Love’s Welcome, Bolsover Castle, July 2014.

This was a performance which combined an immersive site specific devised opening followed by a historically informed workshop production of Ben Jonson’s masque Love’s Welcome. The masque was performed in the Little Garden at Bolsover Castle in one of the possible performance spaces for the original masque. The site specific devised introduction was produced and written by Betteridge and the creative team. The entire show was directed by Betteridge. This video includes contributions from Charlotte Ewart, choreography, Dr Nicola Stacey, Chief Curator English Heritage, and Professor James Knowles, Brunel University.

The research elements of this production were three fold -

1. The workshop production of Love’s Welcome tested the potential of the Little Garden as a performance space. A key result of the production was that the hexagonal shape of the walls of the Little Garden, which match the shape of the Globe, provided a perfect space for theatre to the performed.
2. The workshop brought together Jonson’s original texts with devised seventeenth-century music and dance in order to explore how Love’s Welcome as a masque worked.
3. The immersive opening explored ways of using drama to re-create the textual and material historical context for the performance of Jonson’s masque in July, 1634. When the masque was originally performed the local ‘free’ miners were in a state of uproar and the immersive opening part reflects this historical context.

The research methodology for the masque was based on Betteridge’s AHRC funded productions of The Play of the Weather at Hampton Court Palace and Ane Satyre of Thrie Estatis at Linltihgow Palace. It also drew on Professor Knowles’ published work on Ben Jonson and Stuart masques.