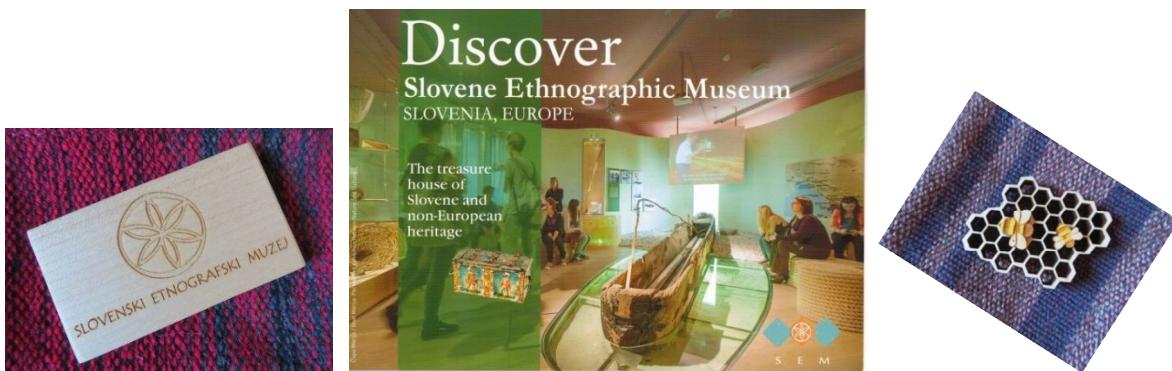


# **AIMA**

## **Agriculture \* Food \* Environment \* People**

### **The AIMA Executive Committee Meeting at the SEM Slovene Ethnographic Museum**

**8-12 July 2019, Ljubljana, Slovenia**



Left to right: the six-pointed flower emblem of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, visitors around the *čupa* (“chupa” dugout fishing boat) and the ever-present bee; background hand-woven fabrics from the weaving workshops at the SEM



Left: The new SEM (Ph. Pierre Del Porto) with banners to announce “Shamanism of Siberian Peoples” and “Where Bees are at Home” temporary exhibits (Photo Cozette Griffin-Kremer)

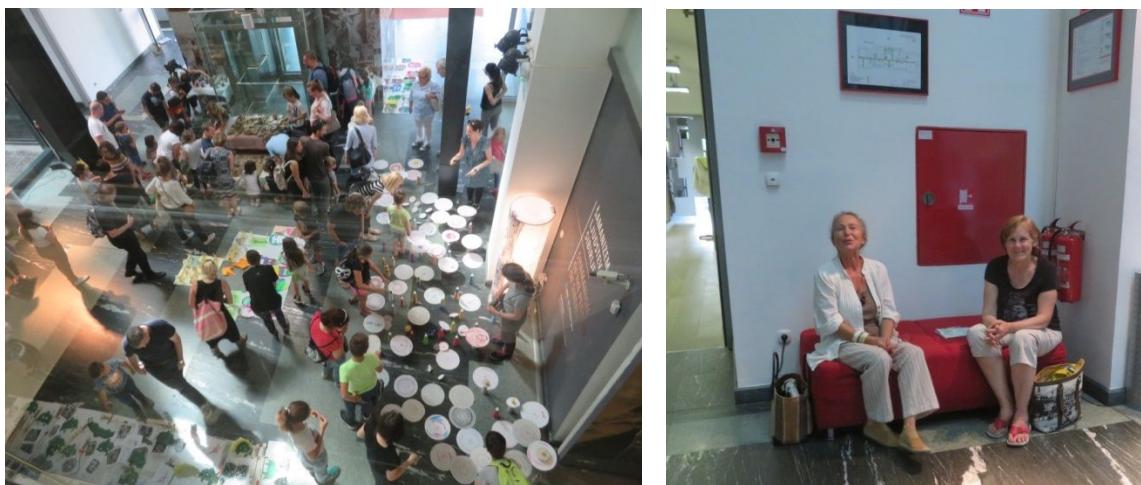
#### **Welcome and participation by our hosts in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum**

Simply walking up to “meet” the Slovene Ethnographic Museum recalls its national and international ethnographic mission, since the façade of the SEM displayed the banners for the two exhibits on during our own short stay: “Where Bees Are at Home” (Kjer so Čebele Doma) and “Shamanism of the Peoples of Siberia”, an exhibit on loan from the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg. This is a pertinent reminder that Slovene ethnographic traditions have had a major **international focus** since their very beginnings in 1936.



Left: from the Shamanism temporary exhibit; Center: just one of the “loaf” hives with panel; Right: the Slovene world of bee skeps (NB all photos without author indicated are by Cozette Griffin-Kremer)

SEM Director Dr. Tanja Roženberger attended our second full day excursion to make acquaintance with us personally. The meeting was officially opened by Dr. Bojana Rogelj Škafar (Director 2005-2015), who is curator of folk art collections. Bojana stressed the depth of the museum’s ethnographic past and methodology, the role, among other distinguished predecessors, of the post-war director Boris Orel, especially in the ethnographic collecting policy, with great emphasis on **recording objects plus the people who understand them**. She noted that meeting organizer and AIMA Executive Committee member Barbara Sosič has been working on small local breeds and that the SEM is proud of their outreach to communities of all sorts concerned with **tangible and intangible heritage**. For example, they have a special program beginning at the moment on a local breed of goats and the SEM’s intensive involvement in intangible heritage as a work-in-progress was introduced during the meeting by Adela Pukl, curator of spiritual culture and intangible heritage. Sonja Kogej-Rus, head of educational Programs, came to welcome us to an afternoon session as well as taking one of our Polish representatives under her wing to share experiences in the children’s programme.



Left: parents and children come to the lobby to check out the children’s workshop; right: Inja Smerdel, former SEM director and Mary Watson (US) in the lobby

A highlight was our special guests, since Dr. Kate Arnold-Forster, Director of the MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) in Reading, the host institution for the AIMA triennial congress in July 2020, came to participate. Last, but not least, former SEM Director Inja Smerdel came in to greet us, a reminder that we owe the participation of our meeting organizer, Barbara Sosič, Head of the SEM Agricultural Collections, to Inja, who suggested sending her to attend the AIMA 2014 congress in Marseille. Barbara gave us her own brief welcome and we set off to follow the business meeting programme and her schedule of meals

and visits to continue the shoulder-rubbing, one of the most valued aspects of any Executive Committee meeting.

This does not mean that EC members far away were left out, as Claus Kropp (DE), Debra Reid (US) and Surajit Sarkar (IN) attended, in part or in whole, electronically. This involved some fairly acrobatic efforts, in view of the time differences between Europe, North America and India and recalls our regular EC practice of Internet conference calls every two months since the last congress in Estonia in 2017, which enable us to keep the ball rolling, in spite of occasional “technology” challenges.

### **Take-away Message from Cozette Griffin-Kremer, AIMA member for France**



Cozette Griffin-Kremer (FR), Hanna Ignatowicz (PO), Photo Kerry-Leigh Burchill

#### ***On networking and the future, with a sense of history***

*A chance for a good part of the AIMA Executive Committee to see the bee panels in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum is not a question of pure luck, although we were very lucky to have such wonderful people hosting us and Barbara Sosič organizing. Why is Barbara on the EC, though? This goes back nearly twenty years. In 2000, I got to know Inja Smerdel, her former boss and SEM director (1995-2005), in the museum because another researcher and I – the formidable Editha Hörandner – could not bear another of our many conference excursions and hid in the SEM, then had a long talk with Inja. After this, Inja came to represent Slovenian ethnographic work in the very large millstone conference in La Ferté-sous-*

*Jouarre, France, where she met François Sigaut and eventually began a doctorate under his direction on oxen and cattle culture in Slovenia, interrupted by his death. She also attended the 2004 Society for Folk Life Studies meeting in Mellac, France, the only one we have had outside the UK, so that she established relations with the SFLS, as well, long since an effective partner to the AIMA – we had our important 2012 relaunch meeting in Scotland, entirely due to the good will of four SFLS members. Inja came to Paris to meet other scholars focusing on various aspects of working cattle, from Egypt to the European Middle Ages and modern-day practice, as well as another time to speak to the Société d’Ethnozootechnie alongside an expert oxdriver and a venerable horse ploughman (who talked about nettle-tree whips and demonstrated one).*

*When I asked Inja who at the SEM might be willing to participate in the AIMA, she instantly suggested Barbara, who attended the AIMA 2014 and 2017 congresses, as well as the 2015 Reading EC meeting, joining the executive committee in 2014, all with the kind agreement of Bojana (SEM Director at the time). Now, her colleagues have come together to make our board meeting as pleasant as it was fruitful, and help us along on our path to the future, but the story goes back to 2000. Thanks to this nigh-invisible crossing of threads, to networking, it was possible to bring people from Europe, North America and even India (if electronically) into the SEM for a look at an institution that reaches out beyond its collections to embrace the human actors who embody the skills and knowledge that bring life to*

*museum holdings. We had the honour of meeting some of them.*

*Among the many thoughtful points that Barbara made to us is that we can widen our outreach towards friends and partners to include ethnographic museums which so often have outstanding collections relating*

*to agriculture and rural life, as well as contacts with the people who bring living experience to our thinking.*

*Cozette Griffin-Kremer, former Secretary General (2014-2017), associate researcher CRBC Brest, FR*



MERL logo and entrance to the museum, University of Reading, copyright Rose and Trev Clough, licensed for use under Wikipedia Creative Commons

**The Business Meeting** spanned two very full days and spilled over frequently into mealtimes and study trips. First and foremost was a detailed update on progress in organizing the AIMA 2020 congress in Reading at the MERL (Museum of English Rural Life), including already impressive responses to the call for papers, contacts with keynote speakers and panel participants, and exploration of funding. Outreach to a broad range of actors and stakeholders in agriculture will include invitations to pertinent associations and societies, such as farmers' unions or specialist research interest groups.

True to the AIMA mission to **encourage scholars and young museum professionals**, there will be bursaries available – more news about those later – and just how to benefit to the maximum from Reading's ideal location for immediate access to the University's world-class farming research centers, the local museums of interest to attendees and such nearby gems as the Oxford Botanic Garden or the Pitt-Rivers Museum. The MERL will be hosting a special exhibit during the congress time, "Commons", an artist-led event, as well as its own "late public events", a reminder of the museum's rather unique position as a rural life communicator located in a large university on an urban site. Optional post-congress study trips farther afield to award-winning institutions are very much in our organisers' minds and will be announced later.

## **AIMA** **Agriculture \* Food \* Environment \* People**

Some of our further business – essential, but that often makes heads nod – included an on-going re-evaluation of our operating statutes, archives, membership recruitment and promotional efforts. Communications and how to keep them vibrant are among the obvious essentials, so we are intensifying use of social media and launching regular blog posts, in addition to the semi-annual newsletter. We are proud that some of the material comes to us in

other languages than English, so that original articles are posted on the AIMA website and we plan to continue this policy of inclusiveness through language diversity.



Engagement with members and friends is at the heart of AIMA priorities and found a special resonance in our host setting at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, where promotion of **Intangible Cultural Heritage** holds pride of place. We also emphasize our alignment with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**, many of which have long been actively pursued by agricultural and rural life museums – they were often ahead of their time! Our outreach includes museums or professional scholarly associations or societies, as well as national and international organizations, and we have been working with professional groups such as EXARC (the international association of experimental archaeology open-air museums), the ALHFAM (the North American-based Association of Living History, Farming and Agriculture Museums), the SFLS (Society for Folk Life Studies) and universities such as Heidelberg with whom we have embarked on a joint venture to bring valuable publications into the realm of **digital accessibility**. This often involves highly fruitful reciprocal relations that enable us to enhance the impact of agriculture and farming-related groups on the awareness of policy-makers. **Relevance** is as great a value as traditions of high standards in museum practice and related research, so we work in each meeting on re-evaluating our strategic plan.



Left: Pete Watson and Hisashi Horio outside the entrance to the SEM, Right: AIMA Secretary General Kerry-Leigh Burchill showing electronic attendees the bee panels in our meeting room, NB the generous bags of museum documents from the SEM on the table



Left: Julia Hanulewicz and Hanna Ignatowicz (PO), Hisashi Horio (JA), Pierre Del Porto (FR), right: Isabel Hughes, Oliver Douglas, Kerry-Leigh Burchill, Barbara Sosič, while Kerry-Leigh shows Claus Kropp onscreen to the other EC members

### **Take-away message from Secretary General Kerry-Leigh Burchill, Director Canada Agriculture and Food Museum**

In a nutshell, my biggest take away was the success that Slovenia is having with museums partnering with local historians and practitioners of traditional ag practices, recreational activities and cultural food traditions to register, document, record and safeguard intangible cultural heritage. How exciting that Barbara and our boat captain found out that their submission was accepted on the same day as our delightful trip.

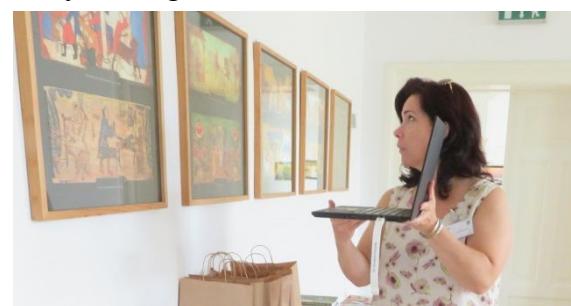
**Special presentations** included some highly informal “touring” in the meeting room for our EC members who attended electronically. Secretary-General Kerry-Leigh Burchill faithfully transported her computer about to angle in on the official presentations and even gave our lucky electronic folk a tour of the magnificent

**Take-away Message from Claus Kropp, AIMA member for Germany** in charge of protocoling our blog posts, does not mention motion sickness at all:



*For almost two days I had the chance to attend the EC meeting of AIMA in Slovenia through a video-conference line from Germany. Although it is always a challenge to get all the technology involved established properly (especially if more than one party is included), I was positively surprised to what extent it was*

**beehive panels** adorning the room. We did not ask them if they ever felt queasy, but they were able to tune in to the presentation of AIMA’s proposed new “look”, as well as stimulating introductions to our meeting host’s work. We had follow-up comments on their own take-away message from several EC members.



Kerry-Leigh sharing the bee hive paintings with our electronic attendees

*possible to play an active role in the discussions even if I was not physically present. Thanks to the Secretary General Kerry-Leigh Burchill, I was able to see and hear basically everything going on in the conference room and also other EC members did their best to include us. Of course, it was a pity not to be able to participate in the excursions on the days following the EC meeting itself and also not being able to exchange more thoughts with other EC members in the evenings at dinner, but nevertheless I would sum up my "digital" experience of the EC meeting in Slovenia as downright positive.*

*Claus Kropp, Head of Experimental Archaeology at Laureham Open Air Laboratory, Kloster Lorsch*

### The system for safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Slovenia



Adela Pukl, M. A.  
Slovene Ethnographic Museum



Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovenia

### Coordinating Intangible Cultural Heritage in Slovenia

Adela Pukl gave us a PowerPoint presentation on how safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) functions in Slovenia. After Slovenia ratified the UNESCO convention on ICH in 2008, the SEM became coordinator and is running the register of 69 elements, 10 of which have been recognized as of national significance as of July 2019. This involves a **three-step process**: entry of the element in the national ICH register, declaration of the element, then nomination to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The present Slovene list of accepted and proposed subjects includes a wide variety of events, skills and activities, from a passion play to bobbin lace-making, dry-stone walling, breeding of Lipizzan horses, particular places of great cultural and environmental value, foodways such as the *trnič* cheese-making, traditional crafts, salt-pan production or the many festivals in the country attached to Shrovetide, among them, the masking monsters (*kurenti*) to chase away the winter. If you would like further information, please contact Adela at [adela.pukl@etno-muzej.si](mailto:adela.pukl@etno-muzej.si) or Anja Jerin at [anja.jerin@etno-muzej.si](mailto:anja.jerin@etno-muzej.si). This on-going process has involved a series of publications highlighting the elements and readers can consult the coordinator's website at <http://www.nesnovnadediscina.si/en/register-of-intangible-cultural-heritage> or the *Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (2008-2018)* edited by Anja Jerin and Nena Židov (Ljubljana 2019, 87 pages) covering oral traditions, expressions and language (2); performing arts (8); social practices, rituals and festive events (24), knowledge and practices relating to nature and the universe (5), and traditional craftsmanship (28).



Left to right: the Kurenti Shrovetide festivities near Ptui, marking the *trnič* cheeses and the sea-salt pans (courtesy SEM)

### ALHFAM Skills Clips

Pete Watson, AIMA Member for the United States, past President of the ALHFAM and expert ploughman, gave us a special preview of plans to make a series

of ALHFAM “Skills Clips” which will involve one- to five-minute videos to aid **in-house transmission of skills** mastered by staff in museums with an engagement in

living history, or farming and rural life practices. This may be as apparently simple as showing staff how to introduce yourself effectively to a working horse, then harness and hitch up to a plough. Professionals all know that the pressures in what – to visitors – look like the most relaxing and charming demonstrations have to fit in with so much other work that staff sometimes cannot find time to transmit all of the basics essential to keeping institutions going.

### The SEM's Special Children's Learning Area: EthnoAlphabet

In a special “fit” with the AIMA mission of enabling fruitful exchanges among museum professionals, Julia Hanulewicz from the National Museum of Agriculture and Food Industry in Szreniawa, Poland – one of AIMA’s longest-time and most active members – attended one day of the Executive Committee meeting, but also spent a full day with SEM Head of Educational Programs, Sonja Kogej-Rus, and Julia has given us a note on her take-away from this congenial session.



Pete Watson presenting a first draft of an ALHFAM Skills Clip featuring Ed Schultz on how to meet a working horse



Left: entry to EthnoAlphabet; Center: a handmill to learn with; Right: letter “Z” for Zbiratelj (“collector”), Ph. Julia Hanulewicz



**Take-away Message from Julia Hanuliewicz, attending for National Agricultural Museum in Poland**

*First of all I was very warmly welcomed in the educational department in SEM. I spent almost all day there, asked Sonja one million questions and all of them were answered in a kindly and comprehensive way. There were similarities, for example different programs for children, seniors, but also differences. Some of them I can take home, some of them I can't. I will write about those that I can take home. I was very impressed by the idea of a permanent exhibition made especially for kids – their ETHNOALPHABET – interesting, fun and full of important information. Children can read, draw and touch everything that they want and it's a great example of the idea “learning by fun”. I have told my co-workers in our*

*educational department about this exhibition and we all want to create something similar about agriculture!!!!*

*Another good idea was giving an opportunity to spend more time actively in the museum. In my place in Szreniawa, we usually offer one workshop and after that a “tour” with guide, whereas, in the SEM, kids spend most of their time doing*

*workshops. I guess we talk too much, and most kids prefer action.*

*Although I have found many things very familiar in Slovenia, one thing was very special – the importance and role of beekeeping.*

*Julia Hanulewicz*

*Curator, Education and Publications Department*

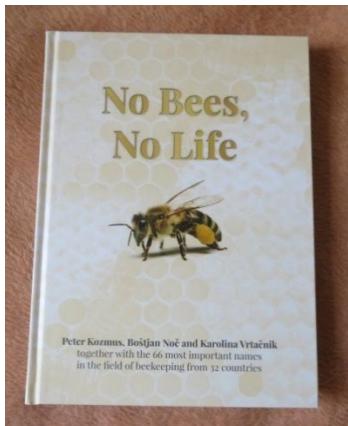


Left: the giant bee watching over Hanna Ignatowicz and Julia Hanulewicz while Bojana Rogelj Škafar takes us on a private tour of the SEM exhibits; Right: small sampling of the beehive panels in the temporary exhibit, to hand scale

Now, after all these comments on bees, it is impossible not to introduce at least a first glimpse of just **how emblematic beekeeping is in Slovenia** and in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. In fact, there is a massive presence of the bee that no visitor could overlook – we could see it from the entrance lobby, looming nearly overhead, thanks to the work of Guillermo Escalante who suspended a giant bee in the staircase passage leading to the July 2018-August 2019 exhibit on beekeeping “Where bees are at home”, to mark the **first celebration of World Bee Day and the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018**.

Following regular museum policy towards their many foreign visitors, the exhibit flyer is **bilingual**, highlighting the native Carniolan bee (*Apis mellifera carnica*) and the profile of beekeeping: over 10,000 beekeepers, nearly 14,000 apiaries with some 180,000 hives. The exhibit’s “bee homes” were drawn from the SEM and other Slovene museums and those of neighbouring countries where the Carniolan bee is important.

Stars of the show are the **painted beehive panels**. True to the cross-disciplinary mission of an ethnographic collection, the exhibit details the main figures, from the late eighteenth century on, what actors were involved in spreading knowledge of the bee as an intimate partner to agriculture and a means for country people to add a cash crop to their household activities. It is no coincidence that among the first of these experts who taught and wrote treatises was **Anton Janša, whose birthday on May 20th was chosen as the date for World Bee Day by the United Nations on the initiative from the Slovenian Beekeepers Association**. A dream in the beginning, this project quickly inspired people in Slovenia and world-wide, all deeply aware that recognition of a World Day went far beyond beekeeping. (*No Bees, No Life*, p. 19).



The SEM encourages outside contributions to its wealth of documents on offer in the museum shop, as from the efforts that

produced the handsome volume *No Bees, No Life*, piloted by the Slovene editors Peter Kozmus, Boštjan Noč and Karolina Vrtačnik, eds., *No Bees, No Life*, Žirovnica: Beebooks, 2017, 352 pages, handsomely illustrated, with contributions from **over sixty international authors** on the hopes for and threats to bee lifeways, bee products and their qualities, beekeeping in Slovenia and around the world, beekeeping tourism and apitherapy, and bees as pure inspiration.

The **Carniolan bee** is famed for its virtues such as overwintering well, not straying into other hives, effective use of a wide variety of pastures including forest, is an especially cleanly homemaker – important for avoiding disease – as well as orienting and swarming cleverly. Slovene beekeepers house their bees in **apiaries** that vary by regional tradition but the most widely used today is the AZ hive. The immense variety of historical hives produced the special pride of Slovenia – the folk art panels popular from the mid-18th century to the beginning of the 20th. However, all beekeeping lives with the fact of life that hives must be transported, as there is no place in the country where there is enough “pasture” for an entire season. As a logical offshoot of beekeeping, there is a strong link to **gingerbread-making**, with its utensils, techniques and products well represented in the SEM permanent displays and activities. The star of the show – the beehive panel – is also the subject of one of the bilingual catalogue collections emblematic of the high quality and thoroughness of SEM publications.



Left: a giant Slovene hayrack used, as in many places, to hold the panels announcing; Right: the Kralov med (Kralov Honey) Beekeepers

## Study Trips

### *Beekeeping is the poetry of agriculture*

Real-Life Lesson One: don't wave your arms! Our tour in the museum's permanent and special exhibits highlighting bee culture prepared us for our study trip to meet Danijela Ambrožič – husband Blaž was busy harvesting honey – at Kralov med (Kralov Honey Farm) in Selo near Bled (<http://www.kralov-med.si/en/>) and this famous quote was the first line of Danijela's introduction to their work. Today's professionals have successfully expanded into “api-tourism” and “apitherapy”. We can testify to the relaxing buzz safely spied on from a reclining position beside the hive entrances, and the charm of a fleeting impression of inhaling

“bee air” from the hives. Danijela took us on tour of the hives, including a look inside both how an individual hive works, then into the apiary itself and led our discussion centered around honey-tasting, trying to divine which flowers gave the key notes.



Executive Committee members in safety gear, learning more about beekeeping and the range of products available.



Left: Danijela explains how an individual hive works; Right: and takes her enthusiasm into the apiary to show us more, while Mary Watson tries out a bit of apitherapy, lying beside the entrances to the hives and listening to the buzz

### Local Breeds Beyond Bees

Bees and beekeeping are only one of the professional **outreach activities** carried on by the SEM. Our meeting organizer Barbara Sosič and her colleagues work with any number of people in agriculture and farming-related professions, also extending their engagement to active support and promotion of local breeds. There is an upcoming project on promotion and safeguard of the **Drežnica goat breed**, among others.

## High Mountain Summer Pasture on the Velika planina and Cika cattle



Left: Velika planina (Big mountain pasture), German Wikipedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Velika\\_planina\\_\(8965484358\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Velika_planina_(8965484358).jpg), Right: Cika cattle with their typical markings. In the background, the ski lift – after the cable car – to get up there

We saw no Drežnica goats, but a remarkable breed of cattle – the Cika – that we met on the “Velika Planina” (“big summer pasture”) on a karst plateau in the Julian Alps of Upper Carniola in northern Slovenia. The Cika are genetically fairly close to their Pinzgauer neighbors in the Austrian Salzburg area. However, there is much emphasis on the Cika having a white zigzag back band and a white band over the upper hind leg at udder height, continued right up the underside to extend over the upper foreleg, with a predominately white tail. They are generally less high at the withers than Pinzgauers.



Left: Barbara translating while Ollie invites Gregor to Reading and leaves him a MERL bag; right: a hint at the work highland farmers do for the EU as landscape stewards



Left: the rare *Scheuchzerieva zvončica* (*Campanula scheuchzeri*) flowers they protect in this safeguarded area; right: Dry-stone wall on the way to Zinka and Andrej's mountain-top home, Ph. Isabel Hughes;

All of this information came from our host, **Gregor Mlakar**, whose family name is based on a feature of these high pastures – the ponds called *mlaka* that are used by the cattle as watering holes and stud the remarkable landscape. Taking care of that landscape is a vital part of making a living for these farmers and cattle-breeders, since the European Union doses out important subsidies for this **stewardship**, which few would any longer undertake, seeing the work involved. A single glimpse at the **dry-stone walling** gives a measure of what was once done to make the land usable for grazing. What one feels in this high atmosphere is great pride in tradition and the capacity to adapt – the once tiny seasonal houses were nearly all destroyed during or after WWII and have been rebuilt with immense care, as well as comfort, falling easily into the trend of today's "tiny house" movement. A few farmers have even kept their now unused pigsty, set up on a stone foundation to protect it, as a reminder that life on the high ground was more varied than today's testimony might indicate.



Left: Gregor's grandparents waiting to welcome their visitors; Right: and test their homemade liquours

Gregor honoured us with an invitation to visit his grandparents, **Zinka and Andrej**, in their mountain home, and a taste of home-made schnapps and blueberry aquavit was awaiting us on their front porch – a welcome boost in the cool air, after the trip up by cable car, ski lift and a walk along the unpaved lanes leading to the clusters of upland homes. We got a taste of what an older one was like, when **Pija**, a high school student in a summer job welcomed us at the Preskar's Cottage, a miniature museum of daily life before solar panels in the **best-preserved high mountain herdsmen's settlement in Europe**. This oval cottage (*batjae*) is the only one rebuilt in the traditional style after the war with its open fireplace, single straw closet bed, shelves to hold each cow's milk in shallow dishes and others for storing and ripening cheeses on the opposite side. The "modern" homes are also roofed with shingles (*šinklni*) and – if modest in space – have all the appurtenances of a comfortable home, from kitchen sink to bathroom.



Left: Preskar's Cottage, Hisashi and Pija watching Kerry-Leigh demonstrate a tree bark cape once used by mountain cattle-herders and shepherds; Right: a "heritage" pigsty – they no longer keep pigs – raised on a stone base to protect it

One of the traditional foods from summer pasture is the salty **cheese called *trnič***, shaped rather like an onion, and decorated with wooden cheese prints (*pisave*). It was once the custom for young herders to give a pair of these utensils to their sweethearts.



Left: our guide Pija explaining how a shepherd's "sleeping stool" worked – if you fall asleep, you fall over;  
Right: our expert *trnič* cheesemaker, Rezka Mali, Photos Kerry-Leigh Burchill



and left: her fresh-made *trniči* cheeses with right: the markers she uses to create the patterns, K-L Burchill

Of course, this is among the highlights of the permanent exhibit in the SEM, which runs from elder practice to the latest message-bearing t-shirt of today. There is nothing like meeting the maker of such cheeses in her own small, welcoming house, so Barbara fielded our questions for our venerable hostess, **Rezka Mali**, as she showed us how to apply the prints, the overhead cheese racks where the cheeses are set to dry, and then the boxes she puts them in for whoever wants to take one home. As Barbara said, this is a common enough tourist souvenir, but Rezka is renowned for her attention to cleanliness and authentic techniques in making these cheeses that can be used like parmesan, especially tasty when grated into soups.



Left: Lipizzaner horses welcoming us to a tour of the Equestrian Park LIPICA, Ph. Isabel Hughes; Right: Kevin Watson (US) giving it a try on a very tame Lipizzaner

### Lipizzan Stud Farm

Life in the upland pastures seemed to proceed at a slower pace – whatever the realities – and we had a sharp contrast in our visit to the Equestrian Park LIPICA ([www.lipica.org](http://www.lipica.org)), the Lipizzaner stud farm, under the watchful eye of professional manager **Janez Rus**, who had assistants await our arrival to let a splendid herd roar past right in front of us. He emphasized that although Slovenia has always been regarded as the origin of the Lipizzaners – famed in the Spanish Riding School in Vienna and across Central Europe – there are many other stud farms, each with its own particularities. The Equestrian Park Lipica is a vast ensemble comprising the historical central courtyard (*Hof*), extensive gardens, an art gallery, manor house, villa, chapel and wedding hall, the Valley of Our Lady of Lourdes, a sinkhole, ice pit and pond, but it was the **Lipikum Museum** that we visited with the professional manager as our guide.

Janez explained the many activities of the stud farm, from use of the historical stables to the most up-to-date genetic planning and hands-on examination of the animals that breed true to the lines defined by the entire network. As **the world's largest stud farm for the breed**, this has always involved **challenging issues** connected with breeding, but also with **agriculture** more generally, such as the fact that the area – as so much of Slovenia – has never been able to produce sufficient fodder for the herds and so has always been a highly costly undertaking. In order to underwrite their central mission, the stud farm has diversified to include many activities from official training in riding Lipizzans, to trail riding, relaxation in carriage rides, culinary offerings and a year-round events calendar. Among the many fine explicative exhibits in the Museum – as well as a chance to mount a full-sized horse without any fear of it bolting – is the collection of outstanding **paintings** the steeds inspired in artists, among them Johann Georg (von) Hamilton, who established the breeds' fame as early as the eighteenth century through his much-circulated art works.



Left: centerpiece in art display, the portrait by Lipizzaners by J.G. Hamilton; right: SEM Director Tanja Roženbergar on left with farm professional manager Janez Rus and a guide

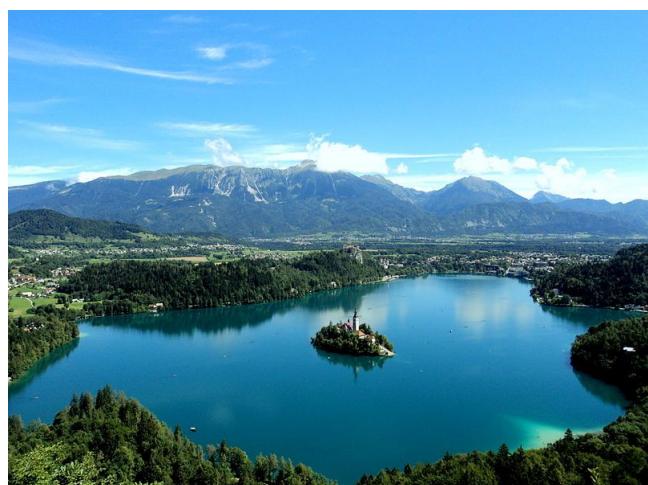
### Not forgetting food....

The weather – at times cool and luckily between the European heatwaves – was kind to us and good food was part and parcel of our study trips, so we had a chance to taste **Slovene specialties** such as the herb cakes and sausages at our luncheon stop at **Pr'Dovar**, a family farm-hostel-restaurant at an altitude of 1000 m in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps, run by Marko and Polona Kuhar, helped that day by son Štefan (<http://www.turizem-kuhar.si>, the website is typically in Slovene, English, Hungarian and Italian). This was a chance

to experience some Slovene foodways – estragon potica (round cake) and telečja obara z ajdovimi žganci (veal stew with buckwheat porridge).



### Pletna boats and Lake Bled



Top left: “our” *pletna* named “Planika” (edelweiss, see the seat back) with a glimpse of the scenery; right: Lake Bled EN Wikipedia, author Canadianhockey91, 15 July 2012, GNC Free License



Left: Master boatman Jakob Kajdiž takes us across Lake Bled to Bled island; and right: Jakob with Barbara Sosič, meeting organizer

One of the special attractions of the mountain visits was the chance to see **alpine flora**, as care for many protected plants is also the responsibility of highland farmers and mountain herdsmen, and the trace of the mountains followed us even on our visit to Lake Bled to cross over to the island in a *pletna* boat named “Planika” – edelweiss – rowed by Jakob Kajdiž. These are specially-made wooden flat-bottom boats with a pointed bow and a wide stern to facilitate entry for passengers. There is much skill – not to mention good physical form – involved in rowing the boats with the standing rudder (*stehrudder*) technique where the oarsman stands while rowing with two oars. The building, maintenance and rowing of the boats has been added to the **Slovene register for outstanding intangible cultural heritage**. The Boat Guild has 21 members, with more than 30 boats – a task handed on within families and groups of friends, so that access to the island and the pilgrimage site of the Baroque Assumption of the Virgin Mary church with its wishing bell remain carefully controlled.

For a taste of the pleasures involved, the **building skills** needed and a chance to listen to the Slovene language, see <https://www.total-slovenia-news.com/made-in-slovenia/4145-pletna-boats-mobile-beekeeping-prekmurje-dialect-added-to-register-of-slovenia-s-intangible-cultural-heritage> (NB the English version is easy to find)

### Museum of Trieste Coast Fishing (Museo della Pesca del Litorale Triestino) in Santa Croce (Slovenian Križ), Italy



Left: Julia, Hanna, Mary, Kerry-Leigh and Franco, explaining the dynamics of a čupa using a model; Center: Franco showing us how a gill net works; Right: Miniature wooden model of a čupa (“chupa”)

The Pletna boating tradition is alive, well and thriving on the tourist business, while much of the recent history of Slovene fishing took place on the nearby Italian coast, so we went to the Bita Trattoria in Santa Croce run by the Slovenian family Gustinčič to meet naval engineer **Franco Cossutto**, the founder and director of the Trieste Costal Fishing Museum. He walked

us up through the old village to the coastal heights. This is of the essence in understanding fishing in the bay, with its steep karst sides that allowed for little beaching of boats, but excellent lookout points for the three watchers who signaled to their compatriot fisherman the location of tuna shoals. The museum has safeguarded the objects of tradition as well as the testimonies in photographs and exhibits to the impressive collective venture of tuna-fishing. Franco explained many a detail to us, from exactly how gill nets worked, to the lookout/signal system, showed us the original netting still on display, lobster traps and – the star exhibit – the unique “**čupa**” (*čupa*) **dugout boat** in full scale and as a model. Again, it was rowed standing up, a considerable feat in light of the boats’ dimensions, so that its anonymous makers had long since designed a way to keep it better balanced by adding a crossing bow at the level of the back oarsman.



Museo della Pesca del Litorale Triestino logo

The book and DVD and documentation recall, among many other details on the various kinds of vessels and fishing, that the **local Venetian dialect for the čupa was zoppolo**, and provides a wealth of details through archive photos and documents, mentioning other aspects of local life, such as the nearby saltpans, the canning factories, oyster-raising or recording the immense knowledge of the winds that affected far more than fishing. Boat-construction was a specialty out of necessity and a fine craftsman (only men in those times) could “see” the pieces he would need literally in the standing trees to be felled. The authors of the texts are drawn from many professions, but we find Franco Cossutto, the naval engineer among them, as Inja Smerdel or Polona Sketelj from the SEM in the bibliography. The DVD text ends with a modern note – that Italians, Slovenes and Croatians have a

long history of harmony in all their diversity.



DVD “Tradizioni di due comunità nel golfo di Trieste (Traditions of two communities in the Gulf of Trieste)



Museum Website: <http://www.ribiski-muzej.it/en/muzej/>

The replica **čupa** in San Croce linked to **one of the most emblematic exhibits in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum** – the last of the boats used in real life and given to the museum in 1947. Luckily, the SEM inquirers caught several **witnesses** who had used the boats in time to

record their experience, as well as the local historian who inspired analysis and building of the replica, all available on the DVD “Čupa Marija”. Transported by crane to enter the SEM building, the Čupa Marija is in the permanent exhibit “Between Nature and Culture”. It is also testimony to the fishermen’s families who turned their attachment to the sea into preservation of their heritage.

***Take-away Message from Hisashi Horio – “Interesting meetings and wonderful efforts, in changing times”***

*Forty-six years have passed since my first participation in the AIMA congress, CIMA VIII in 1987 in Budapest. Participants received formal invitation letters signed by the Minister of Agriculture and were invited to a formal banquet hosted by the Minister held at the neo-Gothic building of the Magyar Mezogazdasag Muzeum (Hungarian Museum of Agriculture). We walked up the red carpeted steps and saluted the Minister and his wife.*

*The congress banquet has changed from black-tie and dark suits to no-tie and jeans. However, the contents of AIMA meetings have not been changed in presentations and extra efforts, as especially the post-conference tours give us precious visits.*



*A participant from the Orient like myself was fascinated by the materials and*

*important issues of different cultural backgrounds. It encouraged me to deepen comparative considerations on farm operations, farm tools and their facilities.*

*What should now be further investigated on agricultural museology? The various themes are set and sufficiently discussed at CIMA conferences. I think that the approaches from historical and/or culture-comparative viewpoints are not really enough; those are fundamental matters that shape the exhibitions concept in museums. Also, I hope the perspectives for production problems of present-day agriculture will be developed and not only focused on ecology or environment; the discussions on these topics are not the salvation to solve the limited circumstances around agriculture itself and agricultural museums.*

*I want to participate in the coming conference(s). However, I feel decrease of my physical strength and declining hearing owing to old age, and so want to give you my ‘take-away’ message from the EC board meeting now.*

*I would like to extend my sincere thanks for your attention.*

*Dr. Hisashi HORIO, Prof. Emeritus Kobe University*

## SEM Resources



Screen clips by kind permission of the SEM

The SEM-produced **DVD “Čupa Marija”** bears testimony both to the sort of work the museum does with its heritage-holders and the profound educational quality achieved, taking advantage of their own and private archives, interviewing the last witnesses before it is too late, consulting with historical specialists and collectors, valorizing the work of replica-builders and users, and making sure the information is passed on in opportunities to introduce the public – young and old – to a heritage that might well have been lost. Now, the *čupa* is a star and a centerpiece in the museum with audiovisual documentation that explains why the boats were used for over a thousand years, that the vocabulary alone indicates Slovenes were inhabiting the Mediterranean coast well before their presence was reported, the **resilience** of coastal populations to the roughest weather – politically and meteorologically – and ever ready to adapt to new times.

The information given by the tradition-bearers is full of **piquant details** – the family that sold their *čupa* to the SEM in 1947 did *not* sell them the oars, much too valuable and reused, although they eventually gave the museum the fore-oar. The replicas were not made with axe and adze, but with modern carpentry tools – those skills were simply no longer retrievable. Among the most evident points in an ethnological collection is the **value of miniatures and models** of all kinds. Set in the hands of an older man who was five years old and fascinated the last time he saw the real thing taken out into the Adriatic, the presence of the small object makes an already highly competent witness vibrant with the joy of details and the pride in what his family and their friends were able to do.



## Book Publications and Peer-Reviewed Journal

Such documents are but a glimpse of the tradition of providing the public and scholars with **in-depth inventories** of the SEM collections, both through individual – often **bilingual** Slovene-English – **catalogues**, the SEM general catalog and the specialist peer-reviewed journal *Etnolog*, founded in 1926, which publishes work in ethnology, cultural anthropology, museology, conservation and other human and social sciences. A sample of the contents of the 1999 Colloquium on Death can be found here: <https://www.etnomuzej.si/en/etnolog/etnolog-91-1999/slavic-folk-conceptions-of-death-according-to-linguistic-data>



Among the numerous **collection catalogues** published over the years, several have been **bilingual**, so are perfectly accessible to ethnologists, museum professionals and amateurs. Just to take two examples, ***OSELNIKI, Whetstone Holders*** by Inja Smerdel, who introduces these objects as “An ode to labour, skill, creativity, individuality and Eros”, no less. As usual in the catalogues, there is a full bibliography, the object catalogue itself, indices to where the sheaths were used, typologies and materials, the various Slovene dialect words for both whetstones and their holders with linguistic-atlas maps, then a typology map, as well as black-and-white, full colour and line drawings of the artefacts (317 pages).

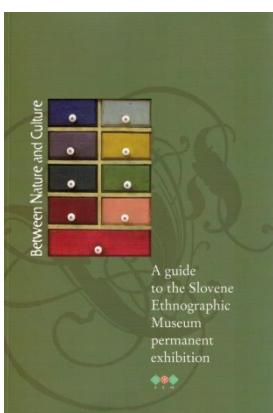
Quite another pathway is taken in layout and exposition in Inja's ***ORALA Ploughing Implements***, as it provided the opportunity to explore the praxis of twentieth-century ethnology in Slovenia with special emphasis on the impact of Boris Orel, his theoretical and methodological credo that imprinted on Slovene ethnologists till today. Orel's byword was **things and the people who use them**, a philosophy we saw still expressed during our meeting and the study trips. This particular volume is a landmark in European ethnological work as regards ploughing implements, examining as it does the component parts of – as ever in Slovene and English – ards and ploughs, and nearly every imaginable connected aspect such as ploughing patterns and methods in function of field size and slope; how depth is adjusted for soil and crops, but also for the height of the draft animals used (mainly oxen); regional distribution of implements and their implications; how and by whom they were constructed, and so on. There is much subtlety in the analysis of complementarity among techniques and implements such as the varied ard and plough types, or spading, always set in a social context and developments over time. The long debate between ard and plough, assymetrical and symmetrical, is set out here so that any interested reader will understand the pitfalls that arose in this field of study over time, as well as the present-day consensus that the entire subject must be carried to a more subtle level of analysis. The author effectively argues that the **endeavour to understand ploughing implements in the broadest possible manner is still of vital importance in ethnology**. It is also a welcome reminder that international and resolutely cross-disciplinary studies in Europe were given sound impulsion by the debate over tillage implements at a time when a united Europe was still but a dream.

### Digital Collections

The SEM has not limited its efforts to published material, but has digitized large swaths of its collection – for example, the extensive collection of **ox yokes** (*jarmi*) is accessible (in Slovene only, but connaisseurs will understand) at <https://www.etno-muzej.si/sl/digitalne-zbirke/jarmi>



### Between Culture and Nature



The museums' general catalogue exemplifies the same standard of ethnological erudition and accessibility, always aiming high in the consistent

respect for readers' interest and capacities. Entitled ***Between Nature and Culture, A guide to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum permanent collection***, it highlights far more than beekeeping and links to much of the vernacular architecture to be discovered by any tourist in the country, from the single or linked double hayrack to the decorative versions now standing prominently in front of suburban houses, foodways past and present, still-popular gathering activities such as for blueberries, surprising cash crops as seen in the collection of dormouse traps (once an important food supplement

in winter, and for fat and fur), indigo blue-dying... right through to present-day consumer crazes in clothing and the societal motivations behind them, social relations and the deep influence of religion – Shrovetide celebrations are still the high point of intangible cultural heritage. There

is a special section – **Reflection of Distant World (non-European heritage collections)** – created for the museum's remarkable collection of objects from as far afield as Africa, the Americas and Polynesia, including analysis of Slovene images over time of the “foreign”.



Left: among many interactive (“heads-on”, in this case) SEM exhibits, one of the African headrests;  
Right: AIMA President Oliver Douglas trying out the headrest, Ph. Isabel Hughes



**Craftwork** occupies a large place in both collections and museum activities, as in the pottery and weaving **workshops**. Perhaps pride of place is given to the future with **EthnoAlphabet**, the special exhibition and hands-on experience space for **children** and families, functioning through games and toys, musical instruments, gift-giving, even water-fetching and cooking over an open fire, as well as popular calendar practices or facing up to hard decisions such as leaving home to make a living in another country. Julia Hanulewicz gives us a report on her experience in a day working with the children above.

Among the SEM’s yearly adult programs is the highly popular **ethnobotany seminar** each spring, entitled “Man and Plant”, a permanent educational project of the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, presenting traditional knowledge and modern uses of plants as reflected in the way of life and culture of Slovenes

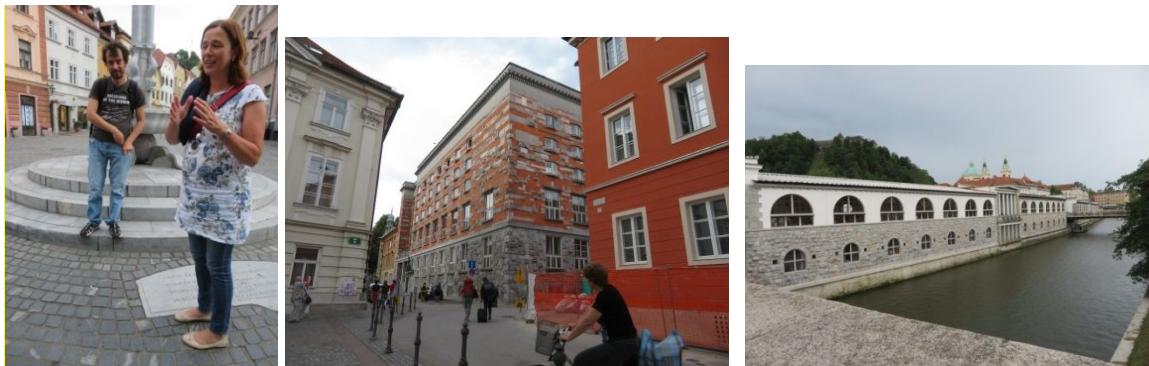
Perhaps the icing on the cake, for Executive Committee members, was the opportunity to visit the museum’s agricultural collection stores with organizer Barbara Sosič after the official program was over.



Left: Barbara Sosič, Head of Agriculture Collection, in the SEM stores with a favourite yoke, Ph. Isabel Hughes; Center: a discovery – the leaf fodder carrying baskets in the stores; Right: a part of the colourful collection of chests

## Ljubljana, our meeting venue

Needless to say, our meeting venue was not neglected, with the simple pleasures of soaking up the atmosphere in lively Ljubljana and a **parallel history tour with Boštjan Plut**, aiming less at royal visits or residences and more at a people's history and geography of the town, replete with tales as entertaining as they were meticulously documented. Needless to say, there is a particular attraction in the fact that the spirit and works of a world-class **architect**, **Jože Plečnik**, comparable in many ways to Scotland's Charles Rennie Mackintosh, are present throughout the town – from his splendid National and University Library to the town's market halls lining the Ljubljanica River.



Left: our guide to the weird side of Ljubljana, Boštjan Plut with Barbara at the old town Hercules Fountain; Center: a glimpse of the National and University Library by Plečnik; Right: and his covered market along the River Ljubljanica

Plečnik worked in many styles over his lifetime, including the many Secessionist buildings, and was known for his **tradition of working with craftpeople**, so there is also an important exhibit on his work in his former home. The strong cultural emphasis on high-quality **design**, whether in the SEM exhibits themselves or in a sidewalk café is a visible part of his heritage. Ljubljana also has a vibrant cultural life, from student neighborhoods full of cutting-edge music events in delightful grunge settings to the various museums, such as the Ljubljana Town Museum with the remarkable exhibit still on during our stay on icons from Russian museums, again presented in the museum's own specially designed interior decor, made to order for the guest exhibit. As is easy to see on a map, Slovenia is a crossroads of traditions – languages, cuisine and lifestyles. Today, a recurrent thread among these diverse expressions is the emphasis on sustainability, responsible tourism **and** – you guessed – **urban beekeeping**, with some 350 beekeepers and over 5000 beehives in the city.

Let's leave the last word to one of the Executive Committee members and co-organizer of the AIMA 2020 Congress at the MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) in Reading, England.

### Take-away Message from Isabel Hughes



Isabel in the Preskar mountain-top cottage

*I am back now and still savouring moments from the trip to Slovenia.*

*I think what impressed me was the work Barbara and colleagues have done to identify people with skills and crafts for their intangible cultural heritage register. The obvious positive relationships that Barbara has nurtured were clear to see. These relationships can only help museums to better animate their stored collections and also to bring the work of bee keepers, boat builders, breeders and trainers of horses more into the public domain to inspire our visitors.*



*blueberry celebration that Kate, Kerry-Leigh and I attended which involved a steam train from Ljubljana to Borovnica where blueberries, music, vintage bus and bicycles, the local technology museum, lacemaking demonstrations and much more were on offer. You can see the traditional dancing taking place on the platform before we embarked.*

*Isabel Hughes, Associate Director & Head of Curatorial & Public Engagement,  
Museum of English Rural Life*

Ph. Isabel Hughes

*I am sending you some images. The one with the steam train was part of a special*

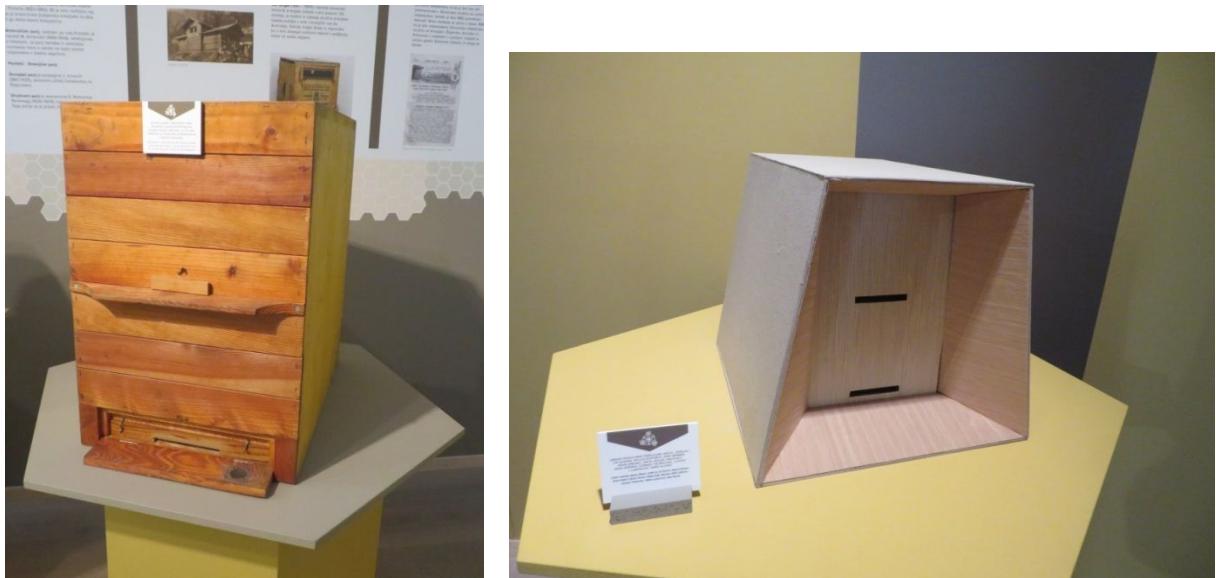


Executive Committee members and attendees: Horio Hisashi (JA), Cozette Griffin-Kremer (FR, Newsletter Editor), Hanna Ignatowicz (PO), Barbara Sosič (SI meeting organizer), Monique Del Porto, Julia Hanulewicz (PO), Isabel Hughes (GB, Vice-President, MERL), Franco Cossutto (Trieste Fisherman's Museum), Oliver Douglas (GB, President), Kate Arnold-Forster (GB, MERL Director), Mary Watson (US), Kerry-Leigh Burchill (CA, Secretary General), Pete Watson (US), Tanja Roženbergar (SEM Director), Pierre Del Porto (FR, Treasurer) at the Trieste Fisherman's Museum in Santa Croce, Italy. Missing, but attended electronically Claus Kropp (DE), Debra Reid (US), Surajit Sarkar (IN) (Ph. P. Del Porto)



Replica beehive panel and cheese marker from the SEM

### A world of beehives from straw and stake to mud and on to AZ and urban abstract



AZ beehive, a stack beehive with honey chamber and usually 2 x 10 comb frames, for easy transport; Modern urban apiary