

Casting the Blue Badge spell: *here, there and everywhere*

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The recent royal wedding was experienced the Blue Badge way by thousands of visitors to London; and by millions (potentially, billions!) of people through TV screens, radio waves and websites around the world. Well done to all Blue Badge guides for informing and entertaining the globe in our unique way!

There must be many examples of colleagues

who worked in this period and congratulations goes to everyone for doing us all so proud during the royal wedding!

I know of colleagues who featured in images and sounds beamed to lands here, there and everywhere: on ABC (Maitland Simpson), BBC and CBS New York (Nadia Marchant); NBC and Canadian Radio (David Kershaw); in Panama (Maria Gartner on Canal 13, Telemetro); in Spain

(Maria Morote on TV channel "Cuatro" and "Radio Nacional de España"); in the Spanish-speaking Americas (Monica Elliston on Telemundo); and Danish TV (Kaare Nielsen on TV2 and Reuteurs Bureau). Many of these opportunities reached guides directly through the APTG and Guild websites; others through word of mouth, recommendations, chance meetings and of course, through the usual contacts!

Once the Blue Badge spell is cast it can lead to all sorts of opportunities: for the individual guides involved and for the Blue Badge community as a whole. So thanks to everyone who publicised the Blue Badge!

Here are some stories:

Monica Elliston on US Spanish-language channel, Telemundo

When Telemundo, the world's second-largest Spanish-speaking TV channel that airs across North and Latin America, asked Monica Elliston to take a small team of presenter, director and cameraman on the royal wedding processional route for a news feature ahead of the big day, many of her closest colleagues and friends couldn't wait to watch it. Utterly enticed and captivated with her storytelling, Telemundo invited Monica to return to the screens of tens of millions of Spanish speakers across North America to co-present, live and direct, on the actual wedding day! On the 29th April at 5am, Monica walked into the temporary studios we all saw erected outside Buckingham Palace. Whilst the make-up team fussed over her and the toings and froings of the world's media danced the chaotic waltz demanded of a truly global media spectacular around her, Monica psyched herself up in the way any Blue Badge guide would: she filed through her Blue Badge brain to prep the royal facts and anecdotes and she scanned for knowledge that reaches our Blue Badge radar without our even knowing it. With all of this to the fore of her mind, she took her place next to Maria Celeste, the channel's main anchor, and she was ready to guide viewers through what they were seeing; weaving-in stories of the past and the present to offer the insight of Blue Badge London guide.



Monica Elliston, Telemundo, 29 April 2011, Buckingham Palace, London

Photo courtesy of Monica Elliston

Monica conveyed London and what was happening to it on that very special day so that all who listened and watched would fall as in love with London as she is. In a seamless way, spectators were informed, entertained, captivated. And the whole time, in every frame and shot of Monica with scenes of the palace and royal family behind her, there was also a glistening gem on the screen: a gorgeous Blue Badge hanging off a chain around her neck.

On that day I was guiding in the City, avoiding the traffic of Westminster. During a coffee break at St Paul's I used an app on my iPhone to watch a live stream of Monica on Telemundo and the immense pride of seeing a colleague

and the Blue Badge going out to the world was difficult to hide. Before I knew it, a surreal scene unfolded: my punters were gathered around me watching the events of a mile away through a small iPhone screen relaying a moving image being aired on millions of TVs on the other side of the world. So much was magical about that day!

article continues on page 2

Also in this issue

- **TERMINAL 5 FINE ART GALLERY**
Page 7
- **BOOK REVIEWS**
Page 8