

AIMA Special Report N°2 July 2020

Coping with Crisis and REOPENING



Agriculture * Food * Environment * People
<http://agriculturalmuseums.org>

A.I.M.A.
International Association of Agricultural Museums
Internationale Vereinigung der Agrarmuseen
Международная Ассоциация сельскохозяйственных музеев
Association internationale des musées d'agriculture
Asociación Internacional de Museos Agrícolas
(ICOM-Unesco Affiliated Organisation)



AIMA Congress at MERL (Museum of Rural Life) in Reading, UK postponed till next year

- ❖ **BUT the AIMA is still working hard**
 - ❖ **through its blog posts,**
 - ❖ **in networking with members and friends**
 - ❖ **and in looking at how we are “coping with crisis” and with re-opening**

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How does the Slovene Ethnographic Museum look after re-opening?

Text: Barbara Sosič, curator; Photos: Blaž Verbič, documentarist



The Slovene Ethnographic Museum re-opened on May 5, and on 14 May 2020, the Slovenian government called an official end to the coronavirus epidemic, becoming the first country in Europe to do so. We had been worried what would happen after the re-opening day and on days that followed, as we did not expect very many visitors ... and we were right.

In the first week, we had free entrance to the museum; however, only a few visitors entered. The main reason is that there are practically no tourists and school groups. Families and individuals have other focuses, other worries. Social and economic crises are a very serious post-pandemic threat all over the world.



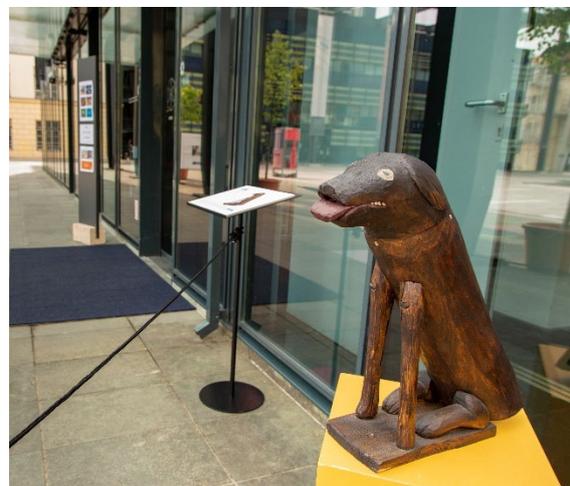
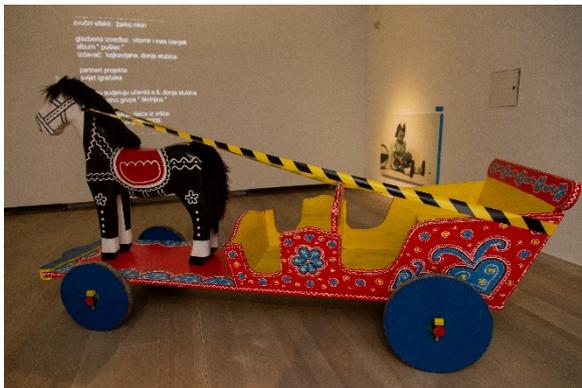
Masks have been compulsory from day one, and physical distancing rules must be observed. Visitors are guided through the multi-story building on a circular path so as not to cross one another. The ticket office has a so-called spit protection wall, and audio-guide devices are no

longer available. Due to the strict hygiene requirements, more work was needed, although the museum will turn less of a profit and see fewer visitors. So we decided to step outside, in a platform in front of the museum, where we put some copies of the exhibits and make an attractive temporary playground for passersby.



We removed upholstered furniture and changed it with furniture that can be easily cleaned and disinfected. Our museum shop is closed, but can be opened on request, although it is forbidden to leaf through books, and we shut down all touch screens and other interactive spots (which are hot spots of every museum!) All this made our friendly museum much less friendly.

At first, we had one-way visits of the two temporary exhibitions in the basement and the 1st floor (*My Feet. My Shoes. My Way*, and *Children's toys of Croatia between tradition and modernity*), but by the end of May the museum as a whole was again opened to the public, together with our two permanent exhibitions *I, We and Others* on the 2nd floor, and *Between Nature and Culture* on the 3rd floor.



As the rest of the world, the SEM took advantage of the down time by expanding online offerings, such as *Stories of objects* (<https://www.etno-muzej.si/en/sem-z-zgodbami-predmetov>), *Virtual walk through exhibitions* (<https://www.etno-muzej.si/en/exhibitions-in-images>), *Exhibition Soundscapes* (<https://www.etno-muzej.si/en/exhibition-soundscapes>) ... And do you know what was an absolute hit? Corona Humor. (<https://www.etno-muzej.si/en/novice/invitation-to-collecting-jokes-or-corona-humour>)

The SEM has set out to build a collection of jokes that have flooded social media during the time that Slovenia remained under lockdown in the coronavirus epidemic. After the crisis, for the *Museums on Summer a Night* (organised from 1997 on every third Saturday in June), the SEM has prepared an exhibition on the collected jokes (<https://www.etno->

muzej.si/sl/razstave/koronski-humor-vici-v-casu-epidemije-covid-19). The collection of jokes, which in a unique way documents this period in history, shall afterwards be published to remember it also as a colourful insight into what the nation went through.

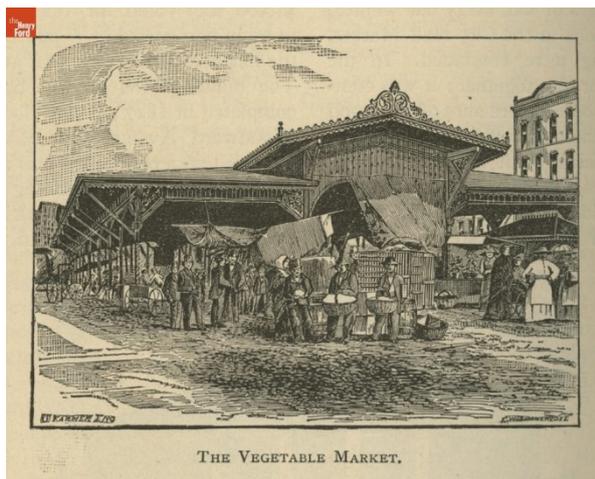


Vice-President's Message Curatorial Work during Covid-19

Museums have been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic and had to close as required by law. Staff either continued working, sometimes developing digital content, and often at reduced wages, while others faced layoffs. They also had to balance the need to maintain security of structures and collections with maintaining safe distance and keeping staff who are reporting to work during the required closures safe.

Living history museums with livestock needing daily care, and with gardens and fields needing planting or harvesting, faced additional dilemmas. How to balance the needs of domesticated livestock with budget shortfalls? How to determine and monitor staff access? How to maintain communication with a public eager to know about the status of their favorite sheep, draft horse, or barn cat? Some sites moved livestock off-property to continue care and allowed staff to conduct seasonal field work. Only after some institutions reopen will the full force of the pandemic be known to the living history museum field.

During the closure, research became my focus as content delivery shifted toward digital delivery. A list of the projects completed in the last three months (13 March to 7 June 2020) includes documenting significance and writing narratives for artifacts available in digital format, delivering that content via Twitter Chats and Facebook Live events, and continuing research for future products. This latter is the focus of the following case study – women and their role in the Vegetable Building from Detroit's Central Market.



The Vegetable Market, published in Silas Farmer's, "History of Detroit and Michigan" (1884), page 794, detail. THF 139107. From the Collections of The Henry Ford.

<https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/363032#slide=gs-459031>

The Henry Ford (Dearborn, Michigan) acquired the market building in 2003. It served this role for only 30 years (opening in April 1861 as the Vegetable Shed at the public market at City Hall and closing in 1893). It then spent 110 years on Belle Isle serving as storage and stables per the needs of the City's park and recreation division. An overview of the history of Detroit's public markets, including illustrations of the structure and its location, appears in Jim McCabe's blog, "Bring the Detroit Central Farmer's Market to Greenfield Village," (reissued 8 November 2019): <https://www.thehenryford.org/explore/blog/bring-the-detroit-central-farmers-market-to-greenfield-village> The Henry Ford's Studio Production team released a video via YouTube in September 2019 featuring photographs (many from the Burton Collection of the Detroit Public Library) of the building and of hucksters who sold their perishable fruits and vegetables: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdLJwkJLIGI>

Reconstruction began at the end of the 2019 season. During winter 2019-2020, a team planned "teasers" to deliver after Greenfield Village opened in mid-April 2020. The team perceived these as a means to sustain public engagement with the project during its physical reconstruction. "Teasers" included new postcards depicting seed packets in THF collections and produced to give away on opening-day; a member preview in May; and a public lecture focusing on the market's role during the Civil War Era (for delivery during the Memorial Day Civil War Remembrance event). These did not occur because of the closure, but research continues.

The next "teaser" that can be scheduled after opening could feature research about historic individuals that can support future programming. The team identified some key themes to pursue including immigration and ethnicity, and women and work that helped ensure food security in the city. City directories include the names of individuals and businesses with stall addresses in the Vegetable Building at City Hall Market (subsequently renamed Central Market). This included many women who worked as hucksters (defined as market gardeners who held permits to sell their produce from moveable carts or stalls).

Silverware. From a full outfit to the smallest article. You can't miss a choice. TRAUB BROS., 115 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich.

504 HOT R. L. POLK & CO.'S HUC

Hotels—Cont'd.
 St. Lawrence Hotel (\$1), 83 Randolph.
 Sailors' Bethel Home, 21 Griswold.
SAXONY HOUSE (\$1), 1313 River.
THREE MILE HOUSE, 1640 Michigan ave.
 Throop's Hotel, cor La Salle and Michigan aves.
TORONTO HOUSE, cor Meldrum and Wight.
 Tremont Hotel (\$1 to \$1.50), cor 2d and Front.
 Union Hotel (\$1.50), 210 River.
 Wabash Hotel (\$1.50), cor Atwater and Brush.
 Wayne The (\$2 to \$3), foot of 3d, opp M C R R.
 West End Driving Club House, s w cor Rademacher and Fort w.
 Western Hotel (\$1), cor 3d and Larned.

***House Furnishing Goods.** (See also Hardware; also Furniture; also Installation Goods.)
 Coulson & Morhous, 178 Woodward ave.
DETROIT TINWARE MFG CO., cor Macomb and St Antoine; Tel 292. (See ads, p 127.)
 Freund Bros., 44 Michigan ave.
 Weber Henry C & Co., 116 Woodward ave and 52 Congress e.

House Movers and Raisers.
 Ager Ira, 599 5th.
 Ager Ira & Son, 332 Charlotte.
APGER WM I, 950 Graftiot ave. (See ads, p 122.)
 Driscoll Patrick C, 919 13th.
 Goodman & Clark, 939 Scotten ave.
HIGGINS JAMES E., 910 12th. (See ads, p 151.)
 Kaiser E G, 677 St Aubin ave.

KELLEY C M., 97 22d. (See ads, p 135.)
 Krefit Frank, 575 Alfred.
 Lyon Bros, 146 Winder.
 Wilson Richard, 904 6th.
 Wilson Wm & Son, 689 6th.
 Wolfhart F W, 466 Grand River.

***Household Furniture.**
GUILLOZ PETER G., 148 Grand River ave; Tel 886. (See ads, p 132.)

Hub and Spoke Mfrs.
 See Spoke and Hub Mfrs.

***Hucksters.**
 (See also Produce.)
 Abbott John, 16 Central Market.
 Beckert Peter, 6 Central Market.
 Bennett Isaac, 59 Central Market.
 Breisacher Christian, 27 Central Market.
 Brodel Nicholas, 22 Central Mkt.
 Broetsche Catherine, 31 Central Market.
 Buchheimer T H, 48 Central Mkt.
 De Gender Rosa, 58 Central Mkt.
 Eggenberger Lena, 24 Central Market.
 Geis Josephine, 55 Central Market.
 Gibney Owen, 18 Central Market.
 Goetz C F, 34 Central Market.
 Hartz Frank, 63 Central Market.
 Hoehnow Mrs Augusta, 43 Central Market.
 Keel C A, 54 Central Market.
 Kruger Albert, 41 Central Mkt.
 Mann John, 30 Central Market.
 Miller Joseph, 62 Central Market.
 Miller Josephine, 19 Central Mkt.
 Myers Mrs Mary, 79 Central Mkt.
 Nicaise Catherine, 61 Central Mkt.
 O'Neill H B, 42 Central Market.
 Rogers Alice, 64 Central Market.
 Roth Albert, 80 Central Market.
 Roth Mathias, 51 Central Market.
 Schuetz Rosa, 67 Central Market.

Detroit City Business Directory, Volume II, 1889-1890 (page 504), published by R. L. Polk & Co. THF277534. From the Collections of The Henry Ford.

<https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/493985#slide=gs-498665>

Of 30 hucksters listed in the 1889-1890 business directory, 40 percent (12 of the 30) were women. These included Catherine Broetsche, Rosa De Gender, Lena Eggenberger, Josephine Geis, Mrs. Augusta Hoehnow, Josephine Miller, Mrs. Mary Myers, Catherine Nicaise, Alice Rogers, Rosa Schuetz (and on the next page: Louise Storm, Mrs. Elise Suppus). Other women appear in other sources with market connections. Mary Judge received attention in newspapers because of her outspoken support of the “Central Market” perhaps because city officials ignored her pleas to keep the market open.

In addition to women working in market stalls and selling their wares from moveable carts around the public market, Detroit’s French Catholic heritage and location on the Detroit River meant that fish merchants had a prominent role in the public market as well. A page in R. L. Polk & Co.’s 1889-1890 Detroit City Directory shows names of Fish-Retail Sellers such as Isaac Danto and his son Charles Danto, both from Russo Poland (per the 1880 U.S. Population Census). What role if any did Isaac’s wife, Rebecca, and daughter, Paulina, play in the family fish business? Did fishwives and daughters in Detroit compare in any way to this illustration of fishwives in the central market in Paris? This remains a work in progress.



FRENCH "FISHWIVES," IN THE HALLES CENTRALES, PARIS.

French “Fishwives,” in the Halles Centrales, Paris. Published in Robert Brown, *The Peoples of the World Being a Popular Description of the Characteristics, Condition, and Customs of the Human family*. Vol. 6 (London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1882), page 32, part of the chapter, “The French: Some Social Habits and Customs,” available digitally at HathiTrust.org:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112112265290&view=1up&seq=50>

Illustrations of market interiors remain rather elusive. This stereograph of a girl hawking oysters captured my attention. Little information about it exists except the title, “Oysters, Sir?” Research indicates that the inspiration for the staged images comes from 1820s popular culture, specifically a ballad “sung to great applause by Miss Graddon” as early as July 1828. The lyrics stressed the hardship of a young person left to hawk oysters at public markets after the death of a sea-faring father. A literary magazine published in Philadelphia, *The Casket* (Vol. 5, 1830), gave the “Oyster Girl” in the ballad a name – “Marian.” The sign behind the wicker baskets in the stereograph says “native oysters.” This also references the lyrics of the ballad, “my native oysters, my York bank oysters, buy”, which likely refers to prolific oyster banks off the New York-New Jersey coast.



Oysters, Sir? Colorized Stereograph. THF278876. From the Collections of The Henry Ford.

<https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/499192>

The native oysters referenced in the 1820s sheet music faced destruction of their habitats due to garbage accumulations by the time Detroit opened its vegetable building in 1861. It will require more research to determine whether Detroit fish dealers imported Atlantic coast oysters between the 1860s and the 1890s. Did lobsters or crabs ever appear in market stalls during the season? Indeed, how did dealers market the fresh-water clams and mussels from the Great Lakes? Would vendors of those localized shellfish have set up their sales areas with wicker baskets, boards on sawhorses, and vinegar and salt to season the raw delicacies? Would fishwives in Detroit wear such colorful clothing to get the attention of patrons? So much remains to be learned.

This is just one example of the ways that this curator has spent time doing her best to be productive during the spring of 2020, the season of Covid-19. Debra A. Reid, Curator of Agriculture and the Environment at The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan.

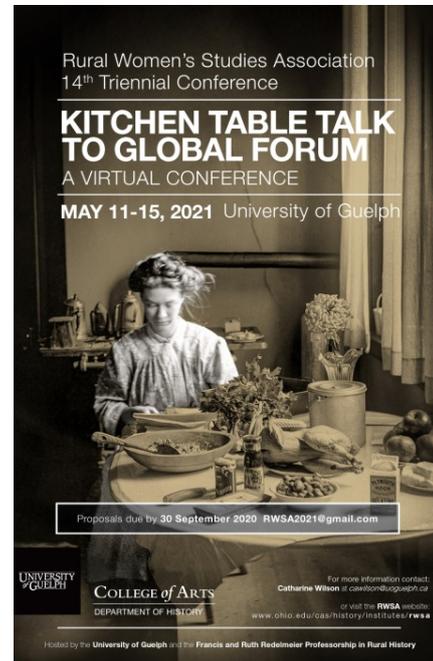


Rural Women's Studies Association 2021 "Turning Lemons into Lemonade"

The Rural Women's Studies Association (RWSA) organized its 2021 conference around the theme "Kitchen Table Talk to Global Forum." The original call for papers urged interested individuals to share their research on and interpretation of how conversations, relationships, and food shaped (and shapes) rural communities. The organizers did not want to cancel the conference in the face of challenges posed by Covid-19, specifically restrictions on travel and delegates' limited financial resources this coming year.

The need to communicate – to take kitchen table talk to a global forum – has never been more critical. Thus, organizers decided that now is the time to transition their 2021 conference into a virtual meeting. This decision offers opportunities more than obstacles and promises to

increase the conversations, not stymie them.



Updated poster advertising the 14th triennial RWSA conference in May 2021, released 4 June 2020.

The RWSA formally organized in 1998 when those who had organized six successful triennial conferences decided it was time to take the next step. Speaking across boundaries always characterized the gatherings. Historians, anthropologists, and sociologists wanted to sustain the momentum and grow the opportunity by increasing engagement with activists, community organizers, and rural and farm women. By the early 2000s, RWSA became a private not-for-profit organization, chartered in Indiana, U.S.A., and recognized as tax-exempt by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Thereafter the RWSA could accept tax-deductible donations for an endowment to reduce conference costs incurred by rural and farm women, activists, and international delegates.

Between conferences, the RWSA welcomes anyone interested in rural and farm women to meet during other professional conferences. This happens most regularly at the annual Agricultural History Society conference and at the biennial European Rural History Organization conference. RWSA members met during 2019 at both the AHS conference in Washington, D.C. and at Rural History 2019 in Paris, France. Katherine Jellison, who presented her paper on Anabaptist women to all Rural History 2019 delegates during a plenary session at the Sorbonne, had hosted the RWSA conference at the University of Ohio in 2018.

The 2021 conference is in good hands. The local host, Catharine Wilson, Redelmeier Professor in Rural History, Department of History, at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, embraced the prospects of a virtual conference (and encouraged RWSA officers, international representatives, and 2021 conference program committee members) to pursue the opportunity. As Cathy said, the theme, "Kitchen Table Talk to Global Forum," almost begs for what a virtual conference can facilitate. Rather than increasing distance between members of a community dedicated to learning more about rural women today and over time, this conference can link kitchen table talk occurring around the globe.

If you want to be a part of the conversation, visit the webpage: <https://www.ohio.edu/cas/history/institutes/rwsa> where you can consult the new call for papers, released 4 June 2020 and submit your idea for a session. You can also contribute to the RWSA blog (information is on the RWSA website) at any time.

Many disciplines thrive during RWSA gatherings as attendees share their perspectives and engage with content through others' experiences. Museums and historic sites always have a role in local arrangements, and hopefully these institutions can devise virtual engagement opportunities.

By Debra A. Reid, long-time member, former treasurer, and frequent contributor to the RWSA conferences, and Curator of Agriculture and the Environment at The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan

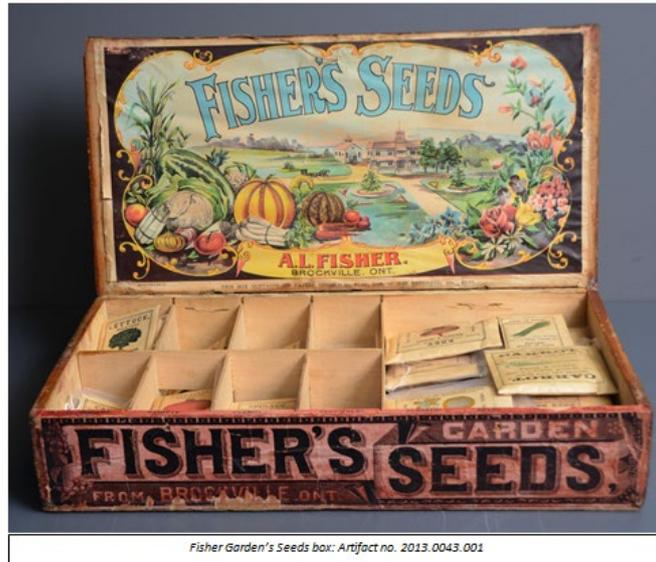
Editor's Note: be sure to check out the report on the immensely successful digital project highlighting the role of women farmers' stories in Australia in AIMA newsletter N°12 "Museums Australia Invisible Farmers" by Liza Dale-Hallett and N°13 Part 1 for "Museums Australia "Social Media – a strategic tool for museums" by Liza and Catherine Forge.



International Year of PLANT HEALTH 2020



**Come and plant a seed with us –
AIMA blog posts will soon include
SEEDS**



Canada Agriculture and Food Museum – blog teaser

Coming soon

The United Nations has declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health. Around the world, eighty per cent of people's diet comes from plants. When we asked some of the staff at the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum what we could do as a different take on International Year of Plant Health they quickly thought of the **beautiful seed boxes, packets and catalogues in our collection....**



Apis mellifera, Western honeybee by

Andreas Trepte <https://www.photo-natur.net/> 4 August 2009 / Wikipedia Commons by kind permission of the author

Meanwhile, don't forget the BEES!

See our blog thread here:

<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/news-events/news/>

With the two latest entries: Slovenia and Firestone Farm

Poetry of agriculture? On the significance of beekeeping in Slovenia, by Barbara Sosič



Two traditional apiaries with painted beehive panels from Upper and Lower Carniola. The beginning of 20th century. Slovene Ethnographic Museum Photo archive.

How to do bee business despite Covid-19? Some practical and personal experience from Firestone Farm, Dearborn, Michigan (USA), by Patrice Fisher



Tools of the beekeepers' trade, a smoker and soft-bristle brush, 4 June 2020. The smoker, of a design in use since the late 1800s, disrupts bees' ability to sense the fight pheromone. The Henry Ford. Photograph by Patrice Fisher





N°57 - JUIN 2020



What about the bees while the Ecomusée d'Alsace was closed?*

The Alsace in France is in the official “East Region”, the first and hardest hit by Covid-19, in part because a large international meeting running February 17-21 brought so many attendees to the Bourtzwiller district of Mulhouse. Happy to be there, many of the participants came early or stayed on to travel, inadvertently accounting for one of the world’s most virulent “hot spots” nearly a month before the lockdown was announced in France. A single attendee who worked at Strasbourg University Hospital was later found to have contaminated some 250 colleagues. At the end of the event, other participants returned to their homes across France and the world with the tragic consequences we now all know.**

The Alsace Ecomuseum (“EMA”) in Ungersheim, France, like so many others, was closed due to the health crisis, with the director living on-site to work with the few people allowed in to care for the museum’s animals and continue the regular agricultural programming in the fields, as well as working in the site’s forest and nature reserve area. However, some “livestock” are a bit touchier to care for, among them, the museum’s bee colony. Here is how the beekeepers were coping.



Left: Beehive with frames removed from the super so the queen excluder on top of the brood box is visible, 29 May 2010, Author: Easy n, public domaine, Wikipedia

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausse_\(apiculture\)#/media/Fichier:Beehive.jpg](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausse_(apiculture)#/media/Fichier:Beehive.jpg)

Right: A langstroth nuc box set-up to transition a colony to a warré box, Author: shawn каза @ beekeeping.isgood.ca, 6 June 2013, Wikipedia Creative Commons

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Langstroth_nuc_box_on_top_of_a_warre_box.JPG

“Our bees have not been “confined” and they have gone on working on the first spring flowers. With the permission of the EMA management, a team of beekeepers has been taking care of our hives for the start of the bee season. The weather has been very fine and we had to intervene to avoid losing out on all the benefits of the season. We made a good dozen nuclei (nuc boxes), which have enabled us to boost the population of our two beehives, so that we have moved from 14 colonies to more than 20. Some of the stronger hives have been fitted out with supers and we have harvested tens of kilograms of fine spring honey. We are hoping that the acacia and linden harvests will be just as good, so that our future visitors will be able to enjoy our good Alsatian honey.”



Collecting the swarm

“As we approached the conservatory orchard hives, a buzzing cloud welcomed us, Louis and me. The bees were flying everywhere, seeming to be frightened, and magnificent. We saw the swarm, hanging on an apple tree branch, about 2.50m off the ground. It was just forming, oblong-shaped (about 70cm) and already had at least 2.5 to 3 kg of insects, so we had no time to lose! Louis went to get an empty hive while I ran to the honey house to fetch our swarm-catcher (that’s a kind of bag at the end of an extendible rod that you close by pulling on a small cord). As luck would have it, the bag was just the right size for the swarm. I sprayed the bees with water so they wouldn’t be so frightened and scatter. They were full of honey just before swarming and, in theory, they can’t bite when their stomachs are full. We had to get this insect column into the bag, give the branch a good blow and the bees fell into the bag, then I pulled on the cord and – we did it! We hoped the queen was in with the rest of them!”

“As soon as Louis came back, we put the contents of the bag into the hive to which we had to add the brood frames and honey. Then, we had to wait to see if the colony would stay and get organized. We put the hive at the Sundhouse hive house. Let’s keep our fingers crossed the swarm will thrive, overwinter well and give us fine honey in 2021. All that took us a good hour, but we’re happy and proud to have boosted the bee population of the Ecomusée. As soon as we get the green light, we’ll take up the beekeeping activities every Friday afternoon. Please be patient!” With kind consultation from François Kiesler, Ecomusée d’Alsace, translated by Cozette Griffin-Kremer

From the Ecomusée d’Alsace electronic magazine *EcoMuse* June 2020 p. 13

* As of 4 June 2020, reopening of the EMA is planned for 1 July

** For an account of the early outbreaks in France and elsewhere, see Philip Oltermann *et al.* “The cluster effect: how social gatherings were rocket fuel for coronavirus” in *The Guardian* online, 9 April 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/09/the-cluster-effect-how-social-gatherings-were-rocket-fuel-for-coronavirus>



The Ecomusée d'Alsace goes on with public education



The EMA is also seizing the opportunity to pursue its engagement with public education and sends its members regular newsletters with updates on the work in the museum, in the nature reserve, in field and in forest, as usual. They also send out extra publications in PDF format, such as the special issue of *Ecomuse Magazine* “Of pottery and potters”, a full-course meal covering the history of their pottery house, extensive information from their resident potter and an outstanding survey of Alsatian ceramic tradition, from Bronze Age to the 17th century. The photographs include collection pieces, replicas and today’s innovative/traditional offerings with informative or amusing highlights such as the rounded funnel-like pot with a handle used to moisten earthen floors before sweeping, fountain-pieces, doll-house tableware, ceramics for chemical factories, the potter’s workshop and individual pieces of equipment. The list goes on and on, and every aspect of pottery-making is explained, from local clay gathering to kiln functioning and the pot cemetery, for any piece without the required “ring”, as well as a side-step to the *raku* kiln and its striking results. There is even a section on the ceramic cats in the tree, familiar to all visitors who have explored the EMA and discovered some of its (half)-hidden treasures. Summary and translation Cozette Griffin-Kremer.



Making hay while the sun shines at Lauresham Open-air Laboratory, Kloster Lorsch (DE)





Some Early 20th century machinery in use in a medieval setting speeds up the hay-making process during the pandemic. Helpers get a special treat!



Howell Living History Farm

a facility of the Mercer County Park Commission



Howell Living History Farm is not “re-enacting”, it is **MAKING** history today

For most of the last 35 years, the Howell Living History Farm in Hopewell Township, New Jersey, USA, has been dedicated to education about farming, but with the Covid-19 restrictions, the farm has responded to the needs of the surrounding community by shifting to more extensive food production, providing wheat flour, cornmeal, oatmeal, eggs and other farm-grown products to Mercer County residents. Director Pete Watson says they are now dedicating their energy and resources to growing as much as they can with their 35 years of experience.



Sonrisa Crespin, Educational Program Coordinator at Howell Living History Farm, has expanded her workload appreciably to help prepare crops for food pantries in Mercer County. Courtesy Howell Living History Farm

Howell is using its seven workhorses, a few oxen and nine people to sustain food banks nearby and will expand capacity to grow tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, okra, sweet potatoes, turnips and squash. Usually, the farm relies on energy from between 14 and 16 thousand hours of recorded volunteer time, including school children’s visits to the farm’s 240 acres, of which 65 is tillable land.

Beyond crop collection and distribution, the staff recently sheared the farm’s 30 sheep and sent the wool to the mill to be spun into yarn. Those spools will be passed along to the Pleasant Valley Sewing Guild of Hopewell Township. They will be knitting mittens, hats, scarves and socks to be distributed at the pantries and community centers next winter.



Left: Vickie Tuari, Howell farm volunteer and directory of a food pantry in Trenton, New Jersey; Right: Pete Watson in the Howell Farm fields. Watch the video on Vimeo at <https://vimeo.com/413737152/4bec4c301a>

They started with bagging their regular production of flour for Trinity Cathedral Food Pantry, exchanging Howell’s corn and oats for its livestock with the local miller for food-

grade flour. As times passes, there will be more variety – chickens and vegetables from the market garden capacity they have doubled, to cope with the communities’ needs.

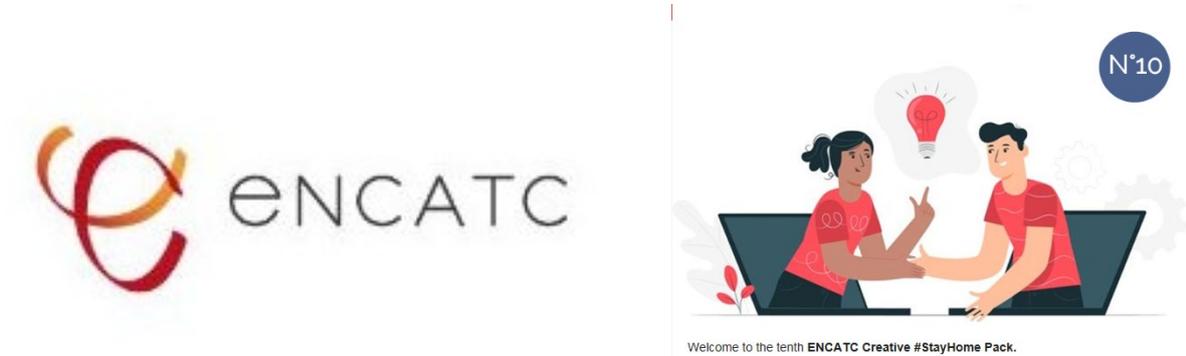
“This whole thing has just kind of inspired us to do what we are, which is be farmers,” Watson says. “Here we are 35 years and two million visitors later who’ve had these educational experiences. And now we’re out in the fields again by ourselves with our horses. Talk about a historical experience.”

Summarized from Mike Kinney / NJ Advance Media for NJ.com. “This 250-year-old N.J. farm reaches back to its roots to address current-day crisis” updated Apr 29, 2020

Catch up on the latest news from Howell Living History Farm here, watch the videos on the work described above and much more: <https://howellfarm.org/>



ENCATC is already on its 16th! Creative Stay-at-home Pack



Welcome to the tenth ENCATC Creative #StayHome Pack.

For the complete ENCATC Creative Stay-at-Home Pack and ENCATC news -> <https://mailchi.mp/encatc/encatc-creative-stayhome-pack-n16-361aybd8sl?e=3aded752f4>



Museums Galleries Scotland provides emergency funding to over 30 sites



Governments around the world sensitive to the enormous value of cultural institutions are stepping in to help. Here is an extract from one of the many examples. This report is one of many updates from ENCATC sent regularly to AIMA members.

27 May 2020

Museums Galleries Scotland has confirmed the award of emergency funding to more than thirty cultural institutions across Scotland. The development body has also published a report examining the impacts of Covid-19 on the sector.

A three-phased 'Emergency, Recovery and Resilience' approach has been implemented by the organisation as it seeks to provide the best support possible to cultural institutions during the turbulent 2020/21 financial year.

The report's findings

- More than half of the independent museums who responded to Museums Galleries Scotland's survey indicated that they will run out of funds within 6 months and 71% would not survive a year
- The Industrial Museums Scotland group are reporting significant financial uncertainty, with 80% of staff furloughed and nearly all museums reporting financial instability before the start of the 2021 tourist season
- The anticipated reduction in visitor figures and income post lockdown will be an enormous challenge for those already facing financial difficulties. It is likely that many will not be able to open this year as it will not be financially viable for them to do so. Some may fail as a result
- Local Authorities and ALEOs have indicated that some museums will not open this year, while future budget pressures mean that some of their museums may not reopen at all
- University Museums are scenario planning for large budget reductions due to the impact on income from the decline in overseas students

See the complete announcement for Scotland here:

<https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/news/museums-galleries-scotland-provides-emergency-funding-30-sites-issues-covid-19-report/>

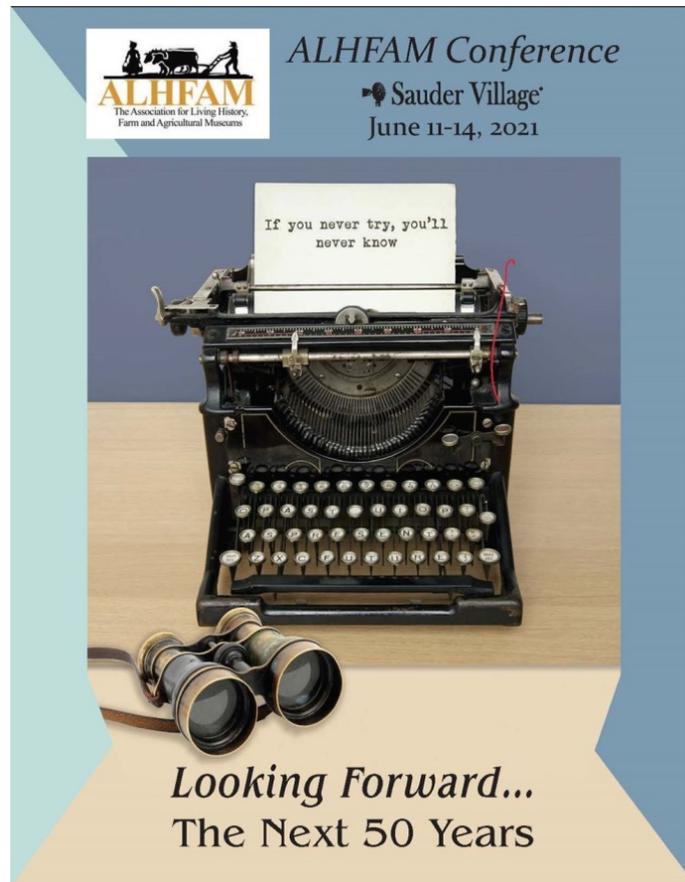


ALHFAM held its first virtual conference!



SCREEN VISION: A 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting & Conference

ALFHAM members had their first Virtual Annual Meeting & Conference. While there is no substitute for convening the ALHFAMily in person, we are adapting to these challenging circumstances and hope you were able to join us virtually. Now, on to the future!



Looking Forward . . . The Next 50 Years

June 11-14, 2021

Sauder Village, Archbold, Ohio

If we could gaze into our communal crystal ball, what would we see? What will the future bring living history, farm and agricultural museums, and how can we begin to prepare for that now? What issues and opportunities has the COVID-19 pandemic underscored and the protests for equity brought to the forefront? What kind of foundation are we building? What best practice methodologies are arising from within our own living history field that are robust, durable, and enduring? What strategies for success are we bringing—or can we borrow—from outside our field to ensure our relevance and sustainability?

The theme of the 2021 ALHFAM conference is about the future of living history. We can't predict it. But we can be open to it. We can prepare for it. We can be flexible, adaptable, and resilient to change as it will inevitably occur. Because 50 years from now, we want to be not just surviving but thriving. We want to be critical to how people see themselves, their communities, and their world. And we can start today.

Visit the call for proposals at

<https://alhfam.org/2021-Conference-Call-for-Proposals>



Follow-up News from the Guild of Model Wheelwrights A modeler in lockdown



Editor's Note: I was in touch with the Guild of Model Wheelwrights for several years and have always been blown over by the quality of the work, as well as the philosophy of historical preservation and methodology of highly strict authenticity usually behind it. Many AIMA members and friends have models in their collections, such as the COMPA, AIMA's host museum, not to mention non-agricultural institutions, such as technology museums, that have devoted much care to preserving and exhibiting their models (the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in Paris, FR, for one.) Yet, there are so many people interested in models – ships, planes, tanks, cars, factories, even farms – and modelling as a hobby appears to be very alive and well. Might it be feasible to establish some kind of “Guild Collection” of models under the auspices of one of the major museums in the UK with vehicle collections, or perhaps to distribute the collection over several museums acting together?

NB Of course, the AIMA is not lending its support to any arrangements for commercial activity, which must be undertaken by the parties involved, but it most certainly can lend a hand to help give visibility to remarkable sources of historical and technical information. This was already done in AIMA Newsletter N°14 in the article entitled “News from the Guild of Model Wheelwrights”, page 31 [https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/AIMA-Newsletter-N°14-June-2019.pdf](https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/AIMA-Newsletter-N%C2%B014-June-2019.pdf)

Page 4 **WHEEL WRITES** February 2017, Number 65

Making the model of a London Pattern Coal Van. by John Castle

Also known as a compass fronted van, due to the semi circular fore-cross ledge. I had long admired the elegant appearance of this vehicle and considered making a model of one, so needing a project I purchased the set of plans drawn by Fritz van Solt. As usual, I spent quite a bit of time studying the plan before committing to cutting wood or metal. I noticed several parts of the drawing which I questioned and set about researching further information from Fritz and others, and built up a library of photographs and drawing detail. The part which gave me most concern was the arrangement for the scales and scale tray which did not seem practical or workable, on both Fritz's plan and the Cooper brothers drawing which it was derived from. The arrangement shown was a set of four chains hanging from two rails fixed under the rear floor of the van, the chains supported a tray on which the scales sat. But such an arrangement was of course a penitentiary, there was no way that the scales could be pulled out to allow for weighing the bags of coal, the tray would always try to swing back into its position under the van, Mike Huddart a Guild member at the time came to my help, when out of the blue he sent me a group of photographs of what now appears to be the last surviving example of the van which he is



restoring, this vehicle still had an original arrangement for the scales which was practical and workable; there were still two rails under the rear body, but these supported a metal framework forming a cradle in which the scales sat, the framework can be pulled out sliding on the rails with the scales in situ, there is then a chain from the outer part of the frame which loops up to a hook fixed into the rear cross ledge giving additional support to the whole arrangement. Mike tells me that an identical arrangement was commonly used on the coal trolleys which succeeded this vehicle. With Mike's agreement Brian Simpson went to his farm and took a number of photographs of the framework and the scales which fitted in them, he went on to prepare a set of working drawing for me, which have allowed me to make a working set of scales. The scale arrangement now resolved, the next problem was the tail gate which was now shown to be too large, and again referring to the original vehicle I was able to adjust that to a more practical arrangement, which incorporates a foot step allowing the coal man easier access to the floor of the van when the tailgate is hung down. The final concern I had was on some of the chamfering, referencing the photographs I have I was able to confirm that the chamfers round the main body were correct, as were most of the chamfers round the fore carriage, however there were chamfers on the splinter bar which do no ring true for a working vehicle, likewise there were chamfers on both axle beds which would have been appropriate for a gipsy waggion, but would never have. [Continued on next page >](#)



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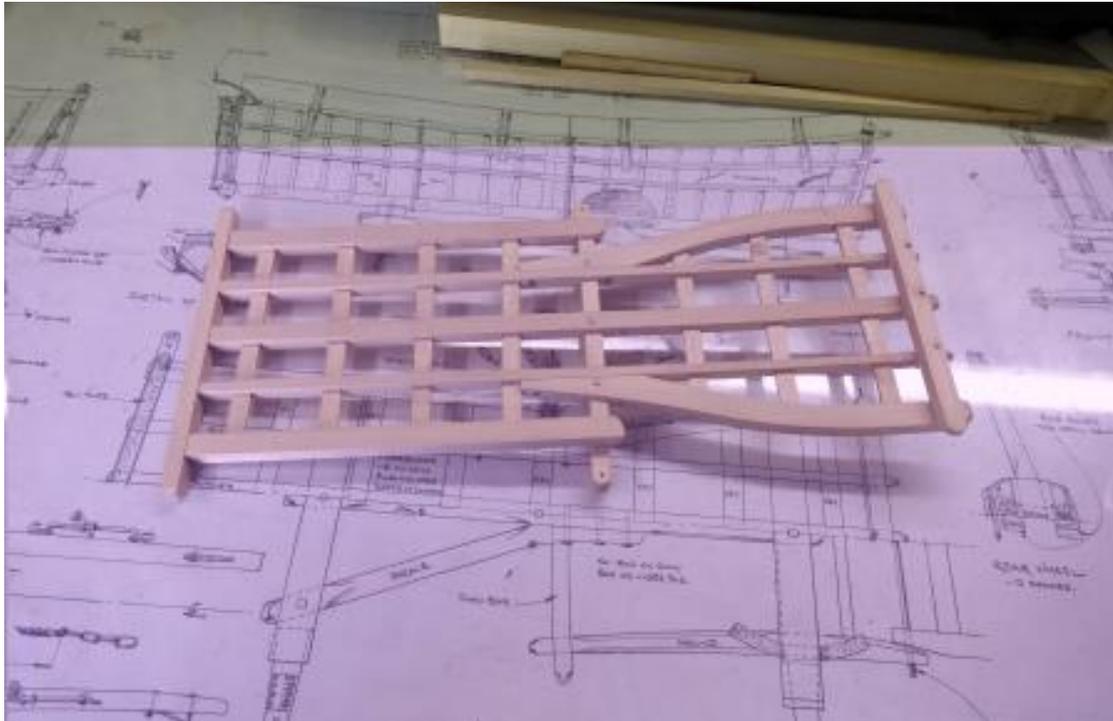
Here is a bit of personal insight and information from John Castle's e-mails in June 2019 and June 2020:

“I have often wondered what would happen to my own models when I am gone (hope it is not too soon but I am already 80).” (2019)

Some of the Guild members have tried to have their models auctioned in carriage sales, but results are very disappointing, although the models are a precious resource. In the main, they are re-creations in miniature of vehicles which have long gone. John's own models are constructed using the same methods used by the original makers. He does not use any glue,

every individual component is miniaturised and held together by pegs and nails. When Guild members have the opportunity to exhibit, they always get very positive feedback from the public but nothing further.

John has made one or two tentative enquiries but apart from one specific situation where he measured a waggon in a museum and has produced a model he hopes will go to the same place, there is little perspective of finding homes for all their models. In spite of the handwork going into the models, they do not seem to be really appreciated for what they are.



“A good example is the picture I have attached, in this view (the bed of a South Lincolnshire waggon): there are 45 mortice-and-tenon joints, all handmade. I take my inspiration from the original builders who many years ago produced work that would easily outlast anything made today. This model is my lockdown relief, I am still model-making at the age of 81, am still working on the model, but expect to have it finished within a month.” (2020)





Aktuell

Freilichtlabor Lauresham

Lauresham Digital Report

“Experiencing Experimental Archaeology”

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the May 10th “Day of Experimental Archaeology” at the Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Kloster Lorsch, in Hessen, Germany, was rescheduled to run virtually over two days, on 9 and 10 May from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., luckily with some tips on medieval cuisine during the lunch breaks! Lunchtime even included a virtual visit to various aspects of the Lauresham site and especially its natural environment, the redevelopment of which is among their major goals.



Begrüßung

durch
Claus Kropp,
Leiter des
Freilichtlabors

Samstag, 09. Mai
11 Uhr



This effort followed on the epic make-over of the EXARC annual congress in March summarized in AIMA May 2020 Special Report N°1,¹ with somewhat different options, although both worked on the digital platform Discord.² The EXARC meeting proposed full presentations in the form of webcammed sessions both in- and outdoors, virtual site tours and PowerPoint voice-over lectures running between 15 minutes and half an hour, at times mixing these methods in the same presentation. The Lauresham meeting utilized the same variety of techniques, but emphasized short communications of 5 to 10 minutes followed by highly stimulating question and answer sessions which easily filled up the rest of each half hour session and were continued later in the chat-box and special topic discussion threads.

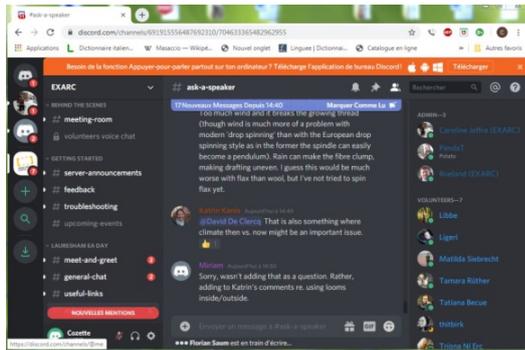
¹ Weblink to Special Report N°1 https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AIMA_Special_Report_N1-May2020-CopingWithCrisis.pdf

² See the Discord manual put together for the Lauresham meeting at https://experimentellearchaeologie.org.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/discord_manual-28-04-20.pdf and NB that Discord began life as a gamers' tool. More information on Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discord_\(software\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discord_(software))

For the full programme and weblinks to access each intervention in the meeting, go to: <https://exarc.net/virtual-events/days-experimental-archaeology-digital-de>

Update: there were 800+ active participants in the Discord discussions during the two days of the virtual conference, 2500+ clicks on the videos over the same period and then 1000 more clicks in the week following the event.

First of all, however, a quick look at how Discord works, since it is among several of the platforms that AIMA members and friends may be familiar with and which can effectively support a digital conference.



Left: Discord virtual meeting display screen with sessions, chat groups on left, questions being sent in from participants in centre; administrators and volunteers column on right of screen; Right: Dr. Linda Hurcombe, Exeter University, keynote speaker

Using this, like any other platform, takes a bit of getting used to – the EXARC volunteers repeated that it was a steep learning curve for them to set up the EXARC annual general meeting under such time pressure – and the relaxed spectators benefitting from their work would be well advised to check out some of the technicals. For example, I had to use it on a very small conventional computer screen and that made mousework or touch guiding nearly impossible, so I had to switch over to a larger screen.

A pleasant aspect was seeing questions come up on-screen as people were writing them in. Four administrators were actually present in audio, so that they could relay the questions to the speakers for their replies and, in a few cases, translate them from German to English. They were also responsible for keeping the discussion going, which they did adroitly, although it was rarely necessary in view of the slew of questions being sent in from viewers. Since the conference was international, most of the discussion was in English, and the number of attendees, many of them actively participating in the question function, far exceeded Lauresham's initial hopes about attendance numbers. Another attractive option is bringing the YouTube video postings on in real time, as during the EXARC congress, which lends a more vivid impression to the undertaking, with the comfort of knowing you can catch up on any session you missed afterwards.

Conference host Claus Kropp, Manager of the Lauresham Laboratory for Experimental Archaeology, opened the event by welcoming participants in German with English sub-titles. Claus switched over to English with German sub-titles for the Sunday morning welcome.

During his introduction, there was also pertinent commentary from the site's farm fowl, which remained discreet but lent considerable atmosphere. Of the thirteen presentations over the two days, all those in German (8) were provided with excellent sub-titles in English, just as the English interventions (5) had German sub-titles.

These presentations were wide-ranging, from one of Lauresham's most important experimental projects (construction of pit-houses and investigation of their conceivable uses), on to reproduction of the equipment for armed cavalry in Carolingian times, attempting to make replicas of the famous card-woven Albecunde Belt and the role of noblewomen in such

work, a fine example of cross-over between historical documents and craft experimentation. Indeed, there were several interventions devoted to various aspects of weaving, including analysis of the “climate” in outdoor set-ups or in various buildings, most especially the pit-houses, to better understand how conditions may facilitate, or not, various steps in cloth-making processes.

Of special interest to AIMA members were the presentations devoted to agricultural practices and how to document them, including hands-on raising and training of draft oxen for field and forest work. This is a world of choices and there was ample expression of the at times agonizing aspect of making them, since the experiments can easily lead to a practical impasse... then you have to back up and re-choose, utilizing the bumps to explain to visitors the genuine difficulties of working your way back into history or pre-history.

In contrast to the EXARC congress, in which President Pascale Barnes gave the welcome in a half-hour webcam video, Saturday’s presentations were kicked off by a rather different 40-minute keynote lecture by Prof. Linda Hurcombe of the University of Exeter on “Experiments within experiments, building a Bronze Age boat and other experiences within museums”. This was a PowerPoint presentation with the pleasant detail of nonetheless having her appear in video on a small screen in the bottom corner, which lends the impression of eye contact. Her detailed presentation touched on many aspects of the expert craft work that takes place in archaeological reconstructions as well as in living history sites or museums that provide craft workshops, although on a very different scale. Whether a boat floats and is a manageable craft is truly an ultimate test, somewhat more “sink or swim” than working with animal draft or weaving.



Brian Cumby, shipwright, and launch of Morgawr sewn-plank replica

With the concern for the deepest implications of material culture, her whole team was attentive to such aspects as working exclusively with adzes or the posture that makes tasks unpleasant or easy, a subject dealt with regularly in the AIMA newsletters.³ Reconstruction of the Morgawr sewn-plank boat also literally embodied expertise, since the team was supervised by a professional who could train them and comment, “if it looks right, it’s right” to sum up. There was considerable cool-headedness on hand, as well – the boat leaked during launch, so they waited until the planks swelled and self-adjusted.

Linda also broached the subject of textiles, among the most important workshop and demonstration activities of EXARC-member museums. Checking the number of visits to the various presentations, it seems that the one on weaving as communication work in museums by Florian Saum had the highest number of hits (309 at the time of writing).⁴ Florian emphasized that the activity is perfect for helping to understand life in a medieval society, where people themselves actually created much of what they used, in contrast to our mainly

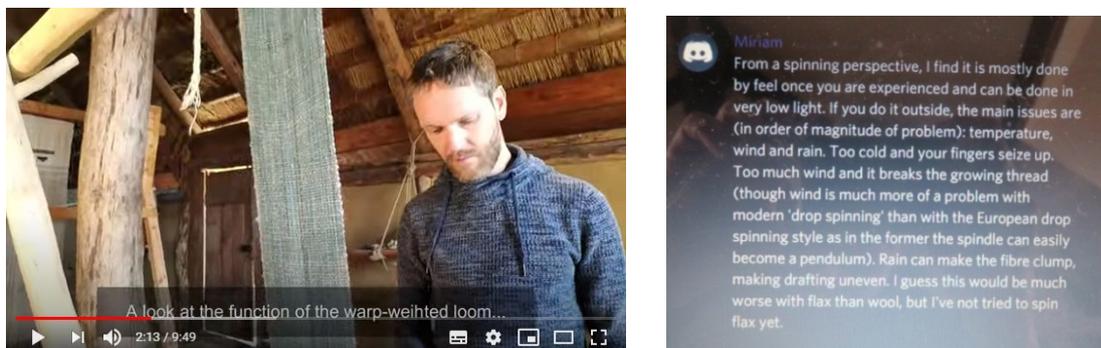
³ See the articles on posture / gesture and art works such as Portuguese *azulejo* tiles or 19th-century ruralist art in AIMA Newsletters N°9, N°14, and N° 15 Part 1

⁴ Weben in der Vermittlungsarbeit: see official programme for weblink to presentation

consumer lifestyles where we “just go out and buy it”. It enables him to show the entire flow chain from sheep wool or flax to wearables, all the while explaining that time constraints for setting up such looms cannot be applied to the museum’s 3-4-hour workshops, so that there is a gap between authenticity and the realities of present-day life which visitors can easily come to understand. The regular frankness of the presenters was a special treat in methodological terms and as insight into the outcomes of their experiments. As Florian noted about weaving processes, “the longer I try to understand, the less clear the evidence is”, a highly motivating boost to further experimentation and research.



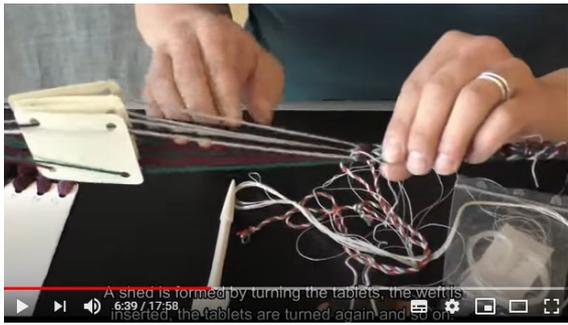
Highlighting weaving processes linked impressively with a special theme at Lauresham, among other museums working on a comparable time period, since it is one of the hypotheses about the use of the pit-houses that have been and are being reconstructed on the Lorsch site, which also holds a yearly textile workshop. A snippet of the lively exchanges that were typed in, then read aloud and answered by the presenter gives an idea of the expertise and sharing involved in the questions of light, humidity and warmth (or lack of it). This screen shot of a comment by Miriam gives an idea of how extensive some of the questions or comments were during the presentations and how rich the exchanges in the discussion threads continued to be “after the fact”.



Florian Saum on left; on right: question for discussion session on weaving from Miriam

Discussion of how the artefact, the Albecunde belt (Albecundegürtel), was card-woven brought up technical questions such as dyeing red to purplish-red, consulting with professional plant dye-users, the workability of gummy, degummed or semi-degummed silk, or whether it arrived in the West already dyed (probably only until the process came to be better understood). The exchanges fired more comment on medieval life, for example, just how long it took to master the techniques involved – five years? ten years? and just how fast a card-weaver can work, all the more pertinent as the technique has never been industrialized, so there are many living examples of “traditional” tablet-weavers (another AIMA newsletter subject⁵).

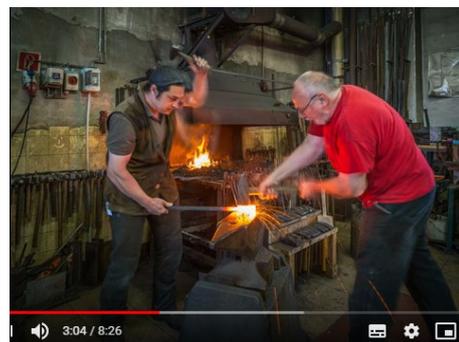
⁵ See article on TWIST (tablet-weavers association) “Tablet-weavers’ International Studies and Techniques” in AIMA Newsletter N°8



Left: Dr. Katrin Kania and Andrea Klitsche-Hiebel M.A. on card-weaving the Albecunde Girdle (belt), Right: Claire Walton at Butser Ancient Farm

All the preceding examples linked up remarkably with the presentation on Butser Ancient Farm by Claire Walton and Trevor Creighton, which likewise elicited a flood of exchanges and highlighted both the joys of the work and the difficulties involved in doing research while managing visitors (35,000 schoolchildren per year). Like the team at Lauresham, they also closely monitor the indoor conditions in their reconstructions, for bacterial and viral content, humidity and temperature, and enlist school classes to help with building, which enables them to better understand that most dwellings in the past rarely survived more than a generation. Trevor emphasized that one of the pleasures of teamwork in reconstruction was the chance to recreate the soundscape involved.

Butser Farm was included in the Sunday Virtual Information Booth, of special interest to the archaeological open-air museums in the British Isles, as they have now formalized their exchange visits with colleagues from other open-air museums and find it is excellent to build up a critical mass of awareness on the part of the public of their mission, with no over-competition issues whatsoever. Reconstruction involves many decisions, as does the general running of the operation: with 200+ volunteers, they have opted for paid professional education staff and decided not to use audio-guides because the philosophy of the place for their visitors is hands-on, with the opportunity to discover the site independently. Among the many remarks was the surprise that the Museums Association does not recognize Butser, because they do not have a “collection”, although this posed no problem for the ICOM or EXARC due to the Farm’s built environment and emphasis on intangible cultural heritage. They host a variety of events, including re-enactments and this year put their popular May 2nd Beltane Festival – cancelled because of the health crisis – online with video clips and storytelling from earlier years, as a stopgap in an unusual situation.



Armored mounted warriors Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart; replica of the blade; forging

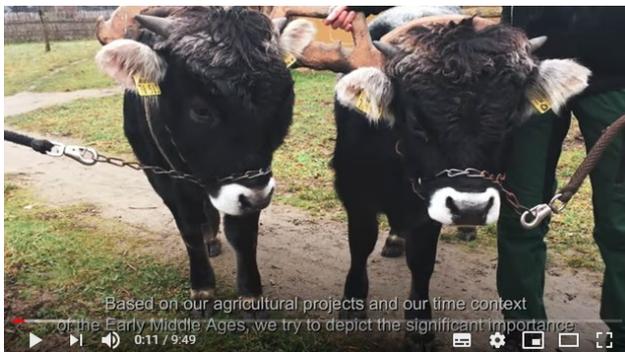
In some ways, the presentation of the Lauresham research on armed cavalry was a contrast to the broad spectrum of the Butser activities, since it dealt with metallurgy and the detailed video clips on the work elicited highly expert comments from both the arms- and equipment-makers and the online attendees. Among them, were comments on the diversity of heritage

craft associations from one country to another, it being a very loose network in Germany with most emphasis on local groups. The Lauresham experiments of course must take into account how weapons and armor are worn and used in relation to the warriors' expertise in handling their horses, a "moving" dimension that adds to the challenges.



Claus discussing traditional yokes shown, but not used, and option for modern 3-pad collar; Right: Volunteer Year interns literally learning the ropes

Peaceful draft animals, oxen of the Rhaetian Grey breed, were at the centre of Claus Kropp's presentation of the Lauresham farming, forestry and transport experiments that lend the site an irreplaceable vibrancy. The museum thus helps underwrite protection and active use of an endangered breed, as do many German open-air sites. There is also a meaningful gap between historical accuracy and present-day rules on animal welfare and veterinary requirements. For example, this provides opportunities to show older yoking methods and how animal-friendly they were (or not...), in order to explain the farm's current use of the three-pad collar, which was perfected in the 20th century. Most importantly, nothing replaces a handler's know-how. In addition to doing his doctorate on the subject of pre-historic ox draft, Claus got his own start in handling through the German oxdrivers' group⁶ in 2012 and has now shared it with Lauresham staff and their interns from the German eco-year programme, many of whom do their volunteerships in open-air museums.⁷



Young Rhaetian Greys; David and Darius, the oxen, as stuffed toys in Lauresham museum shop, during the German Oxdrivers' annual meeting in 2017, Photo C. Griffin-Kremer

The stakes involved for a site like Lauresham are considerable – visitors are thrilled to watch the oxen working for hours on end, animals in some museums get fan letters and have their own social media followers, and visitors to Lauresham swarm to buy the museum shop's stuffed oxen, including a calf, so the animals have become real game-changers. And, this has boosted Lauresham's scientific capacities for investigating tools, implements, vehicles and practices on the site, since the fields are far too small to envision using modern machinery. Claus also noted that the online free-access of the journal *Tools & Tillage* set up by AIMA with EXARC, ALHFAM and Heidelberg University partners makes available a wealth of

⁶ See English homepage at <https://www.zugrinder.de/en/>, German at <https://www.zugrinder.de/de/>

⁷ FOEJ Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr -> DE <https://foej.de/en/start-eng/> and EN <https://foej.de/en/start-eng/>

information on precisely this kind of research, as well as on the built and the human-affected environment.⁸ This dovetails with the deeply hands-on approach at Lauresham to back-breeding for their own herd of Aurochs, to see what sort of landscape is created by regular ruminant grazing practices that would have been part of the wilderness close to the medieval village.⁹

The questions that followed and Claus' expertise in the answers made this session particularly lively, with the factor of working with live animals enriching the exchanges. It enabled him to cite a working group colleague's handbook on using draft cattle in a museum,¹⁰ quote Ed Schultz at Colonial Williamsburg on the loss of thousands of years of built-up knowledge, and cite Pete Watson's work at Howell Living History Farm or Tillers International in linking Old World expertise and commitment to agricultural development on other continents, as well as to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The use of draft cattle at Lauresham also provides the opportunity to create video clips parallel to the Skills Clips the ALHFAM is promoting, and to spread expertise through the community of museum and living history staffers working with animal power. Hopefully, this will contribute to building up a networking platform including all the varieties of actors and skillholders from hobby oxdrivers to real working farmers to the fabric of institutions that can partner with or sustain them in the transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Claus has a simple argument in his conclusion:

“Promote the use of draft cattle, *because it works.*”

NB Claus' presentation of working with draft animals at Lauresham is in two parts, the Saturday overview in German with English subtitles and the Sunday lecture in English with German subtitles.

This is the weblink to his Sunday lecture in English with German subtitles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzwaITArGzo&feature=youtu.be>

And the Saturday presentation of their work at Lauresham in German with English subtitles:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75Mgs-r_VK8&feature=youtu.be

With the cooperation of EXARC and the AIMA, Claus has also launched an online survey of using draft cattle in museums. If you can help, let him know here: <https://exarc.net/history/short-survey-draft-cattle-museums>



X



⁸ *Tools & Tillage* on AIMA website <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/category/announcement/> and <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/news-2/tools-tillage/>

⁹ Special report N°1 https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AIMA_Special_Report_N1-May2020-CopingWithCrisis.pdf

¹⁰ Astrid Masson, head of farm at the open-air Dahlem Domain in Berlin, Handbook on Harnessing Cattle (Handbuch Rinderanspannung: Praktischer Ratgeber zu Verhalten, Ausbildung, Beschirrung und Anspannung von Zugrindern (Deutsch) Gebundene Ausgabe – 1. November 2015)-> AIMA Newsletter N° 5

AIMA Virtual Information Booth

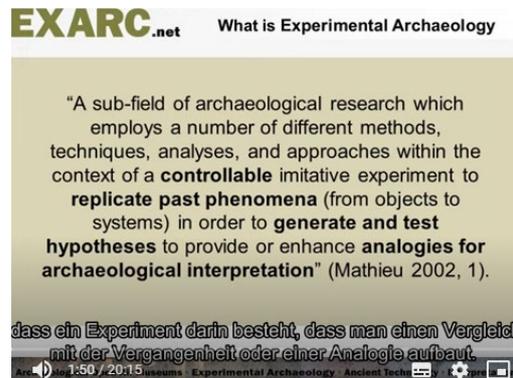
All EXARC members, like Lauresham, have a firm commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and consequently much in common with AIMA members' and friends' museums or sites. Like Butser Ancient Farm, the AIMA was given a special slot in a Virtual Information Booth to close the Saturday afternoon session, first with a smartphone introduction from President Ollie Douglas of the MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) from his home-work (and home-schooling!) garden, followed by Claus' presentation in English of the AIMA, based on the historical documents on the AIMA website¹¹ and his own experience as Member for Germany and as pilot of the AIMA blog postings.¹² EXARC Director Roeland Paardekooper, who is a frequent networking partner and familiar with the AIMA, contributed to the following exchange with typically pertinent questions. This was an especially attractive way to introduce the AIMA to members of another association and we need to follow up with Claus to see how best to optimize this good start.



For EXARC

Dr. Roeland Paardekooper on “Experimental Archaeology: what is it and who does it?”

is a combined webcam and PowerPoint presentation in which he discusses EXARC's members from museums through associations and on to universities and individual scholars, their four main points of specialization (ancient and traditional technology, experimental archaeology, interpretation/education and museum practice). Roeland emphasizes the clarity needed about what experimental archaeology is, as well as what it is *not* – one definition being “the effort to replicate phenomena and practice from the past in controllable experiments meant to generate hypotheses that contribute, in their turn, to analogies for archaeological interpretation”.¹³ However, the much broader endeavor involved is both theoretical and through acquiring concrete knowledge in search, not of the past, but of the human beings that made it live by applying all their capacities and using their context-specific material resources.



¹¹ Weblinks to AIMA history documents: <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/about/history/>

¹² Weblink to AIMA blog posts: <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/news-events/news/>

¹³ Citing Mathieu, 2002, 1.

Roeland goes through various protocols for the optimized procedures to carry out experiments in a real-life museum world or site plus how to disambiguate them: for example, using trees to build a structure with traces of the work which cannot be obtained in any other way. He built up his own approach to answering some of these questions by taking a survey of universities, societies (and associations), museums and freelancers, all of whom may join in collaborative work. This should not obscure the fact that the differences in EXARC member museums and members from country to country may be considerable, with fewer financial resources or higher diversity in skills, and there is definitely still a need for more networking, more meetings – either live or digital – to bring the expertise acquired to the fore. Just defining experimental archaeology is a challenge, but there is a basic consensus that it is a key to investigating the past and its unique role in bringing the hard and soft sciences together is a major advantage. Above all, the power of such experimental undertakings to engage and educate the public is immense, although it is an invaluable tool in research as well.

An added resource is EXARC’s online experimental archaeology collection, much of which has never been published in learned journals and is all the more important to enable effective networking among skillholders. Perhaps the most important aspect of this unique archive-in-the-making is to enable people to avoid doing things that have already been done, often long ago! The experience built up over the years and the current activities form a bridge that crosses disciplines and enables museums and researchers to reach out to the public, to

“Tell stories about the past and its connection to the present
based on archaeological evidence”¹⁴

More about EXARC

EXARC’s work building bridges is based on deeply integrated networking, with 350 members in some 40 countries and many other friends – like the AIMA. Their major activity is helping coordinate projects, for example, the active twinning between Claus’ work at Lauresham and University College Dublin, or enabling partners in different countries to meet and match their interests and expertise. NB money from memberships is never for running EXARC but for *projects* in museums or academic institutions and EXARC is proud of its involvement with the European Voluntary Service which encourages young people on a year “off” to commit to working in museums or at living history sites -> <https://ivsgb.org/erasmus-plus-volunteering/>



The **EXARC Journal** consists of a selection of peer-reviewed articles plus voluntary non-reviewed contributions, all entirely online. The journal is totally free-access, a highly important option expressing the philosophical position of the archaeologists involved. See the latest edition 2020/2 at <https://exarc.net/journal>

¹⁴ To view Roeland’s presentation go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2SKgIRZ5bk&feature=youtu.be>



“European Archaeology Days On 19-21 June 2020 we celebrate the European Archaeology Days (EAD), introduced on a European scale in 2019, and here to stay! Due to the current COVID emergency, the EAD are not cancelled, but transformed. Museums where large events are banned are welcome to unfold their creativity and organise a unique virtual festivity for their public. EXARC is thrilled to participate again alongside many of our members.”

Considering AIMA’s experience networking with EXARC, it is well worth reading the EXARC’s short year-by-year history as one possible “how-to” example. They already have a high score for the year 2020, having carried off two digital conferences as well as holding the EXARC annual general meeting with official member electronic voting.

During the Covid-19 crisis, EXARC especially encourages museums to re-open and provides hands-on support material to help do so under the title “Experience instead of Event: Changes in Open-Air Museums Post-Coronavirus -> <https://exarc.net/history/open-air-museums-times-covid-19-call-arms>

FIVE REASONS TO REOPEN MUSEUMS

				
MUSEUMS ARE READY (9 out of 10 museums report ready to open on May 10th)	IT IS SAFE (museums already have systems in place to regulate and handle public access)	OUTDOOR AREAS (many museums have large outdoor areas with enough space)	SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE ON DEMAND (museums can offer learning activities for school children)	EXPERIENCES (it offers Danish people the possibility to leave home and get much needed experiences)

Source: Organisationen Danske Museer, 2020

An EXARC 'call to arms' to reevaluate and develop your Open-Air Museum's interpretation strategy

5 reasons to re-open -> <https://exarc.net/issue-2020-2/mm/experience-instead-event-Covid-19>

As just one example of an effective and attractive offering, check out EXARC’s special monthly event **“Finally Friday”** that brings two EXARC members together to discuss a topic on the last Friday of the month.¹⁵ The May edition was entitled “On Talking, Tools and Tanning” and is an idea that the AIMA might consider for its member museums in collaboration with networking partners like EXARC, ALHFAM, SFLS, the RMN in GB, and eventually bringing in other international groups such as the AEOM or institutions with fine agricultural collections such as the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, which hosted the AIMA

¹⁵ See “Finally Friday” at <https://exarc.net/meetings/finallyfriday>

2019 Executive Committee annual meeting so successfully and holds a remarkable collection of agriculture and rural life materials.¹⁶

More on Digital meetings

EXARC hosts digital events by museums, living history sites, researchers and freelancers and you can contact them to propose events -> <https://exarc.net/virtual-events>

Meanwhile, the weblink for the Laresham meeting is up on the EXARC site here:

<https://exarc.net/virtual-events/days-experimental-archaeology-digital-de>

Note that with this short time frame and the necessity of assuring permission for the funding to support the digital make-over at Laresham, the effort had a touch of the Olympic Games and Claus admitted that he had more than one night of only two hours' sleep, so the process may not be recommended for those preferring more leisurely sports. Obviously, it is certainly possible with more run-up time to the event planned.

In his Sunday morning welcome to attendees in English, Claus comments that the whole Laresham team is blown over at the very high attendance numbers and they see that this kind of virtual event can be a valuable complementary feature in their museum's strategies which should be developed more actively.

NB that this converges with remarks years ago by Hugues de Varine on the concept of "écomusées" in France – that in the future, other countries might well find entirely different ways of conceiving of how to promote collections, as well as their links to tangible and intangible heritage, and these might not include the criteria in his own experience or our own present-day image of "the museum". -> https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugues_de_Varine

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Come join us in the AIMA

Membership forms and PayPal or bank transfer are available online in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish on the AIMA website under the heading JOIN US!

Individual membership €10, Institutional membership €40.

<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/membership/application-forms/>

¹⁶ Weblink to Slovene Ethnographic Museum report on AIMA website
<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FullReport-ExecCom-2019-SloveneEthnographicMuseum.pdf>