

Time travelling

Contributed by Christine Carrion

Time travelling at Gammplatsen

In 2004 a new attraction was unveiled at the homestead estate at Gammplatsen (litterally "the old place"). During the summer of 2003 the local Sami (or Lapp) association in the town of Lycksele (southern Lapland) collaborated with the Forestry museum to build a traditional Sami hut.

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I had the privilege to join one of the sessions. Half of the group, including myself, represented Samis from the mountains and the other half the settlers. We portrayed the two groups as we met the priest at school as well as in church.

Classes from different schools performed this educational roleplay during the spring, "time-treveling" like us to mid 18th century events dressed un authentic clothes. We, the children and us adults, learned old skills by listening and talking as well as by practical activities like cookeing and by doing handicrafts.

We enacted the quarrel that sprung from a fall out about the rights to fish in a certain area and that ended up with the settlers sabotaging the nets of the Sami fishers by throwing them into the trees. The priest was a part of the control system set up by the government and he made sure that everyone behaved in a "proper" manner. The Sami had to guard their tongues about some things. Like owning a drum. They could be pretty sure that it would be confiscated and destroyed if the secret got out as it was regarded as wizardry.

We learned that the diets of the two groups were quite different.

Meeting our own history like this was a pleasant and instructive experience, and the Sami association and the Forestry museum have since expanded their offering to include the rest of the population as well as tourists. Shorter time travelling sessions can be booked for groups

Text and photo Christine Carrion