 1998; Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2005). However, increased understanding of the ways in which visitors engage with and respond to museums and heritage sites has shown that many writers underestimated the intelligence of the public (Black 2005) who alternatively can be seen as 'active agents' in creating histories (Kean and Ashton 2009) or are interacting with representations of the past in increasingly sophisticated and critical ways (Baer 2001; de Groot 2009).

10. The range of historic sites and museums available to the public suggest that sites of dark tourism and challenging history may be appealing (simply) as a means of finding out about the past, to find the 'truth' alongside a range of available resources such as television, film and books.

What are the ethical concerns posed by the interpretation of dark or challenging histories?

11.The literature highlights a range of ethical concerns related to the presentation of dark, difficult or challenging histories. There is considerable discussion around the interpretation of contemporary or more recent events within living memory (for example, Holocaust sites); the presentation of 'hidden histories' of minority groups that have strong links to contemporary human rights struggles; memorial sites where the explicit intention is to educate visitors to prevent future occurrences (e.g. genocide museums) which are less relevant to our project at the Tower where many (although not all) of the historical events being interested took place several hundred years ago.

12. The following ethical concerns appear most relevant to our project:

i) **Commodification** - where the boundaries between message and commercialism have become blurred (Lennon and Foley 2000). How can sites avoid commodifying history; an approach that results in short-lived, repetitive and easily forgettable experiences rather than 'reflective, developmental or meaningful experience's that are often claimed to be the purpose, or outcomes, of participating in tourism (Sharpley and Stone 2010: 4).

ii) Related to this, there is a danger that interpretation can **distort histories** (by **glorifying**, **sanitising**, **omitting**) in order to construct an experience that is palatable, appealing or entertaining and which avoids the risk of offending visitors.

iii) What constitutes **the ethical treatment of history?**– Museums are widely viewed as trusted spaces of historical knowledge (Rosenzweig and Thelan 1998) which are supposed to get the past 'right' for us (Crane 1997). However, Handler and Gable (1997) claim that the way in which history is presented in museums, notably the pursuit of authenticity in museums and historic sites such as Colonial Willamsburg, can deaden the historic sensibility of the public:

'Mimetic realism [...] destroys history. To teach the public that the work [...] is to reconstruct the past as it really was erases all the interpretive work that goes into the museum's story [...] Mimetic realism thus deadens the historical sensibility of the public. It teaches people not to question historians' stories, not to imagine other, alternative histories, but to accept an embodied tableau as the really real.' (Handler and Gable 1997: 224).

See also Gregory and Witcomb (2007) who argue that many museums' approaches to representing the past closes down opportunities for imaginative and engaging experiences for visitors.

iv) **Sensational** or **trivialising** treatment of histories or events (Sharpley 2009) – how can sites offer meaningful, entertaining and engaging experiences and, at the same time, treat the subject matter respectfully and with integrity?

v) **Appropriate visitor responses** – what kinds of visitor responses or outcomes are deemed 'appropriate'? Here we might ask, is it ethical or unethical to alarm, disgust or scare visitors through interpretation of torture at the Tower?

vi) **Appropriate visitor behaviours** – what forms or engagement, what actions are considered acceptable and are therefore permitted or encouraged by sites? The literature raises questions about the ethics of a range of examples including visitors posing for photographs beneath the gate at Auschwitz; touching human remains; kissing and sunbathing or playing on the slabs at Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe; collective 'gawping' at Ground Zero (Williams 2011).

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WP2: EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING: HOW CAN MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC SITES OFFER POWERFUL, EMOTIONALLY ENGAGING EXPERIENCES?

To be emotionally engaged with something is to make sense of it, to make it meaningful and relevant.

1. Making sense of something means to 'transform the unknown into the known' (Heller 1982:65), to attach significance to it (Aronowitz and Giroux 1985), appropriate it or make something one's own (Wertsch 2002).

2. Affect and emotion are often connected, but one does not always lead to the other (Watson unpublished). How are emotions understood?

3. Emotions can be seen as **process** rather than a static feeling, and may be **discharged bodily** through trembling, hot or cold sweat, crying or involuntary laughter (Scheff 1979, 2001). Emotions are often involuntary but are shaped by the individual, social and cultural context (Watson unpublished, Scheff 1979, 2001).

4. **We are socialised into how we experience, articulate or suppress particular emotions**, particularly distressing feelings such as grief, fear, anger and embarrassment (Watson unpublished; Scheff 1979, 2001).

5. Humans use a range of different cues to communicate to others how they feel including facial, vocal and gestural signals. A study by Sauter, Eisner, Ekman and Scott (2010) found that it is possible to cross-culturally recognise 'basic emotions' such as anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness and surprise through vocal and facial cues, which seems to confirm the existence of **universal emotions.**

Emotional and sensory engagement are fundamental to the learning process

6. Popularly, learning is seen as a purely cognitive process which consists of learning new facts and information. However, we see learning as much more than this – it is a **process of 'meaning making'**, and the emotions and the senses are fundamental to the process. It is not always about learning something new, it may involve building on, reshaping or consolidating existing knowledge. We have adopted a broad and holistic definition of learning which unites cognitive, emotional, bodily, sensory and affective ways of knowing about the world:

7. Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve increase in or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, feelings, attitudes and the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more (Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 32)

8. Learning theorists in museums (Falk and Dierking 1992; Hein 1998; Hooper-Greenhill 2007) stress how important the emotions are to learning:

• Feelings are connected to the desire to learn more e.g. confidence and achievement

• Enjoyment is integral to learning e.g. 'we learn better and remember more if we are motivated through enjoyment' (Hooper-Greenhill 2007: 36)

• Negative learning experiences have the opposite effect, leading to diminished self-esteem, lack of confidence and impact on the willingness to learn in the future

9. What else is important about the connections between learning, the emotions and senses?

Learning is a **process of interaction between the self and the outside world**. The body is essential to learning (embodied) – we perceive the outside world through the senses, through movement, emotion, and how we are located in place/time (Falk and Dierking 2000; Dudley 2010)

• **Cognitive knowledge** (information, facts), therefore, cannot easily be separated from **affective knowledge** (emotions, feelings, values) (Hooper-Greenhill 2007) or **psychomotor functions** (skills and behaviours) (Falk and Dierking 2000)

• **Meanings are stored in structures or frameworks called 'schema' which bring together associated ideas, concepts and themes.** Visitors bring their prior knowledge, ideas, concepts, memories, expertise, viewpoints and assumptions to the museum or historic site with them (Falk and Dierking 1992; Weil 2007).

• **Learning is personal but it takes place in a wider social and cultural context** (Leinhardt, Tittle and Knutson 2002). Individuals make what they learn personally meaningful on the basis of prior knowledge, individual experience and cultural positioning, as well as other factors such as gender (Hooper-Greenhill 2007)

If we want museums and historic sites to generate emotionally satisfying, memorable and purposeful experiences, we need to take into account…

10. People learn most effectively in **supportive environments**, when engaged in **meaningful activities**, are free from anxiety, fear and negative mental states, have **choices and control** over their learning, and experiences are **inclusive and accessible** (intellectually, physically, and socially). Learning takes place in the mind of the learner and **may be different to what the museum expects** (Falk and Dierking 1992; Hein 1998)

11. Learning through **experience**, **discovery** or **participation,** which is both 'hands-on' and 'minds-on', creates a direct link between information acquisition and applied use, encouraging the learner to organise information and construct new meanings, fostering curiosity and active engagement (Black 2005). **Learning through experience** enables learners to respond directly to stimuli, 'apprehending the experience and the related knowledge in an immediate and sensory way' (Hooper Greenhill 2007:36) which can help to make learning more memorable

Emotional engagement with the past can be manifested in many ways

12. **Memories are associated in the same part of the brain as emotions**, along with the senses such as sounds, taste, and smells. The recollection of the past can be an emotional experience e.g. Proust's famous recollection of the madeleines (cakes) (Scheff 1979, 2001). Connections with the past are **associated with childhood** (Samuel 1994) or with **place** (Nora 1996). How else can the engagement with the past have emotional resonance?

• **Identity** – sense of self, family, nation, community, local or regional identity – is often rooted in the past, in place, or through ancestors. Having a history affirms the right to exist in the present and continue into the future (Lowenthal 1998; MacDonald 2009)

• **Desire for connection with people from the past** e.g. the fascination of Pompeii (Beard 2008)

• Desire to **preserve the past** (Hewison 1987)

• Deep **psychological need for security** and the fear of loss of traditional ways of living in the fast-paced modern world (Huyssen 1995; Tosh 2002, Connerton 2009)

• Emotional resonance of **silence and absence** – who is excluded from the historical record? Whose story is not told? (MacDonald 2009)

• Popular social and cultural meanings attached to the past which **celebrate and explain it** in accepted ways e.g. World War II when the British stood firm against Hitler (Calder 1991)

13. *Emotional connections at museums and historic sites are made through material evidence of the past ('the real thing') and connections with human life and experiences*

Museums and historic sites provide **multi-sensory ways of knowing** which appeal to the emotional, affective and cognitive domains. From the literature it emerges that sites do this broadly in two ways through enabling encounters with the 'real thing', the material evidence of the past, and connecting to stories of human life and experience:

Encountering the real thing

• Museums and historic sites create a tangible link to the past which is immediate, exciting and real (Fairley 1977; Rosenzweig and Thelan 1998; Stone 2004)

• The abstract past is brought to life, made more vivid (Trewinnard-Boyle and Tabassi 2007)

• Provoke curiosity and imagination, prompt questions (Stone 2004; Turner-Bisset 2005)

• The 'charisma' or 'aura' of the real thing - the value and significance of historical survival (Fairley 1977; Pearce 1994; Jackson and Kidd 2011)

Connecting to human life and experience

• Objects and sites symbolise or evoke evidence of human life in the past (Shanks 1992)

• Encouraged to identify with people in the past 'as though they were us' (Bennett 1988) e.g. through *prosthetic memory*, the ability to experience emotions, lives or experiences which are beyond our own experience or living memory (Landsberg 2004), often as a replica or imitation (Watson 2010)

• Issues that resonate emotionally across time and space e.g. migration (Abram 2002)

• 'Hot' interpretation that recreates the intensity and passion of the event or the experience (Uzzell 1989 cited in Sharpley 2009)

• **The power of stories to make emotional connections**. We can place ourselves in the story and stimulate the emotions felt by characters – our brains are 'wired' up to take notice and try to 'read' the emotions of others and provide an appropriate reaction (Watson unpublished)

14. *Visitors create their own connections with the past but museums and sites can support the process*

• Making connections to human stories and experiences can help to **prevent the 'over-distancing'** of history – history can be too abstract, too different to the present to be meaningful, creating barriers to understanding. The use of historical characters and voices can create intimacy, shared awareness and empathy (Scheff 1979, 2001)

• Scheff (1979, 2001) and Jackson (2007) talk about the importance of **aesthetic difference**, when emotional involvement is achieved with a character, for example in a performance, but the audience remains aware that they are 'observers' and the emotions they are feeling are part of the performance. It is a protective function so that 'real life' does not become confused with the experience. Providing opportunities for reflection, for silence, or discharge of emotions can help people to manage distressful or difficult feelings which may be provoked by encountering the past

15. *The Generic Learning Outcomes can be used as part of interpretive planning to unite the issues raised here – the need for emotional satisfying and engaging learning experiences which enable visitors to connect with a complex past*

Using the GLOs embeds learning as a sensory, emotional and embodied experience into interpretive thinking, and encourages sites to think about the **impact of interpretation**:

• What kind of responses does the site what to elicit from visitors?

The example given here shows how the Imperial War Museum used the GLOs to develop interpretation in the Cabinet War Rooms, showing the learning outcomes they wanted visitors to experience and how the interpretation would elicit this outcome:

Generic Learning Outcome	**Learning Outcomes for the Churchill Museum**	**Possible Method of Implementation**
Knowledge and understanding	That there was, and is, no consensus about Churchill	Storyline/content of the exhibition: use of other's views & opinions about WSC
	How he became an icon and why	Storyline: visual material, accounts of Churchill as an icon from contemporaries, discussion of role of publicity, propaganda
	Make clear who the person Churchill was, not just the politician	Storyline: material about his childhood, family, friends: use of his own words and thoughts
	Britain's changing position in the world	Storyline: context to Churchill's life to be illustrated by contextual as well as iconic objects
		How could we use the study/feedback space at the end of the Museum to be more explicit about these?
Skills	Critical and ethical thinking	Storyline – the issues/surprises and controversial episodes of his life: how will the objects or text encourage this kind of thinking?
	Learning in different ways	Exhibition design – different ways to engage and interact with the material
	How to look at objects	Design, display and text that surrounds and interprets (or asks visitors to interpret) objects
Values, attitudes and feelings	Changing nature of values	Use of contemporary sources, views and values in storyline – but design & graphics (?) to offer up opportunities to assess these against present-day values
	Stimulate (enthuse?) people to learn about Churchill	Exhibition content and design must have a sense of vitality, life, fun and enjoyment, to reflect Churchill'17 personality
		Clear, inventive ways to display this, without resorting to too much text
	Increased awareness of issues of democracy and politics and their influence on British society	How can we be open about our intention? Should we explain the tone and rationale for it at the beginning?
	Museums contribute to national identity	BE EXPLICIT about extent of Churchill's role and influence: perhaps using the 'what if?' approach in the text
	Individuals can influence change	
Creativity, inspiration and enjoyment	Learning is fun and life long	Design must excite interest: incorporate views of different generations/ages in assessments of Churchill
	Unexpected inspiration	Could some of the episodes of his life highlight his sources of inspiration? Animals, painting etc
	Lateral connections between subjects/themes	Is there a way of building in trails of the unexpected, that incorporate further layers of information for those wanting to know more about lateralisms?
Action and behaviour	Expand your learning horizons	Storyline to give a sense of the vistas of Churchill's life – how widely he ranged in his thoughts, hobbies, and career
	Behaving socially in a museum space	Design and text needs to both stimulate and affirm that social interaction is OK
		Build in ability to change exhibits
	Repeat visit	Use study/feedback area to advertise them, enable people to sign up for them: have tasters available online in learning suite: ensure close relationship between learning programme and Museum
	Sign up for courses and events at CWR	

16. *Conclusions: What does this mean for the Tower?*

• Understanding learning as a lifelong process, which incorporates affective, emotional and embodied ways of knowing as well as the cognitive, helps to see visitors as 'active meaning-makers' who come with their own ideas and assumptions about the history and use of the Tower. Whilst there may be differences in how visitors respond to interpretation in the Tower because of their different national or cultural backgrounds, conveying universal or 'basic' emotions is likely to have meaning and relevance for many visitors.

Visitors will find many ways to engage with the site; it may have personal relevance, be relevant to national identity, or they may simply be an interest in the past. Multiple ways in are needed for visitors to find their own ways of emotionally engaging with what the Tower has to offer. Effective opportunities for learning (which engage the emotions and the senses) will be multi-layered, with opportunities for visitors to participate, become involved (physically, emotionally and intellectually) and reflect upon what they see.

• The Tower has both material evidence of the past (site) and connections to human life and experience – the foundations of emotional connections with the past which can be made by visitors.

• Human stories and experiences of torture, prison and punishment are emotionally-charged. The concept of aesthetic distance may help sites to think about how these stories are 'framed' to the visitor – how they are introduced, what language is used, and how visitors might manage their feelings (e.g. through the use of space).

• Making connections with the familiar (what visitors already know) can provide helpful context against the challenge of 'new' learning experiences (Hein 1998). Openly addressing visitor perceptions and understanding can act as a 'springboard' to tell the 'real', complex story of the past.

• Sites which invite visitors to piece together the history themselves, within a clear narrative framework, have been suggested to unite the cognitive and affective domains because they invite questions, reflection, and provide opportunities for critical thinking and enquiry-based learning, rather than passive appreciation (Gregory and Witcomb 2007).

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WP3: EMBODIED NARRATIVE EXPERIENCE

General

1. In Museum Studies, there has been much discussion of museums and heritage sites as 'experiences' and as 'performances'; theatrical events where storytelling, narrative, emotion and engagement are prioritised. What seems to be prioritised here is less the traditional, information mode associated with museums, but, rather, a sensory and experiential approach to museum making associated more with expos, world fairs and theatre. For Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the route towards this is less about large numbers of objects and more about the presence and 'fact' of iconic objects, combined with the use of expressive installations and environments in order to enable some level of emotional engagement, a 'visceral' grasp of histories and other peoples' experiences (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett).

2. One example we might use to illustrate the kind of approach to making experiences described by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett can be taken from the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum. Here, exhibition designers Stephen Greenberg and Bob Baxter used iconic objects within a seamless, expressive environment. As Greenberg later wrote: 'In one space there is only one artifact, an ordinary Adler typewriter of the period, a basic tool of the bureaucracy. It sits in a space bounded by an organization chart of the whole Nazi chain of command from Hitler down. This is printed in white out of black behind glass, so that visitors see their own reflection mirrored in the black perpetrator space, as they stand on a white floor, in victim space. Beside the typewriter a series of words and phrases are presented whose meaning was deliberately altered during this period of history, a few will recognize their source as George Steiner's *Language and Silence*' (Greenberg, p. 230). In the Holocaust Exhibition, the physical environment was harnessed to evoke a sense of discomfort and self-reflection but also, as a route to encouraging some level of emotional engagement.

Narrative and Embodiment

Two key concepts that have proved influential in theorising exhibition and experience making are narrative and embodiment.

Narrative [extract from MacLeod, Hanks and Hale (eds.), 'Introduction']

3. 'Human consciousness and cognition are narrative 'all the way down' in Dennett's account and this idea has proved highly influential across a number of fields. An important recent collection of writings on the nature of the self contains a useful survey of recent thinking written by the philosopher Marya Schechtman. She distinguishes between two ways of understanding *The Narrative Self*, one in which the self is inherently narrative in structure, and another in which narratives are what selves appear naturally programmed to produce, i.e. to both create and pick out from within the on-going flow of perceptual experience. The latter version implies that we have a natural narrative capacity that helps us makes sense of the actions and events happening in the world around us. While citing recent proponents of what might also be called the 'hermeneutic self' – such as the philosophers Charles Taylor and Paul Ricoeur – Schechtman also refers to the work of the psychologist Jerome Bruner, who, in his book *Acts of Meaning* from 1990, could be said to have produced the classic description of a self that is instinctively predisposed to perceive, create and communicate narrative (Bruner, p. 71).'

4. If the above approach to narrative suggests an individual reaching out into the world to make sense of that world and their place within it, narrative is also a useful term for talking about exhibition making and has a long history of use in this way. Curatorial teams often refer to exhibition narratives – the stories or ideas that are created and laid over an exhibition space. Similarly, we hear exhibition designers drawing on techniques from film-making and storytelling, conceptualising exhibitions as three-part dramas or as beginning, middle and end. Here, narrative is acknowledged as having a spatial character and space is recognised as having narrative potential. That is, narrative can structure our sense of space and spaces can 'hold' or 'carry' narratives. More than this, physical space – as a medium – can convey, through our movement through space, a sense of time and an unfolding of experience that a purely verbal or textual medium cannot.

5. One particular example helps draw out these characteristics. In 2001-2 the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds developed an exhibition *Close Encounters: The Sculptor's Studio in the Age of the Camera*. The exhibition set out to evoke the sculptor's studio without recourse to a literal reconstruction of a sculptor's studio. Three linked gallery spaces of varying sizes were harnessed towards these ends. In the first space, a series of late 19th- and early 20th-century black and white photographs were displayed of sculptors at work. Revealing details of both the sculptors' and the sitters' experiences, the photographs were displayed not in chronological order, but in an order that revealed an increasing focus on and intensity of the sculptors and the sitters. In the second space, visitors entered a larger, top lit room that was painted pale grey in order to evoke, subtly, the sculptor's studio. Here slightly larger than life size photographs of sculptures in the artists' studios and in varying states of completion, were displayed close to the actual, finished sculpture. Finally, in the third and smallest space, a group of maquettes, the small models made by the artists as they worked through the form and composition of their planned work, was displayed, revealing yet more detail of this time consuming and intricate work (Wood). Throughout, the physical spaces, objects and media were harnessed to carry and manifest the exhibition narratives.

6. Finally, and in addition to all of the above, there is increasing emphasis on the narratives that are perceived to emerge from, or be embedded within, the built historic environment (see Austin on 'scales of narrativity'). There has been great interest – of relevance to The Tower of London – in developing installations that augment, accentuate, expand and illuminate the latent narratives embedded in our built heritage – in landscapes and built forms. Importantly, the more successful of these approaches, harness the narrative and spatial potential of imported media such as film (see Duncan and McCauley on the Zehdenik Brickworks).

Embodiment

7. If narrative can be usefully understood as both a cognitive mechanism through which we make sense of the world and a form of structuring space, time and experience, the concept of embodiment is helpful in enabling us to understand more about the ways in which narratives function in a fully embodied realm that is architectural, spatial and laden with the past (MacLeod *et al*, p. 105). The notion of embodiment relates simply to the fact that we experience and make sense of the world around us in and through our bodies; to be human is to be embodied.

8. The result is an interest in designing experiences that increasingly prioritise sensory engagement and bodily experience over a purely intellectual engagement and which, in a parallel shift, see a lessening of emphasis on graphics and the simple layering of a textual narrative over a physical space. Here, approaches from drama and performance and utilising a range of media from film to audio and graphics, light and dark, are choreographed to generate experiences and, in places, augment or draw out particular embedded narratives towards a sensory and emotional engagement. Within the 'paradigm of embodiment' (Hale), narrative is recognised as aural, haptic and physical, as well as visual and textual.

9. In the *Sculptor's Studio* at the Henry Moore Institute, an embodied narrative experience was created as a route to a richer, sensory experience and an empathy with the sculptor and the sitter, as opposed to a purely intellectual, text-based narrative experience (Wood). Here, the curatorial team utilised the visitor's movement through the space and the scale of the human body to elucidate the processes and outcomes of sculpture as well as the states of mind of the sitters and the sculptors. The narrative potential was acknowledged as existing in all elements of the exhibition and, importantly, in the physical and emotional relation between the exhibition and the visitor. Leaving an openness within the interpretation, the exhibition was celebrated for its ability to engage, interest and excite.

10. Such examples are characterised by an awareness that experience is embodied, sensory and physical AND that narrative itself is not necessarily purely visual or textual, but can be filmic, aural, haptic, embedded in the physical site through the addition of interpretive interventions or already evident in the existing fabric and purely in need of framing, amplifying or illuminating.

Performativity, emotion and imagination

11. Of interest here – in relation to the Tower of London – is work by historians and sociologists who have explored the ways in which people perform heritage consumption rather than being passive consumers of heritage. In 2003, Bagnall argued that visitors map their experiences physically, emotionally and imaginatively, selectively constructing 'worlds based around their own experiences' (Bagnall, p. 96). Data collected by Bagnall at two heritage sites suggested that visitors practiced a form of reminiscence informed by performativity. She argued: 'the relationship between visitors and the sites is based as much on emotion and imagination as it is on cognition. Moreover, this emotional and imaginary relationship is engendered by the physicality of the process of consumption' (Ibid., p. 87). Emotions and imagination then, are acknowledged as key dimensions of the heritage visit, a visit where the physical site and the physicality of moving through that site are not just key, but sometimes take precedence. The site itself then, was identified as a potential trigger to emotion and imagination ('feelings that are meaningful and real'); emotion here is the link between the physical site and mental images. Interestingly, such experiences were underpinned by an expectation of authenticity.

12. Finally, in a way that chimes with theories of narrative and the human condition, Bagnall found that visitors utilised memory, life histories and personal and family narratives 'in enabling visitors to relate the consumption experience to a range of experienced and imagined worlds' (Ibid., p. 87). As she noted, 'The narratives of self which are utilized by the visitors are given substance and are made meaningful through their relations to personal and cultural biographies and life histories' (Ibid., p. 88). 'This suggests that meaning is achieved through constructing a plausible experience, rather than presenting a series of facts… A way of securing this plausibility is to encourage an emotional engagement with the sites such that visitors feel that they have a sense of place that is, moreover, their *own* sense of place.'

13. Stimulating emotion and imagination – imagination as the route to emotional engagement – becomes important here. Leaving space for this engagement with the physical site (leaving some spaces empty?) and offering up stories and interpretation that leave room for imagining (the antithesis of some displays at The Tower perhaps) seems important.

14. Interestingly, Bagnall also drew attention to research that has looked at visitor experiences of far more recent histories and the desire from some visitors for the distancing, educative function of museum and heritage sites to sit between visitors and an emotional response when experiences were too painful or close in time.

15. Rather like the emotional mapping or journey described by Bagnall, a number of exhibition/experience designers have developed mechanisms for mapping, emotionally, the planned visitor experience.

Entanglements: buildings and objects, history and contemporary experience

16. At the Tower, the site itself is iconic and has, particularly in some areas, a high degree of narrativity. The inscriptions in the Beauchamp Tower, for example, provide a direct link to the people imprisoned there as well as a sense of the length and nature of their imprisonment. The Tower itself from the outside has a high degree of narrativity in that it evokes immediate impressions of power and also, rightly or wrongly, of incarceration and punishment.

17. The closeness between story and site seems to be of great significance and the most meaningful, emotional experiences are most evident where there is a coming together of a human story with the specific place of imprisonment. This is particularly potent where tangible traces of incarceration are left behind. How can these be amplified? And how can a sense of the past be added through media and interpretive interventions?

18. Research seems to suggest that the embodied narrative experience is underpinned by authenticity. This raises interesting questions about the use of reproductions of instruments of torture.

19. Contrary to the above, where the experience is flattened there is often a mismatch between location and story, between story and authenticity and between the site and the experience.

20. Interestingly, the distancing effects of a more academic and flattened interpretation might be used where more recent challenging histories raise particular difficulties and concerns.

21. Where are the less obvious forms of narrative in the site and how might these be harnessed? (The river, the gateways, the stairwells, etc.)

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4: VISITOR RESEARCH

In order to build on and flesh out visitor evaluation undertaken by Historic Royal Palaces, and as a route to understanding more about visitors' specific responses to themes of prisoners, punishment and torture, some small-scale, qualitative visitor research was undertaken. The following paper summarises the research and its findings.

TOWER OF LONDON VISITOR RESEARCH

General

1. Visitors have overwhelmingly positive experiences at the Tower - the high levels of satisfaction were especially striking to us.

2. Visitors are motivated to come for a range of reasons – an interest in history, a day out with friends or family, to see a very famous landmark/site – and end up seeing much more than they expect to.

3. We talked with visitors who had interest in the many different aspects of the visit and the different stories being presented. As part of this, they are clearly very interested in the themes of imprisonment, punishment and torture and were generally positive about the stories related to this theme that they encountered. But as one visitor put it – '*you could make more out of this*'.

What visitors find most memorable and engaging

4. Although many respondents could not always easily articulate how their (already positive) experience could be improved, there was nevertheless considerable consensus around those features of the visit that respondents found most enjoyable and striking. Two features in particular appeared across most interviews:

Personal / human stories – knowing about the people who lived and died within the Tower. Visitors often mentioned the small but utterly memorable details that bring the site, and the people who lived there, to life. Visitors often recalled and relished specific details linked to the story of an individual – something someone said or did.

'*I also liked in the zoo part… the small notes of what people thought and did at that time, for example, I think an animal keeper, he felt sorry for animals and there was a small quotation that he said that it was like putting an intelligent man into prison or something like that. I don't expect a 17th century man to think that, you know. It was nice to see that quote'* (Katazyna)

'*We often are given numbers, 55 people died here, and I want to know maybe one person's story that represents the 55 but it's more personal. You feel more connected with the person than with the number. And they did that here, you often see the name and the short stories'* (Katazyna, referring to Anne Askew plaque)

Connection to place ('it happened here') – the fact that the Tower is the site where events that visitors learn about actually happened is especially important to them and clearly contributes to the Tower's iconic status as part of the UK's heritage.

'*… because you think of the people who stood in those same spots in different times. It's like a time machine, isn't it? … It's the thought that they were actually on that same spot all those years ago in completely different circumstances and they would have no knowledge of you, of what was to come'* (Marion).

5. The details which spark emotion and imagination can be very different – but the inscriptions in the Beauchamp Tower were often cited and appear to be a very powerful way for visitors to make a connection to the site's history.

'*I liked the inscriptions because it said it was from 15 something… Just that it was that old and so well preserved was just amazing. It didn't even dawn on me that these were prisoners carving this, I didn't even think about that'* (Heather)

'*Probably where we just came from was most memorable for me… the inscriptions I think. They were quite interesting… Just that it's actually there, somebody's taken the time to inscribe their name and their inscription. It kind of hits home that there were people imprisoned there'* (Hayley)

Interpretation

6. Visitors appreciated different ways of finding out about the site's stories;

Some people like reading lots (and came back on return visits without the children or with friends to have the chance to read more). Others preferred to listen, to be told or shown rather than to read extensively.

Visitors enjoyed interaction with the physical and sensory qualities of the site which appeared to offer them a more immersive experience, engaging them bodily and emotionally. For example, whilst some really enjoyed the armouries display, others felt the presentation in the White Tower detracted too much from the building itself:

'It looked like a museum, you could have any other building with those things inside so it didn't add to the atmosphere of the place … I thought it took the atmosphere away from the place' (Katazyna)

'*It did not feel like a castle actually… … What made it less special is that you could not imagine what happened inside the room… you cannot imagine yourself the King was sitting here or eating here, the coronation, whatever it was inside that room you have no idea '* (Darius)

7. Some visitors made their own experiences through engagement with the site and its physical qualities;

'*I touched the fireplace just with my hand… I thought my goodness, the people that stood here*' (Zach)

In a similar way, Barbara made '*a spooky noise*' as she goes into the Torture at the Tower exhibition; Julie was struck by the '*clammy handrail'* and running condensation in the Beauchamp Tower.

Presenting torture and imprisonment

8. Some visitors recalled 'gory details' from the warder's tour but, importantly, no one objected to this level of detail. In fact, Vivien smiled and laughed with her friends when she recalled 'wincing' at the more explicit stories of someone being hung, drawn and quartered.

'*I think that actually quite a few people stand there and read the notes because I know it's human nature to look for something gross and something scary.'* (Katazyna)

'I thought it was good that you don't … like lots of countries, hide the histories so I like that you presented what happened here and it's not necessarily the most glamorous but that's how it was' (Katazyna)

'*It is the same reason people are drawn to horror movies, like you see this, you are scared, but it doesn't really touch you, you are safe … And you know it's in the past, it won't happen to you hopefully ever'* (Katazyna)

9. Visitors, however, did not always have sufficient context to understand the role of the Tower as a place of torture, punishment and imprisonment. The dispersed nature of the exhibits seemed to make it difficult to grasp a coherent story around this theme and some visitors wanted more about the people and the human stories to help understand why it was so significant

'I'm not interested in the pain they've suffered, I'm interested to know a bit more about their life, not their life but how they arrived there, what did they do that caused them to be considered suitable for incarceration in the Tower' (Greg)

Hayley compared the Tower to Hampton Court's interpretation, which was presented 'in more of an interesting way:'

'I can't tell you what that was but you left, didn't you that day, feeling well informed about the history of the place. It made you as you were walking round, it was laid out in a way that you read all of it rather than bypassing it. You did read it' (Hayley)

Accompanied visit

10. The accompanied visit reinforced many of the findings from the interviews:

In Torture at the Tower;

'The panels block out the tower – I can't see the tower.

Where are these carvings? [pointing at the images on the graphic panels].

There is a lack of atmosphere here – the lighting is at odds with the topic and the Plexiglas is a very cold way of presenting the subject. It says here 48 were tortured here but I want to know more – there's very little context. It's horrific and its still happening today but I'd like to know more.

The exhibition is apologising for it – making it palatable, its holding back, it doesn't give me a sense of how awful it was – its too contained.'

In the Beauchamp Tower;

'I like it here because there's lots of information. I don't have to fight too hard to get lots of information. The first thing I saw was the Krays – wow, it brings it right up to date.

[Going up the stairs] The windows are running with water, the handrail is damp and clammy, this really gets to it.

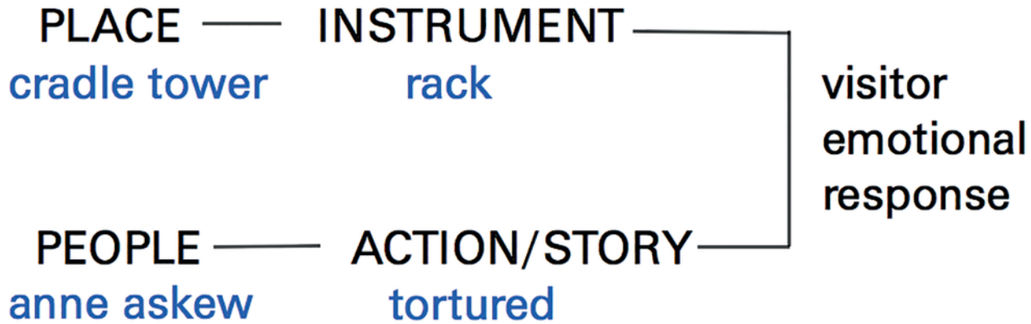
This place is dramatic – dramatic history – but the presentation isn't dramatic – you could really ramp it up.

What was it really like to be here in 1397 – how can we imagine what that was like? The carvings are utterly amazing – every little mark that's been made. It makes me think what would it have been like to be here, to add my own inscriptions while reading what others had carved. This is real – but I've got so many questions. Look, this inscription wasn't finished. Did they die? Why did they choose to leave this? It's the time – the time this would have taken to carve. You were going to die here and this is what they chose to leave – My heart is yours 'till death' I mean, oh my god – how beautiful'.

5. SITE VISITS AND INTERPRETIVE DESIGN

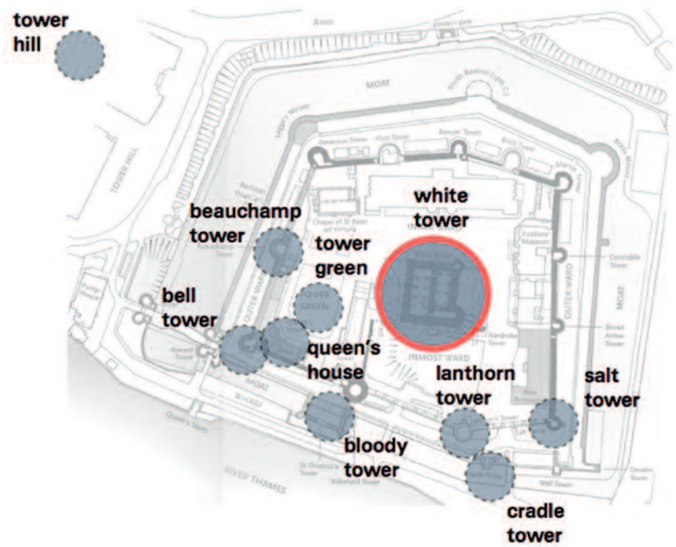
During the process, a number of visits were made to the site in order to explore the visitor experience, reflect on the research to date and provide a preliminary response to the site as an idea against which later discussions might take place. Here, the application of interpretive design principles began to suggest some of the ways in which specific personal stories might be mapped onto the site and conceived as generating some level of coherent visitor offer and experience around themes of prisoners, punishment and torture.

At this stage – again as an idea to work around and against in the workshops rather than a suggested solution – a series of visualisations were utilised to begin to imagine how the connecting of people and place might be approached, the range of emotions that the various individual stories might potentially prompt, and how a greater coherence around the theme of prisoners, punishment and torture might be achieved for visitors.



central exhibition - central themes

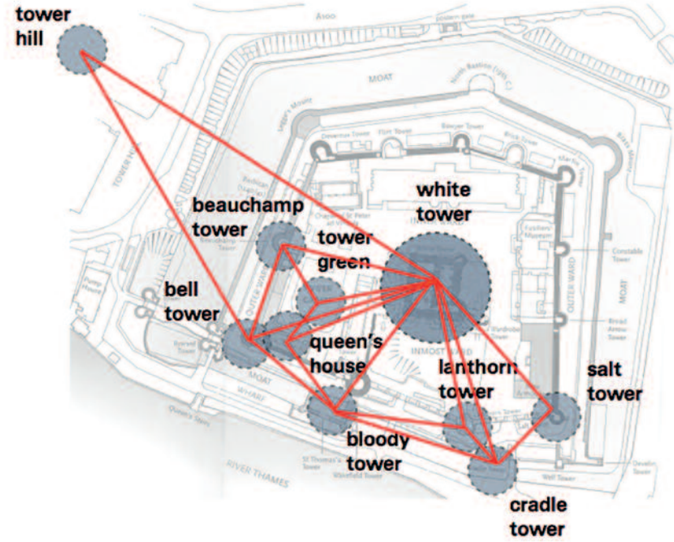
(punishment & torture)



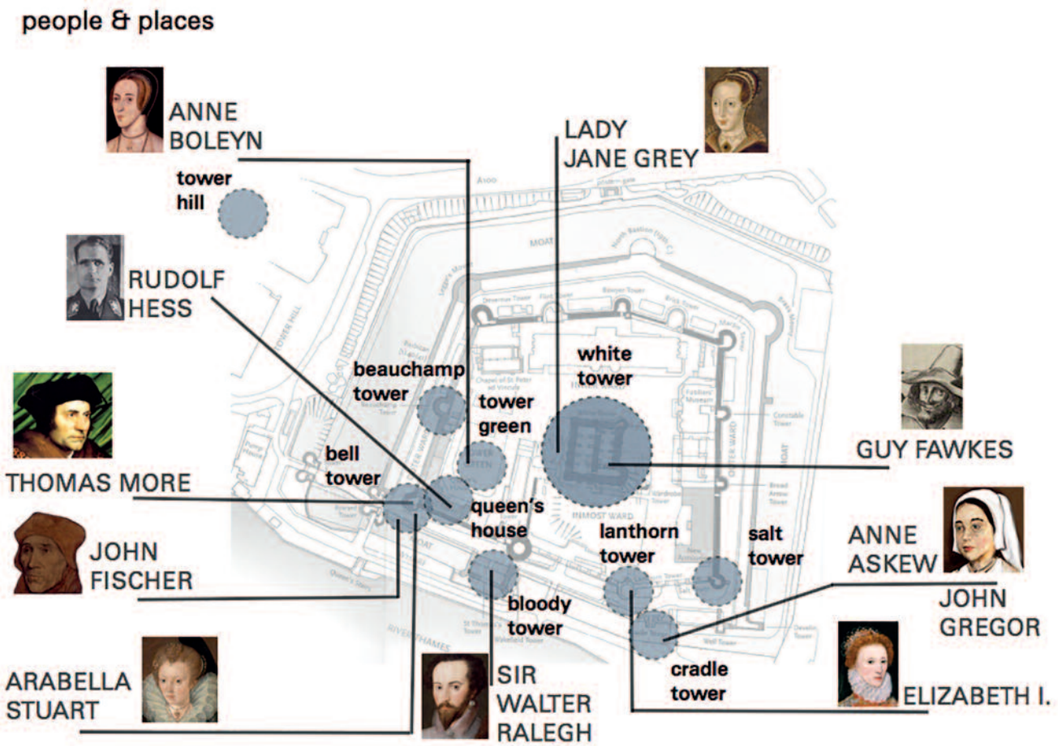
central exhibition - central themes

satelite places - related themes

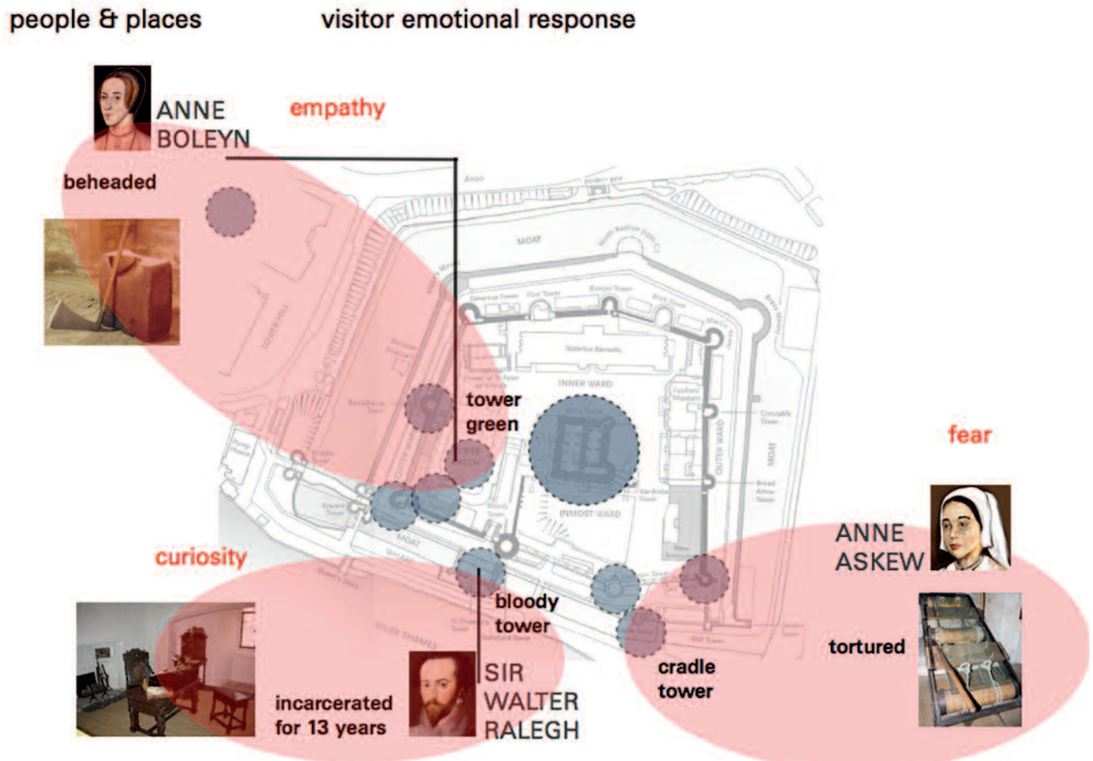
example visitor path



The White Tower as a central hub for the interpretation of prisoners, punishment and torture



The stories of key characters, told in the places that the action took place.



Visitors might experience a range of emotions as they move around the site.

6. PROJECT WORKSHOP

Following on from the working papers, the visitor research and the site visits/interpretive design process, the research team came together for a 2-day workshop. The aim of the workshop was to review the research to date, to draw out the emergent research findings and to undertake a series of activities to drive forward the analysis and begin to think about what the research findings might mean in action.

Day 1: Reviewing the research to date and the beginnings of a framework for the ethical treatment of prisoners, punishment and torture at the Tower.

Day 1 of the workshop involved an intensive working through of the research to date and a mapping of initial findings and observations. Most crucially, the team began to identify a basic framework within which the ethical interpretation of prisoners, punishment and torture might sit. The framework began to provide a series of useful reference points for what might be termed 'positive' and 'negative' visitor experiences (see Table 1).

On Day 2 of the workshop, the team worked collaboratively through a series of activities designed to enable them to think about a more visible and integrated experience of Prisoners, Punishment and Torture at The Tower. In order to provide a starting point for the activities and a set of ideas which the group could utilise or work against, the interpretive planning undertaken during the site visits was introduced (see section 5).

The process of working through the activities generated a deeper understanding amongst the team of how a story could be told in very different ways depending upon the point of view utilised (Activity 1) and how the team at The Tower could begin to choreograph a visitor experience.

Activity 2 required that the team force themselves to make comparisons to the present day and also to try and imagine how very different experiences of and at the Tower must have been in the past. One of the most challenging activities, the team did experience a moment when the horror of the theme hit home and generated significant feelings of discomfort amongst the group. This moment was harnessed for the working through of Activity 3, a critique of some of the existing interpretation at the site.

The critique of the existing interpretation was undertaken in full awareness that much of it was now quite old and was, in many senses, an easy target. That said, the discussion proved useful, again confirming the need for a subtlety of storytelling and more than a simple and reduced telling of a story of pain or death. Some of the most significant discussions centred around a clarity of interpretation in relation to the overall visitor experience (the animal sculptures around the site being fun and entertaining for example, whilst at the same time working against any sense of the Tower as a site of incarceration and torture and the choice of story and media. Here, the telling of the story of George, Duke of Clarence was a particularly useful example where a reduced story and a very literal physical interpretation were felt to result in a flattened and unengaging experience .

The final activities of Day 2 began to shift attention to a discussion of preliminary ideas for the reinterpretation of prisoners, punishment and torture at The Tower. Building on the findings to date as set out in Table 1 above, the team began to explore the matching of individual stories with their authentic location, a sense of how the story might be told to generate certain forms of emotional response and the ways in which different interpretive media might be utilised to engage, inform and open up opportunities for experience.

Finally, the team was asked to begin to think more broadly about the overall visitor experience at The Tower and how visitors might experience the theme of prisoners, punishment and torture from their arrival and throughout their visit.

Positive visitor experience	Negative visitor experience
• Paced with diversity of emotions • Clear narrative • Understanding codes, clues, rules of engagement • Humour, enjoyment • Unsettling, provocative but not 'shock for the sake of shock' • Authentic, real experiences • Real people and stories • Accessible • Choices, free choice - includes choice to go further (more gore, more tech, more info) • Nuanced, rich, complex experiences • Space for imagination, reflection and down time	• Relentless • No schema, no frame in which to place experience (unclear or missing introduction and ending) • Bland, one size fits all • Inauthentic • Confusing or misleading • Simplistic, focus on the moment of pain, not the full story • Didactic • Over themed or interpreted (close down opportunities for imagination or emotion) • No opportunity to go further

Table 1. Preliminary findings: positive and negative visitor experiences

ACTIVITY 1:

MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS: TELLING THE SAME STORY WITH DIFFERENT NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Take a particular episode at the tower and describe 'what happened there?' from the view point of:

- the place

- the person/people

- the action

ACTIVITY 2:

BRINGING THE HISTORY OF THE TOWER CLOSER TO THE PRESENT DAY VISITOR

Make comparisons of the site of the tower and past happenings there to the present day.

Examples: How tall and massive was the White Tower in the Tudor times compared to a contemporary house of a normal farm worker?

How much pain did 30 min. in a rack cause? Is there a modern day comparison? What were the lasting consequences?

ACTIVITY 3

Drawing on the emerging framework for the ethical treatment of prisoners, punishment and torture at the Tower, undertake an analysis of 3 current interpretive interventions at the site. You might think about the story told, the nature of the location for the story, the media/interpretive devices through which the story is recounted, the nature of the experience.

The current interpretation in the Beauchamp Tower (excluding the audio)

George, Duke of Clarence

Torture at the Tower

The site itself (we might think here about the animal sculptures, for example)

ACTIVITY 4

RELATING PEOPLE, PLACES & EMOTIONS:
Using the chart below try to map the range of emotional states that the visit might engender.

Place	Person	Torture Device	Story	Emotion
Tower Green	Anne Boleyn			
White Tower (scaffold close to)	Lady Jane Grey			
White Tower	Guy Fawkes			
Cradle Tower	Anne Askew			
Cradle Tower	John Gregor			
Lanthorn Tower	Elizabeth I			
Bloody Tower	Sir Walter Ralegh			
Bell Tower	Arabella Stuart			
Bell Tower	John Fischer			
Bell Tower	Thomas More			
Queen's House	Rudolf Hess			

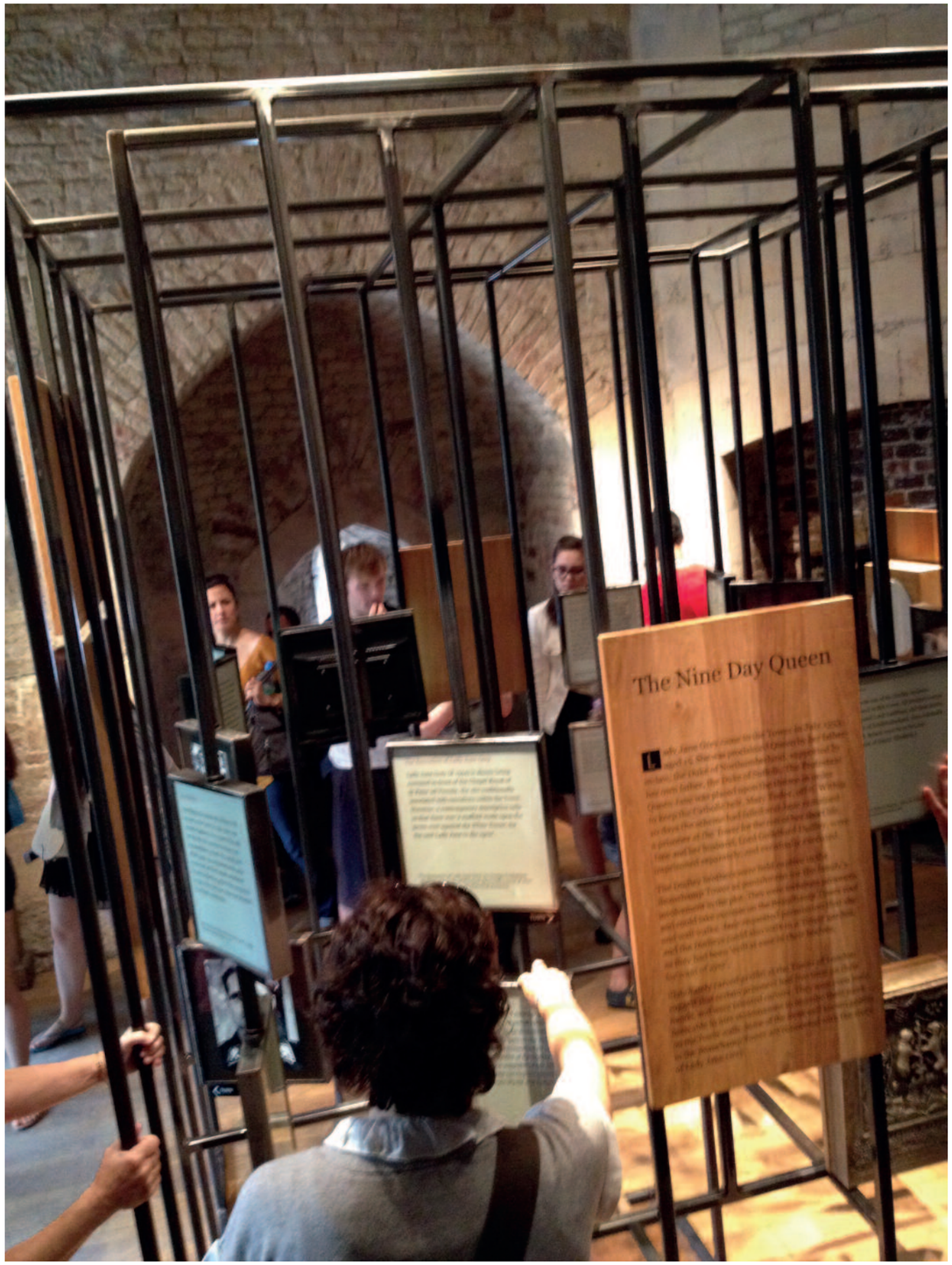
ACTIVITY 5

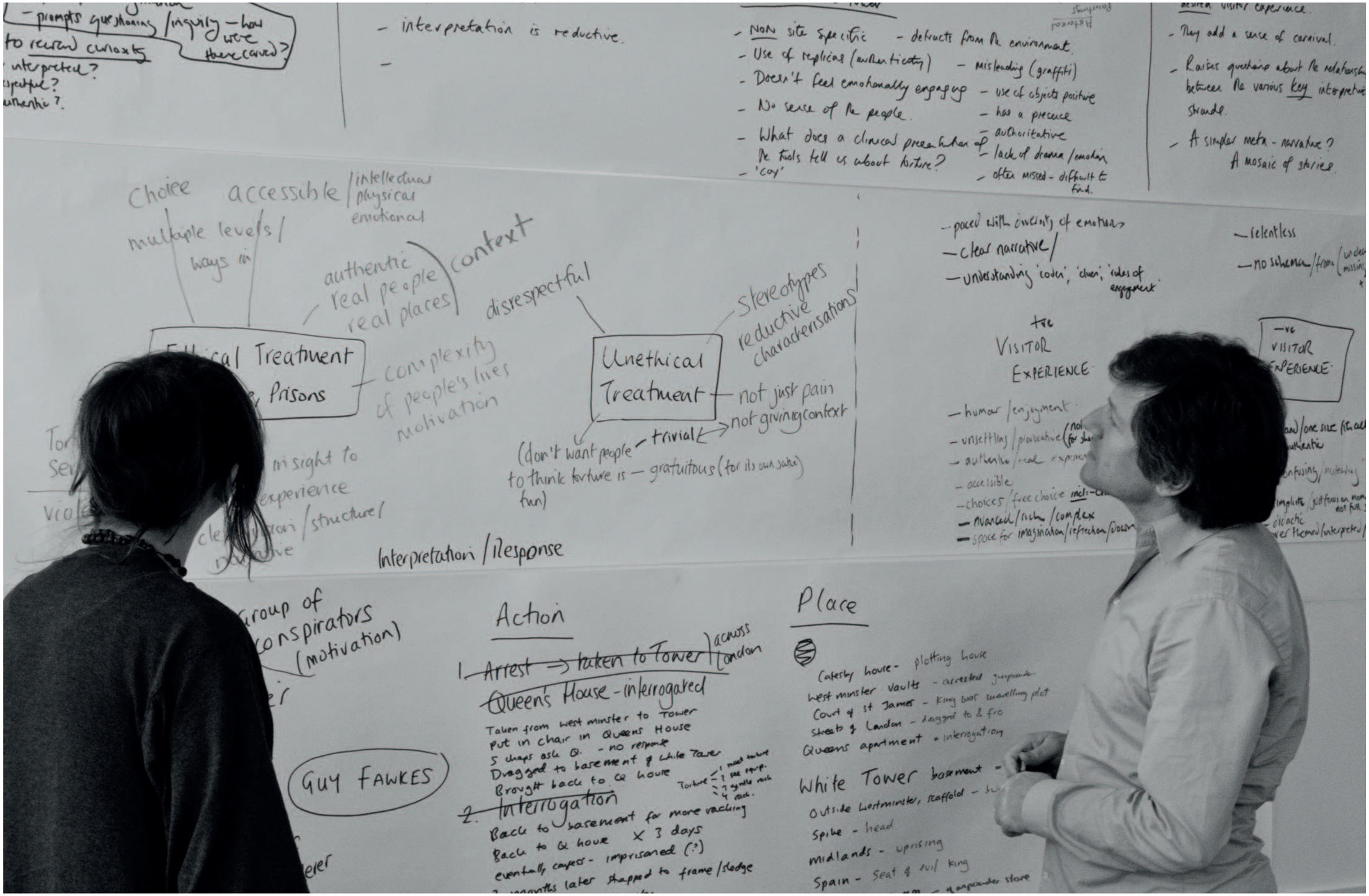
Focusing on one or two of the stories in Activity 5 and working within the emerging framework for the ethical treatment of prisoners, punishment and torture at The Tower, develop a set of learning/experiential outcomes for an interpretive intervention and begin to think about the possible methods of interpretation.

Generic Learning Outcome	**Learning Outcomes for ...**	**Possible Method of Implementation**
Knowledge and understanding		
Skills		
Values, attitudes and feelings		
Creativity, inspiration & enjoyment		
Action and behaviour		

ACTIVITY 6

Starting from the hypothetical masterplan for the site introduced at the start of the day and utilising the emerging framework for the ethical treatment of prisoners, punishment and torture at The Tower, develop a first level – hypothetical - sense of the range of emotional experiences a visitor might have as they move around the site.


The Nine Day Queen


- prompts questioning / inquiry - how were they carved?
to reawaken curiosity
interpreted?
- interpretation is reductive.
- Non site specific - detracts from the environment.
- Use of replicas (authenticity) - misleading (graffiti)
- Doesn't feel emotionally engaging - use of objects positive
- No sense of the people - has a presence
- What does a clinical presentation of the tools tell us about torture? - authoritative
- 'coy' - lack of drama / emotion
- often missed - difficult to find.
- They add a sense of carnival.
- Raises questions about the relationship between the various key interpretive strands.
- A simpler meta - narrative? A mosaic of stories.
Choice
multiple levels / ways in
accessible / intellectual physical emotional
authentic real people real places / context
disrespectful
Ethical Treatment
Prisons
complexity of people's lives motivation
insight to experience
Unethical Treatment
stereotypes reductive characterisations
not just pain
not giving context
(don't want people to think torture is fun) - trivial - gratuitous (for its own sake)
Interpretation / Response
- paced with diversity of emotion
- clear narrative /
- understanding 'codes', 'clues', 'rules of engagement'
the VISITOR EXPERIENCE
- humor / enjoyment
- unsettling / provocative
- authentic / real experience
- accessible
- choices / free choice
- nuanced / rich / complex
- space for imagination / reflection / pause
- relentless
- no coherence / framework
Group of conspirators (motivation)
GUY FAWKES
Action
1. ~~Arrest => taken to Tower~~ across London
~~Queens House - interrogated~~
Taken from west minster to Tower
put in chair in Queens House
5 chaps ask Q. - no response
Dragged to basement of White Tower
Brought back to Q house
Torture - 1 rack torture
- 2 see rasp.
- 3 gentle rack
- 4 rack.
2. ~~Interrogation~~
Back to basement for more racking
Back to Q house x 3 days
eventually confess - imprisoned (?)
Place
Catesby house - plotting house
West minster vaults - arrested gunpowder
Court of St James - King was unwelling plot
Streets of London - dragged to & fro
Queens apartment - interrogation
White Tower basement -
Outside Westminster, scaffold -
Spike - head
Midlands - uprising
Spain - seat of evil king

7. AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF PRISONERS, PUNISHMENT AND TORTURE AT THE TOWER OF LONDON: FINDINGS AND FUTURE PLANS

The research process, which lasted just over 4 months, led to an increased clarity around the ethical treatment of the theme of prisoners, punishment and torture at The Tower. As part of this, the wide ranging discussions and outcomes of the research project were captured in a simple Framework as set out bottom right. The emphasis on the prioritisation of authenticity (stories of real people in the places that they happened) which emerged so strongly from the visitor research, was combined with the need for complex human stories of peoples' lives and motivations and a sharing of the context for their actions, as a route to real and meaningful insights into the human experience. Such content was identified by the research as not only content that is desired by visitors to the site, but as the content suited to enabling visitors to develop some level of intellectual and, importantly, emotional engagement as a route to a meaningful experience.

Ethical treatment of our subject would also mean ethical interpretation and design – ideas captured in our Framework as a care for and intention to support intellectual, physical and emotional access through multiple ways in to the various stories and pasts opened up to visitors. Importantly, in addition to the detailed focus on individual lives and motivations and the provision of multiple routes into that multi-layered content for visitors, the Framework reminded the team of the need for the provision of an overall structure and conceptual map for visitors to the site, if they were to be able to identify, navigate and make their own sense from interpretation around the theme of prisoners, punishment and torture.

Underpinning all of this thinking was the recognition that torture and violence are serious subjects and should be approached with a great deal of thought, care for the impact on visitors and a consideration of the visitor feelings and behaviours that the content might provoke. One route towards reiterating this point and constantly reminding the research team of the potential for the simplification, glorification and trivialisation of this difficult history, was the production of a framework of unethical treatment of prisoners, punishment and torture (see top right).

HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES AND THE TOWER OF LONDON: USING THE FRAMEWORK AND FUTURE PLANS

The usefulness of the Framework is currently being tested by Historic Royal Palaces through a series of interpretive experiments, Phase 1 of which was already underway at the start of this research. As Alex Gaffikin, Interpretation Manager, explains:

'In phase 1 of the interpretive experiments we tested modernising some of the interpretation to help visitors to connect to people in the past. Rather than illustrate the stories of prisoners using historical imagery (woodcuts, stained glass etc.) or Victorian paintings, I commissioned manga artists to create an animated film of the alleged murder of the two princes in the Tower which is now on display in the Bloody Tower. I also commissioned a series of large images to hang on our scaffolding hoarding. These included scenes of someone being dangled from shackles and an execution by sword. I also wrote stories of prisoners (Arabella Stuart, Guy Fawkes and Anne Askew) using more modern language. This was also a good opportunity to tell the longer story about their lives – not just a 30 second summary. The stories are now on our website http://www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon/stories/palacepeople .

In phase 1 we also tested out a more brutal Live Interpretation scenario where a small group of visitors join the 'star council' to watch an interrogation and decide if a prisoner should be tortured for information. The show had a certificate (roughly 12+) – and younger children and squeamish visitors were warned at the start. We evaluated afterwards and discovered that most people found the play at the right level and in fact the 9, 10, 11 and 12 year olds questioned (and their parents) said that they didn't find it inappropriate. Two things that we learnt were that it is difficult for a costumed interpreter to deliver the warning /certification. Visitors think it is part of the performance – almost a joke. So the actors recommended that someone out of costume deliver the warning. The second thing we learnt was that whilst many visitors found the play understandably disturbing, they appreciated the discussion at the end which put it in historical context so it didn't feel like gratuitous violence.

For families during half term, the live interpreters performed a show called 'beat the block' which also discussed torture and execution. This was a much more light hearted play but still with serious themes. Being outside allowed visitors to choose to attend or not or to leave at any point. Evaluation showed it was well received.

Phase 2 of interpretive experiments is a more wide spread project to alter the exhibitions on prisoners across the site. The driving force was to create emotional experiences and so we are creating spooky soundtracks to play in cells, altering the lighting in spaces to give a 'colder' bluer light and commissioning new graphics. I commissioned graphic artist David Foldvari to create a series of illustrations to tell the stories of the prisoners. Foldvari is famous for his macabre and emotionally engaging images. I have also cut down on the number of prisoners talked about, and told individual stories in more depth.

Phase 3, in line with the findings of the research, is a recommendation by the project team to change the exhibitions in the bottom of the White Tower to be more focused on prisoners and torture. It is an ideal spot with a separate entrance and exit so that visitors can choose to enter, or not. It has a history of being a place where torture really happened. It is also a large space, so it can be used to take time with visitors to engage them for longer and deeper.'

Pay attention to precision over terms used; use modern terms to help visitors to connect to modern equivalents, without being explicit (unless doing a specific workshop)

Offer choice to visitors of levels of gore / pain / emotional experience / brutality – but with a 'certification'

Leave some things to the imagination (more frightening)

Avoid 'goodies and baddies' or 'torturer and victim' on religious/political grounds – but do bring out stories of particular heroism or sadism

Tell the whole story – not just the 'capture - prison - torture - execution' story.

Give more time/space to stories in order to give context and backstory. If we don't have space/time - don't do it.

Focus on people; and not just 'victims' but the torturers, the families, accomplices, Rulers who signed warrants etc

Focus on history where it happened; locate interpretation in the actual spaces where it happened

Offer space for visitors to have reflection and 'down time'

Visitors have deeper engagement when they experience emotions; disgust, horror, sadness, humour etc. Offer a range of emotional experiences.

The most effective way to create an emotional experience is through the atmosphere: lighting, sound, building environment. These should provoke the emotions we want.

Even if a subject is distressing there needs to be 'lighter' or up-beat moments or pauses to alleviate relentless horror

Where possible add in dark 'twists' or surprises

Remember that torture is serious and violent

At The Tower, the interpretation team translated the Framework into a series of 'Dos and Don'ts'

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PROJECT PARTNERS

RCMG: The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), at the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies was established in 1999 with the explicit goal of pursuing research that:

• directly engages with cultural institutions, policy makers and funders;
• stimulates and informs ground-breaking museum practice, particularly in relation to learning, audience engagement and social justice;
• benefits museum and gallery audiences and society at large by supporting museums to enhance their social, cultural and learning value

The vision for RCMG is to support museums to become more dynamic, inclusive and socially purposeful institutions by carrying out research that can inform and enrich creative museum thinking, policy and practice. We do this by undertaking commissioned research and evaluations (working collaboratively with a wide range of museums, galleries, arts and heritage organisations) as well as developing projects that advance our own independent research agenda. These activities complement, reinforce and enhance each other.

Duncan McCauley: Duncan McCauley was founded in Berlin in 2003 by architects Tom Duncan and Noel McCauley in response to the evolving task range needed in museum and exhibition design. The work scope of the studio encompasses masterplanning, architecture, exhibition design and audiovisual production for museums and cultural institutions. Interdisciplinary collaboration and thinking across borders are characteristic for the studio's approach in order to create spaces of communication that make both history and identity visible. Combining architecture and time based media they are presently working for clients such as the Historic Royal Palaces in London and the State Museums of Berlin.

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