

# **Periplum – LoGG Proposal 2017: ‘7 Alleys – East Hull’**

## **The Idea**

### **Outline**

Periplum’s project brings to life the East Hull folklore story of the 7 alleys through 2 artistic phases:

1. Preliminary sightings / Premonitions: Actions to stir anticipation throughout the neighbourhood. Bringing smaller acts of wonder, beauty and spectacle in their own right, they also act as a sign-post and invitation to the main performance event.
2. An ambitious outdoor performance in traverse format, playing over 5 evenings. It will be an immersive work of visual theatre – a marriage of narrative-driven imagery, ensemble and aerial performance, fire and pyro effects, live violin and original music composition, engineered set, poetry and light.

### **1. Premonitions – small acts of wonder**

#### **Heralding (Periplum suggestions)**

One night, on the weekend of 29<sup>th</sup> April, the Land of Green Ginger crate arrives. It is marked with the legend, ‘To East Hull with love, from the 7 Alleys’. Over the coming days it emanates sound – harmonic drones, hushed voices speaking urgently, as if from a faraway place, of the Land of Green Ginger and the 7 Alleys, and the ricochet of horses’ hooves galloping.

The arrival of the crate triggers a series of subtle manifestations. New road signs have mysteriously appeared, evoking the poetry of a parallel reality or the ancestors of East Hull revisiting, and signs of 7 appear in the subtlest places, infiltrating the neighbourhood.

#### **Riders of the 7 Alleys**

On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May, as if from another time and place, two beautiful black horses appear pulling an elegant carriage bearing the name of its origin and destination: ‘7 Alleys’, a sign that this magical place of folklore is coming to life again. The carriage is accompanied by a retinue of runners and riders, including a team of local participants, timelessly clad in black. They bring beautiful music and spectacle. Riding with them through the residential estates, a violinist plays live fiddle across sweet, weaving drones, drawing home-dwellers out of their houses and into the streets.

#### **Crossing the Threshold – The invitation**

The horse-and-carriage transports a smaller wooden crate, also stamped with the brand ‘Seven Alleys / Land of Green Ginger’. It contains messages to be delivered to hundreds of Preston Road residents. The message heralds the reawakening of the alleys, challenging the public to seek signs of 7 and look out for the arrival of the mysterious ash people. The message also contains an invitation to enter an on-line portal – a web page where they can find out about the performance event and book places. It tells them when and where the portal of the 7<sup>th</sup> Alley will open and finally reveal its magical truth.

### **The Ash People ascend**

The following weekend, inspired by local legends of apparitions emerging from the 7 Alleys, a series of ghostly figures appear in different prominent and elevated sites around the neighbourhood, by day and also glowing up against the night sky. The public are encouraged to seek out these sightings. Press and social media reports of a strange apparition on the rooftop of Archbishop Sentamu rooftop are broadcast, with film footage captured by the Daily Mail circulated on local TV and web. This can be staged and filmed in secret at an earlier date, to be broadcast in the week leading up to the appearance of the ash people, so that local public are already on the lookout from the moment activities begin: The magic portal has opened and so has a new chapter in the Land of Green Ginger.

(One or more of these ash people could appear as part of the overall LoGG Heralding event at a city centre rooftop location, and could also be accompanied by an ensemble of participants ringing handbells on a procession from the city centre.)

Pale with the dust of demolition, these spirits are emerging, bursting out of the portal of the 7<sup>th</sup> Alley, borne up on an ash cloud. Through press and on-line reports the story is promoted that the cinders of bonfires appearing by the drain-side, along with abandoned shopping trolleys, scattered shoes and debris are signs of their presence, creating a mythology around familiar present day phenomena in the Preston Road area. They appear from time to time in the heart of the neighbourhood, moving across the rooftops, flickering across the alleyways and bridges, lit by lanterns and ringing bells. One bears a wooden crate fashioned into a little home to transport their remaining possessions, wheeling this on a smoking shopping trolley from which erupt little whirlwinds of drifting book pages. In their wake these spirits leave a trail of burnt pages, fragments of scorched story from the book of the 'Land of Green Ginger' and its opening chapter. Residents are invited to share their pictures of the characters and signs of their presence on-line. Stories of the 7 Alleys are passed like a contraband currency in the neighbourhood.

### **Narrative backstory – the secret truth of the 7 Alleys**

The image of this people of the Ash Clouds is inspired by thousands of Hull dockland residents who were bombed out of their homes during the Second World War. Those who survived were relocated within the city, migrating to new and growing housing estates. Many of these survivors moved to the heart of East Hull. This historic reality will serve as the narrative backstory to our project, imagined as a secret history of the beginnings of the 7 alleys. It will fuel both the premonition events and the main performance narrative, being revealed at its climax.

Our narrative will lead the local public to discover this secret heart of the story of the 7 Alleys, a story of migration within Hull that has been buried amidst the subterraneous pages of the Land of Green Ginger. It follows the intersection between the fantastical and the historical, marrying the myths and images of this local folk legend with the development of Preston Road and other East Hull estates, which grew following the Second World War and the impact of the blitz on Hull.

One aim of the project is to encourage residents to reawaken familial links to their neighbourhood, translating these through the legend of the 7 Alleys, with a contemporary twist.

## 2. Adventure - The 7th Alley explodes into life

From Wednesday 10th to Sunday 14th May, the project enters a new phase. The legendary 7th Alley is brought to life through a 30-minute performance repeated each night:

Audience gather at a meeting point – a '7 Alleys' signpost – a short distance from the performance site. (Audience have to confirm attendance in advance on one of the five days.) Met by Guardians of the 7 Alleys, each audience member is given a lucky gift to protect them on their journey.

Emerging from the darkness and distance of the site, the horse-and-carriage draws near, bringing the sound of harmonic drones in counterpoint to the rhythm of the horses' canter. A violinist stands and plays from the carriage as five members of audience are invited to 'cross the line'. These 5 are invited to board the carriage, which then embarks, leading the rest of the audience into the flickering landscape accompanied by fire torches. Audience are cautioned to stick to the path, forming a long, narrow procession.

Reaching a dark area of the park, audience are halted and wait in anticipation. Suddenly, lamp-lights high on poles either side of them flicker into life. Without forewarning the audience have arrived in the 7<sup>th</sup> Alley. The horse-and-carriage disappears into the darkness, becoming the pure sound of the horses' movement and seeming to circle the audience in accelerating quadrophonic sound.

### The Alleyway



Show design and site layout are based around a long, straight audience area central to and cutting through the site – the ‘alleyway’. Audience populate this alleyway, which is delineated on either side by poles (‘lamp-posts’), at the top of which are wireless speakers and remote-controlled lamps. Audience are thrust into the centre of the dramatic action and a heightened super-reality which unravels through vivid images, appearances of the 7 alleys characters and their magical stories.

Blinker bengals are hit and the alleyway is transforming. Action and imagery unfold in the expanse of field on either side of the ‘alley’ through alternating scenes, firstly on one side, then on the other. This expanse becomes a magical realm, a space where the imagination can conjure strange and beautiful realities, where characters and images appear, disappear and reappear elsewhere in the blink of an eye. (Scenography is hidden away in the darkness.) As audience face one scene to the right of the alley, the next scene and visuals are built behind their back, ready to create a new level of surprise and excitement. Audio will also help to shift focus from side to side as signals are shot between speakers.

The characters’ stories become the audience’s story as a mist soon descends – the audience must pay heed to cautionary advice delivered through poetic text to help them navigate the dangers of the alleys. These words of caution will be designed to encourage interactive responses from the audience to give them a relationship to the action and place themselves within it. For example, to avoid disappearing in the 7<sup>th</sup> alley and to make their way safely back to the 6<sup>th</sup>, the audience must hold hands.

The scenes will use both the epic depth of the park, with images magically appearing out of the darkness, and intimate close-up action, with potential for performers to move through the alley amongst the audience and stand nearby the audience by climbing the poles.

### **Narrative departures**

We will explore the following starting points for scenes through the writing process:

- The Ash People awake through choreographed slow-motion and reverse explosions, each appearing in a circle of fire, they begin to push shopping trolleys which emanate smoke.
- A ghostly procession of bell-ringers (participants), self-lit with lanterns, appear moving slowly, circling and encompassing the audience in sound.
- Disappearance and reappearance – a mysterious mist descends. (While legend says that in the 7<sup>th</sup> Alley spectral characters have been seen to appear, there are also urban myths of people disappearing: if you’re in the 7<sup>th</sup> Alley at midnight you’ll never make it back to the 6<sup>th</sup>.)
- The graveyard – a pale statue comes to life.
- Exploring the character Bubble Boy who appears standing in a smouldering pile of rubble. The ensemble of participants appear, carrying an array of pure white round helium balloons, appearing like bubbles hovering in the air. Audience are cautioned not to lose the bubble otherwise they’ll turn into stone. The participants move towards and into the audience before releasing the balloons which rise illuminated into the sky.

As the performance reaches its climax, ascending in urgency and emotion, it bears a twist and revelation. All of these ghostly apparitions are finally revealed as real flesh-and-blood characters – evacuees who migrated to East Hull as a direct impact of the blitz bombing of the city’s docklands. The images that have appeared in isolation earlier in the performance are now drawn together into a single compelling sequence – handbells are rung to signal the emergency. Spectacular imagery of explosions, smoke, fire & flight unfold, bringing backstories of some of the settlers in East Hull into an epic scale. Matchtape crackles and flameballs erupt behind the hovering ash people, silhouetting them in the air. Against a backdrop of flame, they enter into freefall, then are engulfed in smoke before finally descending and landing in reality – a field of smoking debris.

### **Farewell: The Ash People go up in smoke**

As the performance concludes, a confetti drop of burnt pages drifts across the site. Audience can pluck a page from the air to keep. It will contain a clue to the next LoGG performance. As the ash people appeared from nowhere, so they disappear, in a drift of smoke and leaving behind a ring of fire.

### **Themes**

The narrative is in part the journey and experience of the audience as they enter ascending levels of intrigue in the search for the 7<sup>th</sup> Alley. It is a journey into the unknown, and sometimes the supernatural, where audience and performers alike must face their fears. It is about how we imagine, experience and create magic in the places we live.

From the emergence of the dust-blown Ash People to subtle imagery of the displaced home, the work takes images of the 7 alleys apparitions and characters like the White Lady, Bubble Boy and the statue that weeps, and re-imagines these with a localised historical root in the area’s post-war growth, finally contextualised within a story of the ancestors of East Hull arriving and settling.

### **Linking to other LoGG artists/projects**

We will explore any potential links to other LoGG artists, in the first instance seeking consultancy with Thor on sound design for promenading aspects. A specific handover to the next LoGG project will be developed when the next artist is confirmed.

### **Locations**

Our initial location is the heart of residential Preston Road and surrounding areas, animating it with small acts of wonder and looking to engage residents from across the area. The separate project elements will take place in a number of different sites. Locations and content are as follows:

The best location for the crate will be agreed with the 2017 team.

#### **1. Preliminary activity 1 - Horse-and-carriage routes**

These will take in extensive residential streets of the Preston Road and surrounding neighbourhoods, including schools and community centres, e.g. Archbishop Sentamu Academy, Preston Road Women’s Centre, Child Dynamix two Preston Road locations, Woodland Primary School.

This element will feature: promenading horses and carriage with amplified live fiddle and pre-recorded drones, and the delivery of artworks to residents' households. Their underlying function is to achieve maximum reach in attracting the targeted audience numbers to attend the performance event. (The messages will contain links to communication channels for public to confirm their intention to attend.)

## **2. Preliminary activity 2 – 'Ash people'**

These performance elements are also part of the preliminary build-up to the main event and will take place in various prominent, elevated sites across the Preston Road neighbourhood, such as rooftops of Archbishop Sentamu Academy and the Freedom Centre.

This element will feature simple choreographed performance with portable lighting operated by the performers. Sometimes these appearances will be accompanied on the ground by a chorus of local participants performing simple ensemble choreography and ringing acoustic handbells, and amplified pre-recorded music.

## **3. Main performance event**

Current design for the main event would require an expansive site with room for a long audience area (the alleyway) of up to 100m length with wide areas either side of this for action. It would also favour the ability to achieve blackout by working in a controllable area with no ambient light from surrounding areas.

East Park would suit these requirements.

The final event will feature performers, visual props, live and recorded amplified music, installed set, mobile structures, pre-recorded poetry, fire, pyro and other effects possibly including flameballs, gerbes, marine flares, blinker bengals, and an ecofetti drop.

## **Timings**

### **Durations**

Horse-and-carriage deliveries: 4 hours, daytime (1 day)

Premonition events: Short 10-15 minute happenings in elevated positions or longer, durational appearances, such as a movement of the ash people through the neighbourhood – a minimum of 5 in all over 2 days

Main performance event: After complete darkness, lasts approximately 30 minutes, for 5 nights. We anticipate this as starting at 10pm if performance is mid May.

## **Audience**

We anticipate engaging audiences from throughout the Preston Road area, hopefully drawing in further audiences from Greatfield, Holderness Road and other areas of East Hull.

1. Initial engagement will take place through social media plus local press (Daily Mail), radio, TV and media prior and in response to the preliminary activities. The 7 Alleys Facebook site currently has 170 followers, and we would look to boost this following and public reach by linking with Child Dynamix, the Freedom Centre, Archbishop Sentamu Academy and others

through their media channels. Posts will be aimed at raising anticipation, encouraging residents to look out for and report the 7 Alleys horse-and-carriage and the appearances of ash people.

2. Preliminary activities will further raise anticipation and engagement. Prominent positions will be identified for the appearance of the Ash People, making it possible to reach large audiences, while the horse-and-carriage movements reach into large areas of the neighbourhood, visiting residents in their own homes and streets. Residents will be invited to respond to the message they deliver through various communication channels to confirm attendance of the main event. Facebook and phone-lines were both excellent communications channels with local people for the 2016 project.

## **Community Partners & Participation**

We will deepen and build on excellent community collaborations founded in the Pilot stage with Child Dynamix, the Freedom Centre and the Preston Road Women's Centre (Purple House). These partners will help us continue to draw: in inspirational material, advice on shape and content, tap into a local participant base, forge new links to facilitate the production, and provide production and participatory space.

We will expand the project through new relationships, including with Archbishop Sentamu Academy as a performance location and resource partner and Wilberforce College.

Crucially, we have identified with Louise Yates the potential positive benefits of forming a group of local project stakeholders, a secret cohort of collaborators from across the community – 'Guardians of the 7 Alleys' –, including members of key families and organisations, to advise on delivery, helping us to draw in, engage and creatively include diverse elements. This will enhance planning for a safe and ambitious project, also with a view to turning potential pockets of trouble to positive engagement.

We currently envisage opportunities to engage several teams of participants, for deliveries, the performance event and potentially also ash people premonitions, including a group from Wilberforce College. We will also look to engage through Child Dynamix, and directly through local families, to engage youth participants.

We are planning up to 10 community sessions including stakeholder meetings and community workshops, from January onwards. We will discuss target groups and schedules with Louise Yates imminently.

## **Accessibility**

We are identifying accessible sites or sites which can readily be made accessible. Where mobility issues are acute, we will consider other ways of ensuring the events can be experienced by those in question, e.g. alternate forms of making the journey. We will consider transcripts and audio guides for deaf and visually impaired community members and seek 2017 guidance on this.

## 2. Delivery Plan

### Key personnel – Delivery Team

We will approach experienced and proven experts to cover all aspects of the production. These include:

**Fire & pyro** – Lightfires (<http://www.lightfires.co.uk/>), led by Paul Bryce, have delivered fire & pyro for Southpaw (Faust), Station House Opera with the major *Dominoes* project in 2016, and numerous Periplum productions, including Homecoming, 451, The Bell and Arquiem.

**Production Manager** – We will approach Tom Bailey, a widely experienced outdoor Production Manager, acting as Brighton Festival’s PM on numerous large-scale and high-profile international productions, including Carabosse. Tom also managed production for Elizabeth Streb’s ambitious site-specific aerial project *Surprises*, taking place across iconic London landmarks for London 2012, as well as large-scale Periplum works.

**Set Design Engineering** – Tarn Aitken is a resident engineer with No Fit State whose specialisms include making aerial rigs. He previously created a spinning rig for Periplum’s 451. Mike Pattison is widely renowned across the outdoor arts circuit, creating works for the London Paralympics, Kinetika, Periplum and many other groups.

**Sound Design** – Aidan O’Brien is Periplum’s regular sound design artist. We will also seek to engage Thor on sound ideas through the promenading elements.

**Composers** – Mike Simmonds and Barry Han are the team who have created scores for Periplum’s 451, Homecoming and #WeAreAllSpartacus. Mike is a regular performer with the Alice Russell Band and the Mountain Firework Company. Barry has created scores for productions by Tmesis.

Artistic Directors Claire Raftery & Damian Wright have been responsible for conceiving, designing, writing and directing all of Periplum’s previous works including large-scale, critically acclaimed and internationally touring works *The Bell*, *451* and *Arquiem*.

### Timeline

**January 2017/confirmation** Narrative & design development – set/installations, script.  
Storyboard development  
Visual Installation development  
Initial meetings with design engineers & pyrotechnic designer  
Technical rider detail developed  
Site(s) confirmed  
Engagement plan drawn up & initial contact with community partners  
Identifying & contacting potential participants



<b>February 2017</b>	<p>Community meetings/engagement  Production personnel contracted &amp; PM site visit  Marketing strategy meeting &amp; ideas session  Technical design meetings  Set Build begins  Tech rider confirmed – Sound Design &amp; Lighting Design</p>
<b>March 2017</b>	<p>Hull sound design/music development residency weeks 1 &amp; 2  Community meetings/engagement/workshop  Installations confirmed &amp; site layout finalised  MSRA draft submitted</p>
<b>April 2017</b>	<p>Hull sound design/music development residency week 2  Set Build Completed  Costume &amp; Visual Makes Completed  Any structural Engineers Reports finalised  Community meetings/engagement/workshops  Production Rehearsals 1 week – Brighton or Hull</p>

## **Support Required**

At this stage we envisage the following support would be required:

- Liaison with land-owners/developers to secure sites, plus advice and acquisition of quotes for any site surface maintenance, e.g. filling potholes, creating even, accessible walking routes
- Securing suppliers of the items listed in the headline tech rider below
- Gaining permissions from port authorities and other parties for use of pyro including marine flares and potentially air-bound effects
- Core team accommodation in 2017 house, for periods from participant engagement in January to subsequent visits up to and including production weeks.
- Support from the LoGG Digital team in creating broadcasts and for on-line activities, including the project web page and audience ticketing.)

## **Budget**

Please see added attachment.