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Postcard from the chairman

Iceland
calling!



Having just returned from the Ecsite conference in Warsaw, I start looking forward to our big Nordic science centre event: The NSCF conference and annual meeting in Iceland September 21st – 23rd 2011. The conference is fully covered in this newsletter and I urge you all to register and book travel as soon as possible, the principle of “first served” applies.

However, I have to congratulate our “big sister” in Europe with a successful conference at the Copernicus Science Centre in Warsaw. For me, and the other 120 delegates from the Nordic countries, this was a useful and positive experience. The venue, the content and the networking was premium quality and the entertainment gave it all a pleasant flare. The Ecsite conference is coming to the Nordic region in two years and I feel confident that our colleagues at Universeum in Gothenburg at least will match this year’s event by focusing on what is unique for Universeum, Gothenburg and the Nordic.

The Ecsite conference in Warsaw was very much an indoor event. The NSCF conference in Iceland will be a much more outdoor event. Great thanks to the organizing committee for having composed a programme using the Icelandic nature as our classroom. *Beware ash clouds!!* The program as it is presented on our website is complete. There is however an unconfirmed item not yet included; we have invited the Nordic council by the Director and/or Presidency to address the conference about their possible involvement in establishing joint Nordic projects on science communication.

Our last NSCF board meeting was kindly hosted by AHHA in Tartu on the opening day of their fantastic, new centre – Congratulations and best wishes! AHHA has also been granted the NSCF conference for 2012, an opportunity for all of you to learn more about Estonia's bold charge in promoting STEM both to the schools and the general public.

Most of our members are these days in the transition between having main focus on the schools and learning programmes towards focusing more on the somewhat "lighter" programmes targeting the leisure visitors during the summer break. Both groups are important to us. However, many of us rely on the higher income you can generate during vacations and weekends to maintain and develop high quality content benefitting both segments. I wish you good luck in the summer season. As visitor numbers correlate negatively with the number of sun hours we all professionally hope for a cloudy and rainy summer – and perhaps some sunshine in our private spheres.

Best greetings from



Svein Anders Dahl



NSCF Explainers Conference January 12 - 14th 2011

Hosted and organized by dedicated science centre professionals at Experimentarium in Copenhagen



The explainers' seminar 2011 became a great success. 33 participants from science centres all over the Nordic came together for exchange of ideas and experiences. Many thanks to Experimentarium.



NSCF is still open for proposals for organizing the 2012 and 2013 explainers' seminars, please submit proposal before July 1st to sad@vilvite.no.



NSCF scholarship programme

Report from two scholars 2010

Visiting Heureka and participation in the annual NSCF conference

By Anne Hjerrild Rønning og Gry Lottrup Jyde
Co-ordinators of education, Experimentarium

The aim of the study trip was to inspire and expand our knowledge and thereby develop our competences within communication and learning in Science Centres. The main focus of our participation in the NSCF conference, were to gain inspiration and input concerning learning and how to meet the guest at their level.

At Experimentarium we are in a working progress to improve how daily life is planned and we therefore wish to gain inspiration in this area. Since Heureka in many ways resembles Experimentarium, we extended our visit a little beyond the conference, to gain an insight into how daily life is planned. In addition, we have long discussed the possibility of having volunteer explainers at Experimentarium, and since Heureka has a well developed group of volunteers, we wanted to learn more about it.

Furthermore we had a strong wish to build relations amongst explainers in the Nordic countries and both our participation in the NSCF conference and our visit at Heureka open up for this.

The final program

September 15th 2010

Visiting Heureka Learning Center
We had a meeting with Matti Rossi and Merja Nuutinen. They gave us an introduction to Heurekas series of school programmes and an insight into current projects.

Visiting Heureka
Merja Nuutinen gave us a tour around Heureka and explained about their daily work, exhibitions, school programmes and so on. Afterwards we spend a couple of hours in the exhibitions and the planetarium on our own hand.

September 16th and 17th 2010

Participation in the annual NSCF conference



Visit at Heureka

The tour gave us a good and useful insight into daily work at Heureka.

As mentioned Heureka and Experimentarium resample each other in many ways. Therefore we believe there is a lot of opportunities to begin a rewarding relationship across the two science centres. There is plenty of inspiration both in terms of how daily life is structured and how various social and development processes are arranged.

Part time and full time explainers

We noted that there are six or seven full time explainers at Heureka and that each of them had assigned responsibilities. Having fulltime explainers makes it easier to implement new initiatives and correct possible errors. The fulltime explainers have close contact with all the communication that proceed in the exhibition and through this have the opportunity to influence the communication in general. This helps creating a more continuous every day life and a closer cooperation between developers and explainers.

Because fulltime explainers have close contact with the actual explaining, they also have the possibility to give concrete and useful sparring and inputs in the development phase. In this way they have the possibility to address challenges before the product is done.

Due to the assigned responsibilities each area is frequently evaluated and updated and gives the part time employees better possibilities to get help, since they always know who to contact.

The program of the day

From the point of view of the guest, the program of the day from Heureka and

Experimentarium is very similar. There is a series of shows, demos and school programmes. The main difference is found in the work schedule of the explainers. At Experimentarium the work schedule of the explainers is diverse as the explainers can e.g. conduct shows and schools programs during a day, while the explainers at Heureka are allocated to a specific job all day. There are pros and cons in this way of organizing daily work. The main advantage we will consider in the future is how it will make it easier to organize daily work. In addition it will expand our possibilities to guarantee the quality of communication in the exhibition.

Volunteers

Experimentarium frequently discusses the opportunities of having volunteers as explainers, therefore we had a wish to get insight in how Heureka uses volunteers as explainers in the exhibition. It is hard to compare volunteering across countries and cultures, because there is a slightly difference in traditions around volunteering. But we got some inspiration about which kind of work the volunteers can perform, how much the social contact means and how difficult it can be to start up with volunteers. These experiences richer, we now have a platform to launch a possible work with a volunteer corps at Experimentarium.

Participation in the annual NSCF conference

By participating in the conference we got insight in how learning and communication is defined differently depending on the science center or museum. One of our main focuses at Experimentarium is how to meet the guest at their level and how to educate our explainers to do this. Therefore we in particular learned from the keynote speaker John Falke. Furthermore the participation opened up for building relations amongst the Nordic countries.

Keynote speaker – John Falke

The main focus of John Falke's lecture was how to divide guest in different types and how you have to meet them differently. John Falke's way of dividing guests depending on their intentions is different from the way we traditionally divide our guest at Experimentarium. At Experimentarium we are working on developing and improving the education of our explainers to meet the guest at the right level. John Falke's lecture gave good inputs and inspiration for this.

Networking

Our participation in the NSCF conference has opened up for a transnational science centre corporation. We have already made use from this network in planning the upcoming conference for explainers that is being held at Experimentarium in January. It has been a great help and it will not be the last time we make use of this network.

Socially

Since we got back have our corporation improved since we now have common frames of reference and know how each other work.

As a final remark we would like to mention that the trip all in all has given us priceless inspiration that we can benefit from as well in our daily work and in future development.



Dr. John Falke – sharing results and reflections based on his book "Identity and the museum visitor experience"

Scholarships 2011

The board of NSCF received two applications from members within the deadline early May. Both applicants were granted scholarships for study tours to other science centres.

The two candidates are: Inspiria from Sarpsborg, Norway (opening August 2011) and AHHA from Tartu, Estonia.

Please prepare your application for 2012. See NSCF Newsletter of November 2010 for procedures.

ICE & FIRE

2011 NSCF conference and AGM in Iceland

By Tómas Óskar Guðjónsson

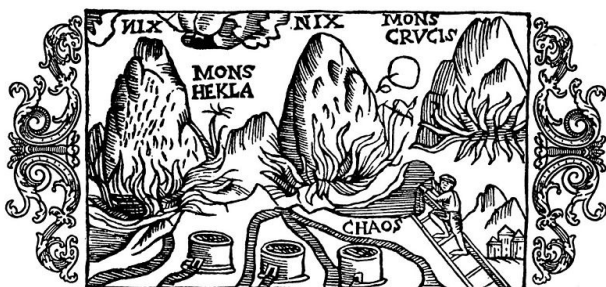
The conference will start with a welcome reception by the Mayor of Reykjavík, Mr. Jón Gnarr. A bus will wait for us outside the Reykjavík City Hall and take us directly to Selfoss, a small village about 60 km east of Reykjavík. We will have light dinner at Hotel Selfoss upon arrival. The hotel will be our base for the next two days.



The City Hall in Reykjavik

As many people are aware of Iceland is one of the most geologically active spots on earth. On day two of the conference we are going to explore this fact.

Our main target will be to reach Sólheimajökull glacier (-jökull means glacier in Icelandic). On our way we will make a few stops and do some small experiments. We will drive through South-Iceland and pass the famous volcano Hekla (1.491m), a mountain believed to be the gate to hell in former days. Hekla is also one of Iceland's most active volcanoes and it erupted last time in the year 2000 and is due to erupt any time now.



Mt. Hekla – “the gate to hell” introduced by an dramatic artist in the 15th hundreds.

After a little brake at the beautiful waterfall Seljalandsfoss our trip continues through a region affected by eruptions. We will see how this

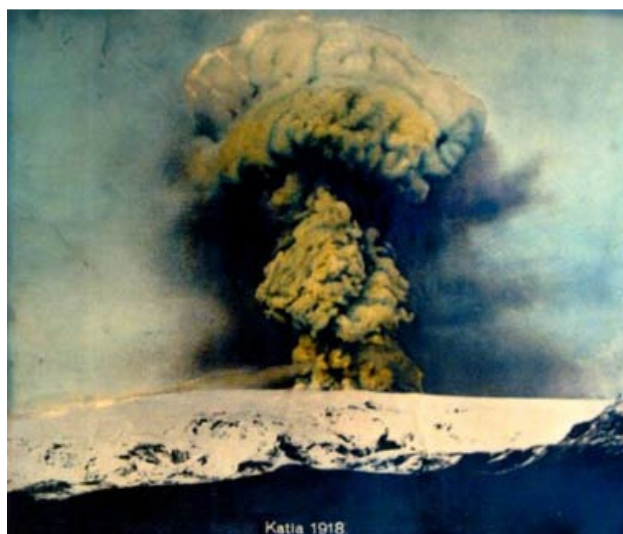
outburst of nature's forces has changed the appearance of the landscape in a unique way.



Mt. Hekla as normal people sees it these days.

We will drive right past the Eyjafjallajökull volcano and make a short stop at it roots depending on the visibility. This famous volcano halted most of the air traffic over Europe 2010 and is also famous for the fact that its name is almost impossible to pronounce properly. Hopefully we will be able to correct that on this trip.

This day will mostly be spent outdoors so warm clothing, rain gear and good shoes are important. Our main destination is Eyjafjallajökulls big sister Katla. Katla is a highly active volcano underneath the great Mýrdalsjökull glacier, one of the largest in Iceland (1.480m – 590km²). Katlas last eruption was 1918, and before that in 1860. The volcano itself is covered with 700m thick ice which quickly melts during eruption and causes severe flooding. As people have been expecting eruption in Katla for the last decade it is closely monitored for example with this live camera <http://www.ruv.is/katla>.



A famous photo of Katla's last eruption in 1918.

Our final destination is Sólheimajökull, a small glacier that glides from Katla. A walk on the Sólheimajökull glacier tongue between ice

sculptures, ridges and deep crevasses will complete your day with both magnificent nature and scenery. This is easy and safe glacier walk in breathtaking surroundings. We will get guiding services, ice gear (crampons and ice axes) and other safety equipment if needed.



The gliding glacier Sólheimajökull.

Icing on the cake that day will be in the town Hveragerði (Hot spring town) where we will enjoy some hot springs and go to a real hot spring sauna after a busy day. So please bring some swimsuit with you. Light food and some Icelandic treats will be available all day so nobody will get hungry. At last we will enjoy a good dinner at Hotel Selfoss.



The town of Hveragerði where thermal springs are all over the place.

Since weather in Iceland is never good for three days in a row, we will spend the last day of the conference indoors. The director of the software company CCP <http://www.ccpgames.com>, a leading company in computer gaming on the internet will tell us interesting things about virtual reality and how they have created a whole universe and a thriving community on the internet with game called "Eve online".

We will hear interesting things about "The Icelandic web of science" <http://visindavefur.hi.is/> and how scientists are directly involved in that program. We will hear about results of a Euro-

pean study focusing on how young people use the internet to seek and obtain information on various kinds of scientific topics.

After the annual NSCF meeting we will drive back to Reykjavík to Fjölskyldu- og húsdýragarðurinn and finish the program there with lunch.



Our base camp - Hotel Selfoss



Selfoss

For the full programme and registration:

<http://www.nordicscience.org/>

LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOME YOU

WARMLY IN
ICELAND!