



ENGLISH HERITAGE

ECHOSCAPE TRANSCRIPT

Echoscape is a 3D audio experience designed for visitors to Maiden Castle. The following transcript is for people who will have difficulty accessing this audio but would still like to experience the content. If possible we encourage you, like those downloading the audio, to try the experience at Maiden Castle. Print this transcript and take it with you, following the instructions as you go.

If you're in a different part of the world we still encourage you to read the transcript outside, with the sky above your head, and the grass beneath your feet. Set aside a good 40 minutes and step into the world of Maiden Castle.

<INTRO MUSIC>

NARRATOR: We're about to go on a journey.

Find a spot nearby where you feel safe to close your eyes.

< PAUSE >

Now, close your eyes.
Feel the weight of your body pressing on your feet, into the ground.

Feel the breeze on your skin.

Take a deep breath in and out.

They call me Maiden Castle.
On my slopes five thousand years of lives and dramas have unfolded.

On this exact spot others have, and will, close their eyes and imagine you: impossibly distant in the past or future.

You are linked in that imagining.

Time is like this place: enfolding circles like my ramparts and layered like the soils and sediments under your feet. Let your imagination bore through those layers of time so you can feel the stories of those others all at once. Can they feel you? Hear you?



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<PAUSE>

Open your eyes and look at me.
Take in my size. I've been here a long time.
Look up at the sky.
Same light. Same cloud. Same sun.
How warm are you?
Did they feel the same in their leathers and furs, or
Roman armour or Victorian tweed?

Your presence here, on the solid mud beneath your
feet makes you part of a shared story.

I will guide you a little, but what's most important is that
you follow your feet.

With the car park behind you, follow the path to the
left with the fence running alongside it. Or, if you'd like
an easier walk, take the other path to the right.

Walk towards me, and let's see whose imaginations you
come across.

< MUSIC >

NARRATOR:

Here's an old woman, she's a storyteller from the late
Iron Age, nearly two thousand years ago.
Her name is Nonna.
She walks right alongside where you are towards the hill,
for a meeting with the other Elders of her community.
She's brisk – walk a little faster to keep up with her, and
keep walking. We're aiming for the top.

NONNA:

(Conspiratorially mischievous, she wants you to listen)
My Grandmother was never in a hurry. I remember her
with her small grey pony walking between villages, he
carrying pottery to trade.
Her carrying stories of far off places and a time long ago.
I can smell the pony's sweet warm breath.
Soft muzzle, thick lips gently exploring my hair, the back
of my neck.
Get off!

<PONY SNORT>

Her stories meant she was always invited closest to the



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hearth so all could see her.
I see her now, sitting cup in hand, waiting for the right
moment.
She'd smile, stretch out her tanned skinny legs, and
begin.
Her favourite was the fisherman who caught a skeleton
woman in his nets and ran home screaming.
He had no idea she was following him home, all a-tangle
in his tackle.
But when he turned and saw her, sad and alone in his
firelight, he felt pity, not fear, and let her stay.
As he slept he dreamt of a lost girl and cried for her.
The skeleton woman drank his tears and grew flesh and
skin on her bones. When the fisherman awoke he found
a whole woman with a fierce heartbeat in the bed next
to him...
...(wryly) they were both very happy with what they
found and so lived together forever.

As a child at her knee her stories transformed me as I
hung off her
Every.
Single.
Word.

< MUSIC >

NARRATOR:

Follow your feet. Keep heading upwards, there is more
of me to discover.

<PAUSE >

Try walking a little slower.

Now you're in step with a man who was here about
one hundred and twenty years ago. He's a little more
out of breath than you are from climbing the hill.
His name is Thomas Hardy. He's a writer in his 50s.
Today he wants to get away from the gossip of
Victorian society and lose himself in the elements and
his own imagination.

<HARDY'S WHEEZY BREATH>

Continue slowly with him to the top. Then wait there
and look about with him.



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HARDY:

(Considered, as if thinking out loud to himself and in satisfaction as he uncovers new metaphors. descriptions)

The castle looms out of the shade by degrees, like a thing waking up and asking what I want there.

It is so enlarged by nearness that its whole shape cannot be taken in at one view.

I climb upward to invade Mai-Dun, the 'Castle of the Great Hill'.

The stupendous ruin is varied with protuberances, which from hereabouts have the animal aspect of warts, wens, knuckles, and hips.

It may indeed be likened to an enormous many-limbed organism, cephalopod in shape — lying lifeless, and covered with a thin green cloth, which hides its substance, while revealing its contour.

<PAUSE>

<STRENGTHENING WIND>

A squally wind blows in the face as it skips sportively down the slope that I so laboriously clamber up.

Its track can be discerned by the undulations of the withered grass-bents.

<SOUND SUDDENLY STOPS>

Looking aloft for a moment I perceive that the sky is much more overcast than it has been, and a dead lull in what is now a gale ensues with almost preternatural abruptness.

<LULL THEN WIND HEAVES>

A storm begins with a heave of the whole atmosphere, like the sigh of a weary strong man on turning to recommence unusual exertion.

(Tone and volume raises as storm sets in, struggling to speak over it)

The wind, quickening, rushes along helter-skelter, carrying thick rain upon its back.

The rain is followed by hailstones which fly through the defile in battalions — rolling, hopping, ricocheting, snapping, clattering down the shelving banks in an indefinable haze of confusion.

It is impossible to proceed further till the storm



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somewhat abates, and I draw up behind a spur of the inner scarp, and *thus await* events.

< MUSIC >

NARRATOR: Time to walk a little further. Find a place that feels calm and peaceful, then stop.

<PAUSE>

We've found another man: Paul Nash. He's a modernist painter. It's 1937. He stands here, where you stand right now, looking down at his shoelaces.

NARRATOR: He's here to find comfort on my hills, feel the breeze on his face and the ancients below his feet. He wants perspective, but right now all he can see is the muck on his shoes.

NASH: (*Bottled anger*)
I should never have read that blasted newspaper.

But, dammit, I can't... I just can't swallow it!
It's unthinkable: to start another one.

The Great War tore everything apart.

The fabric of reality.

So many lying broken in the mud.
A whole generation.
Now a void.

All that was green and natural split apart and defiled.

The driving rain.
The stinking evil, yellow mud.
The shell holes filled up with green-white water.
The roads and tracks covered in inches of slime.
The black dying oozing trees.
The blasphemous sunrise.

And the shells that never ceased.

<PAUSE>

And now?
Now we are left with the new world we have made:



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Broken and fragmented.

<PAUSE>

The livestock graze contentedly all around me. I feel
ashamed of this agitation.

You're behaving like a petulant schoolboy.
Pull yourself together, Nash.
Swallow it down and get sketching.

How to paint the magic of this place. How to blend the
now and the then.

NARRATOR:

Time to move to my higher ground.
Find an elevated spot.
A place with a view.
Where you can watch and wait and consider.

You have a couple of minutes: a storm is coming.

< MUSIC >

NONNA:

A storm is coming.
My day's work is done and I'm sitting on the ramparts,
watching, waiting.
Normally I can see what is coming.
But this time my view is obscured.

There's been rumours of an endless sea of undefeatable
metal men. They come from vast lands ruled by a single
man who claims to own the whole world from ocean to
sky.
(*With disgust and disbelief*) As if there wasn't enough for
everyone.

I am the only one who realises our whole way of life
may change.

We've lived on this hill for so long.
I could talk for days about the brave and the stupid
generations who have grown, loved, died here.
But even I can't imagine the new world that is coming.

<PAUSE>

<SOUNDS OF IRON AGE COMMUNITY FROM BEHIND: SMITHING AND WEAPON
MAKING, GRINDING CORN, LIVESTOCK >



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I hear the sounds of my people behind our safe walls.
Children play, we work the grain, we feed the animals.

They say, ours is a safe place, isn't it? Our gates are
strong.

(Disdainful)

If I can't see what is coming, they won't even turn to
look.

Oh, we've hoarded grain and livestock, weapons are
sharp, thousands of slingstones piled.

(Breathes in)

But we've stood in readiness for so many weeks now.
Normal life creeps back.
As life does.
As life will.

I sit, watch, wait, stretching my old legs out in the sun.
There are no stories to tell at such a time.

I know violent men will come.
They're far from their families and their land. They will
have forgotten kindness.

<PAUSE>

A breeze hits my face and I shiver.
This waiting feels like a cold knife in my belly.
For the first time I think these walls might not protect
us.

I don't feel safe.

(Together)

NASH:
NONNA: I don't feel safe.
I don't feel safe.

NARRATOR: Start walking again. Explore. Nash is close by.

NASH: I don't feel safe.
That's what is setting me on edge.
I should ignore the news.
The weight of the camera pulls on my neck as I walk.

(Slight disdain)



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I'm looking for Mortimer Wheeler, that great 'man of science' and archaeology.

He insists that objects, *people*, buried in this place for countless centuries must be dug up, catalogued, judged and removed to a museum.

Their secrets cannot remain where our ancestors, in good faith, hid them from the sky.

Progress demands it.

I'm in a mind to document *him*.

<LONG PAUSE >

I stop in shock at the sight of it.

A starkly precise grid of exposed earth set out in pits and pathways.

The process enables more precise documentation of the archaeology but the Maiden seems somehow exposed. I want to cover her modesty.

Wheeler is puffed up and proud, with big moustaches on his sun burnt face.

He's excited, like a child, waving me over to something he's found in a far pit.

I try to navigate the trenches but I lose my footing on the loose earth. I slip into one.

Dammit.

My elbow plows into soft mud, but the camera is safe.

Wheeler's too engrossed to notice.

I pick myself up and step more carefully over to him.

He straightens as I reach him and in so doing reveals the full glory of his find: a twisted human skeleton, open mouthed and frozen in a slow twisting writhe.

It's a war grave he says.

Muddy bones at the bottom of a damp dark trench.

Heaps of mud and dislocated earth.

There's...

No, I almost can't...

There are no words.

Nausea...

Spinning....

Men of science.



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The dead screaming in silence.

NASH: *(Total fear)*
Aaaaargh!

<SOUND OF WWI SHELLS WHISTLING PAST>

Aaaargh!
Damn it. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it.
Stop damn it! Stop!

<SOUND OF SHELLS WHISTLING PAST>

Keep it together.
NASH!
Try!
It's not real. It can't be real.

<SOUND OF SHELL WHISTLING PAST>

God.
Look about you, man. Use the damn imagery.
Green hills, see?
This is England, not Flanders.
A horizon of green.
See the lines.
Sweeping lines of green mounds.
This is Dorset. Where dinosaurs roamed.

<PAUSE>

Then men and women presumably.
With their stone and flints. I see lines of time curving
back into the distant past.
Focus on the lines man, sketch them down.
Sketch the damn lines.
Tracing its circular lines.

HARDY: *(Together)*
Tracing its circular lines.
NASH: Tracing its circular lines

NARRATOR: Move slower. Hardy approaches

HARDY: Tracing its circular lines, the roar of the storm can be heard travelling
the complete circuit of the castle — a measured mile — coming
round at intervals like a circumambulating column of infantry.
I start to walk again.



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Lightning radiates round, and a rumbling as from its subterranean vaults — if there were any — fills the fort.

The lightning repeats itself, and, coming after the thoughts of martial men, bears a fanciful resemblance to swords moving in combat. The very brassy hue of the ancient weapons that were used here.

Acoustic perceptions multiply.

We can almost hear the stream of years that have borne those deeds away from us.

Strange articulations seem to float on the air from the gateway, of coming and going, and general excitement.

There arises an ineradicable fancy that they are human voices. If so, they must be the lingering air-borne vibrations of conversations uttered at least fifteen hundred years ago.

NARRATOR:

We are moving into the centre of the storm.

Walk to the middle until you feel enclosed and surrounded by me.

Then stop.

Look.

Wait.

<CLIMACTIC MUSIC>

HARDY:

The violence of the storm was transitory.

I find myself left bare to the mild gaze of the sun, which sparkles now on every wet grass-blade and sponge of moss.

The abrupt configuration of mounds is now for the first time clearly revealed — mounds whereon, doubtless, spears and shields have frequently lain while their owners loosened their sandals and yawned and stretched their arms in the sun.

Before the eye stretches the interior of the fort. So open and so large it is practically an upland plateau, yet wholly within the walls of what may be understood as one single structure.

Men must have often gone out from the gates in the morning to battle with the Roman legions under Vespasian. Some return no more, others come back at evening, bringing with them the noise of their heroic deeds. But not a page, not a stone, has preserved their fame.

This place is a witness to all that happened.



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(Together)

NONNA: This place is a witness to all that happened.
HARDY: This place is a witness to all that happened.

NARRATOR: It's time to hear the end of Nonna's story. Find a place on the edge and watch with her.

NONNA: This place is a witness to all that happened.

The storm has broken: Vespasian's army has arrived. In the clear light I see what our future holds.

Let me tell you a story.

When my son learned to walk he didn't crawl first.

He'd sit and watch the other children but he wouldn't crawl over to meet them.

He had no time for half measures, when he was ready, he would just get up and walk.

One day he pulled himself up onto a stool, let go with one hand, then the other, wobbled – only slightly – then walked until he collapsed into my arms giggling.

As if that's what he'd been saving himself up for all along.

I knew then he'd be a wise man and a leader.

But I didn't know what he'd lead us into.

I watch from the ramparts as he steps out of our strong, safe gates towards the Roman encampment. I can't help but think of those first sure steps he took as a tiny boy.

'You'll see mother', he said this morning, 'there will be a way to live alongside these men. And I will find it'.

Now he walks, steady and proud, his own near-grown son following a step behind, as they follow the Roman messenger towards an unknowable future.

I tremble at the sight of our two worlds walking together because I know enough of Romans to be sure that they must live *over* others, not *alongside* them.

I know in our shared future, with them over us, there'll be no place for an old storyteller like me.

Their women are treated as slaves – belonging to the men, with no place on their councils.

When you imagine a world run by men alone it's no surprise to think



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they'll never be satisfied until they've eaten up the whole world.

(Sighing)

So I sit and watch from the wall for my son to come home.

<MUSIC>

It's dusk and near dark, and he is returning.

He is alone.

His head is bowed, he's unsteady, stumbling,
as if he's forgotten how strongly he found his feet all those years ago.

I yell the alarm to the gatekeepers to let him in, and run to catch him
as he collapses into my arms. He's sobbing, saying: 'All is lost mother,
they are so many and they have taken my boy'.

I see now, our people have stepped from a safe familiar place into a
brutal one.

We are making a new world

(Together)

NASH: We are making a new world.

NONNA: We are making a new world.

NARRATOR: Walk again to find Nash. He can almost hear me.

NASH: We are making a new world.

But surely the ancients still walk in this awe-striking place?

The scene is serene, except where it's not.

The glinting white bones lie exposed in the sunshine as guardians to a
world that is both here, and not here.

Spoilt earth... things that should be left buried.

The earth turns over and is rent open.

All in the name of progress.

<PAUSE>

Look about you Nash, try to see the country all around.

This Maiden Castle that men have made and lived upon. Its epic banks
and ramparts.

What should I paint?



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Where is my scarcer instinct?

These soft, ancient contours flowing in circles.

This grass, which somehow always re-grows to cover up the mess of man's disruptions.

Skulls in clusters like bird's eggs...
A cold scientific grid.

<PAUSE>

Damn it!

Those men. Those 'modern men' who upend the world because we must always be moving *forwards*.

Propelling us, compelling us onwards in a straight line.

Why won't they look around them.

They talk of war like it's an inevitable thing.

Like they've forgotten entirely.

(*Calming*)

Breathe.

Listen to her.

Green. Green hills swerving around and around, enfolding me.

The sky is above. Up and down still works.

<PAUSE>

Here I stand firmly on this Maiden ground, pregnant with the past.
Wrapped about with a blanket of turf, she lies in her curved lines of the present, dreaming about possible futures.

Warmed by the mild gaze of the sun.

<CLIMACTIC MUSIC >

NARRATOR:

Warmed by the mild gaze of the sun. Watered by the rain. Caressed by the breeze.

I do dream of the future, the past and the present, all at once, because time doesn't bother me.

I have and will be here forever. Until I'm not, just like you.

I am a focus of imagination.

Many people have stood here, where you are right now, looking, listening, feeling the breeze on their faces.

Wondering who came before and who will come next.

You are one of them.



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What is your story?

<PAUSE>

Who matters to you most in the world?

<PAUSE>

What storms are approaching?
What ground needs rebuilding?

<PAUSE>

What will you do next?

<PAUSE>

Time to regroup.
Stop and look at your feet.
Can you feel them, solid, holding your weight?

Look up at the sky, the clouds drifting in the breeze.
Breathe some of it in.

How do you feel?

<PAUSE>

Explore me. Imagine a time when you're no longer here.

Then, continue your story.

<MUSIC >

CREDITS

NARRATOR:

This audio experience is a Splash & Ripple production for English Heritage.

It was written by Rosie Poebright, using some of the writings of Paul Nash and extracts from Thomas Hardy's short story, "Tryst at an ancient monument". Nonna's Iron Age story was informed by Wheeler's excavations and the writings of Tacitus.

Sound design and music was created by Helen Skiera using the vocal talents of Alice Barclay, Andrew Collins, Ian Harris and Stevie Thompson.