**Periplum – LoGG Proposal 2017: ‘7 Alleys – Preston Road’**

**The Idea**

**Outline**

Periplum’s project will have 2 artistic phases:

1. Preliminary sightings / Premonitions: Actions to stir anticipation throughout the neighbourhood, acting as a sign-post and an invitation to the main performance event, also bringing smaller acts of wonder, beauty and spectacle in their own right.
2. A site-responsive trail and performance event: A series of adjoining, beautiful, visual and immersive walk-through installations lead to a finale performance.

**1. Premonitions – The Ash People freefall from the sky & migrate**

Inspired by local legends of the White Lady in the mist, pale figures appear in different, prominent and elevated sites around the neighbourhood, glowing up against the night sky. Painted with the dust of demolition, as if having emerged from an explosion, they’re seen moving across the rooftops and suspended in the air as though defying gravity. The public are encouraged to seek out these sightings.

Simultaneously, a magical horse-and-carriage appears, a sign that the 7 Alleys are coming to life again. They move through the residential streets, bringing beautiful music and spectacle throughout the neighbourhood while delivering invitations to residents to attend the performance event.

**2. Performance event – The 7 Alleys explode into life**

The culminating performance event will be an ambitious and immersive spectacle of music-driven visual theatre, beginning with an audience journey through a visual and sonic trail. It culminates in a static site finale – a marriage of aerial performers, fire and pyro effects, live violin and original music composition, engineered set, poetry and light.

**Narrative – Backstory: The secret history 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 – Preston Road –, their few remaining possessions transported by cart.

Pale with the dust of demolition, these spirits of the ancestral settlers are emerging again, bursting out of the portal of the 7th Alley, borne high on an ash cloud. They appear from time to time in the heart of the neighbourhood, seen suspended mid-fall, moving across the rooftops and flickering across the alleyways, 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…

Periplum’s narrative will lead the audience to find 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 the Preston Road estate, which grew following the Second World War.

One aim of the project is to encourage residents to reawaken familial links to their neighbourhood, translating these through the magical narrative of the 7 Alleys, and with a contemporary twist. The magic portal has opened and so has a new chapter in the Land of Green Ginger.

**Structure**

**Everyday**

Our initial location is the heart of residential Preston Road, animating it with small acts of wonder and looking to engage residents from across the area to draw them on a journey into lesser explored parts of the neighbourhood. We will work with a core of local stakeholders – ‘Guardians of the 7 Alleys’ – to encourage participation of groups of residents and organisations to help facilitate the safe & ambitious realisation of the project.

**Manifestations – Acts of Wonder**

At dusk on a spring day in April 2017, rhythmic eruptions are heard across the Preston Road neighbourhood, but no trace of their origin can be seen. This is the first of a series of signs, manifestations that the legend of the 7 Alleys is awaking once again…

**Heralding Event**

A gigantic wooden crate appears on a brown field site where houses, now demolished, once stood. The sign on it reads: ‘To East Hull with Love, from the 7 Alleys’. It pulses with harmonies and voices as if from a faraway place. Climbing out of it are 7 ash people. They perch on top of the crate before disappearing into the landscape. The road signs have mysteriously changed, evoking the poetry of a parallel reality or the ancestors of East Hull revisiting, and signs of 7 appear in the subtlest places.

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’. The carriage is accompanied by a retinue of runners and riders, timelessly clad in black. 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 smaller, ornate wooden crates, also stamped with the brand ‘Seven Alleys’, depositing them at vantage points across the neighbourhood. They deliver messages to the doors of 1,000 residents, a mysterious invitation to cross the threshold and attend the performance – to meet at the appointed time and place that the portal of the 7th Alley will open and finally reveal its magical truth. Through the invitation each recipient has been challenged to invite 7 companions: friends, family, neighbours, schoolmates, strangers.

That night, residents report sightings of the mysterious Ash Spirit levitating from buildings in central Hull to the rooftop of Archbishop Sentamu Academy. Stories of the 7 Alleys are passed like a contraband currency in the neighbourhood – a genuine local folk story is coming alive. Residents are invited to share their sightings of the characters and stories through social media.

**Adventure**

From Thursday 28th to Sunday 30th April, the project enters a new phase. The legendary 7 Alleys are brought to life through a series of adjoining immersive installations leading audience on a fantastical journey – under a surreal canopy, treading lightly between fiery walkways, through narrow misty passages.

The exact nature of the show is dependent on confirmation of site, specifically the layout and possibilities of the site, aesthetically, logistically and in terms of capacity. Below are indicative ideas, which will continue to evolve through November.

Audience are drawn by a horse-and-carriage procession from Preston Road, down Exeter Grove, to the beginning point of a trail, a walk which will lead to the culminating performance event. (Audience have been requested to confirm attendance in advance on one of the four days.)

The walk has 7 gateways to 7 Alleys, each of which will be themed in different visual media and accompanied by sound – beautiful weaving harmonic drones and voices – from portable systems. Each new alley has its own road-sign: ‘First Alley’, ‘Second Alley’, and so on. Each alley would be hosted by Community Guardians.

Pathways of fire flicker beside the beautiful landscape along the Holderness drain, signalling walkways for the public, while bursts of flame rise on the horizon.

Crossing the first gateway, audience are given a lucky rune (‘The Gift’) to protect them on their journey. A field of white trees, illuminated by LED lighting, opens up. A chorus of ash people appear, dragging fallen white trees in their wake, trying to plant these and raise them into the sky as they go across the landscape.

Beyond the second gateway, lining the next stretch of the walk, an array of pure white round helium balloons appear as bubbles suspending miniature houses in the air, made and manned by local youth participants. The houses hover off the floor, at head height, as illuminated lanterns, creating an aerial alleyway which audience walk between as they hear the voices of the young participants telling the story of the ‘bubblegum boy’ character of the 7 Alleys.

As audience continue, a ghostly procession of bell-ringers (participants), self-lit with lanterns, appear rising slowly over the brow of the skate ramp beside Woodland Primary School, and draw the audience onwards towards the blue bridge, calling residents towards the fabled 7th Alley.

As audience pass closely beside the drain they see an illuminated raft floating on the water with another ash spirit character singing a haunting melody.

Audience cross the third gateway and assemble on the bridge over the drain. The blue bridge is mysteriously lit amidst a timeless mist which drifts across the landscape. This is the Lair of the Ash People.

Crossing over, audience enter the long vista of a tree-lined alleyway. Stepping off the pathway through a clandestine ‘hole’ in the fence onto a new twist in the journey, a 4th alley contains Day of the Dead-style graves to greet the audience, an altar flickering with candles honouring the ancestors of Preston Road.

The 5th Alley – audience enter an enclosure near the old hospital where a lit up tree is covered with bandages, and audiences are invited to make a wish by placing a copper coin onto disguised magnets. If the wish is granted, the coins will remain, if the coins fall the wish is rejected.

At the end of the promenade journey, audience enter into an arena surrounded by a circle of fire (firecans). Spectacular imagery of explosions, smoke, fire & flight unfold, bringing backstories of some of the settlers in East Hull into an epic scale, and featuring aerial harness work by several performers on a specially made truss structure.

The Ash People awake through choreographed slow-motion and reverse explosions. Against a backdrop of flame, they enter into freefall, then are engulfed in smoke before finally descending and landing in reality. They greet the audience, and silently invite them to mark the end of the journey to the heart of 7 Alleys: a final trial to ‘play with fire’. A call-and-response begins between audience and pyrotechnics building in scale. An audience member is given a bell to ring – crackers and bells respond. Audiences place their hands in the air, creating a flame-ball effect, more hands creates a larger reaction. Audience clap, a sound echo is returned. The concept is that collectively we can make magic. Finally, the audience impel the rise of the Ash People once again, and they fly into the sky and away into the darkness.

A garden of flame remains as a social space for audience to share their experiences.

**Themes**

The narrative is in part the journey and experience of the audience as they enter ascending levels of intrigue through 7 gateways and 7 trials, towards the mystery of the 7th 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, distorted gravity and images of explosion and reparation, the journey will explore signs of a people migrating and a neighbourhood (re)building. The work takes images of the 7 alleys apparitions and characters, like the White Lady, Bubble Boy and the white statue that weeps, and re-imagining these with a localised historical root in the area’s post-war growth.

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

On Monday 1st May, leave-taking activities take place. The crates are packed away and loaded onto the cart. The horse-and-carriage goes on a last journey through the streets, bidding farewell, then seems to disappear into a cloud of smoke, and with it disappear the wooden crates. The Ash People once again appear on the rooftops, this time waving goodbye, but this time they will leave on a strange mobile contraption, heading for the next neighbourhood. This is the handover to Dominic…

**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, and if there is any possibility of Re-rediffusion characters , it could make sense for these characters to change the road signs. We will also work closely with Dominic or the confirmed next artist to devise the handover to the next phase of LoGG.

**Locations**

The separate project elements will take place in a number of different sites. Locations and content is as follows:

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

These will take in extensive residential streets of the Preston Road and Greatfield 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 artworks will contain an invitation to attend and will have links to communication channels for public to confirm their intention to attend.)

**2. Preliminary activity 2 – Aerial performers / ‘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 aerial 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.

The location of the over-sized wooden crate will be agreed with the 2017 team.

**3. Main performance event**

The main event site currently has several options. The exact nature of the event will also be dependent on site, the two options being:

* a site-specific performance trail, ideally linking to the actual 7 Alleys location, and culminating in a short, spectacular finale repeated several times over each evening
* a large-scale performance, largely based around a single site, reached through a short promenade

3a. Site-specific performance trail – Option 1

The preferred site we have identified leads audience on a route from the lower end of Exeter Grove, running alongside the Holderness Drain, towards and over the blue bridge above the freight train track, then down an alley towards Hedon Road. It culminates in a larger site with a potential capacity of 1,000-1,500 – the site of the old maternity hospital, currently a development site run by Green Port Hull.

3b. Site-specific performance trail – Option 2

Further north along the Holderness drain and also alongside Exeter Grove, runs a long lawn. This would need to be transformed with infrastructure as it is more of a blank space.

Other potential options are available, but these 2 are first preferences.

Both of these options will contain the following content:

The promenading section of the event will contain firecans, visual installations of as indicated above, amplified live and pre-recorded audio, portable lighting, ensemble choreography, acoustic hand bells.

The end location will feature aerial performance, fire, pyro and other effects including flameballs, gerbes, marine flares, an ecofetti drop, live and recorded amplified music, mobile structures, poetry.

**Timings**

**Durations**

Horse-and-carriage deliveries: 3 hours per day during afternoons

Premonition events: 1 hour each day at dusk into darkness

Main performance event: begins at dusk, lasts either 2.5 hours if smaller audiences (audience experience 1 hour), or 40 minutes with larger audiences (site dependent)

**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 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 on the skyline, making it possible to reach large audiences, while the horse-and-carriage movements below reach into all corners 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 into 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, 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 event, also with a view to turning potential pockets of trouble to positive engagement.

We currently envisage opportunities to engage several teams of participants, 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 days 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. Were 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 DirectorsClaire 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**

**Nov/Dec 2016** Narrative & design development – set/installations, script. journey

Storyboard 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

**January 2017** Hull 2-3 days College participants’ engagement begins

Community meetings/engagement

Pyrotechnic Design Meetings

Set design development & final designs

Costume design development & final designs

Visual Installation development

**February 2017** Hull 1 week Sound design/music development residency week

Community & college participants’ workshops begin

Community meetings/engagement

Production personnel contracted & PM site visit

Marketing strategy meeting & ideas session

Technical design meetings

Tech rider confirmed – Sound Design & Lighting Design

**March** 2017 Set Build begins

Hull sound design/music development residency week 2

Community meetings/engagement/workshops

Installations confirmed & site layout finalised

Marketing ideas & Press plan finalised

Pyrotechnic build begins

MSRA draft submitted

**April – early May** 2017 Set Build Completed

Costume & Visual Makes Completed

Any structural Engineers Reports finalised

Community meetings/engagement/workshops

Production Rehearsals 1 week – Brighton or Hull

Marketing/Press Strategy begins

Preliminary performances /premonitions begin

Pack Up Freight/Truck Brighton - Hull

Performances on Site

Pack Up Freight/Truck Hull- Brighton de rig

Evaluation

**Production schedule - April 20th - May 1st TBC**

Thursday Periplum PM, Directors, Musician & Performer arrive in Hull

Friday Dusk -Premonition performances begin central Hull– ash performer central Hull horse/ carriage

Saturday Premonition performances begin – ash performer & horse/ carriage

Sunday Premonition performances begin – ash performer & horse/ carriage

Monday Periplum team arrive Hull

Tuesday On Site Build & rehearsals

Wednesday Technical Dress Rehearsal

Thursday Preview Performances to invited audience

Dusk - Main Performance preview invited audience- duration to be confirmed with site capacity– either 2.5 hours with small audiences on performance trail or 40mins larger capacity show

Friday Dusk - Main Performance preview invited audience- duration to be confirmed with site capacity– either 2.5 hours with small audiences on performance trail or 40mins larger capacity show

Saturday Dusk - Main Performance- duration to be confirmed with site capacity– either 2.5 hours with small audiences on performance trail or 40mins larger capacity show

Sunday Dusk - Main Performance- duration to be confirmed with site capacity– either 2.5 hours with small audiences on performance trail or 40mins larger capacity show

Monday 7 Alleys Portal closes – the horses disappear into ash cloud, the ash people appear on rooftops waving & going through doorways

Tuesday Company Depart

**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.

**Budget**

Please see added attachment.

**Headline Tech Rider**

On-costs to be met by Hull 2017:

* Lights / sound (PA, radio mics, etc.) – Indicative spec to follow
* Power (generator/s)
* Stewarding - Indicative numbers/timings to follow
* Overnight security
* Crew / on-site production assistance – Unload, build, de-rig & load
* Barriers/fencing
* Tracking & other materials for rough pathways
* Decking
* Costs of ensuring safe sites
* Motorola radios - Up to 12 for duration of rehearsals and performance events
* Gazebos/tents for control position, volunteers and company dressing rooms/production space
* On-site portaloos