**Report on the Ace 2017 Conference:**

**14th-15th March 2017, Edinburgh.**

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**True’s Yard Fisherfolk Museum**

I was rather concerned I wasn’t going to make the conference having contracted pneumonia the week before. Thankfully I was well enough to attend and I am so glad I did because it was a wonderful experience and I learned so much. I’ve tried to condense it all into a few bullet points:

**Things I learned at the Ace 2017 Conference**

* Next time bring business cards.
* Make more use of your collection- one of the stalls used maps to tremendous commercial advantage.
* Innovate don’t imitate! Don’t be a cheap copy of Starbucks. Improve your offer but never lose your authenticity.
* Have clear vision with your projects.
* Communication is key! Cascade from the top downward.
* Monitor your objectives!
* Tackle exclusion from the Boardroom to the Gift Shop.
* Buddy up- it is physically impossible to attend every lecture. Swapping notes with another attendee will make your life so much easier.
* Get advice from architects as to your layout.
* Inspired evenings- think outside the box when it comes to fundraising.
* Brexit- are we a mirror? Should we reflect our core values or our audience? – Not an easy question to answer.
* Don’t be afraid to change.
* There is no one way of doings things. Embrace one audience like The Gainsborough or change to attract a different audience like the National Theatre- just keep trying!
* Don’t just look at the exhibitors stalls- talk to them! They aren’t going to try and hard sell you. They are there to get their brand out and make contacts- not to try and force you to order.
* If you want a seat at the main lectures get there early.
* Tell wonderful stories- ultimately that is what we are here to do.
* ‘Placemaking’ – inspire pride in your town/city.
* Your shop is just as much a part of your Museum as the galleries.