Message from the President

I hope you enjoy the latest edition of Guidelines International. We welcome our new editor, Tina Engström (UK) assisted by Serena Franklin (India) and Janet Bulloch (UK). Thank you ladies, for volunteering to undertake this important work for us. The magazine depends on members’ contributions so please continue to send them to: info@wftga.org

In March my husband and I went on a cruise from Cape Horn to Cape of Good Hope, including Antarctica, which made me even more aware of the importance of interpretation and conservation and we received great hospitality from our members in Buenos Aires and Cape Town.

It is always a pleasure to meet colleagues and find out more about their challenges and opportunities.

This year is going to be a particularly challenging one for all our members and it is even more important for WFTGA to continue to promote the employment of qualified and licensed tourist guides so that those who continue to travel understand fully the cultures and communities they visit and the importance of conservation and protection. As Professor Sam Ham, our keynote speaker in Bali said “tourist guides strongly influence visitor behaviour and attitudes to the places they are visiting”.

To this end I request your active support for our promotional campaign: We are the Professionals. Phase 1 encourages the employment of professional tourist guides and consists of the following slogan, which members are asked to use when writing official letters and emails to tourism professionals, tour operators and governments:

Follow Us and Discover Our Special Heritage

We stand for standards and quality in tourist guides

We are the professionals!

We promote training and qualifications for tourist guides

We are the professionals!

We support codes of practice and quality charters for tourist guides

We are the professionals!

Phase 2, launched in Bali, is directed at the visitors themselves and includes posters and leaflets featuring UNESCO World Heritage Sites, asking the question of visitors “Is Your Tourist Guide Qualified?” The poster can be downloaded from www.wftga.org and can be adapted by each member association. A5 leaflets are also available for all members free of charge. There is space to enter local information and we encourage their use by all our members.

On 17 April, I had the privilege of attending the meeting of the UNESCO Committee for NGOs in Paris when WFTGA was officially admitted as a Non Governmental Organisation in Operational Relations with UNESCO. In order to achieve this status we had to submit details of our activities for the past five years and show the Secretary General that we support the aims of UNESCO.

While there I was able to preview the exhibition celebrating the re-erection of the Aksum Obelisk in Ethiopia, which was officially opened by the Secretary General on 23 April. He stated that “the exhibition conveys a sense of the spontaneous, joyous festivities that have marked all the phases of the operations in Ethiopia; from the arrival by plane of the three sections of the Obelisk in 2005, to the inauguration ceremony in Aksum on 4 September 2008. Today we are delighted to celebrate another milestone: the successful completion of this remarkable adventure. The specially designed metal support structure that obscured the Obelisk over the past year has been dismantled at last. Thanks to the hard work, dedication and talents of UNESCO staff and experts, the 152-ton obelisk now proudly stands unencumbered on the Aksum World Heritage site as an archaeological reminder of Ethiopia’s glorious past and a testimony to human creativity.”

The Aksum Obelisk was looted by Italian troops during the Second World War and its re-erection is regarded by UNESCO as being on a par with the saving of the Abu Simbel temples in the 1960s. It is therefore with great pleasure that I am able to announce that on 8 May WFTGA Past President Titina Loizidou flies to Aksum to help train the guides who will interpret the Obelisk and the remainder of the World Heritage Site. This is the first official co-operation with UNESCO by WFTGA under our new status and we are extremely fortunate that it is such a high profile project. We wish Titina good luck and look forward to reading about her experiences in a future edition of Guidelines.

Part of our role as an NGO in Operational Relations with UNESCO is to continue to support developing countries and I am delighted also to be able to announce an extension to the Jane Orde Scholarship. The Jane Orde Scholarship, administered by the Androus Foundation, is awarded every two years to enable a tourist guide from a Tier 3, 4 or 5 Country to...
attend our Convention. Past President Deborah Androus has agreed that from 2010, we will be able to offer a further scholarship to enable a WFTGA member from one of these countries to attend a WFTGA Train the Trainer Course. This will in turn encourage training and development of tourist guides in his or her home country and thereby spread WFTGA training standards.

The seed money for this scholarship has now been raised in Scotland through a book sale at the University of Edinburgh, where I am Course Director for tourist guide training. After her death in 2002, WFTGA Past President Jane Orde’s books and leaflets were donated to the University of Edinburgh for the use of guide students and tutors in Scotland. These books and leaflets have been used regularly over the past six years. We decided to offer those we no longer require along with duplicates in the departmental library to our current students. The students were invited to choose whichever books or leaflets they would like with all funds being donated to the Jane Orde Scholarship Fund. We were delighted to be able to raise £303 (340 Euro).

Jane was a member of the Scottish Tourist Guides Association and involved in the training and mentoring of many Scottish Tourist Guide students, including WFTGA Area Representative Mary Kemp Clarke. Training was very dear to Jane’s heart and I know that she would very much approve of this new venture. I would personally like to thank the Scottish Tourist Guide students and the University of Edinburgh for their generosity, and I hope that other member associations may consider fundraising for this excellent cause, which should help to raise the level of professionalism and training for tourist guides around the world. Funds from the Convention Auctions will continue to be used both for the original scholarship and for the new trainer scholarship.

Rosalind Newlands
WFTGA President

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WFTGA now represents more than 100,000 tourist guides from the following 47 countries: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belize, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Macau, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uruguay.

The WFTGA General Assembly meets just before the Convention every two years to listen to and decide upon bids for the next Convention, vote on proposed motions and elect the new Executive Board.

Decisions made at the General Assembly included the following:

- Amendments to percentage of members required to call for an Extraordinary General Meeting to conform to Austrian Law, under whose aegis WFTGA was registered in 1987 (following the first Convention in Tel Aviv in 1985).

- An agreement (pending ExBo’s discussions) to extend the possibility of hosting Conventions outwith the January and February slot, to allow other country members an opportunity to bid.

We also heard that developing links between the WFTGA and UNESCO and UNWTO are strengthening. Financial help from UNESCO, in particular, supports the training of professional tourist guides in some areas. Long established and good links continue with the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG) too. Indeed it was in cooperation with FEG as consultants that the CEN/TC 329 regarding Tourism Services – Requirements for the provision of professional tourist guide training and qualification programmes was passed. The WFTGA are official consultants for the ISO/TC 228: Tourism and Related Services, in effect with a watching brief on any developments in the industry which might affect professional qualified guides.

The main convention was opened by the Indonesian Minister for Culture and Tourism Mr. Jero Wacik, following traditional dancing. The plenary sessions delivered over the week had Eco-Tourism: The Tourist Guide’s Role as their subject. I was most impressed by the knowledge, efforts and delivery of Mr. I Gede Ardika, the Former Minister for Culture & Tourism of Indonesia. As well as speeches, there were many workshops on Eco-Tourism and other important issues for tourist guides.

At every Convention there is a silent and a not-so-silent auction to raise funds for the Jane Orde Scholarship Fund. This fund enables a guide to attend each Convention with financial support, and is named after one of the founding members and past presidents of the WFTGA.

On one of our memorable visits we were all taken to Mas Village, where everyone in the village turned out to greet us. It was very moving indeed. Ros Newlands officially opened their Woodwork Exhibition, and we were all entertained by young girls dancing to the sound of the gamelan.

Meetings, workshops, lectures and tours take up every minute of the day during the Convention. In the evenings, the schedule is just as hectic with receptions and presentations. All the while we are networking with fellow guides from across the globe. We learn how problems are solved, or not, in other places. We share experiences which enhance the image of our profession. I am also sometimes asked why my association bothers with membership of WFTGA. To answer that question first let me copy here Article 3 of the WFTGA Constitution:

**Aims**

- **a)** To establish contact with Tourist Guide Associations throughout the world, to reinforce their professional ties and to promote and protect the interests of professional tourist guides;

- **b)** To represent Professional Tourist Guide Associations internationally;

- **c)** to work for the improvement of the quality and reputation of the profession of Tourist Guides worldwide;

- **d)** to hold a Convention of Tourist Guide Associations at regular intervals.

The ethos of WFTGA is about competent and answerable professionals, who are true ambassadors for their region or country. To make this possible WFTGA believes that all tourist guides should possess an area specific qualification, obtained through competent training of the highest professional standard.

By being a part of the WFTGA we are plugged into a megaphone of 100,000 voices wanting the same things. The louder the better. This is why bodies such as UNESCO, the UNWTO, the ISO and others are beginning to listen to us.

Mary Kemp Clarke
Mas Village, January 2009
Photos: Tina Engström
Delegate meetings. Above: Tina Engström (UK), Serif Yenen and Murat Tiryaki (Turkey). Left: Ros Newlands and Aladdin Khalifa. Below: Jennifer Briscoe and Johan Van Biljon (South Africa).

Above: Renate Macho and Felicitas Wressnig (Austria). Below left: Haw-wid Raden and Arinto Prakoso (Indonesia). Below right: Aija Tamsone (Latvia) and Ikuo Hasegawa (Japan).
Workshops.

Above: Murat Tiryaki (Turkey) talking about Eco-tourism – A Tourist Guide’s Perspective.

Above right: Viola Lier (UK) talking about Business Skills for Tourist Guides.

Right: Alexander Maerah (Indonesia) makes a point at one of the workshops.

Below: Delegates and participants at workshop on Business Skills.

Above: Forozandeh Salehi (Iran) speaking at one of the workshops.
Clockwise from left: Armen Shahbazyan (Armenia); Roza Atanesyan (Armenia) with Balinese dancer; Popi Hadjiedemetriou and Ayse Gokyit (Cyprus); participants from South Africa enjoying dinner; delegates and participants from various countries enjoying themselves; Stanislav Voleman (Czech Republic) trying a Balinese dance.
Clockwise from above: Emily Fung Siu Chau (Macau), Aida Idrissova (Kazakhstan), Elvira Cuthbert (UK) and Monal (Indonesia); Nyoman Kandia (Indonesia); Felicitas Wressnig (Austria) strutting her stuff on the dance floor; dancers from Papua; Michelle Sabti (UAE); Walid El Batouty (Egypt) showing off his Balinese dancing skills.
How do you describe the indescribable? This is the answer to the question, ‘Can you please describe your feelings when you heard the news on winning the bid?’ First disbelief, then overwhelming joy, followed by a pang of regret for the days lost in worrying. Continually thinking, ‘How do we manage? Shall we succeed?’

And the countdown has started. Now it is one and a half years to go. Soon it will be months, then weeks, days and hours! How shall we manage to organise a Convention that guides from the rest of the world would enjoy?

There is only one answer to that. Prepare well and in good time! And that is exactly what the Tallinn tourist guides are doing now. We started by disseminating the news of our victory to prepare the ground for finding partners and sponsors. First a press release, then an article and radio interview on the International Tourist Guide Day and, of course, by word of mouth. Now we are in the process of sending out letters officially asking for a meeting with owners of venues, providers of services, and potential sponsors. And we are certainly not aiming low. One of the first letters was addressed to the President of the country.

Who is this ‘we’? The Tallinn Guide Association has 165 members. At the annual meeting held in February we formed the so called ‘think-tank’ from volunteers to collect ideas for the Convention. Needless to say, the main idea was Culture – this had been our unifying theme for the bidding process, and would now provide the main structure and themes for the Convention.

But now this framework has to be filled with content: topics and presentations for the workshops, speakers for the plenary sessions and performers for the entertainment programmes have to be found. We decided to collect as many ideas and proposals as possible and then draw up a short-list. The task of the think-tank is not just to generate the ideas but to galvanise other members, as well as coming forth with proposals. We believe that Estonia is full of interesting people who have something to say to the world. We just have to find them.

Last week we had a round-table meeting for the volunteers and the organising committee. A suggestion was made that we should allocate a host or hostess to each member country of WFTGA who will start communicating with their associations well before the Convention. These people could answer all their questions about the programme, booking, reaching us, accommodation and whatever needs there might be. This would also mean that a large number of our members would be even more actively involved. This in turn would also mean making our professional association stronger.

We have already received good feedback on how the Estonian Convention Bureau is using our ‘case’ to prompt other professional associations to take the initiative in bringing their international meetings to Estonia.

Our winning the bid to organise the WFTGA Convention was a victory not just for the tourist guides of Estonia but for the whole country which was erased from the world map for a long time. Now we can help our country to show that we are back again and can compete together with all others on an equal basis.

Come and be ESTonished!

Laura Taul
Tallinn Guide Association
International Tourist Guide Day
21 February 2009

International Tourist Guide Day is held on 21 February each year and is co-ordinated by WFTGA – the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations. The first time it was held in 1990, 15 countries participated. Since then, tourist guides in an ever-growing number of countries have been conducting tours for disabled or disadvantaged persons, for children, industry partners, officials and the general public. Events are also held for local tourist guides including presentations and retraining courses.

It is a public relations event par excellence, drawing the attention of local authorities, fellow citizens and the media to the quality and value of the work of professional tourist guides. Each year, awareness grows and there is an increasing contribution by both regional and national governments to the International Tourist Guide Day. This year many events were organised all over the world:

Africa

The Uganda Safari Guides Association celebrated with bird watching and cultural walks in the city. The chairman Herbert Byaruhanga, quoting from the Tourism Act 2008, congratulated the guides for making a breakthrough now that “tourist guides” are clearly defined in the tourism law.

Kenya Eco-Bird Guides Association celebrated International Tourist Guide Day for the very first time by gathering in Nairobi Arboretum for a guided tour through the history of the park and identifying the different species of trees.

Asia

India celebrated the International Tourist Guide Day for the very first time. The Tourist Guides Federation of South India celebrated at places like Chennai, Kailasanatha Temple at Kanchipuram, Shore temple and Five Rathas at Mahabalipuram (World Heritage Monuments).

In Mumbai, a special dinner was hosted by the Tourist Guides’ Association (TOGA). The specially designed banner by WFTGA for tourist guides was unveiled and displayed. The posters have been displayed at strategic locations and places of tourist interest all over the city. An important part of the day’s celebration was the presentation of an award to Mrs. Rama Khandwala – the most senior guide in Mumbai with the longest unbroken track record of continuous service in the tourism sector. The award was presented to her by Mrs. Serena Franklin, President TOGA. Mr. Ramesh Kulkarni another very senior guide who has retired was also presented with a floral bouquet.

In Singapore, The Society of Tourist Guides created three new heritage trails. With the support of Singapore Tourism Board they were able to reach out to the media to publicise the event and create awareness about the role of professional tourist guides.

Europe

In Austria, Carinthia’s Tourist Guide Association organised free guided tours at seven locations, including Klagenfurt, Villach and Ossiach – with the guides dressed in baroque costumes! In Vienna & Lower Austria, 90 tourist guides organised 250 tours, 12 lectures and 25 internal visits on 21 February. The previous day 30 tourist guides gave special tours for sight-impaired people at the Ethnological Museum, which opened only for the ITGD event and also provided special exhibits. 2,700 Euros was donated towards a model for sight-impaired visitors to the Ethnological Museum.

The Cyprus Tourist Guides Association celebrated 21 February with guided walking Tours in all towns. They also visited the Mayor of Nicosia and stressed the importance of the International Tourist Guide Day and discussed problems facing tourist guides.

The Glasgow and West of Scotland branch of Scottish Tourist Guides Association marked the day in a distinctive way. They invited students of tourism from Glasgow’s four universities to go on a coach tour with a difference – at various points along the route Glasgow ghosts came on to the coach to tell their story. The entire event took only three hours, but the impact will hopefully be much longer lasting. Most of the students had never heard of professional tourist guides (Blue Badge). Now they know what it’s all about!

Tina Engström

Celebrations in Uganda. Above: Noel and Vicky. Right: Chairman Herbert Byaruhanga (middle) flanked by the Chief Spokesman and the General Secretary Kamugisha Johnnie. Below: Members enjoy the barbeque.
ITGD celebrations in Austria.

Above: Carinthia’s Tourist Guide Association offered tours on ITGD dressed in baroque costumes.

Left: The Ethnological Museum in Vienna opened specially for ITGD and tourist guides gave special tours for 90 sight-impaired people, including children.

Below: Tourist guides from the Vienna Association of Licensed Tourist Guides at the end of the successful day.
Above: ITGD celebrations in Glasgow, UK. Viola Lier, Anne Robertson (or Queen Languoreth of the Britons of Strathclyde), Moira Wadsworth (or Queen Victoria), Roy Stewart (or James Watt), Bruce Cochran (or Pierre Emile L’Angelier), Sandra Middleton, John Anderson, Maggie McCann (Chair of STGA Glasgow Branch), Ian Macdonald (or Clyde Shipbuilder Elder).

Below: ITGD celebrations in Cyprus.
Above: ITGD celebrations in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Right and below: ITGD celebrations in Singapore.
ITGD celebrations in Mumbai, India.

Left: Rama Khandwala – the most senior guide in Mumbai with the longest unbroken track record of continuous service in the tourism sector – was presented with an award by Serena Franklin, President of TOGA, Mumbai.

Below: Tourist guides in Mumbai.

Below: ITGD celebrations in South India.
First officially registered Tourist Guides in Brunei trained by WFTGA


Facing page, top picture: Mary and students celebrating the end of the course with attendance certificates.
Facing page, bottom picture: Iris and Mary inside the Masjid Jame’ Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque.
Brunei Tourism, based at the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources in Seri Begawan, commissioned two “Hands On” tourist guide courses and one “Train the Trainer” course from the WFTGA. These resulted in the first batch of officially registered guides for Brunei. Most participants already guided, but had been trained to different standards by their own employers. It was a resounding success with just under 40 passes – not yet the minimum required to set up an Association there, but almost.

With only one week’s notice Iris Barry and I set off to Negara Brunei Darussalam for a whole month – November 2008. We didn’t have much time to prepare, but as qualified Lead and Part 3 Trainers, we were up and ready for the challenge. I received very different reports from those who knew Brunei about what to expect. All I was sure about was how to deliver the courses, which, by the way, are excellent. Looking back on the whole experience while preparing this short article, I am so glad to have been a part of this exercise. Brunei and the people we met and worked with, were wonderful.

All participants were so positive and receptive. None had ever dared to do a walking tour around Bandar Seri Begawan, but with the help of Chris Robles at Brunei Tourism, and model tours led by Iris and myself (can you imagine? – two whole days cramming!) they all did it and enjoyed it. We also assessed their skills in the Brunei Museum, where we learnt more than I’ll ever need to know about a Malay wedding and the beautiful keris. We even prepared and delivered a model coach tour – again with only a couple of days to become familiar with the place! The in-class sessions took place in a very comfortable hotel in Kiulap, where we were over-fed three times a day for tea breaks and lunch, and which Iris and I called home for 30 days and nights.

Despite it being the rainy season we didn’t see very much rain at all, except on our only two proper days off. Iris spent a night in the jungle – the Heart of Green Borneo – she climbed to the top of the canopy of a seemingly endless primary forest. I went up river to see my very first proboscis monkeys, and visited a home in the largest water village in SE Asia. The heat was suffocating, but we got used to it. We worked very hard and we settled into a happy routine: deliver course, prepare course, prepare class every evening and assess course.

We made good friends too. Two of the participants went to the Convention in Bali. One of my assistants Amirah, nicknamed me Babu and writes regularly. All the participants reported a good outcome to the exercise, and most commented on how enjoyable it had all been.

To quote Iris’s official report: The three training courses were the first non-company based tourist guide training programmes to be delivered in Brunei. The highly interactive nature of the training proved successful with participants who, after the initial ice was broken, developed a strong team spirit and were supportive of each other.

Mary Kemp Clarke
WFTGA Trainer
IS YOUR TOURIST GUIDE QUALIFIED?
Professional Tourist Guides Will Wear Their Official ID

We Are The Professionals

World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations
www.wftga.org