

ITP + 2019 Final Report

**Museums Association (MA) Annual Conference 2019
3-5 October 2019, Brighton
And pre-conference visits**

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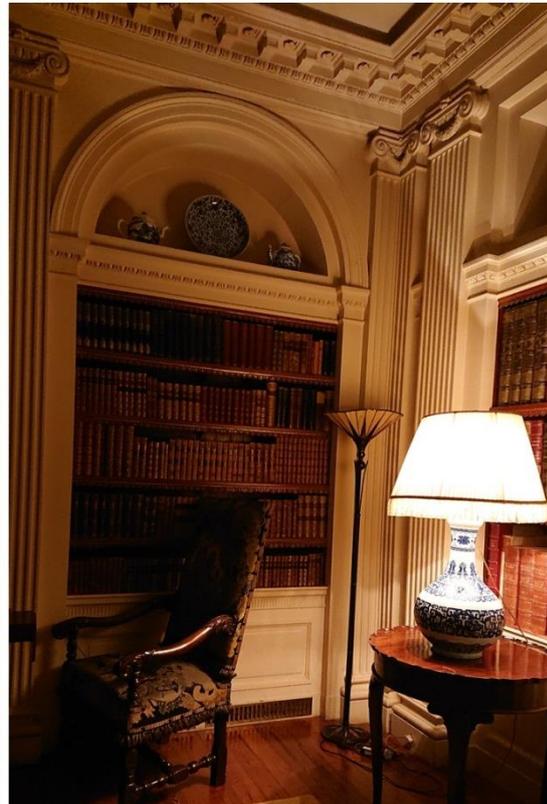
Acknowledgements:

It's my pleasure to express my sincere gratitude to everyone working on this ITP+ opportunity and I am so grateful that I could participate in it. In particular, I'm thankful to the ITP team who supported my visit to Brighton in many ways and made great efforts to enrich my first experience with the Museums Association (MA). The ITP+ projects open new opportunities for a lot of museum professionals around the world and help developing their institutions.

My deep appreciation to the Weald and Downland Living Museum and Polesden Lacey for their genuine work and for giving us the opportunity to learn.

And many thanks to the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust for making it all possible.

Many thanks to all of you!



General Feedback:

I am back in London as part of my PhD research at Aarhus University in Denmark. Once I contacted Claire Messenger, the ITP Manager, she was so generous to offer this outstanding ITP+ opportunity. My motivation was to learn from the sessions and other events at the Museums Association (MA) Annual Conference, but the ITP team has exceeded my expectations with the visits to the Weald and Downland Living Museum and Polesden Lacey.

The planning and organisation of this ITP+ opportunity is one of the lessons I learned. Everything was running smoothly and very accurately with great commitment to the needs of the participants. Nice memories can give the most effective path to convey valuable messages. The ITP programmes are always distinctive in interaction and offering high levels of enjoyment and learning, as well as a comprehensive understanding for the needs of the participants.

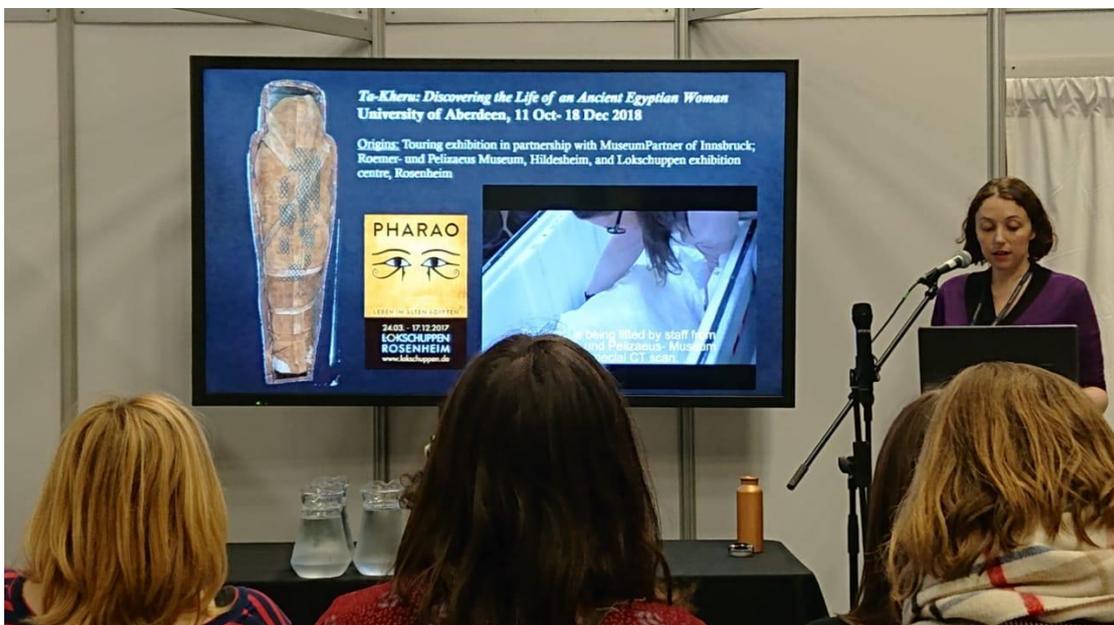


I have attended other international conferences over the years and found a great deal of value in the MA Conference 2019. My participation met all the preceding goals in addition to finding the opportunity to learn from a diversity of ideas and practices with colleagues from different countries. In addition to the conference sessions, we had ongoing opportunities to discuss different experiences in the field of museums. The chance to network with other colleagues in similar situations was a very valuable experience; especially that it was my first experience with the Museums Association.

During the conference, I attended many important sessions with some topics directly related to my work in the Ministry of Antiquities and my PhD research at Aarhus University. I was able to explore and discuss current ideas in international museums. Sometimes I found differences between the types of discussions in the MA conference and in Egypt, and this emphasised the importance of attending this type of international conference – to gain a wider idea for what's happening around other museums in the world.



In particular, I enjoyed the session presented by the staff of Aberdeen University about their exhibition "Ta-Kheru: Discovering the life of an Ancient Egyptian woman". It was inspiring to see how the curators were committed to produce ethical qualities within the exhibition narratives and mode of display, from writing the name of Ta-Kheru in her mother tongue, to the ancient Egyptian ethics around women in society.



During lunch/dinner times, receptions and free time, I was able to share aspects of cultural backgrounds with my ITP colleagues. It was great to hear from them and recognise cultural similarities and variances which created a rich dialogue and exchange of knowledge. It was also great to meet Xuejing Dai again. Both of us were on the ITP in 2015, and we even shared the same apartment.

Along with the great value of the sessions, the conference allowed the attendees to explore ideas around the future of museums and how museums can participate in outlining our relations to this planet. Personally, I found myself in the discussions about ethics in museums, and especially those which were related to human remains.

The visits to many places were very inspiring. I had a visit to the Booth Museum of Natural History and I found a lot of similarities with my work in 2016 for the renovation of the Hunting Museum in Egypt inside Manial Palace Museum. I had a second chance to visit Brighton Museum and Art Gallery and the Royal Pavilion in which I am always happy to enjoy different types of arts and cultures.



The visit to Polesden Lacey

My focus in this visit was to learn from the management team on how to run this type of historical house. From the first moment I could feel the impressive style of interpretation inside the house to make the visitors feel that they are in a living house and real home. The new exhibition ‘Polesden Voices’ was very touching; especially for telling the stories about the other people who lived in the house – not necessarily the owners. It was a nice surprise to find a postcard from April 8th 1930, saying that Mrs. Greville and her assistant will be in Cairo in a couple of days. In Polesden Lacey I gained new knowledge on how to use volunteers, and in particular, how to engage the elderly in heritage management.



The visit to Weald and Downland Living Museum

In the Weald and Downland Living Museum I enjoyed one of the most creative museum experiences. The preserved buildings and contents were introduced in an intelligent and creative storytelling approach. The simplicity of the ideas and its great values were very strong and powerful.

Everything in this museum is inspiring. The beautiful surroundings made me feel that I want to stay more and more in this place. The collections in the storerooms and how they reached the museum, the 'behind the scenes' explanations provided by the museum staff held a lot of value and gave us many ideas that we can learn and apply in our institutions.



To sum up, this ITP+ opportunity offered a strong platform for learning, networking and building new relationships. The continuous value of the ITP to support museum professionals around the world is highly appreciated. Attending the ITP in 2015, and this programme in 2019, were both of great value for enriching my experiences and network.

**Thank you for your kind support.
Wesam Mohamed**