

# HERITAGE sandbox

## REACT

Research & Enterprise in  
Arts & Creative Technology

### PRESS PACK 2012



*React Heritage Sandbox Ghosts In The Garden Listening Device 2012*

# Ghosts In The Garden, Tweeting Dead People, Cemeteries of The Future and more: how six cultural collaborations are using academic research and creative technology to transform Britain's heritage experiences.

*Projects to be showcased at a special preview on Friday 28 September at Watershed, Bristol with a keynote from Charles Leadbeater.*

Earlier this year, The Arts and Humanities Research Council established Four Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy. The REACT hub, a collaboration between UWE Bristol (the University of the West of England), Watershed and Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter, was set up to catalyse and fund brave projects looking at the future of creative and digital media.

With technology changing the way people travel, work, communicate and spend their leisure time, for the heritage sector to remain relevant and sustainable, it must make sure it remains at the forefront of this wave. In its first round of funding, REACT responded to this industry challenge and awarded £300,000 to ground-breaking collaborations of academics, technologists and creative companies under the banner of Heritage Sandbox

The six teams worked together for just three months, transforming their brilliant ideas into new prototypes, experiences and services that reveal the future of museums, theatres, parks and even cemeteries, using the latest digital technologies to bring the past back to life.

From tweeting the dead to visiting long forgotten cinemas to augmented reality mirrors and enhanced Georgian listening devices, each project explores the possibilities of merging 21<sup>st</sup> century technology with robust historical research and the wealth of heritage sites Great Britain has to offer.

REACT Executive Producer Clare Reddington said, "Intellectual Property, contracting, cash flow and language are traditionally tricky areas when building collaborations between companies and academics, but when people and ideas are freed up, brilliant things can happen. The six Heritage Sandbox projects are great examples of how unusual partnerships can produce extraordinary cultural experiences which will bring new audiences to parks, museums and cemeteries around the UK."

REACT Director Jon Dovey said, "At its heart REACT is about culture change, challenging our academic and business partners to create new relationships, new ways of working and new networks. It is about allowing researchers who are passionately expert in their field to find a way to make that excitement valuable to the small businesses and entrepreneurs who drive the Creative Economy."

To discover Heritage Sandbox projects, please visit:  
**[www.watershed.co.uk/ished/heritagesandbox](http://www.watershed.co.uk/ished/heritagesandbox)**

For any more information on Heritage Sandbox, interviews and hi res images please contact:

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## About Heritage Sandbox Projects



### City Strata

City Strata is a mobile platform, which enables users to explore different layers of a city's heritage and developers to easily create apps which include user generated and uploaded content. And as part of their REACT Heritage Sandbox project, the City Strata team developed the Cinemapping prototype, an app which maps Bristol's cinema heritage, so that users can experience local cinema history in the places where it actually happened.

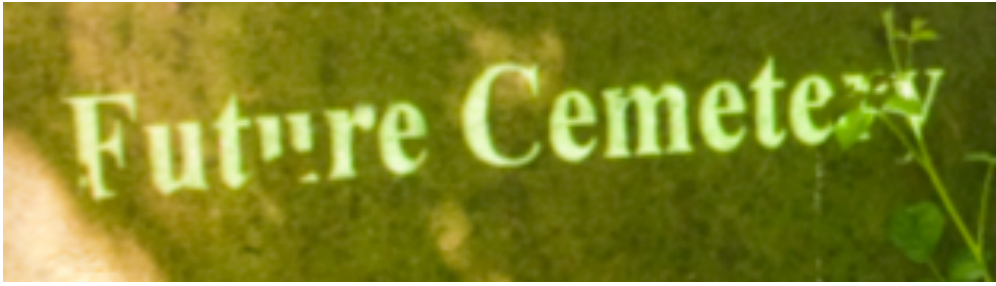
The project is a collaboration between the University of the West of England (UWE), creative partner Calvium (who were also behind this year's Soho Stories App for the National Trust) and Bristol City Council.

Cinemapping celebrates cinema-going culture past and present: from the magnificent Grade II listed Whiteladies Picture House to a full blown cinematic tour of the heart of Bristol's old commercial and leisure district that was destroyed in the Blitz called 'The Lost Cinemas of Castle Park,' which features Cary Grant's childhood cinema, the Clare Street Picture House. The app draws content on the fly from a remote database, using the specific location of participant to trigger geographically related content.

Peter Insole, Archeological Officer at Bristol City Council, says, "The REACT Heritage Sandbox allowed us to be much more collaborative, both with UWE and Calvium. We would never have been able to develop the technology and narrative for the Cinemapping App in-house. It's been an incredibly rewarding experience and I hope the approach will be as transferable as the technology itself."

Academic partner Dr Charlotte Croft, UWE says, "The REACT Heritage Sandbox project has been a brilliant opportunity to build on my experience designing cinema-related heritage experiences, working closely with creative technology company Calvium to develop a scalable platform that can also be used to create other heritage and cultural location-based experiences. I'm really excited about taking the project forward in other cities around other locative cultural themes."

Creative partner Jo Reid, Sales and Marketing Director at Calvium, says, "City Strata allows people to add their own contributions into the app, in the place where history happened, building up layers of both official and user-generated content. With REACT Heritage Sandbox we focused on the historical role and function of cinema within local culture, but the scalability and flexibility of the platform means that it is open for anyone to adapt to their own project, whether historic or futuristic."



## **Future Cemetery**

Future Cemetery created an entirely new experience for visitors to the historic cemetery of Arnos Vale in Bristol. Using augmented reality, projections, performance and storytelling, the project sought to attract new audiences by shining a light on the future potential of these treasured places around the UK.

From a machine to create your own digital epitaph, to the located stories of some of Arnos Vale's historical residents, the project used workshops and test days to research engaging but sympathetic experiences that explored issues of bereavement, remembrance and mortality. Culminating in a large-scale public testing day on 30 June, Future Cemetery received an overwhelmingly positive response from visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

Whilst the graveyard might not seem like an obvious site for digital innovation, cemeteries are actually huge historical repositories of successful and cutting-edge technology, from cremation to the gravestone, and the Future Cemetery project created an opportunity to update that technology for the future.

Creative Economy partner Felicia Smith at the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust says, "The response has been phenomenal, which suggests that people are far more willing to engage with the subject matter and sensitivities around bereavement, which shows that cemeteries do have an exciting future. We hope to share our results with other heritage cemeteries to explore the potential of developing cultural experiences at cemetery sites around the country."

Dr John Troyer, lead academic partner, University of Bath, Social & Policy Sciences, Centre for Death & Society, says, "Working with both Arnos Vale Cemetery and Calling the Shots on the REACT Future Cemetery Project has been a fantastic opportunity for both myself and the University of Bath's Centre for Death and Society. It can be tricky for academics to find this level of external support when working with the Creative Industries on arts and humanities projects. By supporting these projects between academics and creative economy partners, I am hopeful that all UK Universities come to remember that they are also, at their cores, Creative Industries."

Creative Economy partner, Jeremy Routledge at Calling The Shots, says, "The Future Cemetery Project has experimented with new languages to engage audiences around the idea of death as part of life, so that they can access ideas of their own mortality and death. We have tried to develop a project that expresses the continuity of heritage and history from the stories of the 300 000 people buried at Arnos Vale to all of us living today. It's a tribute to Felicia, John and the REACT team that we were able to come up with such a relatively sophisticated approach in such a short amount of time. I am very proud to be involved."





## ***Ghosts In The Garden***

Featuring fireworks, maidens in distress and old scores to settle, Ghosts in the Garden is no ordinary 'heritage tour'; but an audio adventure in Bath's Sydney Gardens where groups mingle with real people from 1824 and make choices that change the course of past events. Keen to focus on a compelling experience rather than the technological interface, University of the West of England (UWE) historian Steve Poole and start up games company Splash & Ripple, created a collection of fictional Georgian "Special Listening Devices" issued to audiences from Bath's Holburne Museum.

As visitors tour the sites of former attractions from the museum's pleasure garden heyday, the devices 'tune in' to live events happening in the past; the sounds of its Labyrinth, Cosmarama and illuminated Gala evenings. Visitors meet with some of those who once made it their home; rope-dancers, pyro-technicians, pioneer balloonists, charming ladies - and a handful of rogues. But things are not quite right in the gardens and it's up to visitors to help those they meet across the centuries to find a happy ending.

Hiding smartphones inside their attractive wooden boxes, the experience is totally accessible, with self-confessed technophobes of all ages responding with positive feedback and getting stuck in. Yet these 'period meets punk' contraptions hide the use of sophisticated branching narratives and cutting-edge GPS triggering mechanisms for the Ghosts in the Garden content.

Academic partner, Dr Steve Poole, UWE, says, "Heritage Sandbox has given me the freedom to think beyond the boundaries of my customary practice and mix with creative partners I would never otherwise have had an opportunity to work with. It's been a real challenge adapting historical research to creative game-play and helping to build a heritage experience that's neither a simple audio tour or a work of dramatic fiction but that contains elements of each. These are exciting times for academic historians who really want to experiment with collaborative practice, new media and public engagement; REACT has changed the way I think, and I hope it will change the way people experience culture and heritage sites."

Creative partner, Rosie Fairchild, Splash & Ripple, says, "Ghosts in the Garden is an extraordinary visitor-driven experience that brings real people from the past face to face with people of today. We're leading the way in enabling people to shape their museum visit through ditching the passive audio-guide and museum app and replacing it with a powerfully interactive audio adventure using excellent archival historical research. This ambitious project has only been made possible by support from the REACT programme; having time, space and expertise on tap has been critical to the development of this unique idea."



## *Ivory Bangle Lady*

I tweet dead people, The Ivory Bangle Lady project allows visitors to do just that by breathing life back into the story of an extraordinary character who lived 1600 years ago in ancient Rome. Based at the Yorkshire Museum, the story is centred around the remains of a Roman woman, who lived and died in York in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Affectionately referred to as the 'Ivory Bangle Lady' because of the exquisite elephant tusk bangles she wore on her wrists, she possessed considerable wealth, was of a high status in society and African in origin, challenging our perceptions about the homogeneity of elite Roman immigrants to the British Isles during the days of the Roman Empire.

The project harnesses social media in the form of twitter and hidden projections, to provide an interactive treasure hunt experience. Museum visitors are invited to explore the life and death of the Ivory Bangle Lady, answering questions posed to them as they tour the museum and sending answers via tweets to @IvoryBangleLady. A correct answer unlocks a new projection of the Ivory Bangle Lady and you're rewarded as she reveals the next part of her story and a new puzzle to solve. A collaboration between the University of Exeter and creative company Iimagemakers, the project brings together world class academic research and inclusive, accessible technologies to make history experiences come to life.

Creative partner Paul Davies, Iimagemakers, says "We recently held a test day at the museum and it was hugely successful, with overwhelmingly positive feedback. We are planning more improvements to the experience, including better wireless provision, ability to interact via text as well as Twitter and accommodation for large groups of people taking part at the same time, and hope the process and results will inspire other museums to integrate social media into their cultural exhibits. Soon young people could be learning about the past by tweeting dead people around the world."

Academic partner and Exeter University archeology fellow Dr. Stephany Leach adds, "While her burial goods went on display following the discovery of her sarcophagus in 1901, the remains of the Ivory Bangle Lady languished in storage. It is only through the REACT Heritage Sandbox project that we have been able to restore the remains to their original stage, giving the Ivory Bangle Lady her full form and reuniting her with her possessions, so that visitors can see her in context and connect to her story. The Heritage Sandbox experience has been a real eye-opener in discovering the value of creative technology in bringing fun and enjoyment as well learning to the public, allowing people from six to sixty and beyond to access historical narratives in a new and interesting way. It shows the importance of a multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach in any future academic work."



## Memory Of Theatre

Just as Bristol Old Vic is about to reopen its Georgian auditorium and backstage areas this year, the theatre is embarking on an innovative and exciting new project to capture the memories of audiences, artists and performers who have used the building over the past decades, in collaboration with the University of Bristol, Pyxis Design and theatre production company MAYK. Using unique binaural recordings, the Memory of Theatre project invites audiences to pledge and return their most treasured memories and stories back to Bristol Old Vic. Whether in a specific seat in the auditorium, on the stage or in the bar, audiences are invited to wander around the spaces at Bristol Old Vic and will be able to listen back to these memories in the exact spot they took place. Accessed using a smart phone and utilising a new indoor positioning system, participants are able to hear the voices of visitors of the past and present exploring the relationship between archives and memories and the way performance events live on through the stories told by its audiences.

The Memory of Theatre brings together groundbreaking digital technologies developed by Calvium in Bristol and WiFiSLAM in Silicon Valley. Pyxis Design selected these state of the art approaches to enable a visitor's smartphone to recognise very specific places in the theatre, whether it was the butterflies of a first date, backstage nerves before a performance, or the emotion brought on by a particularly powerful play. The result will be the creation of a dynamic, interactive archive from the most vivid memories of Bristol Old Vic's audiences, concealing them in the ether of the auditorium and foyer where they can be unearthed by generations of theatre-goers to come, in effect producing a living archaeology of theatrical history. The working prototype will also give rise to a commercially viable, adaptable and sustainable system for delivering location-triggered experiences at heritage sites.

Academic partner, Dr Paul Clarke, from the University of Bristol, says, "Memory of Theatre turns your smart phone into a listening device that enables you to hear people's memories of events that have taken place at Bristol Old Vic. As a visitor you wander around the theatre finding the stories that haunt the building, triggering them in the locations where they happened. Performance is transient but this is a way to make its impressions last, for theatre and its audience to leave a legacy for the future."

Creative Economy partner, Cliff Randell from Pyxis Design, says, "The project has enabled us to get right up to date with the latest WiFi location technologies, and to explore the characteristics of several different approaches. By working as part of the Heritage Sandbox I have been able to find out how people respond to the features of each of the systems. It's been a valuable learning experience which we expect to have wider application, particularly within our country's highly developed creative economy."





## *Reflecting The Past*

History often allows us to hold up a metaphorical mirror to our past, but what if real mirrors were used around museums and historical sites to provide a narrative, bringing the visitor and the past into ever-closer proximity? As part of REACT Heritage Sandbox, Dr Tim Cole, Professor of Social History at the University of Bristol and Tom Bennett at Interactive Places are opening up conversations in front of the looking glass; visitors will be transfixed as characters from the past appear behind visitors in the mirrors adorning heritage places.

Using a wide range of media, these new 'augmented reality mirrors,' employ directional speakers and a specially developed film over concealed monitors to create an immersive visitor experience that re-populates heritage properties with 'ghostings' of figures from the past. The visitor is placed into another time through the illusion of figures who come to life in the mirror and appear to be in the same room. The team has wrangled with the physics of creating images in the mirrors that don't appear simply like pictures on a screen but have a sense of depth. The projects working prototype augmented reality mirrors can easily be adapted to a range of interactive experiences at heritage sites, museums and galleries.

Academic partner, Professor Tim Cole, University of Bristol, says, "We're trying to work out whether places have memories and if so, how can we help people relate to these memories. By combining mirrors with augmented reality technology, we can bring heritage experiences that much closer to the visitor, who will be mesmerised by seeing his or her own reflection within a reflection of the past. It is quite a powerful effect, and one that we hope will have applications across a range of site-based heritage programmes."

Creative partner Tom Bennett, Interactive Places, says, "Working on the Heritage Sandbox project 'Reflecting the Past' has given us the opportunity to try something completely different, and work with new partners. Discussions with Tim Cole from the University of Bristol have always been very stimulating and he has brought a useful academic perspective. We have better understood the workings of large organisations and universities, and increased our South West connections - in particular, Interactive Systems Studio (<http://www.interactivesystemsstudio.com/>) in Plymouth, and directional speaker company Audionation (<http://audionation-uk.com/commercial/>) in Weston-super-mare"



## About REACT Showcase: Heritage

The REACT Showcase: Heritage, will take place on **Friday 28 September at Watershed in Bristol**. The showcase will provide an opportunity for members of the press and guests to experience first hand some of the Heritage Sandbox projects before they are introduced to the public at venues across the UK. The event will include films showcasing the six commissions, a chance to hear from some of REACT's other heritage projects and an open discussion addressing the challenges and opportunities posed by the emerging possibilities. There will also be a keynote from leading authority on innovation and creativity, Charles Leadbeater on 'Hacking the University'

### *Programme:*

**1.30pm: Welcome**

**1.50pm: Keynote from Charles Leadbeater**

**2.15pm: Film presentations: Ghosts In The Garden, City Strata, Memory of Theatre**

**2.20pm: 'Tuning into the Past' Panel Discussion chaired by Heritage Sandbox Business Adviser, Mark Leaver**

**2.50pm: BREAK**

**3.05pm: Film presentations: Future Cemetery, Reflecting The Past, Ivory Bangle Lady**

**3.25pm: 'Plaforms for Haunting' Panel discussion chaired by REACT Executive Producer, Clare Reddington**

**4.05pm – 6pm: EVENING DRINKS RECEPTION**

For full details please visit: [www.watershed.co.uk/ished/heritagesandbox](http://www.watershed.co.uk/ished/heritagesandbox)

To reserve passes, please email: [matt.davenport@watershed.co.uk](mailto:matt.davenport@watershed.co.uk)

## About Heritage Sandbox and partners

### **About REACT**

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), REACT (Research and Enterprise in Arts and Creative Technology) is one of four UK Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy and is a collaboration between UWE Bristol (the University of the West of England), Watershed, (and iShed), and the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter. It is a unique collaboration supporting innovative products and transformational services by bringing together companies and academics across South West and Wales.

It reaches across two dynamic UK regions, and uniquely across three cultural areas and two languages and creative economies. Together we aim to generate a transformation in arts-driven economic and social impact, by combining demand from the Creative Economy with Arts and Humanities research excellence.

REACT is working with iShed to deliver projects using the Sandbox process. We will run two Sandbox schemes a year with six projects in each scheme from 2011 – 2014. Each Sandbox scheme will have a different theme and to qualify applicants must have a project that uses Arts and Humanities research with a Creative Economy partner.

[www.uwe.ac.uk](http://www.uwe.ac.uk)

[www.bath.ac.uk](http://www.bath.ac.uk)

[www.bristol.ac.uk](http://www.bristol.ac.uk)

[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

[www.exeter.ac.uk](http://www.exeter.ac.uk)

### **About iShed**

iShed was established by Watershed in 2007 to produce creative technology collaborations. iShed's portfolio of commissioning schemes, events, research and consultancy encompasses the arts and creative industries. Local, national and international partnerships with industry, artists and universities, enables iShed's support of talent and new ideas. iShed extends Watershed's impact by widening opportunities for creative engagement with technology, developing digital practice through a focus on open investigation and audiences.

[www.ished.net](http://www.ished.net)

### **About Heritage Sandbox**

The Sandbox process is a tried and tested innovation programme for guiding and enabling companies to research emerging possibilities in interactive, digital media, create new ideas and deliver innovation to the market. Each project will engage with industry experts in areas of business development, intellectual property, PR and production. The Sandbox scheme is in its fifth year and this year has awarded six £50,000 commissions to support research and development of innovative experiences content, applications of experiences.

[www.watershed.co.uk/ished/heritatesandbox](http://www.watershed.co.uk/ished/heritatesandbox)

### **About Watershed**

Watershed is a cross-artform venue and producer, sharing, developing and showcasing exemplary cultural ideas and talent. Based in Bristol, we place no boundaries on our desire to connect with artists and audiences in the wider world. We curate ideas, spaces and talent to enable artistic visions and creative collaborations to flourish.

[www.watershed.co.uk](http://www.watershed.co.uk)

### **About The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK.

For further information on the AHRC, please go to: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk>

## About Creative Industries iNet

The Creative Industries iNet (Innovation Network) is a £3.2 million programme of support designed to help the South West's creative businesses thrive and advance the area's growing reputation as a global creative centre of excellence.

The iNet is supporting each Heritage Sandbox project to develop the commercial applications of their ideas and find new markets, by giving them access to specialist information and research, and through sharing knowledge and expertise.

[www.creativeindustriesi.net](http://www.creativeindustriesi.net)

The iNet is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and led by Creative England, the recently formed national body that supports the sustainable growth of independent creative businesses, and the talent that feeds them, in every part of England outside London.

[www.creativeengland.co.uk](http://www.creativeengland.co.uk)

## Press info and assets

We have a substantial bank of audio, video and visual assets for media use.

For any more information on Media Sandbox, interviews and hi res images please contact:

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For a quick look at Heritage Sandbox, please visit:

<http://www.watershed.co.uk/ished/heritagesandbox>

<http://twitter.com/reacthub>

Twitter hashtag: #heritagesandbox

REACT is funded by:



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

REACT is a collaboration between:



University of the  
West of England



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BATH**



University of  
**BRISTOL**



**WATERSHED**

Heritage Sandbox Business Development is supported by:



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