

Museum

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Ethnographic and open-air museums

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From the Editor

When visiting an ethnographic museum or an open-air museum, one often has the sense that such institutions are not only *about* everyday people, but are also *for* them. Chamber music at a major gallery of contemporary art usually requires a necktie or dress; a folk concert at an open-air museum is less exigent: a tee shirt and shorts will do. The objects displayed at an ethnographic museum tend to be vernacular; so, too, does its public.

This is not, of course, to say that vernacular culture is somehow inferior to High Culture, any more than to imply that the reverse is true. If, however, vernacular culture has increasingly come to receive recognition of its own value and dignity (and leaving aside occasional cheapening due to over-commercialization or demagoguery), it is due in good part to the buoyancy and consequent popularity of ethnographic and open-air museums.

In their strenuous and laudable attempts to preserve and display the intriguing relics of irrevocably bygone eras, have they not tended, on occasion, to ignore or even opt out of the present? The question might better be put another way: as guardians and messengers of vernacular history, do not such museums have a special responsibility regarding the problems of everyday people of our time?

Many specialists (a growing number?) think so. One example. At the session of the International Committee for Museums of Ethnology (ICME) that took place on the occasion of ICOM '89, in the Netherlands, Dr Wolfgang Mey of Hamburg's Museum für Völkerkunde proposed the creation of an informal working-group to examine ways in which ethnographic museums could deal with violations of human rights.

It is, then, topical to explore how ethnographic museums and open-air museums are facing important problems of today. *Museum* does so in the central theme section of this issue.

A first sub-section, on ethnographic museums, has been co-ordinated by Martine Jaoul, a curator at the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires in Paris and member of the Bureau of the French National ICOM Committee. The second sub-section, devoted to open-air museums, has been co-ordinated by Christopher Zeuner, Director of the Weald and Downland Open-Air Museum (United Kingdom) and President of the Association of European Open-Air Museums. *Museum* warmly thanks Mme Jaoul and Mr Zeuner for their unstinting and efficient co-operation in putting this issue together.

A.G.

P.S. With this issue, the oversigned leaves the post of Editor-in-Chief after two years and ten months of effort to revitalize *Museum*. He wishes to thank members of the editorial Advisory Board, the Editors of away-from-Headquarters editions of the magazine, and colleagues of the UNESCO Secretariat – most particularly Editorial Assistant Christine Wilkinson – for imaginative co-operation. He also wishes to thank the many *Museum* readers who responded to the questionnaire sent with No. 170; your ideas and suggestions will be invaluable in shaping future issues of the magazine.

Ethnographic museums today

Martine Jaoul

Ethnographic museums, museums of popular art, regional and local museums, ecomuseums, folklore museums. . . . The difficulty of simply naming and classifying all these institutions, which nevertheless regard themselves as having a shared identity, is itself highly significant of the movements that are currently causing a certain stir among the many 'cousins' of open-air museums.

In 1991, at a national meeting of directors of this type of collection held in Mulhouse, the general term '*musées de sociétés*'¹ was coined to refer to such museums in France. Will the same expression be adopted in other countries? This matter of designation is surely symptomatic of the problems that are currently besetting all such institutions. In the articles that follow, the theme of the complex relationship of these *musées de société* to 'their society' will indeed be found in virtually all cases to be, in one guise or another, the recurrent *leitmotif*.

Jean-Claude Duclos and Jean-Yves Veillard initiate the debate, arguing that an ethnographic museum is also a forum for public discussion and, hence, a political arena. They highlight the difficulties experienced by curators in remaining independent and objective in regard to the issues at stake in a particular region. Following in their wake, Hartmut Prasch ponders the means of correlating the policies of local museums and the regional museum in a harmonious manner.

Local authorities, regional power centres, dominant societies and minority groups – Liliane Kleiber-Schwartz considers in the context of these very contemporary concerns the cultural action of the Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie in Paris: do immigrants have 'their' museum? Finally, it is essential to situate ethnographic museums in the more general context of scien-

tific study and practical experience in the field. This is the issue that Marie-Odile Marion addresses on the basis of the experiment she carried out in Mexico on the museography of technology.

This debate on *musées de sociétés* takes on a very topical dimension in Europe at a time when European economic and political structures are being set up. This is the reason why France's Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires is preparing, in conjunction with the French Committee of ICOM, the first European meeting to discuss ethnography museums, to be held in Paris in February 1993.

Pride of place will be given at this meeting to a review of the functions, roles and future of the ethnographic museum in a Europe viewed from a regional standpoint. One of the practical goals of the meeting will be to set up a European network of *musées de société* for the whole of Europe within its geographical boundaries.

The meeting will take place against the background of a whole series of events focusing on the ethnography of Europe and its museums, grouped together under the banner EUR'ETHNO 93 – to which all the readers of this issue of *Museum* are cordially invited. ■

Note

1. *Translator's note: Musée de société* is difficult to translate adequately into English: the term has the sense of 'community museum', and at the same time denotes one reflecting the state and evolution of a given society.

Ethnographic museums and politics

Jean-Claude Duclos and Jean-Yves Veillard

To an even greater extent than some other types of museum, ethnographic museums are rooted in the everyday world, questioning the age in which we live. How then do they manage to steer between, on the one hand, an apolitical view without responsibility and, on the other, the taking of political sides? This is the problem on which the following article tries to throw light. Jean-Claude Duclos was Deputy-Director of the Camargue Regional Nature Park before becoming, in 1981, Curator of the Musée Dauphinois in Grenoble. Jean-Yves Veillard was Curator of the Brittany Museum in Rennes and since 1987 has been Curator of the Rennes Ecomuseum.

It is impossible to dissociate the mushrooming of museums of ethnology in the nineteenth century and the developments in ethnology-related sciences from the interest shown at the time by the imperial powers in their colonial possessions.

The importance which many countries attached to their presence at those first major international events known as 'universal exhibitions', also owed something to a clear political determination to assert their existence and their singularity and to develop trade. Incidentally, it was at these exhibitions (especially the ones in 1867 and 1878) that scenes of community life, staged with objects and costumed dummies in an authentic setting, provided some of the earliest signs of an interest in regional ethnography and continued thereafter to inspire the displays of ethnographic museums.

In 1899, Frédéric Mistral, the Provençal poet, founded at Arles (France) the Museon Arlaten (one of the first museums of regional ethnography), hoping that similar museums would be opened in every French city since 'they are the very best way of teaching everyone history, patriotism, love of the soil and respect for one's ancestors'. In so doing, he was defending a political system, namely, federalism.

When the *Heimatmuseen* sprang up in defeated Germany in the 1930s, embodying the desire to give value to popular cultural traditions, to rekindle pride in being German and to demonstrate the superiority of the Aryan race, there again the political intention was clear.

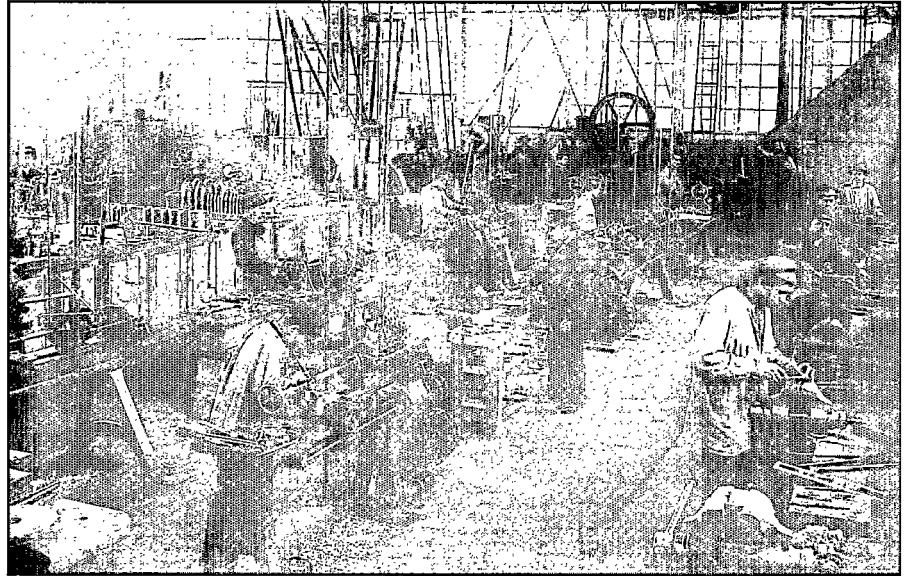
More recently, on the other side of the Atlantic, neighbourhood museums – still called community museums – were established towards the end of the 1960s in order to give disadvantaged social groups

an opportunity of being in contact with their own culture and to encourage them to take their own future in hand. Once again, this formed part of a consistent political idea.

Self-reliance

In the same way, the birth and development of ecomuseums cannot be dissociated from the first outward signs of the desire to defend one's identity and environment or, in France, from the legacy of the events of May 1968. The ecomuseum concept has been so successful throughout the world because it also shows the same spirit of resistance to the disregard of identity by a dominant or even oppressive central power. The museum, which was hitherto a means for a country to vaunt the identity of the nation, became an instrument for ethnic or social groups seeking to set themselves on their feet and obtain recognition. To this movement belong the large number of ecomuseums that sprang up in Quebec between 1979 and 1984 (such as those at Haute-Beauce, Fier monde, l'Insulaire, La Vallée de la Rouge, Saint Constant and Deux Rives), which defined their approach as the opposite of museums and which are sometimes called 'rebel museums' today. In Europe, from Norway to Catalonia and Portugal (after the Revolution of the Carnations in 1974), a very large number of ethnological museum experiments were launched in the 1970s.

'Only those who live by their culture and give it life are able to think up anything that is new and independent', said Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), with reference to the need for a museum policy in the Sahel. Many people are following the same approach. In France, where certain rural areas are overlooked by or simply un-



© D. Busseuil. Ecomusée de la Communauté le Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines (France)

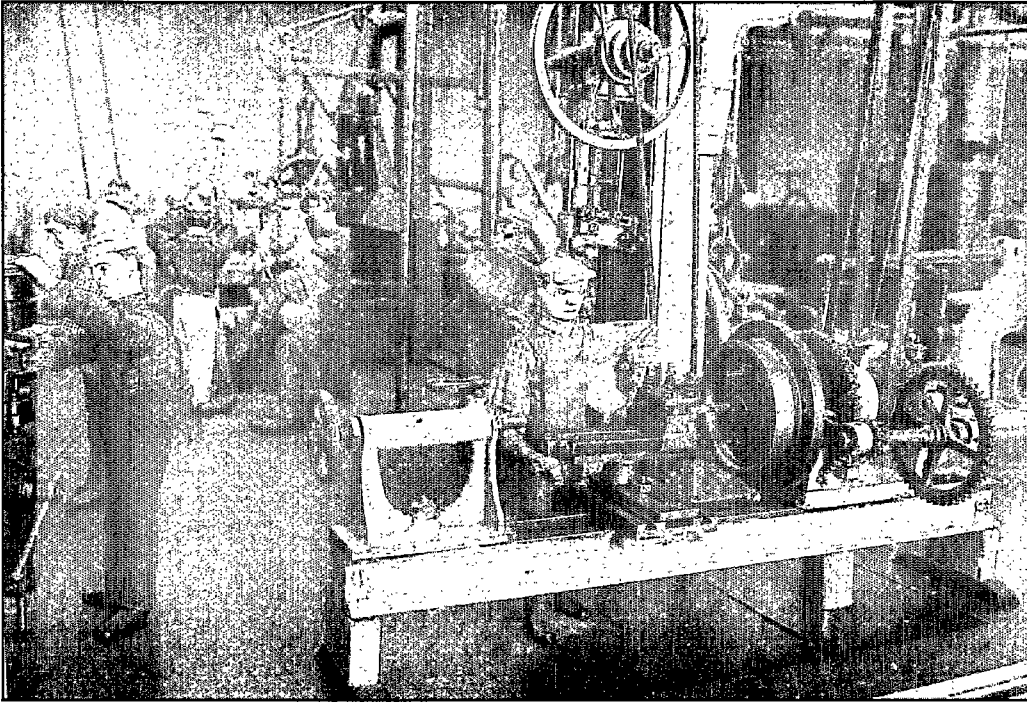
Fitting shop, Creusot works, 1881.

known to the municipal authorities, this realization has spurred community action and resulted in the creation of a local museum or ecomuseum, or at least in research, collections and exhibitions. Here we find the same emerging desire to give everybody, in the area where they live, the means, as Stanislas Adotevi has said, 'to take responsibility for their culture, that is to say, to take responsibility for their development'. What they are trying to do is to recover their sense of community, to enjoy the strength that comes from the feeling of belonging and to regain their dignity. In such a context, the museum is regarded, as Alpha Oumar Konaré has put it, as a way of 'sharpening the critical spirit, the self-knowledge, the self-recognition and the self-reliance of local communities'. There is an emerging desire to democratize knowledge with the aim of contributing, through museums, to the cultural as well as the social and economic development of the societies they serve.

In the words of Milagro Gómez de Blavia, 'In Latin America, it is today impossible to conceive of a museum that is solely con-

cerned with the heritage and ignores development'. Museum specialists who think like him maintain that all the documentation on the relationship between a community and its environment, built up and conserved at great cost by the museum, should benefit as many members of that community as possible and provide material for their thinking about the future.

'Unsure as we are of what the future holds for us', observed the late John Kinard, founder of the Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum, 'we must gather together in peace and brotherhood to build our future by defining attainable objectives'. The conception of museology expressed in those words shows the extent to which some museum professionals are willing to commit themselves. Those who shared the same ideas in varying degrees began to meet in the 1970s, rallying, in opposition to the official museological 'establishment', around the standard of the 'new museology' and founding, in Lisbon in 1985, the International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM). Of course, by no means all the members of the museum fraternity who



Animated model of the Creusot workshops constructed by Joseph Beauchot, late nineteenth century.

took part in this movement were ethnographers, particularly as the practice of interdisciplinarity is one of the rare basic principles of the 'new museology' which was never challenged. However, ethnography and its parent discipline, ethnology, in practice play a dominant role because of the means they offer for studying what differentiates one group from another and how each group maintains its separate existence.

Avoiding slippage

Ethnologists, in France at least, have come a long way since the time when they regarded the museum and the succession of tasks which it permits, e.g. the collection, study, conservation and display of specimens, as something essential for their research and teaching activities. Now that they are installed in laboratories or research centres, ethnologists no longer seem

to expect much from museums. It is true that what they study, which is precisely what the museums are attempting to collect, suddenly acquired the status of ethnological heritage and that some ethnologists, fearing that the emotional undertones present in the concept of 'heritage' might undermine the scientific quality of their research, preferred to keep their distance. It is also possible that as museums were not developing at the same pace as ethnology, they were unable to hold on to the research workers they needed. One thing remains beyond doubt, in the few pointers we have given above concerning the inevitable involvement of museums in matters of politics, and that is the need, in order to avoid any slippage, to ensure that a genuine scientific spirit permeates what the museums do.

While generating cultural action that responds to the deep-seated needs of a society, the staff of museums also have the

duty of justifying their choices from the standpoint of science and of setting them within the long-term context of museum activity. The work of museums is a combination of these two responsibilities, one cultural and the other scientific. But when we ask what an ethnographic museum should acquire, the other question that has to be asked is what will contribute to the development of those on behalf of whom acquisitions are made, i.e. those whom the museum is aiming at in the medium and long term. It nevertheless seems that the search for a balance between scientific investigation and cultural action is not enough to define the involvement in political matters that we referred to.

There is also a third aspect, equally important but more difficult to delimit, which pervades such action. It has to do with ethics or with the implicit moral code that each curator attempts to share with those around him and to observe by virtue of his obligations towards the community that employs him. Of the three things that make it possible to gauge the nature and degree of the involvement of the museum and its staff in political matters, this is the least well known. True, situations vary immensely and reference to pre-established systems, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has shown its limits. The Universal Declaration has been said to represent a 'Europe-centred ideology' and makes no mention of the rights of groups or cultural communities. To some people, it even tends to foster the mindless drift towards uniformity, which is precisely what museums of ethnography oppose by placing value on differences. The obligation to adopt an ethical stance is all the more important in a world in which museums, by the way in which they express themselves and the work they do, are able to perform an informative role which the media, subject to economic pressures and

the exaggeration which is an intrinsic media characteristic, are more or less abandoning. The dozens of deaths that accompanied the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi prompted information about India, which lasted about as long as his funeral pyre. But what detailed information was provided in connection with the hundreds of deaths provoked by the incident at the holy site of Ayodhya?

This ethical stance, always closely bound up with the museum's cultural and scientific functions, makes it impossible to shirk questions on the 'keep everything' attitude to cultural diversity (what about excision?) or the global dimension of ethnic conflicts, or questions on the development models of these human communities in relation to Planet Earth's resources. Modesty is particularly necessary when ambitions appear inordinate. It is not a matter of 'playing at politics' but of attempting to accompany the ordinary citizen in his advance from culture as knowledge to culture as a source of energy or, to borrow the expression of Jean-Michel Leterrier, culture as fuel.

The directors of ethnographic museums must, therefore, each in his own domain, find a compromise between the need to respond to the cultural demand being expressed and the need to do so with the necessary scientific method, in obedience to their particular moral code and while remaining consistent with the overall purpose of the museum which, for a time, is in their keeping. At the same time, all this must fit in with the demands, obligations and aims of the authorities through which the museum is funded. However, each society has the museums it deserves and the role that their directors can play there, even if it is often exciting, is strictly limited. And that is a good thing. ■



Regional museum, local museum: what dialogue?

Hartmut Prasch

Local and regional museums are a popular part of Austria's museum scene. But what are their major efforts, problems and prospects today? The author is well suited to answer these questions since, in addition to having specialized in ethnography, ethnology, philosophy and German studies at the University of Innsbruck, and published a number of works on ethnography and museology, he has been Director of the Spittal/Drau Bezirksheimatmuseum since 1987.

Regional and local museums are by far the largest category on the Austrian museum scene. Their number has been steadily growing since the mid-nineteenth century to reach the present figure of over 200. The boom in museums which we are witnessing today, due partly to the strong emphasis placed on cultural tourism in Austria, means that no end to this numerical growth is likely in the foreseeable future.

The category of regional and local museums has three distinctive features.

First, apart from the nine regional Provincial Museums which are established under public law (each Austrian Federal *Land* or province has one such museum), museums of this kind are generally run by associations or similar private, non-profit-making entities working for the public benefit.

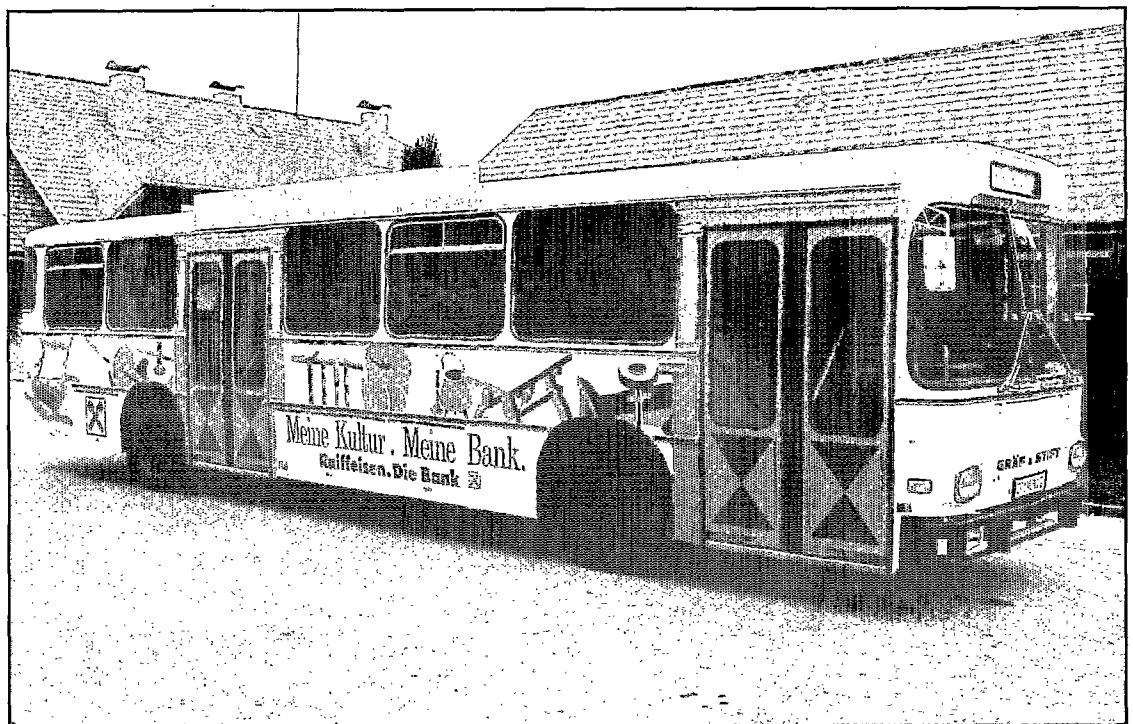
Second, their collections consist mainly of items with an ethnographic and local historical interest.

Finally, their catchment area is confined to a small region.

The situation of the regional and local museums in Austria

The sharp increase in the number of museums in recent decades has created problems for the content of collections and also organizational and infrastructural difficulties.

Nowadays, practically every local authority and town seems to want a museum of its own. This initiative is not necessarily bound up with a distinctive local character and the desire of the population to assert a



*Carinthian
Museum Bus.*

regional identity. Considerations relating to the economics of tourism play a role which is at least equally important. This fact is also reflected in the statistics for visitors, some 85 per cent of whom are tourists and barely 15 per cent local inhabitants.

In terms of content, the problem of the regional and local museums resides essentially in the thematic uniformity and lack of variety of the collections; this is increasingly resulting in a 'dilution' of the Austrian museum scene. By the same token, the public is losing interest in museums, and this is having a lasting adverse effect on their reputation and budgetary resources. This phenomenon is also attributable to the organizational structures of this category of museums. The infrastructure of the regional and local museums has many features which differ from those of the Federal and Provincial museums whose collections are administered by public bodies.

More often than not, the sponsor will be a private institution – an association. The curators and collaborators will be laymen drawn from a great many walks of life who take an interest in local cultural values and devote their leisure time to voluntary work in the museum. The emphasis will accordingly be placed mainly on the collection and conservation of items with a cultural historical interest; the study, presentation and explanation of the collections are relegated to the background.

As they lack the financial resources to purchase new items, the regional and local museums are almost entirely dependent on donations. They thus tend to become museums 'with a bit of everything', ranging from images of saints to ploughshares and folk costumes; the structure of these collections is interchangeable so that they could

readily be transferred from one museum to another.

The main shortcoming is the lack of any possibility for the museum curators to obtain expert assistance and financial support. Neither the public agencies, which are a source of funding, nor the experts in the major museums have as yet recognized or done anything to develop the true potential. Co-operation between the 'big' and 'small' museums is thus correspondingly deficient, as the latter still carry the stigma of dilettantism.

The potential which does in fact exist here for the creation of an attractive museum scene will be briefly illustrated below with particular reference to an initiative to develop co-operation in the Austrian Federal Province of Carinthia.

Towards a 'Carinthian museum scene'

Since 1987, efforts have been under way in the Federal Province of Carinthia to develop a 'richly diversified museum scene' through closer co-operation between the regional and local museums, with the emphasis on co-ordination of the main centres of interest of the collections.

Starting out from the extensive resources of the Bezirksheimatmuseum in Spittal/Drau which is one of the best-endowed ethnographic and cultural historical regional museums in Austria concentrating on the 'life and work of peasants in the Alpine areas', a Partnership of Ethnographic Museums was founded in 1987; ten local collections belong to this association at present. They are either direct external branches of the Bezirksheimatmuseum in Spittal/Drau or else independently run entities. All the participating museums are,

however, administered by associations established under private law.

The essential aims of the partnership are as follows: the Bezirksheimatmuseum offers professional assistance to well-established or recently created local museums to enhance the educational value of their displays and solve conceptual and infrastructural problems. The partnership also provides a framework for co-ordination of the centres of interest of individual collections. Collections with a specific local interest have thus gradually been built up around the regional museum, together with specialized collections focusing on the historical resources available locally (they cover areas such as fishing, mining, local customs and tourism).

Close co-operation within the partnership thus leads to the development of a museum scene in which the individual themes of cultural history fit together like the pieces of a puzzle to give a general overview.

Another objective of the partnership is to create central documentary records of the collections existing in the member museums so as to prepare the ground for scientific research.

In 1989, a training course was introduced to fill the gap in further training opportunities referred to earlier; this course is specially designed for museum curators working on a voluntary basis. In co-operation with national adult education establishments, the Bezirksheimatmuseum in Spittal/Drau organizes two annual training modules under the heading 'Active Museums'; these two self-contained courses provide an essential grounding in theoretical and practical museum work. In the subject-areas of 'Exhibition techniques and exhibition design', 'Stock-taking and catalogu-

ing', 'Public relations and sponsoring', 'The educational function of museums' and 'Restoration and conservation', specialized lectures by qualified experts and work in study groups provide an essential introduction to the main areas of museological activity.

The partnership also devotes particular attention to the development of educational strategies targeted, first, on children and young people and, second, on adults. The aim here is to enhance the status of the museums so as to offer the local population in particular an opportunity for dynamic integration of the museum into the process of development of a regional identity.

A museum concept for the whole of Austria

In addition, the Bezirksheimatmuseum in Spittal/Drau began in 1991 to operate a travelling exhibition accommodated in the Carinthian Museum Bus. The strategy behind this large bus which has been specially adapted for exhibition purposes, is to bring the museum or selected parts of its collections to the population. This is done in several ways: from April to June, and again from September to October, the Carinthian Museum Bus is parked each morning in front of a different school in the province. The aim here is to offer schools in rural areas, where pupils have few opportunities to visit museums, the possibility of constructively integrating thematic exhibitions into the teaching syllabus without the need to set aside extra time and organizational effort as the displays are brought to the schools themselves. During the same period, the bus is open to the local population in the afternoons, while in the summer months the main appeal is to tourists.

Within the partnership and its area of activity, and in line with the set objectives, a 'regional curator' has been appointed since 1991, in co-operation with the adult education establishments, to work full-time on the co-ordination of interests and focal points of activity. In addition to the projects referred to already, these tasks include making specialists available for specific areas of museum work (restora-

tion experts, exhibition architects, scientists, etc.) and (in future) the organization of travelling exhibitions.

By establishing a network of local interests, and through more intensive co-operation between regional and local museums on the basis of voluntary membership of the Partnership of Ethnographic Museums, the first steps have now been taken towards the development of a richly varied museum scene.

The organizational structure of the museum entities has not been changed in any way. All the participating collections continue to work independently on an associative basis with unpaid staff. The projects are financed mainly through their own resources (membership contributions, donations, admission charges) and also through sponsoring actions in co-operation with business interests. Few public funds have been made available as yet, but there are now signs that values are changing throughout Austria in line with the growth of regional museums, as opposed to the big central museum establishments.

The initiatives already taken in this respect in the Province of Carinthia could readily be implemented on a wider scale. The objectives of this regional model could be reviewed, extended or refined, in order to develop and implement in the long term a museum policy for the whole of Austria in the context of which local and regional museums would be accorded the importance which rightly belongs to them as repositories of a valuable heritage of cultural history. ■

Interior of an eighteenth-century farmer's house, Bezirksheimatmuseum, Spittal/Drau.



© Hartmut Prasch

From the colonial museum to the museum of the communities

Liliane Kleiber-Schwartz

The profound changes which have occurred in French society since colonial times can be seen in what used to be called the 'Musée des Colonies' – the Colonial Museum. This building, at the Porte Dorée in Paris, has had an eventful history. It was to France what the Museum of the Congo in Tervuren was to Belgium and the Museum of the Tropics was to the Netherlands: a beacon to illuminate the great work of the European powers in the distant lands where they held sway.

Today, however, these museums, which once served to spread the ideologies of the period, are finding themselves with a new function. Standing in the front line of North/South relationships, they are now striving to promote dialogue and give a different view of the cultures that it is their job to display.

The Colonial Museum has become the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts and has been working for some years to establish itself as such, finding new ways to exhibit its collections and trying to attract a broader range of people. In the three interviews that follow, Liliane Kleiber-Schwartz, Cultural Officer and Curator at the museum, attempts to throw light on this process.

Henri Marchal, the General Curator, first gives *Museum* a broad outline of the ups and downs of the institution's history.

L.K.: Henri Marchal, how did this museum start?

H.M.: The Colonial Museum was put up in 1931 when the International Colonial Exhibition was held that year in the south-east of Paris. It had been planned for a long while to have a museum of this sort and the building for it was designed to outlive the exhibition itself, which was by definition temporary.

L.K.: What was the museum's geographical coverage?

H.M.: When it was planned, the museum was intended to give a general view of all the territories under French influence, from Indo-China to West and Equatorial Africa and including the West Indies and French trading-posts in India. It was to be the showcase for what France was doing in those territories, not only where art was concerned but also in the social and economic spheres.

L.K.: Who was it mainly intended for?

H.M.: It was mainly intended for young people, as we can see from the numerous visits by school groups at the time, press cuttings and interviews given during the Colonial Exhibition. In reality, its chief purpose was education and even propaganda, the aim being to encourage young people to embark on a career or activities that would lead them on to work in those territories and help spread the message of metropolitan France.

L.K.: How were the exhibits obtained at the time?

H.M.: Many items displayed in the new museum were privately owned and were lent for a limited period but some of them came from the colonial offices of the territories in question. Only a small proportion were acquired for the purpose and thus became the property of the nation.

In 1935, the museum changed its name and became the Museum of France Overseas. This was followed by a reorganization, which led to some of the rooms being devoted to French influence abroad. The displays covered a very long period, since the items illustrating that influence started with the Crusades and went right up to the beginning of the twentieth century, including the missions entrusted to Gallieni and Lyautey.

L.K.: How did the public react to the museum?

H.M.: The museum had a considerable impact. This can be explained by the prestige of the international colonial exhibition itself, which was visited by nearly 3.5 million people, an enormous figure for the time especially when you realize that the exhibition only lasted about six months. The message was certainly heard since the museum aroused an interest in service overseas in a number of young French people.

How do you decolonize a museum?

L.K.: How did the Colonial Museum change into a Museum of African and Oceanic Arts? In other words, how do you decolonize a colonial museum?

H.M.: The change took place in the wake of the decolonization that began after the Second World War, when a very severe

blow had been dealt to European influence and the European sense of superiority. The countries of the Third World started then to become conscious of their political weight and of the role they were to play on the international stage.

The 1960s in French-speaking Africa were the years of accession to independence. As the Museum of France Overseas had no further *raison d'être*, a new purpose had to be found for it. It happened that André Malraux, who was then Minister for Cultural Affairs, was hunting for somewhere in Paris to display African and Oceanic art. Feeling that there was probably no point in constructing a new building for the purpose, he thought of the Museum of France Overseas. The new exhibition followed two basic ideas. It was decided, first of all, to restrict the geographical coverage to French-speaking countries only and to concentrate on Africa and Oceania. Secondly, as its basic purpose, André Malraux wanted to lay emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of the objects since he took the view that the ethnographic aspects were a matter for the Musée de l'Homme. This further meant that the economic and social material previously on show was also removed.

Re-christened the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts, this protean museum was exceptionally well funded so as to finance a vigorous purchasing policy, the result of which was that ten years later, the holdings had doubled in size in relation to the core collection acquired between 1931 and 1960!

L.K.: Today, there are a variety of cultural communities in France, the largest of which come from its former colonies. How does the museum see its role in relation to these potential visitors?

H.M.: When these communities began to increase in France, the purpose of the

museum also began to change. Its role is now to preserve the link between these groups and the items that belong to their artistic heritage so that they can find something of their culture in the museum. This link is sometimes very tenuous owing to the difficult living conditions that immigrants experience in France.

L.K.: How is this policy put into practice?

H.M.: We have quite a wide range of options. A series of activities has been organized with the logistic support of the Association pour le Développement des Échanges Interculturels au Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Association for the Development of Intercultural Exchanges at the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts) – or ADEIAO – a voluntary organization set up in 1985.

The backing of this organization has been a great help in finding ways of catering for immigrant communities and people with roots in the cultures represented in our collections. One of the most important activities is the self-expression workshops for young people. The children, from all kinds of background, take part in a project that appeals to their creative instincts and, at the same time, discover the museum's exhibits and explore the meaning of the items which are unable to speak for themselves. These items are the natural heritage of young people of immigrant origin and are a reference point for them and something they can identify with.

Apart from regular activities of this kind we also organize special events. For example, it seemed important to us to give a special place to films, both as an art form and as something that the museum could use to show the items' original environment. Films are also an excellent way of educating the public. Out of this grew the African Film

Festival, for example. We try to relate the films we show to seminars and discussions and thus give Africans an opportunity to speak. We also place a lot of emphasis on music and organize concerts and music workshops.

L.K.: How do you make contact with your public?

H.M.: Mainly through voluntary organizations such as the Association of Berber Culture, which is making a film on what immigrants remember, in collaboration with the museum; the Association for the Solidarity of Africans in France, which helps us with the African Film Festival; a study group on 'people and migrations', and many others.

The children explore

The young people's self-expression activities take place in special areas close to the collections whose discovery they aim to encourage. The children come to us from schools or associations and we get them to explore various aspects – the architecture, art, music, oral tradition – of the different cultures of the Maghreb or sub-Saharan Africa.

Martine Poirée, an art specialist in charge of the 'Signs' Workshop (arts of the Maghreb) answers our questions.

L.K.: What do these self-expression activities involve?

M.P.: We ask the young people to explore a theme which they then work on for several sessions. On each visit they spend part of the time discovering the exhibits (looking at audio-visual displays, handling objects, visiting different rooms) and part of the time in creative self-expression. I get

them to experiment on the basis of North African decorative tradition. Each child contributes something of himself and also something from the world of today. The result is a mixture that gives free rein to their imagination.

L.K.: How do you relate this approach to what they do at school?

M.P.: The French education system does not set much store by art. It is taught at school, of course, but is given most prominence in extra-curricular activities. This means that many children are unable to benefit from them. The museum workshop stimulates artistic awareness, hence an awareness of the outward forms of creativity and of the arts in North Africa, and this leads to a sense of the richness of the tradition. It is an introduction for children who have hardly any contact with art in general. In the end, they manage to get something constructive out of this activity, which gives them a chance to make contact with a culture. It is never easy to define what actually happens because we do not know how, inside themselves, they approach these foreign civilizations and what they really see in them.

L.K.: What changes do you see as a result of these activities?

M.P.: A change always takes place both in the group as a whole and in its individual members. The children who come from those countries feel more important, and the others learn to understand these different cultures. Little by little, as they continue their self-expression activities – in their experiments in painting, for example – they eventually take over this new territory for themselves.

L.K.: Is there any spin-off for the museum from these activities?



Photo by courtesy of the author

Discovering calligraphy at the 'Signs' Workshop of the Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie.

M.P.: Yes, from time to time. The first is when the family visits the museum. Sometimes the children get their parents to come so that they can show them the exhibits. Another is when the young people come back to the workshop with things from their own homes, such as a dress, a piece of pottery or a book—very often the Koran. They like showing these things to their classmates, and at that point they are relaxed and proud of their cultural origin, even if the feeling subsides a few days later. But the spin-off can also include a change of attitude of some sort. For example, we often show them films about North Africa. For those who have never been there, seeing the scenery, the houses and the way people live is also a way of discovering the land their parents came from. It is very common in France for immigrant children to make great efforts to become integrated, to be like the other children in their class or generation. This usually leads them to blot out their culture of origin. It is difficult for them to understand that everything is enriching and that nothing must be abandoned, especially when they are between 8 and 12 years old. They may wish to be different later but at that age, if they want to feel accepted by the group, asserting their Maghreb or Afri-

can identity is certainly not the way to go about it. The workshop activities let them speak about this more simply and more directly, and this is often vouched for by their teachers.

L.K.: It would seem then that the workshop, as distinct from the museum's exhibition rooms, is a place where children can express themselves, speak about their differences and find their own relationship to what they discover.

M.P.: That, at least, is what we would like it to be.

Music from North Africa

Mehena Mahfoufi, a musician and ethnologist particularly interested in music, has developed some music workshops at the museum. He speaks of his experience.

L.K.: In a museum that sets out to be a centre open to performers from the Maghreb and Africa, how do you yourself stand?

M.M.: I am an Algerian musician, living the life of an immigrant. I have been in France for a very long time but I have always kept

in touch with my roots and my home culture, because I often go back to my country.

L.K.: Among all the different kinds of North African music, which ones do you place most stress on?

M.M.: There are many different types of music in North Africa. When I tell the children about them, I try to show them that there exists a scholarly musical tradition and also a perfectly homely but little-known form that allows me to explain the social set-up to them. I use music as a way of getting into the society. In doing this, I emphasize both the words and the instruments which accompany them, including those purchased for the workshop – percussion instruments, flutes, lute, etc. – and my own instruments as well, such as the *nai* and *zourna*. For background information, I use records, cassettes and video films.

L.K.: Groups of children of various nationalities come to this workshop. How, during their activities, do they communicate with each other?

M.M.: The interesting thing in this mix of cultures is the opportunity for comparison. When a group contains North African children, they may speak Arabic or Berber and discover that they have an identical culture. When I was explaining what a flute is by giving its name in Berber and in Arabic, I realized that there were African, Vietnamese and other children who were pronouncing the name of this instrument in the language of their parents, their language of origin.

I also discovered that for young children from North Africa, the fact that they knew this instrument impressed their classmates and strengthened their own sense of iden-

tity. I do not know if they have any opportunities in their own classrooms to show that they know things that the other children don't know, but this comes out at the workshop. They can thus compare what they know and it is possible to speak of communication between them.

L.K.: And communication with the parents?

M.M.: When people say that there is an area in which communication between the children of immigrants and their parents is impossible, I think that they are right. There are children who do not know their parents well and are ignorant of their cultural background. In a very modest way, this type of action based on music helps children to learn something about a culture which they have had no opportunity to discover or to see in action in their own homes. But who is going to take up the question of immigrant culture? Immigrants should be given an opportunity not only to express themselves and pass on their culture to their children but also to live that culture for themselves, because they are in a kind of limbo at present.

L.K.: Do you think that this could take the form of a museum of immigration, for example?

M.M.: Now, on that subject, I am going to tell you what I think. I think that the museum you are talking about already exists inside people's heads. It is in their memories. The music that I would call popular music, that is, music connected with a ritualized social framework, ceases to exist when taken out of its ritual context. If you ask a woman to sing the bride's song for you, she will say: 'But there is no bride; why should we sing it?' This is an attitude peculiar to all oral traditions and is also true of North Africa. When a ritual dies, the music that gives it life dies too. ■

The museography of craft techniques: an experiment in Mexico

Marie-Odile Marion

The author is a French Doctor in Ethnology of the University of Paris V (Sorbonne), and has lived and worked in Mexico since 1971. She is a researcher at the National Institute of Anthropology and History and teaches at the National School of Anthropology. As the reader will see, it is these posts that have led her to take an interest in museography as applied to traditional techniques.

The activities which I shall describe in this article formed part of a collective project planned at the beginning of 1985, the aim being to combine the various stages of anthropological work within a single process. Set within an educational context (a seminar of the National School of Anthropology of Mexico), it involved carrying out a research project on the material culture and crafts of the Mayas of Yucatán and Chiapas and organizing a series of museographical exhibitions accompanied by lectures for the general public. The idea of such an arrangement was that it should enable us to mark our progress with tangible results and thus improve our training of researchers and teachers, both by displaying the results and presenting them to a non-specialist public.

This project, which began early in 1985, extended over three biennial periods and was concluded in August 1990.

The first stage was probably the most difficult, although by no means the least interesting. The students had no knowledge whatsoever of the study of traditional crafts; they had never worked in the field; what they knew about the Mayas was restricted to the historical information provided by archaeologists, and they had no experience in devising a research project. In the course of those first six months of work, our efforts were wholly devoted to training them for field-work, defining the subject of our research, dividing up individual responsibilities within the group and drawing up the project itself.

We had decided to work in the Mayan communities of the peninsular states of Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo, and had divided up the work between us: some working exclusively on pottery techniques, others on the weaving of natural fibres (cotton, agave, *tule*, palm, liana, etc.), while

others studied the techniques of working in wood, stone, skins and wax, embroidery and other traditional techniques forming part of the everyday life and material culture of the Mayan Indians of the peninsula.

The following six months were devoted to organizing the material for the survey and selecting the different objects on the basis of their quality and the importance which each of them represented for the museographical text which we were preparing. We had devised a progressive study method, which required the different teams to work at a constant rate with the aim of advancing at the same pace in processing the data. The transcription of statements and recordings was carried out in parallel, as was the printing of photographs in the laboratories of the School of Anthropology. At the end of the first twelve months of work we had amassed about a hundred listed items, approximately a thousand photographs and more than twenty hours of recordings of statements and various kinds of documentary evidence.

An enormous abyss?

The task of arranging the exhibition area proved to be quite an experience. None of us had had the least training for this kind of work and the exhibition room initially seemed like an enormous abyss in which our ideas, initiatives and aspirations came into collision with the bare walls, the partitions and the empty display-cases. However, imagination and methodology joined forces and, over a period of forty-eight hours of intense discussions, unsuccessful attempts and fresh efforts, our project began to take shape and the corridor of the School of Anthropology was transformed into a museum room. We had divided up the space according to the different crafts being studied: traditional pottery; ritual

ceramics, wood-working, processes of scraping, weaving and embroidering; the section devoted to henequen, etc.

Each of these display areas presented, in addition to the basic materials, tools and utensils used, the objects produced, together with explanations of their use and domestic, religious, medical or agricultural purpose. One of our objectives was not achieved, since we had been unable to obtain the assistance of one or more of our informants. However, the result was positive in various respects: first, on account of the enthusiasm which our work aroused in several of our fellow-students and teachers and, second, because during the process of analysing the objects on the basis of the explanations provided by the craftsmen we had come to certain rather important conclusions regarding the symbolic significance of the decoration of some objects and the interpretation of equally symbolic gestures which were represented in a codified form by the craftsmen as key elements and, therefore, absolutely essential for an understanding of the system that had conceived and reproduced them.

During the course of the following two years we continued our work and extended it to the forest zone of Chiapas. We concentrated our studies on three new ethnic groups: the Lacandones, the Tzeltales and the Tojolabales. During this period, some of the students who had taken part in our collective venture presented their theses marking the end of their courses. They had all been working on craft techniques and oral tradition, but were replaced by new members who joined the team. We pursued the same objectives with the same methods, although considerably modified so as to take account of the experience we had acquired. The team which studied the Lacandones was perhaps the most successful, since it worked among communities

which were deeply integrated into the ecological environment of the tropical forest and were thus able to draw on and employ an astonishing range of skills. Our study was enriched by each new example of their skill in working with wood liana, bark, feathers and flint; in making traps and canoes; in dyeing and tanning; in preparing vegetable salt and in many other processes which it would take too long to list.

In some cases we had to help the craftsmen work on the objects we had asked them to make, since some of these objects had not been in use for many years and their manufacture therefore required special efforts which we encouraged through a sense of solidarity. At the end of three periods of field-work, we had assembled an original collection which contained some unique pieces which were not included in the collections of the Museum of Anthropology of Mexico.

With ever-increasing astonishment

In August 1988 the second photographic exhibition was organized by the Museo del Carmen and was accompanied, as during the first stage, by the showing of films and slides on the material culture of the Lacondon Indians, and by a lecture on their system of symbols. On this occasion, one of our main informants, Kinbor, accompanied us and advised us on the display of the objects. His contribution was extremely important, since it enabled us to conceive and set out the exhibition in a less arbitrary way, using arrangements which were unfamiliar to us or, rather, which would never have occurred to us. Instead of planning the different sections so as to correspond to the basic materials and crafts, our advisor suggested that we arrange the objects according to their relationship with the various areas of social behaviour.

It was on this basis that he designed the display area on 'Man and the Forest' and arranged the bows, arrows, traps and nets, the bark quivers and the deerskin and lizardskin pouches. In the area on 'Woman and the Forest', he organized a display on food-gathering and fishing with fish traps and hung up multi-coloured necklaces and the toucan breast feathers with which women adorned their hair after having been secretly seduced by a suitor encountered by chance along one of the forest paths.

He then went on to create a typical room with its belt loom, mahogany cradle, hammock and fabrics made from bark-fibre, gourds and baskets, shells and monkey-bone needles, wooden plates, skeins of cotton, woven tunics, ornaments of scented wood and dried flowers, all of which helped to give a picture of the daily life of women and children.

Next to it, though in a separate section, he designed a men's workshop and filled it with basic materials, wood, *tule* and liana, roots, fibres and bark; he laid out the vegetable dyes, gums and resins, vegetable salt powders, and poisons and tannins alongside a collection of articles used by men in their daily life. Silently and with ever-increasing astonishment we observed him, impressed by this logic in classifying a culture which was, in fact, his very own.

Finally, in the last display area, he represented his symbolic world, the universe of his gods. There he displayed aromatic herbs used in ceremonies, bark cigars, crystals of resin, the statues of latex that the Lacandones burn in order to cure their sick, the wooden sticks that produce the ritual fire, the balls of annatto wood, the strips of bark from which they made headbands and with which they cover their censers, the long fibres of *balché* with which they

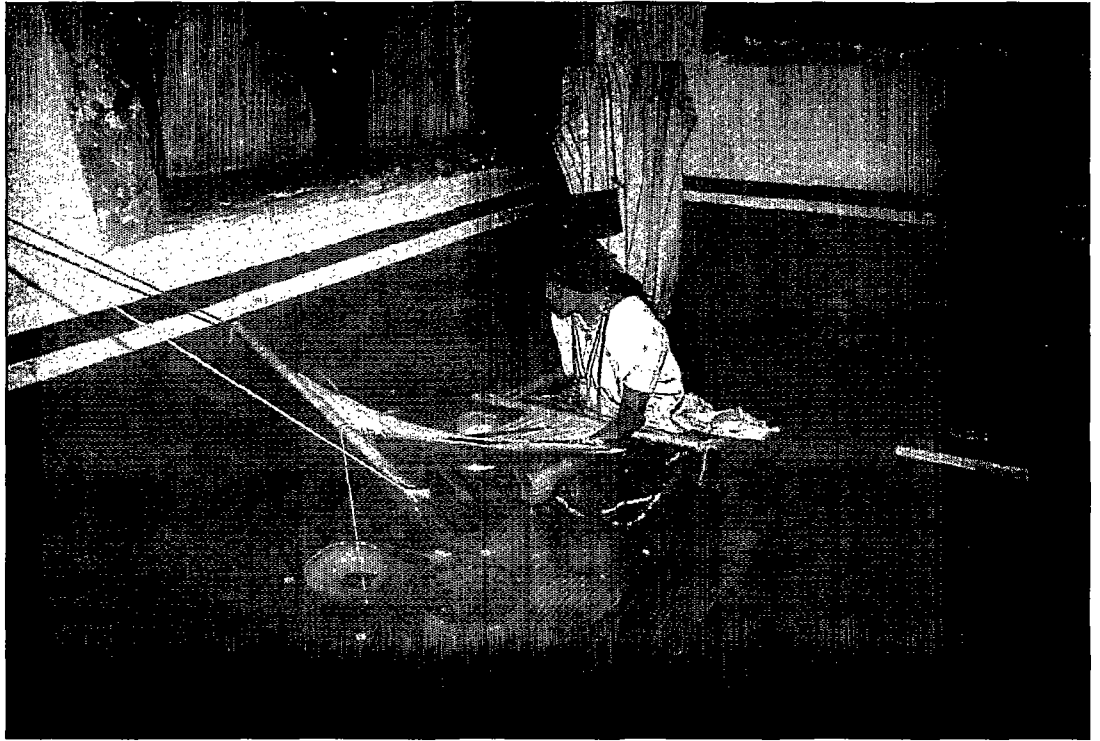
prepare the ceremonial drink, shells and ritual drums.

He also arranged an area showing how the children were initiated into adult life, placing in it the small objects which the children use in the rites accompanying adolescence, the little bows and arrows which the grown-ups carve patiently for the purposes of teaching their children, slings saved from the wood of the sapodilla tree, clay dolls that the girls cradle, necklaces of red seeds, which are the colour of ritual blood, pumpkin seeds, which are symbols of intelligence, and toucan feathers, which are symbols of adolescence.

Savouring the results

It was not just a question of imagination; Kinbor had given us an astonishing lesson in museum display work. He had never visited a museum and, I believe, knew nothing at all of such displays, but he had shown us that objects had their own significance, that they existed within a special context that was culturally defined and formed for the people that manufactured, used and knew them, a completely coherent, logical and symbolic system, whose meaning, without his help, would probably have eluded us. The world of the forest as lived in by men and that same world as lived in by women, women's daily round, the male sphere of craft skills, the universe of the gods and religious life which integrates the new generations into a world made sacred through the employment of special rites – it was in this way that Kinbor showed us the internal organization of his society, beginning with the modest objects of its material culture. Without realizing it, he had shown us a new method of understanding traditional skills, based on the interpretation of the social

He then went on to create a typical room . . . Exhibit at the Museo del Carmen, 1988.



© Marie-Odile Marion

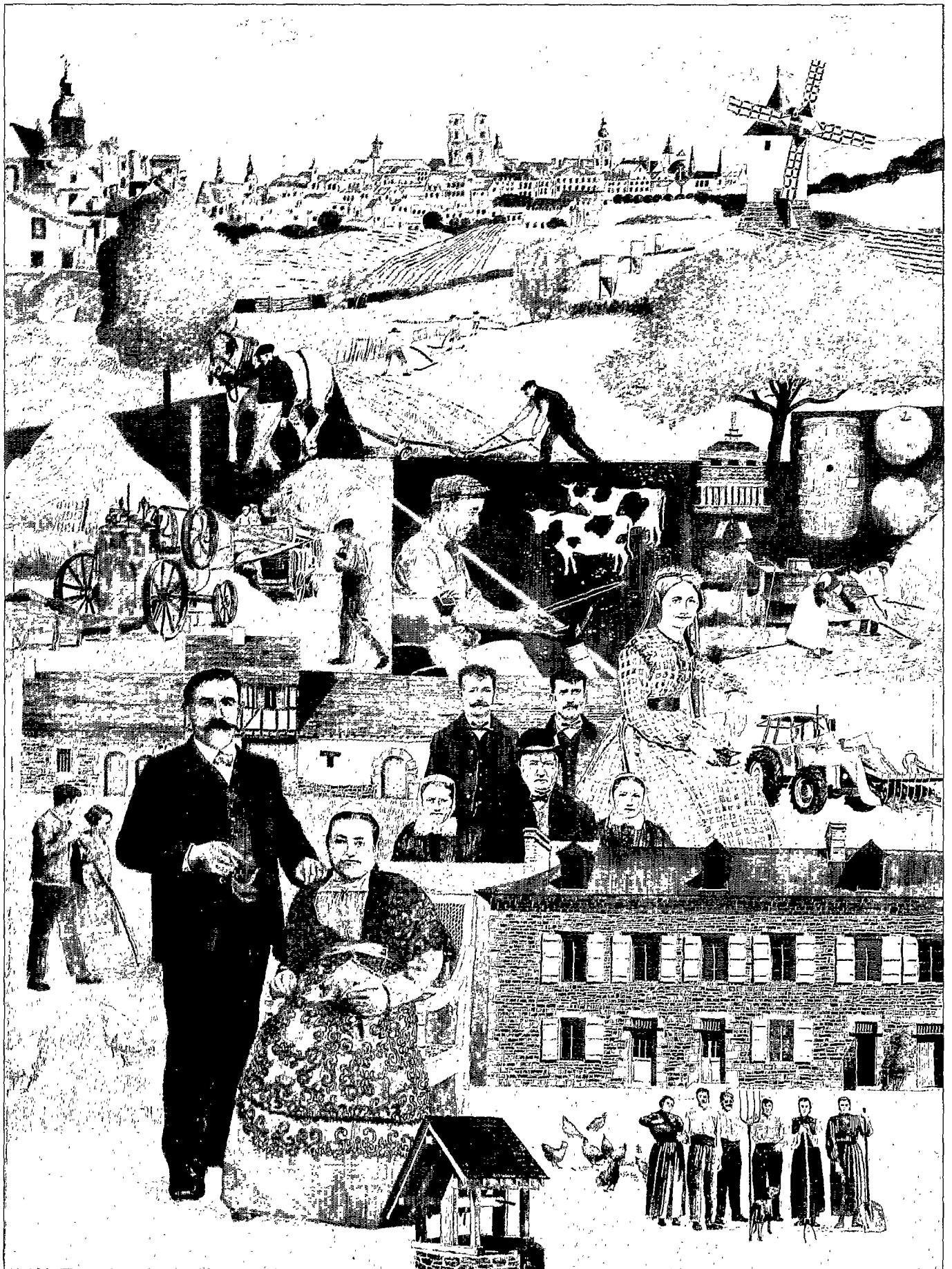
areas which determined the reproduction of knowledge and its use.

The period following that second, important activity was more intensely devoted to research. Various teams of students travelled around the hot and humid tropical forest areas and even went as far as the cold lands in the centre of Chiapas; we began to study the ritual system of the Tzotziles, the medical skills of the Chol Indians and the material culture of the Zoques, the Tzeltales and the Tojolabales of the jungle. Thesis projects showed that our efforts would soon bear fruit.

In July 1990 a final exhibition displaying a large selection of Mayan objects was arranged in the local government cultural centre in Coyoacán. The theme of the exhibition and of the accompanying lecture series provided us with an opportunity to take an overall view of various aspects of the traditional cultures that we had studied, bringing out the similarities and

differences, from the standpoint of the skills employed, the forms of aesthetic expression, the types of social organization necessary for their reproduction, the different ecological environments where they existed and the context of symbols which sanctioned their transmission from generation to generation.

The Mayas of the peninsula, of the cold lands and of the tropical forest, united through their craftwork, their tools, the women's woven and embroidered fabrics, their musical instruments, their furniture and basketwork, provided us with a new perspective on the overall similarities and local differences, the results of the creativity and originality of indigenous art. Above all, they provided us with an opportunity to savour the results of five years of teamwork, and to prove to the sceptics that research unaccompanied by teaching loses much of its satisfaction, and that anthropology may still be carried on in museums, even on an improvised basis. ■



© Musée de Bretagne

Poster of the Ecomusée of Rennes (France) illustrating different periods in the life of a Bintinais farm. Designed by Jean-Louis Simonneau from archival records.

Open-air museums: celebration and perspective

Christopher Zeuner

The centenary of the foundation of the open-air museum at Skansen is a landmark in the development of a particular type of museum that since 1891 has grown in number and popularity. The centenary is an occasion for celebration and for reassessment. The articles published in this section of *Museum* seek to explore the philosophies which brought about the creation of open-air museums and the ways in which

these museums have changed. They also look ahead, seeking indicators for ways in which this particular type of museum can be developed and adapted for our societies and communities in the future.

I would like to dwell for a moment on the idea of celebration. In a world of increasing professionalism, of growing use of technological approaches to conservation and to



Fifteenth-century house with beehive, Weald and Downland Open-Air Museum, Sussex (United Kingdom).

Photo by courtesy of the author

the scientific analysis of the past, we must not lose sight of an important aspect of museums that is amongst the most difficult to define. The word 'celebration' aptly describes this element. Open-air museums celebrate rural communities and emerging industrial societies, through their folk art, their music, their houses, their textiles, their furniture and the achievements of their craftsmen and skilled workforces. Through the presentation of past communities we at the same time celebrate existing communities in all their variety – drawing parallels and underlining differences.

Open-air museums are at the forefront, in their field, of popular use and therefore have a special opportunity to communicate this idea of celebration to visitors. Open-air museums base their work on scientific and academic curation – without this they are worthless. Yet they find themselves working as part of the tourism industry. The majority of the users of these museums will certainly see them firmly placed in the recreation field. It is possible that the socio-economic groups using open-air museums will include people who do not normally visit museums. If I am right in this assumption, open-air museums most certainly have opportunities for communication which are not available to the more

traditional type of museum. Through the celebration of past achievements we are enabled to see more clearly our position today – it helps us to make judgements, it gives us a more accurate perspective.

Museums are aware of this potential and those responsible for them are seeking new ways of achieving their task. Open-air museums are changing rapidly. Their traditional concerns remain important, but many are taking on aims and objectives that previously would have been seen as being outside the role of open-air museums. I feel sure that readers of the articles that follow will not fail to perceive that, despite all the fresh ideas and new techniques, the founders of the first open-air museums – particularly Artur Hazelius at the end of the nineteenth century – had conceived many of these same aims and objectives. Today they are reborn but fresh packaging is sought to satisfy and captivate our modern audiences.

The combination of the celebration of the foundation of our first open-air museum and the current re-assessment gives museologists an opportunity to ensure that the museums for which they are responsible and seek community support and finance are relevant to society today. ■



© Fukagawa Edo Museum, Tokyo

Boathouse taverns: part of the Edo Museum's life-sized reproduction of the nineteenth-century town of Fukagawa (Japan).

In the beginning . . . Skansen

Eva Nordenson

Unlike so many other institutions, this open-air museum has origins that can be dated and localized: 1891, on Skansen Hill in Stockholm. In this article, the museum's present Director traces its beginnings.

Sweden in the mid-nineteenth century was still an agrarian country with small towns and with only a few industrial companies, based primarily on timber and iron ore. The natural variety of this far-flung country, ranging from plainlands in the south to mountains in the north, had made possible a rich and variegated traditional culture. Literacy was already widespread and compulsory elementary schooling was introduced in 1842.

After the end of the Napoleonic wars, Norway was ceded to Sweden and a union formed between them which lasted throughout the nineteenth century. At the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris, the two countries were jointly represented in 'The Street of the Nations'. Exhibits here included copies of some historically famous late-medieval timber buildings from Sweden and Norway, and a parade of large models dressed in Swedish and Norwegian folk costumes. The exhibition's idea of reflecting national character through traditional architecture, models in folk costume and Swedish-Norwegian co-operation was to have an impact on the future of the open-air museum.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Swedish society entered a new phase: rural life was reformed and transformed, new technology and new enterprises were developed, and urbanization and social and economic turbulence followed as the old agrarian Sweden became an industrial nation. It was at this point that Artur Hazelius, the creator of the Nordic Museum and Skansen, embarked on his mission of collecting and saving the traditional cultural heritage for posterity.

Artur Hazelius (1833–1901) came from an upper middle-class Stockholm family with strong patriotic interests. At Uppsala University he belonged to the pan-Scandinavian

student movement, revelled in Old Norse ideals and wrote an academic thesis on the Icelandic poem *Havamál*. As a language teacher he was one of the co-authors of *Läsebok för folkskolan* which, as an elementary-school reader, was the most widely read book in nineteenth-century Sweden. In the 1870s he gave up his teaching post and set out to travel in the Swedish countryside. He saw the old farmsteads falling into decay, traditional crafts being abandoned and folk costume going out of fashion, and he was disturbed by the oblivion to which the great heritage of fairytales, ballads, dances and music was being relegated.

Hazelius began collecting artefacts above all from agrarian communities, and in 1873 he put on an exhibition of his 'ethnographic collections' in a private house in Stockholm. This was the germ of the Nordic Museum, today Sweden's central museum of social history. Using display techniques inspired by the world exhibitions, the wax cabinets of the period and the Düsseldorf School of Painting, he produced great peep shows, known as dioramas. In these, complete cottage interiors, authentically furnished, were populated by models in folk costume. He also arranged a number of outdoor scenes, using stage-scenery landscapes, models and stuffed animals.

During the 1880s he was inspired with the new idea of replacing these displays with 'living pictures' and setting up an open-air department of the Nordic Museum. Being an educator, he realized that knowledge came of experience and that the most powerful experience of all was reality apprehended through all our senses. He substituted real buildings for the mock interiors, real people for the models, live animals for the stuffed ones, the murmur of real birch trees for stage flats and live music instead of the mute fiddle on the wall. This



© Peter Segemark, Stockholm

Folk dancing at Skansen.

was, in short, a romantic park which would provide an unending sequence of experiences and impressions but would also prompt reflection and convey knowledge.

In 1891, on the Skansen Hill in Stockholm specially acquired for the purpose, 'the greatest beggar in Sweden' was able to build up houses and homesteads brought here from various Swedish provinces, from south to north, even including a Lapp encampment with Lapps, their dogs and their reindeer for all to see. The farmers' livestock was moved into the homesteads and the wild animals traditionally hunted – bear, elk and lynx – were put in Skansen's 'zoological garden'. He wanted to display the Nordic flora and to re-create, round about the buildings transferred here, their original botanical surroundings. But perhaps the main concern of all was to portray people's living conditions in the old agrarian society, their everyday occupations, the work of their hands, the joy of their festivities, all the different traditions of the year, dancing, music, narrative art. To his creation, at one and the same time instructive and entertaining, he gave the motto 'know thyself', thereby making Skansen a national meeting-point.

Skansen opened in October 1891. As the first open-air museum, it was to be emulated all over the world. Hazelius' ideas on the interaction of culture and nature remain the conceptual bedrock of Skansen. During the hundred years which have now passed, the range of the collections has been broadened and Skansen has acquired increasingly comprehensive material which can be used educationally to illuminate historical, geographic and social aspects of life in Sweden.

During the hundred years of its existence, Skansen has received nearly 140 million visitors. ■

Early open-air museums: traditions of museums about traditions¹

Adriaan de Jong and Mette Skougaard

How can popularity be achieved without endangering authenticity? This is but one of the issues that faced early open-air museums, analysed in this article, and which continue to raise problems even today. After studying history, art history and museology, Adriaan de Jong (who is Dutch) edited the government memorandum 'Towards a Museum Policy' and, since 1981, has helped shape management policy at the Netherlands Open-Air Museum. Mette Skougaard, a Dane, studied history and ethnology and has been Curator at the Lyngby Open-Air Museum since 1979. She has written extensively on Danish peasant culture.

To move and rebuild old buildings was not a new phenomenon which suddenly appeared in the latter half of the last century. It was, however, new that selected buildings were moved to museums in order to be preserved for posterity with the aim of displaying the pre-industrial culture of rural populations.

It is a matter for discussion where and when the first open-air museum was established. As early as 1882 it was possible for the public to view an old Norwegian farm building, reconstructed near the estate of the Swedish-Norwegian King Oskar II at Bygdøy near Oslo. However, there can be no doubt that it was first and foremost the work of Artur Hazelius and the establishment of Skansen in Stockholm that showed the way and was a source of inspiration for open-air museums in Scandinavia and later

in other European countries and the United States.

The creation of open-air museums during this period was not an isolated event. Only a short time after the establishment of Skansen in 1891 the Norwegian Folk Museum bought its first ancient house to be moved in 1895, and in 1897 the first two buildings, which later were to form part of the Open-Air Museum in Lyngby, were opened to the public in Copenhagen. In addition to these national open-air museums, many regional and local open-air museums were also established throughout Scandinavia at about the turn of the century.

The new museum concept soon spread to Finland, northern Germany and the Netherlands, so that open-air museums became



Folk dancing at the Norsk Folkemuseum in 1902.

© Norsk Folkemuseum, Bygdøy (Norway)

something of an international phenomenon, albeit still within a limited area. Using the history of two of the early open-air museums, Lyngby in Denmark (1901) and Arnhem in the Netherlands (1912), we will try to shed some light on the genesis and initial stages of open-air museums.

Museological developments

Over the years many theories about the original idea of open-air museums have been put forward. Technically, the question may be debated from two angles: the removal of ancient buildings *per se*, or the use of buildings as a framework for functional exhibitions, dioramas, tableaux, etc.

A movement towards establishing museums of an ethnographical nature in a number of countries appeared in the nineteenth century. They consisted of single buildings or collections of buildings that were reconstructed for temporary exhibitions, copies as well as original buildings being displayed. Among the earliest-known examples was the Indonesian *kampung* (village) at the international exhibition in Amsterdam in 1883. It proved one of the most popular sections of the exhibition, with demonstrations by Indonesians of traditional music and agricultural techniques, for example ploughing with buffaloes.

We do not know whether these buildings were a source of inspiration for Artur Hazelius or other founders of open-air museums, but there can be no doubt that the great international exhibitions of this period, where art, handicraft and antiques were shown together with the most recent industrial products, played an important role and served as an international means of inspiration. Already in 1900 the theory

was advanced that Artur Hazelius got the idea of creating Skansen at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1878, where he saw buildings from the French colonies. These were not, however, furnished in a traditional way but were used as show-cases for export products from these dependencies. As early as the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris a number of countries presented displays of buildings featuring national architecture. In this way a Norwegian building was in the form of a very large 'loft-house' and the Swedes also constructed a copy of a traditional house. This must have been known to Artur Hazelius since he presented a plan of Skansen in 1890 in which this very building featured.

To move and reconstruct a building can, as already mentioned, also be seen as a logical further development of the principle of the interior. Bernhard Olsen, who originally founded the Danish open-air museum in Lyngby, gave a very clear description of this, as it impressed him when he visited an old farm in Skåne about the year 1879: ' . . . In these rooms everything indoors had grown out of the architectural form and was so closely allied to it that nearly every single thing had its permanent place and should not be parted from it . . . '. Although Bernhard Olsen was thus inspired by the original interior arrangement of an old farm, there can be no doubt that the world exhibitions played a major part in this development of the principle of the interior in the way that we have seen with regard to reconstructed buildings. The Artur Hazelius Scandinavian ethnographic collection at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1878 has often been particularly emphasized as a very important source of inspiration. Here objects were arranged in interiors in which figures in traditional dress were placed, as on a stage, in emotive tableaux depicting the life of the people.

While the interior of the Swedish exhibition was shown in smaller rooms with the fourth side open to the public, the Dutch exhibition at the same World Exhibition went further by creating a room from the small Frisian town of Hindeloopen which one could actually enter. Of this room Bernhard Olsen wrote: 'Every single object had been taken from old houses and was in its proper place. The effect was, as opposed to the Swedish way, moving, and from the moment I entered this old room which was like another world, far removed in time and space from the crowded modern present-day exhibition, it was clear to me that this was the way to arrange a folk museum.' The fact that the walls, floor and ceiling of the room were painted on cardboard and the furniture had been gathered together from various rooms in Hindeloopen did not dampen the enthusiasm of our predecessors. The experience of being present in the room was more important than the question of the authenticity of the architecture.

Moving buildings and exhibit interiors as a functional whole provided the most essential elements of the new open-air museum phenomenon. But there was also a third element: people themselves. In many ethnographic villages at the international exhibitions one could see natives appear and perform various work processes, a way of exhibiting human beings which we find tasteless today. In a much more friendly way the human factor also became part of the open-air museums, where inspiration from the theatre and the then popular *tableaux vivants* is obvious. Here we find one of the sources of the many performances of singing and dancing, among other events, which are so typical of Skansen and – to a somewhat lesser degree – other open-air museums. But this also demonstrates the fundamental dualism of the concept of open-air museums which domi-

nates many discussions of them even today: the attempt to make history come alive in an entertaining way on the one hand and the necessity of authenticity and science on the other.

That this ambiguity was able to evoke considerable controversy could be noticed in the Netherlands Open-Air Museum shortly after its inauguration, when the academic advisers, following the planning of grand folklore festivities, unanimously disapproved of 'the organization of a show-piece of habits and actions which belong to the intimacy of a familiar, small circle'. They were also of the opinion that '... springing from a leaning towards curiosity, the wearing of old-time attire which in reality is out of fashion would serve no other purpose than a trite pageant which in the end would also ridicule the local attire still alive'.

Background of early open-air museums

The origin of open-air museums cannot be explained through museological developments only. Seen in a wider context, the first open-air museums are an expression of the increasing interest in folk culture as this manifested itself in the spiritual climate during the second half of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly, the principal motive for this interest was the preservation of a cultural identity which had become subject to increasing threat from various quarters.

One of the causes was the rapid modernization taking place at that time. As a result of industrialization and urbanization Europe underwent fundamental changes. People who had been living for many generations in one place or region started to migrate, and their traditions were lost in

the metropolitan melting-pots. While the working classes united themselves to protect their rights, the founders of open-air museums gathered the remnants of the traditional rural communities and their 'unspoilt' environment. Dislike of the growing uniformity of modern society was prominently voiced by F. A. Hoefer, the founding father of the Netherlands Open-Air Museum, in his appeal for support for the museum: 'But then who is capable of damming up the current towards the new and drabness? In some places people still use furniture and utensils proper to the region shape-wise, but gradually the uniform products of industry make their entry.'

A second cause of the feeling of endangered identity was the increasing economic and cultural pressure exerted upon the various regions by the big city seats of government of the unitary states. Thanks to faster means of transport, remote areas were subjected to ever-growing influence from the national culture, and regional and local characteristics were looked upon as backward phenomena doomed to disappear at a rapid rate. Factors such as the centralization of education, conscription, the transfer of civil services and the introduction of national holidays contributed towards cultural unity with hardly any room left for dialects and local variants, which in some countries were even subject to active suppression.

As the consequences of modernization and increasing uniformity became more visible, they gave rise to a counter-movement which drew attention to the 'debit side' of progress. This counter-movement arose from a mixture of feelings: local patriotism, uprooting of the original community, neo-romanticism, and sadness at the disappearance of age-old traditions, as well as the encroachments on the beauty of the

scenery and, subsequently, rural architecture. The founders of the open-air museums were part of this counter-movement. It is striking that open-air museums were initiated by intellectuals rather than by farmers. This was because the founders' aims were inspired by a desire to reflect the characteristic, picturesque and primitive features of the countryside rather than to present agricultural history. In this they had been preceded by, among others, writers, poets and painters.

Interest in the fading folk culture was very widespread and in many countries led to the foundation of museums dedicated to regional culture, but the specific development of open-air museums was for a long time restricted to the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and northern Germany. An explanation for the spread of this type of museum to the Netherlands and northern Germany can probably be found in the wave of interest in Scandinavia which swept over German and Dutch language areas from the 1890s. Amongst other things, this interest focused on unspoilt nature and Europe's last 'primitives', as the Lapp population was then regarded. This atmosphere was transmitted by famous Scandinavian writers such as Björnstjerne Björnson and Selma Lagerlöf, as well as by travellers to the North, who in turn did not fail to impress upon their compatriots how much better Scandinavians took care of preserving their folk culture. Also, the then-prevailing interest in the Germanic past, sometimes even regarded as a counterpart of the 'imported' Greco-Roman culture, and the study of Germanism led to intensive contacts. In this connection, the Dutch-Belgian philologist Professor Henri Logeman gave in 1909 the first detailed description of Scandinavian open-air museums and stood up for the establishment of similar museums in the Netherlands and Belgium. Prior to the foundation of the Netherlands Open-Air Mu-

seum, Hofer too visited Scandinavia twice and became in particular inspired by the affinity between one of the farms of the Danish open-air museum at Lyngby and those in the eastern part of the Netherlands.

An unsolved riddle

While these contacts provide a possible explanation of the early spread of open-air museums to the Netherlands and northern Germany, the continuing absence of this phenomenon in the more southern areas of Europe is still an unsolved riddle. The interest in regional culture which became apparent in France, among other countries, for instance in Provence with the foundation by Frédéric Mistral of the Museon Arlaten in 1899, shows that the absence of open-air museums cannot be interpreted as indifference to folk culture in Romance-language areas. It is possible, though, that the spread of the first open-air museums was connected with the practical feasibility of moving buildings, which is far greater in areas with rural architecture of wood, clay or even brick, than in areas with traditional construction using heavy stone.

The notion that we are rooted in the rural community led not only to regionalism but also to the identification of rural traditions with national identity. It is remarkable that even today national identity is often expressed by means of folkloristic features stemming from the countryside. For instance, in the case of the Dutch 'cheese girls', a typical local costume developed into the national folkloristic attire of the Netherlands. Open-air museums, especially the central ones with collections from all over the country, were similarly regarded as a national symbol.

It was therefore important for Bernhard Olsen that the museum he founded should

serve national ideals: '. . . through the choice of the buildings in Lyngby I have attempted not only to find the thread of the development of the house types from hearth to brick chimney, but have brought them from the lost countries, not only because the most primitive examples were found there, but because young people here should be taught about all that was once part of Denmark, in order to consolidate the memory of what has been lost and prepare the way for the spiritual and intellectual gathering of that which has been dispersed, which is the only form of reconquest that I can visualize'.

Skansen itself embodies Swedish national sentiments which are still expressed in the annual commemoration there of the Day of the Swedish Flag. Another example occurred in 1919 when the Netherlands Open-Air Museum became a bulwark of nationalist feelings by hosting the Great Patriotic National Feast in which all provinces participated. The public attendance was huge and some historians regard this manifestation of national solidarity as a sign of the general fear after the First World War of a socialist revolution. This irregular link which has sometimes existed between open-air museums and nationalist sentiments has incited mixed feelings. From the standpoint of a more cosmopolitan world picture we would certainly ask whether in such cases open-air museums actually contributed to a narrowing of the spiritual horizon rather than the broadening of it as might be expected from a cultural institution.

We would be guilty of giving a one-sided profile of the early open-air museums if we were not to include the ideas about their educational function. Open-air museums were regarded as establishments pre-eminently suited for the purposes of folk education, as a first tentative step to

put ordinary people and children in touch with culture, open their eyes to the arts and convey good taste. In this educational way of thinking we can detect a close relationship between the early open-air museums and the conception of the Folk High Schools which spread continually at the time. There is also a distinct connection with the 'arts and crafts' movement in appreciating traditional craft products as a source of inspiration for the applied arts, and simultaneously countering mass products' plainness. A former director of the Tivoli Gardens fun-fair in Copenhagen, Olsen was nevertheless a serious scholar. Thus it was his main objective to show, in accordance with the prevalent evolutionary theories, how the farm had developed chronologically from the primitive type, sheltering human beings and animals in one and the same space, to the fully fledged farm with different functions spread throughout different spaces and buildings.

Old museums and modern times and needs

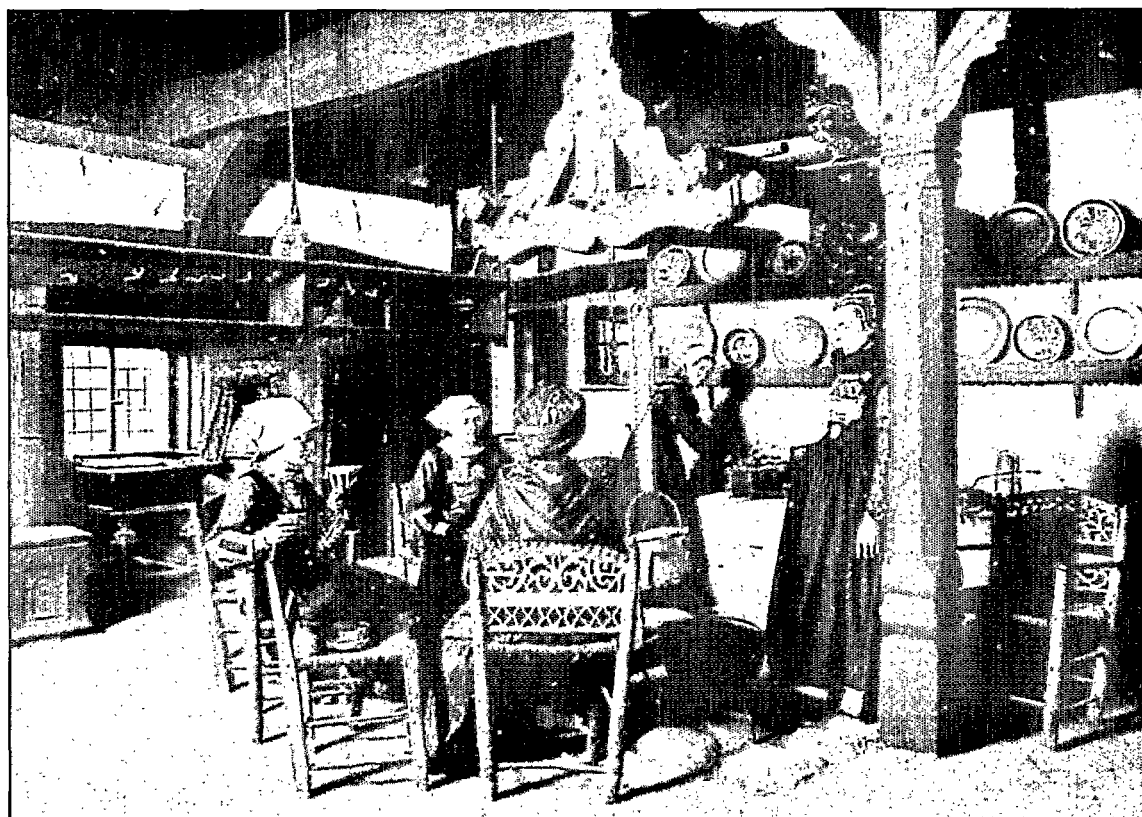
Naturally, these academic theories have become obsolete, and the early open-air museums have not in every respect evolved as the founders envisaged. Nevertheless, our work over the past century has followed the basic concept as introduced by Hazelius and others, including the transfer and furnishing of old buildings. We are now confronted by a number of questions, such as to what extent we should prolong the span of time represented. Should we show the industrialization of the countryside? Today, only a tiny minority of the industrial countries' populations live in rural areas and the cultural features that distinguished the rural populace and townspeople clearly in the last century are hardly recognizable nowadays. Therefore, we ought to ask ourselves in what way our

museum bears relevance to the community and according to what concepts we would want to develop our work further.

Another central question concerns authenticity. It is fairly simple to remove a building to a museum and furnish it so as to give the visitor an illusion of authenticity; however, total authenticity is an illusion. Over the years, buildings have been subject to alterations. It is we who decide which period they represent, it is we who carry out restoration, and who take safety measures. As to interiors, the ideal of full authenticity collapses because the furniture almost never originates from the building in question. Furthermore, even the most completely furnished house, however authentic its appearance may be, would not be able to convey to the visitor the poverty, filth and other unpleasant aspects of living conditions in olden times. The more concrete the reconstruction of the past, the greater the risk of giving a false picture, which may prove popular but which threatens the museum's integrity.

Set against the background of the historical ambiguity of the open-air museum – on the one hand rooted in the entertainment of world exhibitions, on the other in the study of folk culture – the existence of authenticity problems of this kind becomes understandable. Also, the public is easily swayed by this ambiguity into assessing the relationship between 'ordinary' folkloristic museums and open-air museums as one between scientific and popular museums. Following naturally from this perception it comes as no surprise that some authorities foster the feeling that open-air museums are in a better position to pull through financially compared to other museums.

There is, however, a great danger lurking in the lack of appreciation of the scientific



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Around the hearth in the Ostenfeld farmhouse, 1913, Frilandsmuseet, Lyngby (Denmark).

and educational sides of open-air museums, particularly at the present time. The fundamental changes in eastern Europe, the increasing economic integration and scaling up of the European Community and the immigration of foreign workers lead, all in their own manner, to a revival of the identity problem. In this, open-air museums can play a role for good – or ill. A positive role would require fresh approaches and creative ideas arising from a modern academic background wherein sentiments should not be allowed to dominate. If one were to express one single wish on the occasion of Skansen's anniversary, it would rightly be that open-air museums manage to further a balanced development of their unique combination of scientific and popular appeal. ■

Note

1. This article has been based on data from archives and literature of very diverging origins which within this brief context do not lend themselves to references. We would like, however, to make an exception for three publications which have been of the greatest importance to us: A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Fifty Years of Netherlands Open-air Museum* (Arnhem, 1962); P. Michelsen, *Frilandsmuseet: the Danish Museum Village at Sorgenfri; a History of the Open-air Museum and its Old Buildings* (Copenhagen, 1973); and Tonte Hegard, *Romantikk og fortidsvern. Historien om de første friluftsmuseene in Norge* (Oslo, 1984). We also owe a great debt of gratitude to a number of specialists who lent advice and a helping hand with information about specific areas.

Small beer, large pigs and the Anglo-Dutch War of 1627

Toby Tompkins

The author of this memoir is an actor and writer who lives in Nieuw Nederland op den Mannabatoes (otherwise known as New York City!).

The Pilgrim Fathers (and the Pilgrim Mothers) never intended to settle in New England, nor did they wear buckles on their hats once they got there. There was no 'First Thanksgiving' celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November until the nineteenth century. When the Pilgrims did feast, although they'd eat stringy wild turkey at a pinch, they preferred venison, or the beef of Old England, though the latter had to survive months at sea in salt-casks, and tasted like boiled shoe. They hated cranberries, which were eaten only by bears and 'savages'. The first landing was not at Plymouth, and when the Pilgrims did land there, they beached their boat (obviously not *Mayflower* herself) on the sand, rather than crashing into the Rock – which is nowhere mentioned in the original accounts. Nor is *Mayflower* an apt name: she was a cranky, elderly cargo ship chartered on the cheap by the Pilgrims' London backers, and the voyagers detested her. The vessel on display in modern Plymouth is an accurate reconstruction of *Mayflower's* general type, but the original was broken up in England shortly after her most famous voyage, and she left no plans.

Nobody was ever burned as a witch at Plymouth Colony (or at Salem, either: they hanged them). There were stocks, used mainly to shame servants for public drunkenness, though the Pilgrims were no teetotalers. They drank beer, and wine when they could get it, as thirstily as any other Europeans of the period, but they guzzled in private. Less than half of the people who survived the first bad winter were 'Pilgrims'; the term itself is used only once, metaphorically, in the first records.

Almost nothing Americans and others are taught about the first 'planting' in New England is true. It is the mission of Plimoth Plantation (the spelling follows William

Bradford's) living history museum in Massachusetts to correct the errors, and to present a far more vivid picture of the real lives of the early settlers than the myths and pieties of over 300 years of Thanksgiving Day pageants, parades and political propaganda.

The current reconstruction of the 1627 village has gone through many incarnations since a Plymouth man, Henry Hornblower II, began fund-raising after the Second World War. From sketchy beginnings involving mannequins in generic 'Pilgrim' outfits, peculiar architecture, and guides lecturing on antiques from much later dates, today's settlement has become an authentic, fully-functioning community, inhabited by men and women who have taken the names and identities of the 'saints and strangers' known to have been living in the village seven years after the landing. The language used by the villagers is a reconstructed blend of the various dialects of Early Modern English known to have been in use in the districts whence the Pilgrims emigrated. And at a separate clearing near the Eel River, Wampanoag Indian staff members inhabit the sort of summer encampment their ancestors built yearly, speaking a mixture of seventeenth-century English and their native tongue.

Enter Isaack

My own involvement with Plimoth began in 1979, when the directors had decided to add a little spice to the October Harvest Festivals they had been presenting. The festivals featured villagers celebrating the gathering-in with feasting and prayers of thanksgiving, but a day or so of watching other people eat got old quickly for many visitors. It was decided to combine the feasting with the visit of a Dutch contingent from the new colony at Manhattan, which

was known to have happened in October, 1627. The Dutch were led by one Isaack de Razeer, Governor Pieter Minuyt's second in command, and in a subsequent letter home de Razeer left one of the earliest descriptions of the English settlement. Adding the pomp and ceremony of a visit by foreign dignitaries to the feast-days gave the event a purpose which brought in the wider context of the Pilgrim colony: the staff began looking for 'Dutchmen'. As none of the regular interpreters could be spared for the role of de Razeer, Plimoth took the dubious step of hiring an actor, whose only virtues were that he knew a little seventeenth-century history and sort of looked Dutch (not that he spoke any of the language).

I met Peter Cook, then Director of Exhibitions, by chance at a Christmas party in 1979, and began babbling innocently about my interest in early colonial history. Peter described his casting problem, and shortly thereafter a letter arrived from the Director of Interpretation, Len Travers. Len grilled me a bit: actors are held in justifiable suspicion by the historians at Plimoth, who maintain a constant vigil against creeping Disneyfication and 'themeparkitis'. I passed the ordeal-by-letter, and soon received a daunting package containing biographical material on de Razeer, a capsule history of the United Provinces during the Golden Age, source pieces on the founding and early years of Nieuw Nederland op den Mannahatoes, and a little phonetic manual on how to pronounce Dutch without giving a real Nederlander cardiac arrest. After a winter spent trying to digest my man and his times, in some terror I paid a preliminary visit to the village in the summer of 1980, and promptly fell in love with it: I had not been there since my childhood summers on Cape Cod, when it was still mostly ladies in mob-caps pointing at things.

Fortunately for me, far less is known about Isaak de Razeer than about the leaders of the English colony, so I had a limited licence to fake it. The man wore two hats in Minuyt's colony, being Chief Merchant (*opper koopman*) of the Netherlands West India Company in addition to his administrative function as the Governor's *secretaar*, and he was constantly getting caught in conflicts of interest. Eventually a 'contrary faction' among the company employees (unlike Bradford's people, the Dutch at Manhattan were contract workers and traders working on commission) forced him home in 1628. He'd only been on the island of the 'old Mannahatoes' two years, appalled by the disorder and selfish greed he had to deal with, and his letters indicate that his visit to the English impressed him: Bradford's village was thriving by 1627, full of God-fearing families (as opposed to the Dutch bachelors who were forever getting into trouble with Indian women) determined to make a new life in the New World.

The English and Dutch were allies, but Europe was far away: de Razeer's flowery letters (Bradford complained that the Dutch were 'full of complimentary titles') masked what was in part a spying mission. In addition to opening trade with Plymouth, he came to probe the strengths and weaknesses of the colony. As seen by the museum directors, the formal decorum of my dealings with Bradford has an underlying edge. I had a piece of my man: fond of order, even a little stuffy, but evidently short-fused when crossed, he was sincerely dedicated to establishing a *permanent* colony at Manhattan. He was also a silver-tongued salesman, and actually introduced *wampum*, the Indian shell-money, which was made in large quantities by the Indians around Manhattan, but was largely unknown to the natives of Massachusetts Bay. And I had at least two great anecdotes



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spot machine-stitching). I felt a real cock o' th' walk, even though when I first tried my phonetic Dutch on a Plimoth director, Dr Jeremy Bangs, who was fluent in the language, he told me I sounded as if I came from Sweden, or . . . maybe New Jersey.

Eight hours of improvisation

Feeling more like a hastily-crammed student walking into a history exam than an actor making an entrance, I edged through the gate with my entourage, that first rainy day. The original de Razeer entered 'to a noise of trumpets', but the only man who could even get a sound out of our straight horn was flummoxed by the wet weather. We entered to a noise of dying moose. Rich Currier, as Myles Standish, had arranged a cannon salute, but the powder was soggy, and when he blew in the touchhole, it flashed back, burning off his eyebrows and part of his beard: when he finally met us, he looked as if he'd come straight from the heat of some battle not covered in our research.

At the Governor's house, Doug Painter, playing Bradford, offered refreshment. Tea and coffee wouldn't be around for another fifty years or so: the choice was beer or wine. I was smart enough to avoid the wine, and was handed about five gallons of beer in a vast two-handled mug. Diplomatically, I drained it, as the Governor and I exchanged courtesies, and found myself quite tipsy at 9.15 in the morning, with a long day to follow. Little joke, my hosts told me that evening. Beer was the tippie of choice at the time, but the regulars asked for 'small beer', non-alcoholic root beer standing in for the real thing, which left their wits intact. *I* drank *big* beer all day, and I don't remember many details of the afternoon. My memorized speech, in Dutch and English, must have gurgled out with-

The author, as Isaack de Razeer, left, with Doug Painter, as Governor William Bradford.

to try to work into my conversations. The previous year a small Dutch garrison near present-day Albany had been defeated in battle with the ferocious Mohawks, who took at least one Dutchman back to their camp and ate him. And I'd learned that the famous tale of Minuyt buying Manhattan for \$24 in trinkets was true, but he'd done the deal with the wrong Indians, meeting a band of Canarsie hunters who were happy to take the white sucker's goods – too bad they didn't think of selling him a certain bridge, while they were at it. Cannibalism and fraud – why, I couldn't lose!

And the costume Nancy Fee and her staff made for me was magnificent. Copied from a Frans Hals painting, right down to its 288 gilt buttons, it was all hand-sewn (sharp-eyed visitors being always quick to

out incident (probably because there were no real Dutchmen listening), and I don't think I ever tripped on my sword, though I sat on it once.

For an actor, accustomed to working from a script onstage or in a studio, eight hours of improvisation and full interaction with the 'audience' was a revelation. The high palisade around the village renders it a pocket out of time. Only the visitors remind one of the twentieth century, and after the first hour they became insubstantial, gaudily-dressed ghosts against the pungent, earthy reality of the seventeenth century. Of course that first day the beer had a lot to do with the effect, but in later years, when I stuck to the small stuff, the time-travel illusion never failed to seduce me. The dense smells and sounds of the pig and goat pens, the yeasty sweat of the villagers, their cadenced, musical speech, the tang of woodsmoke from the wattled chimneys, and the muscular textures of woven woollens and linens, unfinished wooden planking, clay daub, the work-worn handles of tools, all served to turn the twentieth-century people into cartoons. Their clothes seemed too flimsy for the serious October weather, their voices were birdsong, and even to a relatively lax member of the Dutch Reformed Church, the paint on the women's faces made them so many Jezebels. Even the cameras (which, they insisted, to one's polite scepticism, could make one's image in little-devil's work, if true) seemed baubles worn for some quaint heathen reason by a tribe of the Preterite, more to be pitied than condemned.

As a tourist myself, albeit a seventeenth-century one, I was able to gawk along with the other visitors at the odd habits of the 'Brownists'. When I was questioned about the Separatist faith of the villagers, as a Dutchman I could honestly say I knew little

of it, and what little I knew I didn't care for. Or, caught snooping around the cannon (with a costumed Jeremy Bangs making careful notes – in Dutch – on fields of fire, in the little book he carried), I could tell the visitors (making sure there were no English in earshot) that although the guns were in better order than those of my countrymen at Nieuw Nederland, Standish's 'trainbands' were but farmers ill-suited to their weapons (a lie). But I had nothing but praise for the cheerful discipline of the villagers, in contrast to the drunkenness, licence and godlessness prevailing at my own colony.

I spoke in Dutch-accented English, with seventeenth-century syntax and the odd Dutch phrase dropped in, and sometimes I lost control of the mix and was reduced to nods and grunts. When my tongue tangled, I could revert to my clay pipe, though the harshly cured twists of Virginia tobacco I was offered were enough to choke the Marlboro Man, and on one occasion I was reprimanded by the Constable for 'drinking sot-weed on the public street'. Curious people, these Brownists (and to call them that derisive name was to cause serious offence).

Away with the lute!

A living history museum is not a controlled environment, especially where livestock are involved, and even less so when some of the livestock are pigs the size of recreational vehicles. Well, the boar, anyway. Mostly he went along with the programme lazily enough, and kept his authentic seventeenth-century self in his authentic seventeenth-century pen. But one morning he decided to broaden his horizons. The pen fell as straw before him (I think he ate some of it), and the early visitors were treated to a villageful of English and Dutch folks whacking vainly on the back and butt-end

of an oblivious, hairy, pinkish-brown Volkswagen bus. After giving both villagers and visitors more fun than anyone deserved, the boar got tired of the ruckus and returned, on his own, to his ruined pen for some peace and quiet. At the following year's first Feast, I was told he was featured prominently, and with some regret I asked for a second helping.

Each visit, over the eight I made, was a little different, as research continued to turn up variations in everything from the cut of a sleeve to a point of doctrinal dispute. One year there was a sword-and-buckler 'duel' between Standish and my own military aide, one Wolfert Gerritsen, a hot-headed veteran of the Lowland Wars, who'd made a certain suggestion to the Captain's wife at the noon meal. Next year the bout was deemed altogether too rowdy for the staid community: in any case, Wolfert would have been bound over to the Magistrate's Court for his lewdness, if Standish hadn't simply blown his head off first. One year there was the music of lute and recorder; the following season the musical experts John Kemp and Donna Curtin had ascertained that the Pilgrims eschewed all instruments but the drum that summoned the militia to muster and the faithful to worship. Thereafter there was the full-throated singing of psalms, set according to psalters of the period. One year my white ruff was relatively modest, and the next it had turned saffron and spread to my shoulders, making me look like the head of John the Baptist on a yellow platter.

The finery of the Dutch, compared to the simplicity of even the Governor's best suit of clothes, prompted questions from the visitors, which led into discussions of the relative distribution of wealth, changes in fashion (my trendy doublet of 1626 contrasted with the nipped-waist Elizabethan or Jacobean garb of the English, already

well-worn when these rural people had embarked in 1620), or the different strictures against 'vanity' held by our two subsets of Protestantism.

The Plantation's Education Department carries the living history experience of the village out to schools and colleges across southern New England, during the off-season, and during my years I was asked to collaborate with the staff in writing two short plays for the 'Winter Ed' programme. One involved a murder trial which precipitated 'King Phillip's War', the Wampanoag uprising led by Metacom in 1675–76. The other dealt with the colony's remarkably liberal (for the time) treatment of an influx of Quakers – heretics, after all – in the mid-1650s. It was a source of sly amusement to me to see veteran first-person interpreters succumbing to stagefright when confronted with lines and blocking to remember: the boot, as 'twere, was on the other foot.

Ghosts or hallucination?

For my last trip, the staff had decided to add a day to the usual long weekend, in order to show the Dutch arrival at the English trading post in present-day Bourne, south of Plymouth, at the head of Buzzard's Bay. De Razeer had sailed up from Manhattan, anchoring off the post, where he was met by an English delegation. In 1627 the usual route to the village was a six-hour trek through the woods, but my man, gouty or arrogant or both, would only walk across the narrow neck of Cape Cod, to the Massachusetts Bay side, where he insisted on being taken upcoast by boat. The trading post is architecturally dubious, and the site itself is just off a busy modern intersection. In full regalia we clanked and creaked out of our van into a parking lot full of tourists, and were hustled behind the post, through a littered picnic ground,

down to a sheltered spot on the hiking-and-biking trail which parallels today's Cape Cod Canal, where we awaited our cue to sound trumpet and make a formal entrance (trying not to trip over the Coke cans and burger wrappers). Six Dutchmen and their English guide stood around trying to keep our hats from blowing off (de Razeer puffing on a last cigarette), when one of the tour boats which plies the canal happened along.

We could hear the amplified voice of the guide: 'And in the 1620s, there was a trading post over there at Frenchman's Point, built by our Pilgrim Fathers and . . . Holy Cow, there they *are!*' The boat almost capsized as the tourists swarmed to starboard to yell and wave. But on a common impulse none of us reacted or even moved. De Razeer cupped his cigarette in one gloved hand, and the only motion was the snapping of the West India Company's flag in the fresh breeze. Ghosts? Costumed sculpture? Collective hallucination? The boat passed; our cue came. That year's trumpeter had concealed a modern valved instrument in a bush, and the moose sounded in better health. But the meeting with the English was an anticlimax after the accidental reminder we'd given a boatload of people that New England is still haunted by its past.

In past years the Bradford-de Razeer negotiations had been a little dry: complicated matters of trading rights with the Indians and first titles to settlement, couched in the formal diplomatic language of the period. No conclusions had been reached in 1627, as neither party had the right to speak for his government. But the issues were serious. The English and Dutch had clashed in 1625 in the East Indies, where a Dutch admiral had wiped out a 'factory' of English traders on the Dutch-claimed island of Amboina. Len Travers, playing



'Family dinner': a re-creation at Plimouth Plantation.

Bradford, decided we ought to crank up the tension of our meetings in light of that incident, so when we sat to talk, Standish and his counterpart Gerritsen were armed to the teeth, and there was an English musketeer posted at the door with his matchlock.

We hadn't actually written the argument, of course, agreeing only that there should *be* one, and after Bradford blandly refused, for the third time, even to consider Dutch trade north of the Connecticut River, it erupted. In my silkiest voice I recalled the Amboina massacre, and added, 'At need, honoured Gouverneur, I may summon four ships of war that be presently at Nieuw Nederland . . . How many ships hast *thou?*' Bradford leapt to his feet, knocking over the beer mugs, and bellowed: 'What! Do you *threat* me, sirrah?' Whoops!

Pistols and daggers drawn around the table. Someone fetched the sentry a lit match for his musket. Bradford's Indian friend Hobbamock (played by the brilliant and rather fearsome Nanepashmet, himself a Wampanoag) materialized in the door like a bad dream, wielding a knife as long as my forearm. Buzzing and confusion among the visitors crowding the house and peeping at the windows, matched only by the dismay Len and I felt. Good God, how the hell do we get out of *this* one? Havoc beckoned: hair, teeth and eyeballs all over the floor, followed by the curiously unreported Anglo-Dutch War of 1627. I feared for my ruff.

The moment was defused by Paul Cripps, playing Council Member Thomas Prence. He jumped between us and delivered a shaming little sermon on how it would gladden the heart of the Pope at Rome to see two Protestant Christian brothers thus at daggers drawn, which allowed Len and I to mumble surly apologies and back down. But the visitors still buzzed, and I only found out why at the end of the day: the whole time Paul had been preaching peace, he'd had his snap-haunce pistol cocked behind his back.

Perils and virtues of interpretation

If we frayed the fabric of history a bit on that occasion, at least we got people to realize that the Pilgrims were fallible, emotional people who were not frozen behind glass in a museum diorama of dead, and deadly, history. First-person interpretation involves as many perils as virtues: improvising, regardless of the solidity of one's preparation, is a risky business, and one can never be sure what might pop out in the heat of a dispute. In addition, there are always a few unruly visitors who try to catch you with your persona down. Most Dutch-speaking

visitors I met were good sports, once I reeled off my disclaimer (in Dutch), that for 'diplomatic reasons' I was sticking to English. But I had to hide from one needling Dutchman by developing a sudden interest in the reeking pigsties. He followed me even there, and I was only rescued by Jeremy Bangs, who happened by with his notebook and, with a few terse Dutch remarks, holed the man's pretensions below the waterline and left him marvelling that this odd American museum could afford to import real Dutchmen. At a local bar that night he was heard to say, 'But, I mean, *nobody* in this country speaks Dutch . . .'.
■

Context is as important as character, and the interpreters always try to remind the intelligent visitor of the world beyond the palisade. There was no war between the Dutch and English in 1627, but the tensions were in place, and the near-brawl in Bradford's house might have prompted some people to remember that some three decades later, the Duke of York's fleet sailed into New Amsterdam harbour and made it possible for me to write this without learning Dutch.

As to the questions I have raised at the beginning of this article? Well, Lincoln created 'Thanksgiving Day' in 1864, as a bit of Union propaganda, picking the November date because even the deep South had its crops in by then. Of course, in New England if you haven't harvested by October, you'll have little to be thankful for. For the other matters, I recommend a visit to the village. I continue to wonder why the later myth-makers decided to put a belt-buckle on a hat. Chastity belt for the brain? Ask Carolyn Travers or Kim Baker in Research, look for buckled hats in the splendid Plantation library, and when you are thoroughly confused, stroll down to the village . . . but try not to wink at Standish's wife.
■

Conflict-resolution in Northern Ireland: the role of a folk museum

Alan Gailey

Open-air museums recall and honour the past. Some, at least, strive to heal present-day community antagonisms. Such is the case of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, located near Belfast, whose Director since 1988 wrote the following article. Dr Gailey is interested in seasonal customs and ethnological cartography, among other things, and wrote Rural Houses of the North of Ireland and Irish Drama.

A Northern Irish folk museum was instituted in the late 1950s when terrorism was directed against the constitutional position of the area within the United Kingdom. By 1964, when it opened, however, many people believed that there was growing respect for divergent socio-political and religious viewpoints. Most of its development has been since 1969 in a setting of inter-communal strife, renewed terrorism and social change. The museum is statutorily required to deal with the way of life and traditions of the people of Northern Ireland (*all of the people*). So it has an opportunity to work to generate mutual respect amongst the public it serves.

A seventeenth-century influx of settlers from Britain was only the most recent major immigration to contribute to social variety in the north of Ireland; it was the most decisive in shaping modern circumstances. It established the Reformation in Ireland, but dichotomizing religion as Catholic and Protestant conceals different viewpoints between the former state Church (Anglican) and the Calvinist Presbyterianism, which came principally from Scotland. Political developments led to constitutional retention of the six north-eastern Irish counties in the United Kingdom in the 1920s, when the remainder of Ireland became independent. So political dichotomy between nationalism/republicanism, and adherence to the British crown, was overlaid on the religious differences. Segregated schooling exacerbated this situation, stemming from the determination of different religions to maintain an influence on education, with differing emphases on the teaching of history and of the Gaelic language, and even on the team games played by children. Discrimination in employment in this economic periphery, and partisan allocation of publicly owned housing to tenants, compounded the problems. A campaign to redress some of the prob-

lems accelerated social change, but was overtaken by renewed political terrorism.

Acceptance is growing that Northern Ireland's social traditions are never unique. Each has connections with neighbouring geographical areas – the remainder of Ireland, Britain, Western Europe, and (because of extensive emigration in past decades) North America. These connections are ideological contexts for Northern Irish people to come to better self-understanding culturally. Physical contexts where people can meet to explore and develop respect for the variety of their traditions are too few, a reflection of residential and educational segregation.

Ten per cent of Northern Ireland's schoolchildren

There was interest in the 1930s in establishing a folk museum, visualized as part of Belfast's municipal museum. The Second World War interrupted consideration of the idea, but it was revived in the 1950s. Legislation was passed in 1958; it was said then that the Ulster Folk Museum Act was the only thing upon which all political viewpoints could agree!

Late in 1958 the museum's Trustees began to recruit staff and to search for a suitable site. A small mansion with 55 hectares of land was purchased 12 km outside the centre of the city of Belfast, a site endowed with natural beauty and topographic variety suitable for an open-air museum. In July 1964 the museum opened to visitors. By then a small technical and professional staff had mounted indoor exhibitions in the converted mansion, reconstructed a traditional house, and partly completed a water-powered spade foundry. Collections illustrating local life had been initiated, and research on custom and tradition was under way.

© Ulster Folk and Transport Museum



Museum visitors examining gravestones in exhibit churchyard.

The Trustees decided that displays relating to local life should develop in formal indoor galleries and by means of an open-air museum. They were to be based on academic research to be prosecuted in its own right, to create a culture-history resource for the whole community.

Purpose-built indoor exhibition galleries opened to visitors in 1976 for some transport collections, followed in the early 1980s by space for folklife material. The latter is the first of three small buildings for folk-museum purposes, its modern design con-

trasting with the vernacular character of the open-air museum.

Development of the open-air museum is environmental and contextual. The planned collection of reconstructed (some reproduced) buildings is the presentational setting for any one of them. Exhibit buildings are presented with functional relationships between them, in rural and urban landscapes representative of Northern Ireland's environment. It follows that implied functional relationships between exhibit buildings necessitate presenting them all as an integrated life-style. So the open-air museum illustrates the way of life and traditions of Northern Ireland during the generation before the First World War. The statutory duty to deal with other periods, including the present, is met in the indoor exhibition galleries. Finally, the created museum environment must be used in practical ways (craft demonstrations, appropriate farming activities, seasonal and customary events) to interpret past life.

The museum aims to develop an environment in which interpretation of the past can be used in the present to enhance mutual respect for varying cultural traditions so as to provide for a future when all of the people of Northern Ireland can experience greater self-knowledge. Staff recognize the important social role the museum can play for local people. They have thus always been involved in educational work based on the museum, and almost 10 per cent of Northern Ireland's school population annually visits the institution.

Community-relations-oriented courses for schoolchildren were experimented with in the early 1970s. Based on local cultural materials not then used in the school curriculum, they stressed aspects of culture held in common by all sections of the

community. Due to their success, and for more general educational reasons, full-time education officers were appointed soon afterwards. They concentrated on developing resource materials intended to encourage schools' project-based use of the museum although work initiated in the 1960s in adult education continued and there was later provision of adult textile-craft instructional courses.

By the late 1980s, much of the education officer's effort was directed at the organizational and teacher-support infrastructure of Northern Ireland's education system, but the earlier cross-community inter-schools initiatives persisted. Potential for their development was recognized, to the ultimate benefit of community relations generally. It was also clear, however, that structural changes were required in the education system if the social consequences of segregated schooling were to be mitigated.

Community relations and structural change

Change came suddenly to the social environment in which the museum works, in the shape of a new national curriculum for schools in the United Kingdom. Responding to local needs, and alongside core curriculum studies, Northern Ireland's new curriculum provides for a number of cross-curricular themes, including Cultural Heritage and Education for Mutual Understanding. Their subject-matter is to be incorporated into the local teaching of core subjects, including languages, history and geography.

These cross-curricular themes are affirmation that community relations issues must be addressed in structured ways. Discussions in 1988/89 amongst representatives

of the civil administration, community groups, educational institutions and cultural organizations concentrated on cultural heritage and community social relations. Recognition grew that Northern Ireland's cultural experience has dimensions shared by all (as in aspects of daily living), and others that separate communities (religion, interest in the Gaelic language, attitudes in constitutional politics). Structures and programmes are needed to develop understanding of and respect for this mix of unity and diversity. A Community Relations Council now exists, funded by, but independent of, government, and a Cultural Traditions Group advises that council.

The Chairman of the museum's Trustees and the Director were active in discussions which led to the formation of the Cultural Traditions Group, and continue to participate in it. This recognition of experimentation in the 1970s in educational work in community relations was apparent also in participation by the museum's senior education officer in advisory work on the content of the cross-curricular theme of Cultural Heritage. Furthermore, the group advising on the new history curriculum was led by the museum's Chairman. Here was recognition that the museum had been, and continues to be, an essential provider in these vital policy areas.

Quiet success

Since its early years the museum has been sensitive to, and reflective of, the cultural traditions of the various communities it serves. Proposals in 1965 for creation of its open-air museum included churches representing the numerically strongest religious traditions in Northern Ireland. One (Anglican) was completed in the early 1980s. A second (Roman Catholic) will

© Ulster Folk and Transport Museum



Rear of exhibit farm in rural part of museum.

soon be available to museum visitors. Residences of the clergy of the different traditions are also included. Contextual interpretation of these buildings has started to relate them to the people who used them, by means of internal furnishings and, externally, for example, by placing gravestones in the churchyards. These must bear family names recognizably reflecting community affiliations.

So, well-known but often subtle markers of community and cultural distinctiveness are emerging in display situations, reflecting the social reality of Northern Ireland's built environment. Exploration of the realities of the traditions of groups other than one's own in the non-museum setting is fraught with psychological (occasionally even physical) danger. The museum provides a 'neutral' place where social discovery is 'safe'.

Much of this exposure to other people's traditions is not overtly undertaken, but happens during a museum visit that is often family-based, and regarded as a leisure activity more than an educational one. Therefore it is appropriate to include

a didactic element in the visitor's experience. A formal exhibition gallery is being developed in the basement of a Catholic parochial hall of the open-air museum. It will accommodate interpretation of the diversity of Northern Ireland's religious traditions. If the reconstructed churches must reflect the realities of life in 1900 and the implied socio-religious community relationships of that time, the origin of these traditions and the way in which they have progressed until the present will be exhibited in a formal way. These developments are financed by resources made available through the programmes for Cultural Heritage, and Education for Mutual Understanding.

Comparable approaches have been adopted in exhibitions in the indoor galleries. The unifying theme of 'the brotherhood' as a social organizational phenomenon displays continuities of ritual and symbolism. It was the basis for the medieval craft guilds of many countries and today is the pattern for groupings in Northern Irish society as diverse as those devoted to religious, political, and temperance (anti-alcoholism)

objectives. This was the theme of an exhibition in 1988 which, perhaps for the first time in Northern Ireland, brought together parade banners and regalia of politically, and largely religiously, opposed organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Orange Order. This happened in a non-threatening way, in a neutral setting. Visitors from all parts of Northern Ireland's population commented on the understanding they were given of realities of daily cultural diversity, seen for the first time to have some basis of cultural unity. An exhibition in 1990 on *1690: The Folklore of a War*, dealt with modern perceptions of the Williamite Wars of the end of the seventeenth century. It was similarly conceived and was equally, quietly, successful. *Marriage* was the theme of an exhibition in 1991 using these approaches to explore and to interpret relationships between cultural unity and diversity.

Prolonged contact

Another emphasis to realize the museum's social potential stemmed from the experimentation in the 1970s with the community-relations-oriented projects for schoolchildren noted earlier. Each project involved a number of consecutive days of work at the museum on local cultural material. Time spent travelling to and from the museum could have been more constructively used if the schoolchildren could have remained there overnight. Furthermore, they themselves revealed that they learned culturally from coming into prolonged contact with one another outside the formal content of these projects. So in its Development Plan of 1973 the museum included provision of residential accommodation for schools' use in the museum estate. It has now come into existence within the urban part of the open-air museum. A first unit accommodates thirty pupils with their teachers in a terrace of

industrial workers' houses removed from the city of Belfast. It came into use in April 1990. A second unit will create the possibility for those from segregated schools to work together at the museum on common curricular projects in the Cultural Heritage and Education for Mutual Understanding programmes and to live together while doing so. This is achieved in a way which maintains the open-air museum's interpretational integrity for all visitors, yet provides modern living circumstances for the young residents. Resources for this pioneering development came from government funding provisions for the new educational cross-curricular themes. With the experience of its earlier experimental work in this field, the museum was well placed to exploit the possibilities generated by structural changes beyond its direct influence.

The museum's social purpose has much to do with interpreting the genesis and cultural realities of the variety of identities espoused by, or ascribed to, the people of Northern Ireland. Embedded within one another, these identities function at different social, political, religious and geographical scales. They range from the identity of the individual in the family, and of the family in the local community, through divergent socio-politico-religious affiliations which persist in particular geographical settings and historical contexts. Northern Ireland is not unique in confronting simultaneous issues of cultural diversity and unity. If the approaches described here prove valuable in Northern Ireland, they may also suggest ways of confronting problems of community relationships elsewhere.

Interested readers may contact the author at the following address: Dr Alan Gailey, Director, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra Holywood BT18 OEU, County Down, Northern Ireland. ■

Everyone needs Kizhi!

Boris Aleksandrovich Gushchin and Viola Anatolevna Gushchina

The 'open air' in which the museum described in this article finds itself is pure, far from any city, wafting through forests and over lakes in the north-western part of Russia. The authors have mounted a number of exhibitions at, and written extensively about, what is officially known as the State Historical, Architectural and Ethnographic Museum-Park of Kizhi.

Sixty kilometres from the town of Petrozavodsk, in the northern waters of the bleak Lake Onega, there lies, among eye-catching skerries, the small island of Kizhi. Some 6 km long and about 600 m wide, Kizhi is one of 1,650 islands on the lake and is known to experts worldwide for its unique collection of buildings.

Kizhi's history stretches far back in time. Pagan rites were once celebrated there (the word *kizhat* means 'social gatherings' in the local Veps-Karelian dialect). The ancestors of today's islanders were Russian settlers from Great Novgorod. Vigorous and enterprising, they were attracted to the northern territories by the abundance of fur-bearing animals in the dense forests and by the multitude of lakes teeming with fish. In the tenth and eleventh centuries they began to open up lands settled by Finno-Ugric tribes. On the banks of rivers and lakes, little villages appeared, clustered around Orthodox churches. *Pogosty* became established in the north, communities which eventually became major administrative and territorial units.

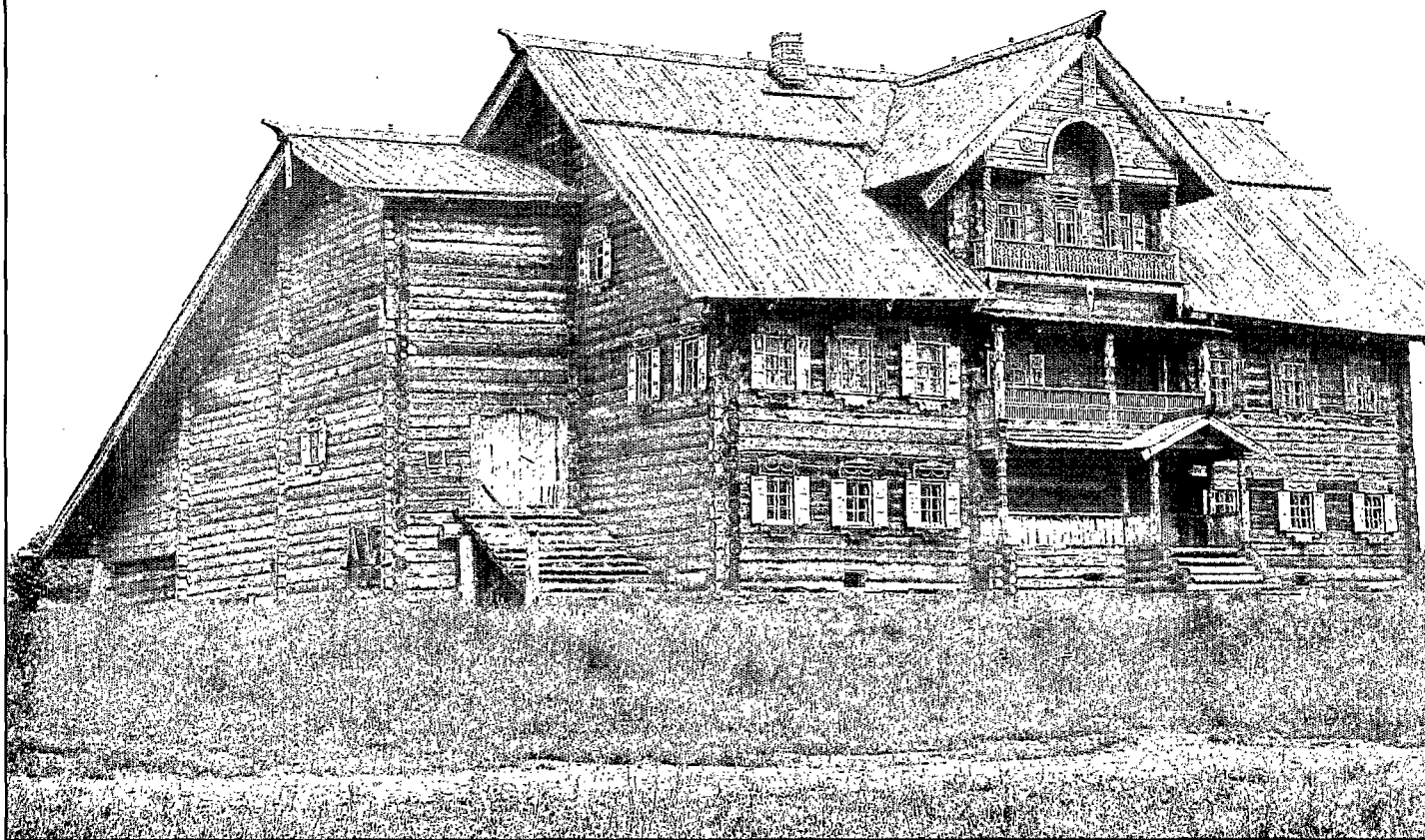
The buildings on Kizhi

The Spassky *pogost* on Kizhi with its two wooden churches is first referred to in the cadastre in the year 1496. It is known that both churches had hipped roofs at that time. Nearby stood a bell tower, also with a hipped roof. In the vicinity of the old churches lay small hamlets of just a few houses, which were typical of the region to the north of Lake Onega in the sixteenth century. Small plots of land suitable for cultivation were worked by a single large patriarchal family (some families had as many as twenty-five to thirty members). Two of the old villages on the island – Yamka and Vasilevo – have survived to the present day.

The churches on Kizhi were struck by lightning and burned down at the end of the seventeenth century. New churches were immediately erected on the same sites. The first to be built was the Pokrovskaya winter church, which underwent major alterations in the course of its long life, acquiring its present ten-cupola roof towards the middle of the eighteenth century. It exhibits the striking features of the curious sixteenth- to eighteenth-century churches, with hipped roofs, which are quite common in the areas adjoining the Onega basin.

However, the Pokrovskaya church was not destined to play the most important part in the future architectural complex. The magnificent Preobrazhenskaya church, which, with its twenty-two cupolas, was built for summer services, confidently established its primacy once and for all when it was built in 1714 (its forerunner is considered to be the eighteen-cupola Pokrovskaya church, built in 1708 in the village of Ankhimovo on the southern shore of Lake Onega, which burnt down in 1963). It is the Preobrazhenskaya church which embodies to the fullest extent the traditions of the northern carpenters and the peasant ideal of beauty, born of daily labour and the uninterrupted link with nature and everyday village life. It is quite likely that the subsequent transformation of the Pokrovskaya into a 10-cupola church was connected with attempts to achieve an overall architectural effect. The bell tower of the *pogost* on Kizhi was built in 1862 on the site of the dilapidated old tower and was rebuilt in 1874.

A four-tiered carved iconostasis in the Baroque style, composed of 102 icons and dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was preserved inside the Preobrazhenskaya church. The iconostasis has been dismantled to allow damage-



prevention work to be undertaken and is currently held in the museum's reserve. The iconostasis of the Pokrovskaya Church is composed of icons dating from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

The group of buildings on Kizhi was created over a period of nearly 180 years by craftsmen of succeeding generations. The outcome of their long creative quest was a masterpiece of Russian wood architecture which was to achieve recognition far beyond the boundaries of Karelia. Echoes of paganism, the festive aspect of the Orthodox Church, severe asceticism, the Old Belief, a clearly perceptible allusion to the Baroque, an impression of the culture of the neighbouring peoples – the Karelians and the Veps; the centuries-old experience and talent of the Russian architects: all of these influences left their mark on the architecture of the buildings on Kizhi.

Beautiful as well as functional

There are good reasons why an open-air museum began to take shape on Kizhi in 1951, becoming officially, in 1966, the State Historical, Architectural and Ethnographic Museum-Park of Kizhi. It must not be forgotten that Russian art in general owes

a lot to Kizhi. The country remembers the names of the island's talented peasants – custodians of epics and spinners of tales, composers of songs and makers of dances. Many interesting monuments of wood architecture are scattered over the nearby islands and shores.

Examples of such monuments began to be brought to Kizhi. Within the small compass of the island are churches, chapels, houses, bath-houses and barns from various regions of Karelia, which go some way towards creating the setting once to be found on Kizhi. The museum is also trying to re-establish old villages in the vicinity of the island in order to offer visitors the fullest possible picture of old peasant architecture.

As can be seen from any peasant house on Kizhi, each and every object fashioned by peasant hands was beautiful as well as functional. In these houses, people once led a measured existence, with its cares and concerns, joys and sorrows. The arduous daily life of the peasant and his constant striving for beauty left their mark on the interior of the houses, where primitive tools are found alongside magnificent examples of folk art. All peasant art is permeated by a blend of the utilitarian and the aesthetic.

Sergin family house, c. 1880–90.

Most peasant dwellings in northern Russia have the living quarters and cattle-sheds under one roof. In northern conditions, this enabled the peasants to carry out most of their work around the house without stepping outside. Interior settings have now been re-created in a number of buildings, while ethnographic exhibitions have been organized in others.

The peasant buildings on the island are arranged in architectural and ethnographic sections reflecting the characteristics of the various regions of the Karelian ASSR.

One of the oldest monuments of Russian wood architecture is to be found on Kizhi – the church of the Raising of Lazarus (second half of the fourteenth century), which was brought from the lands of the Muromsky Monastery on the south-east shore of Lake Onega. This church may be described as an architectural miniature, so small are its dimensions and so graceful its simple lines. The church of the Raising of Lazarus helps us to follow the development of the architect's skill from four simple walls to the multi-domed Preobrazhenskaya church on Kizhi.

The chapels of the 'Kizhi necklace' still occupy their original sites, scattered in picturesque fashion throughout the villages around Kizhi (Koroba, Vorobi, Volkostrov, Podelniki, Eglovo) and on the island itself (Vasilevo). Forming a close bond with the surrounding countryside, some of the chapels appear to merge with ancient pagan groves; others constitute the centre of a village; yet a third group stand out as distinctive beacons on the lakeshore.

The Kizhi Museum-Park faces a whole range of difficult problems, some of which are connected with the island's unique natural environment, economic activity, tourist traffic and the preservation of the

peasants' spiritual culture. But the museum's most important task will always be the preservation of the unique architectural monuments.

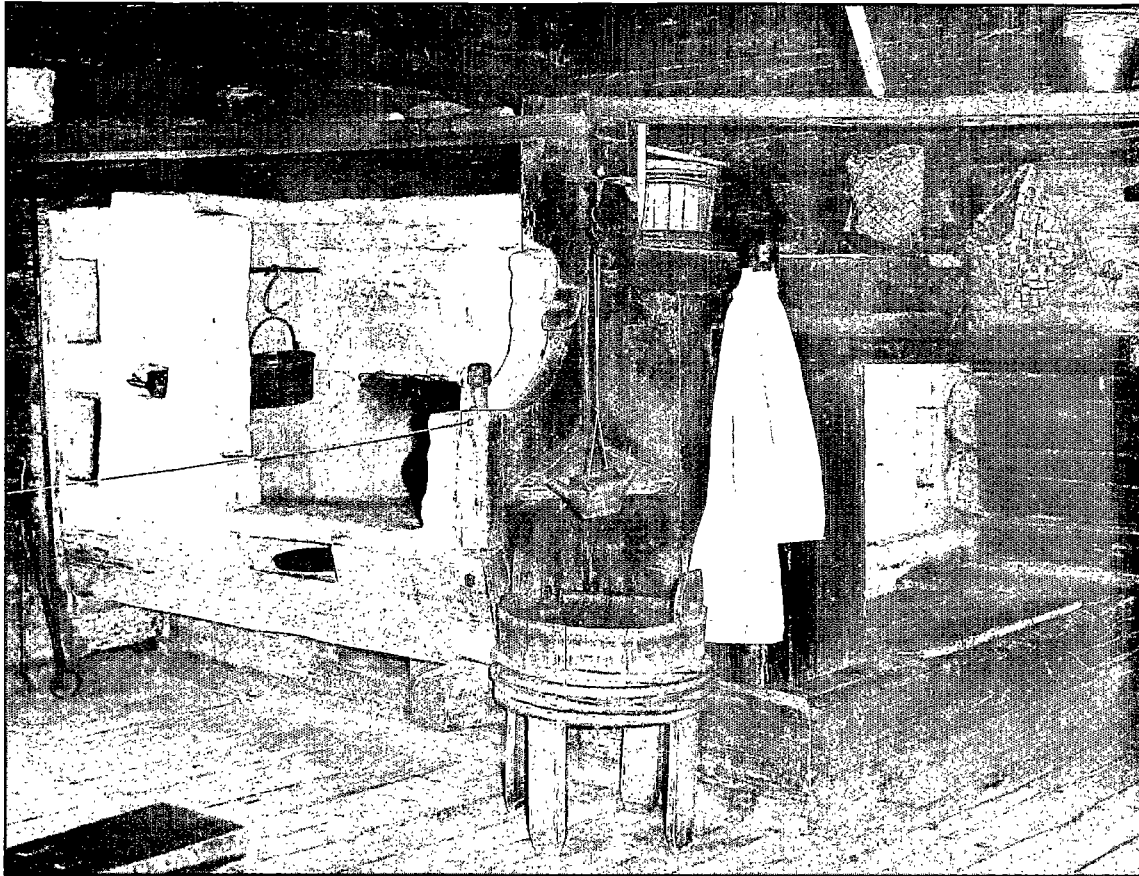
On 12 December 1990, the buildings on Kizhi were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. The report written by the Kizhi *volost* (district) executive committee on 1 January 1919 now has a sad and paradoxical ring: 'The *volost* executive committee reports that there are no ancient monuments in Kizhi district'. Fortunately, this did not prevent the buildings on Kizhi being brought under state protection in 1920. Thereafter, state and society did not neglect the churches on this island, although what was done was clearly insufficient.

In 1926, the monuments on Kizhi were registered and their full-scale measurements taken under the direction of Academician I. E. Grabar. Detailed measurements of the Preobrazhenskaya church were made in 1940 by the architect L. M. Lisenko.

Repairs and restoration started in 1948 within the area of the *pogost* on Kizhi, and the architect A. V. Opolovnikov took charge of this work in 1949. Work to restore the iconostases was carried out simultaneously and in the middle of the 1950s the renovated churches welcomed their first tourists.

The acceptable and the unacceptable

As the twentieth century draws to a close, certain aspects of the restoration work carried out in the past may be criticized, such as the absence of accompanying conservation measures and the almost complete removal of later layers. But it must be recognized that what the restorers did to



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Reconstitution of the interior of the Elisarov family house.

the buildings on Kizhi at the end of the 1940s drew the attention of experts and the public to the island's problems.

Saving the monuments on Kizhi has become a job for specialists with different types of expertise: architects, restorers, designers, wood technologists and chemists. But the technical interests of scientists dictate radical, narrow-minded measures: engineers using metal to consolidate a structure, doing irreversible harm to the original components of a unique building; wood technologists measuring the density of wood by firing repeated rounds from a small-calibre rifle. The natural reaction of the public and scientists from other disciplines is one of indignation and protest.

In our view, it is essential first of all to reach agreement as to which measures are acceptable in relation to the buildings on Kizhi and which are unacceptable.

Is complete rebuilding acceptable, replacing nearly half of the wood but preserving

the buildings' architectural and artistic features? Is it acceptable to preserve the wood completely by chemical means, but thereby altering the properties of the material? To what extent is it admissible to add on disparate structures inside and outside the buildings, thus changing the churches' aesthetic appearance?

Sacrifices will have to be made, but which ones? Not nearly so many, perhaps, as ten, twenty or thirty years ago. The solution must be based on the Venice Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas and the recommendations of the ICOMOS working meeting on the Preobrazhenskaya church, which was held in Petrozavodsk and Kizhi in September 1988. Kizhi's problems can only be solved with the co-operation of scientists from a number of different fields whose activities should be co-ordinated by ICOMOS.

Kizhi must live, for it is by discovering the greatness of their past that people acquire a faith in the future. It is not just for the experts: everyone needs Kizhi! ■

Almighty time

Anna Maincheva

How can samples of vernacular architecture belonging to different ethnic groups and historical periods be grouped together in the same space? Should old buildings be left in their original environment or can they be moved? What can be done when wood preservatives turn out to be toxic? When there are at hand no carpenters trained in restoring centuries-old buildings? When a museum cannot afford trained guides? These are but a few of the issues discussed in this article, whose author is Chief Architect at the Historical-Architectural Open-Air Museum located near Novosibirsk in Siberia.

The preservation of Siberia's cultural heritage poses a serious problem. The relentless passage of time and social change combine with the elements to take their toll on its remarkable buildings of wood which, abandoned amid Siberia's boundless expanses, often in deserted settlements, stand condemned. The task now is to reinsert these monuments into a cultural context and to create opportunities for interaction between people and architecture, and between the modern world and the material world of ages past. For the community has suddenly realized that it is not simply or primarily specialized skills, crafts and age-old woodworking techniques which are being lost for ever; the bond between the centuries, the traditions and memory of the people are disappearing with them. Sadly, most modern Siberians are unfamiliar with the architecture, dress and way of life of their predecessors.

Filling in this gap in their education and awareness is one of the tasks of the Historical-Architectural Museum, an integral part of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Siberian Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences, which is located in the city of Novosibirsk. There are quite a number of pre-conditions for the establishment of a museum of this kind. Novosibirsk is a major industrial and cultural centre at the crossroads of the main Siberian tourist routes, and the Siberian Department of the Academy of Sciences provides the basis for scientific study of Siberia's history.

There is no doubt that the creation of a museum of this sort, which is basically an open-air museum for the display of architectural monuments made of wood, constitutes a great challenge. The first expeditions to identify examples of old Siberian wooden architecture, which were organized in the 1950s and again in the 1970s,

provided a theoretical basis for the venture. The original idea was that the museum would encompass the whole of Siberia, displaying wooden structures erected by all of Siberia's peoples. The museum was organized on a geographical basis with separate sections for western and eastern Siberia. But some serious difficulties emerged when an attempt was made to put this tempting idea into practice. One of the problems was quite simply shortage of space.

Siberia is a land with many nations and its architecture offers a vast array of styles and forms: such diversity cannot be reflected in an area of 46 hectares, only 25 of which are suitable for building. We are therefore attempting to develop the museum in the following two ways.

First, we intend to organize the museum around the more or less autonomous historical core, which contains restored examples of wooden architecture. The exhibits in this area all illustrate the cultural assimilation of Siberia. There is an archaeological complex showing the ancient cultures of Siberia, the Zashivirsky and Kazymsky *ostrogy*¹ – examples of the stockaded settlements by means of which the Russians opened up Siberia and which were current in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and also the Siberian peasant farmstead which developed by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Second, we plan to create areas devoted to the ethnography of western and eastern Siberia; these will contain wooden buildings typical of those regions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the event that the buildings in question prove impossible to transport, a procedure is envisaged involving careful study and measurement of the originals and the construction of replicas in the grounds of the

museum. It has also been proposed that models and reconstructed buildings providing a fuller picture of Siberian architecture should be displayed in the exhibition pavilions.

Preservation *in situ*?

The reason for the establishment of the museum was in fact the need to transfer to its grounds wooden buildings constructed by Siberian peoples, despite the many theories of open-air museum management which rule out any removal of monuments from their original sites. While it is, no doubt, more logical and more satisfactory to preserve monuments in their original environment, laying out preservation and service areas around them and organizing tourist itineraries to include them, in some cases there are substantial difficulties involved in creating a museum on the site or simply in maintaining the monument and preventing its destruction.

The buildings which have now been brought together in the grounds of the museum provide an example of this point.

They are genuinely unique: the seventeenth-century Spaso-Preobrazhensky church from Zashiversk, a town abandoned during the nineteenth century, and the eighteenth-century Kazym'sky *ostrog* from the river Kazym, a monument of defensive architecture which was located in the marshes of the Tyumen region. These buildings had to be transferred from the regions where they had been built for a variety of reasons, but chiefly because they could not be preserved and maintained properly so far removed not only from the nearest cultural centre but from any habitation. Any forest fire or act of negligence or malice could have com-

pletely destroyed these remarkable examples of historical architecture. The farmstead of the old Siberians which dates from the nineteenth century is an integral part of the historical core area and although it lacks the romantic associations of the *ostrog* buildings it is also unique in its own way: it was situated in a zone scheduled for inundation and which now lies at the bottom of a reservoir.

There is another aspect of the preservation of old wooden buildings which was not taken into account by the museum's founders. Novosibirsk is a heavily built-up city which suffers from an acute shortage of accommodation. Low-rise wooden buildings are increasingly being eliminated from the city's fabric and extremely interesting examples of town architecture dating from the early twentieth century are often demolished. Those buildings which the society for the preservation of monuments has managed to save from demolition are condemned to slow decay as they are abandoned when their occupants move to new flats with more amenities.

In the absence of other options, one extreme solution enabling such buildings to be preserved would be their relocation to the grounds of the museum, the intention being gradually to create a little street of them. It would be an interesting idea to locate this street in the vicinity of a specially designed hotel complex.

This would be perfectly in keeping with the idea of siting the museum in an ecologically pure zone 4 km from the scientific centre of Novosibirsk – Akademgorodok – on the banks of a stream among tracts of forest. Far away from urban industrial areas, busy roads, noise and pollution, it would be possible to create a park in which the visitor could

be at one with nature and with the architectural exhibits displayed. This location would also make it easier to preserve the buildings, which would not be subjected to the harmful effects of chemical pollution or vibration.

Another problem encountered is the fact that the fireproofing compounds and chemicals providing protection against dry-rot and woodworm that were used to conserve the structure of the buildings make it dangerous to remain inside them

for too long. In other words, we will have to look for non-toxic means of preserving the wood so that the monuments themselves do not become environmental hazards. The distance from the main distribution systems means that non-standard solutions must be found to the problem of organizing a water supply, drainage and telephone links. The museum does not have a special team of guides. Visits are conducted by its research staff and architects, the busiest season being the summer.



Photo by courtesy of the author

Spaso-Preobrazhensky church (seventeenth century) from Zashiversk, transferred from its original site.

Visitors' comments

But all these problems fade into the background when we hear the appreciative comments of our visitors. Some of them are making their first acquaintance with Siberian architecture while others had not expected to find such a quiet, secluded, interesting and attractive spot in Novosibirsk, an industrial centre plagued with most of the drawbacks and problems of a large city. Our ethnographic collections and architectural displays often expose the complete ignorance of our fellow-countrymen which, to our delight, they attempt to overcome by asking a multitude of questions. I hope that acquaintance with our museum touches a hidden chord, creating interest in and respect for the culture and way of life of the Siberian peoples in different ages. Without any exaggeration I can say that for many people our native land, Siberia, was a *terra incognita* whose discovery is greeted with interest and astonishment. I should like to reproduce here the comments of some of our visitors:

You were very kind to show me the open-air museum. The method of construction of all these ancient buildings by arranging logs of wood is really unique. – *A. W. Joshi, India, Autumn 1990.*

This is a very interesting museum. I liked the church and the bell-tower. I climbed all over the *ostrog*, looked under the bathhouse and climbed onto the logs which they were going to use to build a hut. – *Dima, aged 10.*

How little we know about the history of Siberia. This is so far removed from our everyday lives. Thank you for the most interesting commentary. – *Engineers of the Institute for Applied Physics of the USSR Academy of Sciences.*

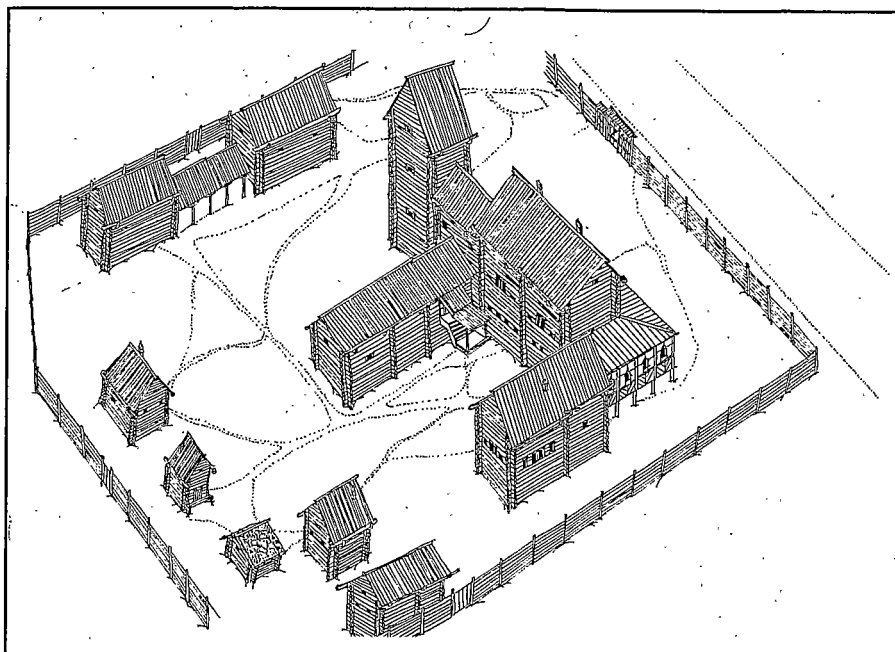


Illustration by courtesy of the author

In addition to its material problems the museum is also experiencing difficulties in recruiting staff. We have a permanent shortage of skilled carpenters as the country no longer has any educational institutions training carpenters for restoration work. There are also a number of problems of a financial nature: first and foremost the reduction in public funding for work on the museum and the need to look for other funding sources, but also rising prices for building materials and transport.

In addition to dealing with these urgent problems the museum studies the material and spiritual culture of the Siberian peoples, publishes the results of research on the different regions of Siberia, organizes exhibitions and lectures, works with students and schoolchildren, advises on the organization of traditional festivals, studies and develops crafts and establishes and maintains international contacts.

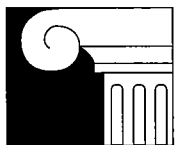
All these activities are designed to concentrate efforts and attract fresh resources to solve urgent problems relating to culture and the preservation of national property and to wrestle with the destructive and all-powerful Chronos, god of time. ■

Note

1. The word *ostrog* originally meant a stockaded settlement or fortress. Later it acquired the meaning of 'gaol'.

House of the voivode (provincial governor), 1640, Naryn, Tomsk (reconstructed from documents of the State Archives, Siberian Section).

A City and its Museums



Gjirokastër, the town that is a museum

Emin Riza

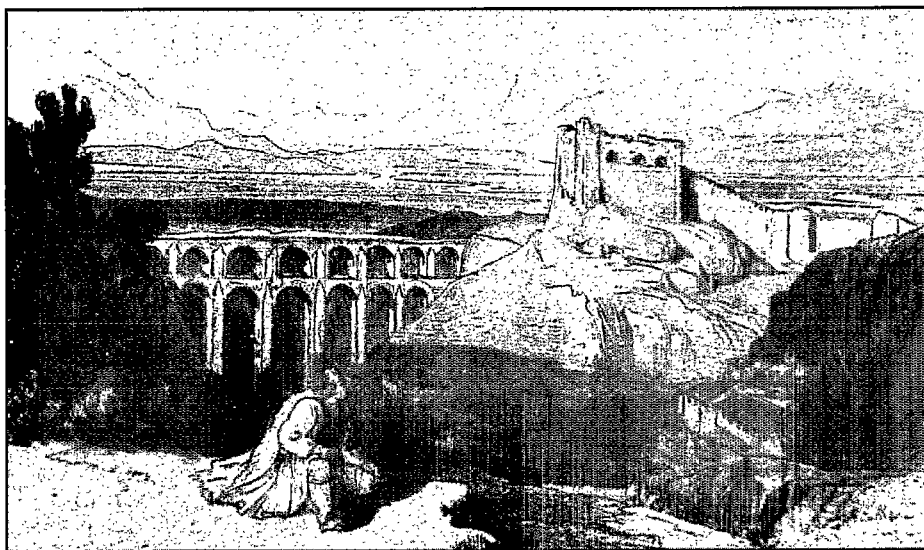
The Albanian people is one of the most ancient in Europe, and over the centuries it has built up a priceless artistic heritage. Always and everywhere, this outstanding architecture has been prominent in the life of the nation – a treasure of authentic masterpieces of the utmost historical and artistic value. From prehistoric times to the present day, traces of a rich past have thus survived, which patient research and study have uncovered and set off to advantage, with the support and encouragement of the various state departments concerned. The whole rich tapestry of a nation's life unfolds before the eyes of the observer, the researcher or the casual visitor: fortresses, city buildings, monuments, cultural edifices, works of art or simple dwellings – throughout the land, on the plains and in the mountains, in town and country, these traces of the past are a forceful reminder of the history of a people that is closely bound to the land, having cherished and defended it for centuries.

Yet this is not the only legacy of the past: whole towns are classified as historic monuments by the state. Gjirokastër and Berat, for example, are 'museum-towns'. These are urban centres that have carefully preserved everything in the architecture and layout of the town which makes them unique, the living embodiment of a specific period of history. Compared with a single historic monument, the museum-town has an undoubted advantage: it shows us a whole town as a living organism. The old buildings are not dotted about or tucked away in often alien surroundings. On the contrary, the museum-town is a living entity which even retains the atmosphere of the natural setting in which it took root and grew. So the museum-town is an object-lesson in

itself: as a living piece of the past, it has a more direct and compelling impact on visitors and inhabitants alike as they come into contact with the rich variety of its buildings and structures, just as they were designed by their original master builders.

The museum-town of Gjirokastër is an impressive example of Albanian architecture, set in the steep and rocky valley of the Drino. It is built on a hill capped by an imposing fortress, dating from the second half of the thirteenth century. This formed the nucleus of the first settlement until, in the early fourteenth century, the population expanded and spilled beyond the city walls. In 1419, under Ottoman occupation, Gjirokastër became the county town of the *sanjak* of Albania, which at that time was one of the main administrative divisions and included the residence of the pasha. After a period of introspection and inertia due largely to the unrest which broke out at intervals throughout the sixteenth century, the town started to move again and went through a major period of expansion in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Gjirokastër reached the apogee of its development and took on its present-day appearance.

The design of the town was to a large extent determined by the uneven ground upon which the fortress was built, with the result that each quarter has its own style, although the whole conveys a very strong sense of unity in places where the general design of a set of architectural features fits perfectly into the landscape, while in other places, sometimes only a stone's throw away, the buildings are more scattered, all of which gives the whole a highly dynamic and varied aspect. The weary traveller tramping the



*The fortress and the aqueduct.
Nineteenth-century engraving.*

paved streets as they wind endlessly up and down is rewarded by picturesque and constantly changing views, each more attractive than the last, while the high stone walls with their fortifications rise up steeply, creating a striking atmosphere.

The most impressive building is the fortress, whose walls with their many towers follow the uneven contours of the mountain. Situated on the south-east slope of the mountain, the fortress dates from the thirteenth century, and building continued until the reign of the powerful vizier Ali Pasha of Tepelena, in about 1810. It was at this time that the aqueduct was built and which for many years supplied the fortress with drinking water from a stream 10 km away.

The market building has always been one of the most important architectural features of Gjirokaštër. Originally situated near the fortress, it was moved in the early seventeenth century and rebuilt on the site occupied today by the new market, which dates from the end of the nineteenth century, with the same remarkably harmonious architectural design that we know today.

Dotted here and there are numerous buildings of a religious nature which are generally simple in style, remaining unobtrusive in this imposing town with its very varied yet perfectly homogeneous architecture. Strength and grandeur are the main features of these highly original buildings, nearly always tempered, however, by infinitely subtle detail. The typical dwelling-house of Gjirokaštër is rich in style, despite the severe constraints of the environment, expressing the innovative imagination of the Albanian master builders who designed and constructed these buildings to meet the needs of every citizen.

This type of building displays three main styles. The most sophisticated of these began to appear in the early eighteenth century, reaching a peak between 1800 and 1830, when the most elaborate styles were evolved. This period undoubtedly marked the zenith of the highly inventive town architecture, to be followed in the second half of the century by a period of pronounced change which has left traces still visible today. Moreover, these changes affected the whole of the urban heritage of Albania, as a result of the social transformations brought by the emergence and growth of the national bourgeoisie.

The houses in Gjirokaštër are mostly two storeys high, but some of them are partly or wholly three-storeyed, and they are very compact and dynamic in style. The rocky, steeply sloping terrain imposed severe limitations on the architects, so that the vertical

structure of the houses follows the uneven contours of the mountain. Another feature is the highly functional interior decoration, in which much thought went into deciding on the exact position of each item. The bedroom is the basic unit and is decorated in various ways to suit its function in the life of the family, reaching the heights of refinement in the guest room, often richly ornamented with carved wood, murals and plaster mouldings which create a slightly formal atmosphere, yet also a pleasant feeling of comfort.

In contrast to this carefully designed and even refined interior, the outside of the houses in Gjirokaštër is remarkably austere and massive in style. What impresses the visitor is the carefully balanced design, the feeling of dynamic power, from the base of the building right up to the top floor, where the façade decorated with bold frescoes is in striking contrast to the bare stone of the lower floors.

There are also many signs that these were fortified houses, with their steeply rising walls and many loopholes. At the time they were built, they had to be more than merely a comfortable and practical shelter: they also had to guarantee effective protection against attack from outside. All these various kinds of buildings were designed over the centuries by talented master builders whose creative genius always drew on the experience of their forebears.

A special decision by the authorities classified Gjirokaštër and Berat as museum-towns and placed them under state protection. Hence it became possible to undertake research and restoration work. The decrees enacted to protect and administer such urban centres make it easier to solve the many technical and scientific problems that arise, and also to find a solution to the tricky question of integrating them into modern life. As a protected environment, the museum-town is divided into a historic centre and a free centre. The historic centre, which consists of a 'museum' area and a 'protected' area, contains the most important monuments, and these are classed in two categories according to their value: the most representative and artistically outstanding, in the first category, are preserved in their entirety, whereas in the second category only the façade is safeguarded.

The fact that the state has taken over a town like Gjirokaštër raises the complex and sensitive problem of restructuring the town as a whole. This task was entrusted to the Department of Cultural Monuments, a local subsidiary of the National Institute of Historic Monuments. On the basis of research conducted by specialists in

various fields and with the collaboration of the best craftspeople, the Department carries out and administers all restoration and repair work – a methodical and scientific operation covering the whole town.

Weaving this type of work into the fabric of people's daily lives has not been without its problems. These have been solved to general satisfaction by adapting most of the monuments in the second – and larger – category so that they can be used as municipal buildings for social and cultural services. The polyclinic, for example, was installed in a series of houses in this category – an experiment which proved highly successful. The buildings in the first category are treated with great care on account of their historical value. For some years work has been under way in the fortress, where a national war museum has been set up – an approach that is being gradually extended to other monuments of this kind. Some houses in the first category have been converted into the Topulli Museum; a cultural centre now occupies part of

the old market; another building houses the Folk Museum of the Gjirokaštër district; and so forth.

Such operations are often difficult and costly and may have consequences other than merely maintaining and restoring the works of the past. It is particularly important for modern architects and town planners to gain a richer knowledge of our past and to learn from these authentic examples of the architectural heritage of the nation. And the many publications about this type of work are helping to educate young people and make them more knowledgeable in this field.

It has been no easy task to turn Gjirokaštër into a place worthy of its splendid architectural past. Thirty years after the launching of this grand operation, we can say that this aim has been achieved. Yet nothing is final: we must continue to look after this living museum and work to make it even more attractive, day after day. ■

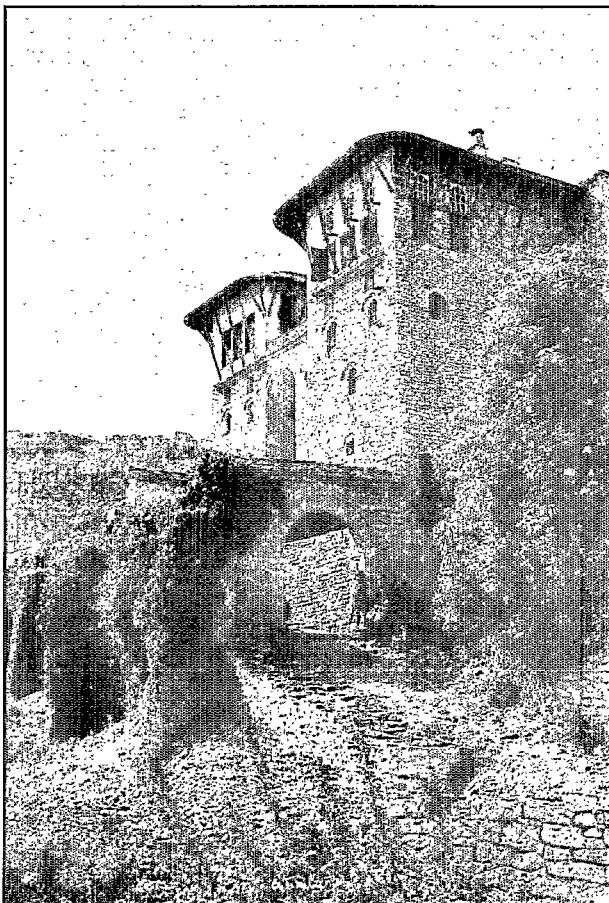
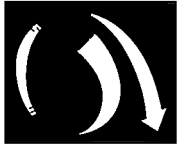


Photo by courtesy of the author

Early nineteenth-century house in Gjirokaštër.

Return and Restitution of Cultural Property



Items taken by United States soldiers are returned to Germany and Austria
A Museum report

The controversy over the refusal by the Texan heirs of a Second World War soldier to return the \$3 million Quedlinburg manuscripts to Germany appears to have had some positive effects.

Two reports from American newspapers in October 1990 indicate that the Quedlinburg affair has influenced others to return works of art taken from Europe during the Second World War.

According to Susan Stern in *The Tribune* (Oakland, California) of 19 October 1990 an ex-G.I. from New Jersey returned an authenticated sheepskin document to the German authorities. Cameron Anderson, now 64 years old, was with the Allied occupation forces in Germany at the end of the Second World War, and had sent the sheepskin document in a letter to his mother as 'a little piece of the war'. Only after her death in 1971 did he find it again, and framed it to keep as a souvenir. When Mr Anderson read in the *New York Times* about the Quedlinburg art treasures, he contacted the art expert mentioned in the articles, William Voelke of the Perpont Morgan Library in New York, and found that the document had been in the German archives during the war. Mr Anderson contacted the German authorities, who flew him out to Nuremberg to return the document personally.

Even though no value has yet been placed on the document, Mr Anderson (who had at first been worried about the possibility of being prosecuted for holding stolen property) said: 'I think it's kind of the right signal . . . it might lead other people to return things they picked up during the war.'

At the same time, on the west coast of the United States, the University of California at Berkeley returned valuable manuscripts by Mozart, Schubert and J. M. Haydn to the Austrian monastery of

Kremsmunster, where they had been stolen by an American soldier during the Second World War.

According to an article in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* of 5 October 1990, the music library at Berkeley got hold of the eighteen manuscripts when a prison guard came to the library in 1976 to sell the manuscripts his brother-in-law had brought back from Europe after the war. Professor Emerson, the acting music librarian at the time, persuaded the man to sell the manuscripts (worth several tens of thousands of dollars) for a mere \$1,400.

The manuscripts were used by the Berkeley music department for teaching and research until 1988 when it was discovered that they had been stolen. The discovery was purely accidental: a catalogue of the university's collection of pre-1900 vocal manuscripts was printed, and somehow Father Mandorfer (music archivist in the Kremsmunster monastery) got hold of it. Father Mandorfer wrote to Berkeley and, after investigation, it was determined that the manuscripts had actually been stolen. The monastery's music library had been used as quarters for American troops in 1945.

The manuscripts were handed over to the Austrian Consul during a brief ceremony. Mr Roberts, the present music librarian, was quoted as saying: 'I am pleased that we're giving them back . . . there has been such a flap over the Quedlinburg treasures. In that instance, the United States is shown in an unfavorable light. This is an example of Americans acting differently.'

Readers will be interested to learn that a forthcoming issue of *Museum*, devoted to the theme 'Museums, War and Peace', will report on the current state and prospects of questions concerning armed conflict, heritage and museums. ■

Frankly Speaking



Shieling: an urban forest in New Hampshire

Elizabeth Yates

An 'urban forestry centre' may sound like a contradiction in terms. The author of this article explains why it isn't and offers a glimpse of how a private paradise was transformed into a public trust. Elisabeth Yates has written many books, won seven honorary degrees and donated the Shieling Forest to the State of New Hampshire (United States).

Two hundred years ago New Hampshire was an agricultural state. The great trees of the early days had served in building houses and bridges and roads. Cattle and sheep grazed in meadows and upland pastures. But the soil was thin, strewn with rocks, and when good land opened in the west farming moved to it. Gradually the trees came back and took over the land, surrounding towns and villages, making a distant background for the cities. Agriculture was becoming silviculture.

Fifty years ago when my husband and I came to New Hampshire seeking a home in the township of Peterborough, we were shown an old farm, a mile from the centre and on a good road. There were clear fields that had been pastures, a brook, and an upward slope where trees were maturing. The house was old but sturdy, the barn that had once been so essential was stalwart. The place became our home and we called it Shieling, a Scottish word signifying shelter. We could not have guessed how apt that name was to prove. The fields gave us openness, the woods adventure, and the brook ran through the seasons: full spate in spring, gently in summer, ice-fringed in winter, but always coming down from the hills on its way to the river. The trees in the fifty acres of woodland were a mixed stand of pine and hemlock, oak and beech, with many maples whose sap during the farming period had yielded some hundred gallons of maple syrup. Twice, at twenty-year intervals, we had the woods selectively cut, and the standing trees responded in stature.



© Elizabeth Yates



© Elizabeth Yates

A small section of the brook in late summer.

We loved Shieling for what it was, for the joy it gave to us and our friends, but fifty years were making changes and we felt that our land should somehow be protected if it was to maintain its character. We wanted to see it used in a way that, though it might be far from its original purpose, would yet be in keeping with it. My husband's life came to its close while we were exploring the idea, but his vision stayed.

'... a deep and abiding interest'

I had heard of Urban Forestry Centres and the term seemed contradictory; yet it had meaning: a wooded area on the edge of a growing community set aside for ever as woodland. Civilization might crowd up, development come near, but it would be preserved. We had thought little of Shieling's features but they were there, especially the trees: all second growth but sound, providing food and cover for wildlife and refreshment for the surrounding land. And there was so much more: the great boulders, the brook, the sugar bush, the evidence of a brick yard from which had come most of the bricks used in the early building of Peterborough, a granite quarry from which massive blocks had come for use in the town. I needed advice as to how all this could be safeguarded. I sought it from my attorney and others who cared deeply for the land. The decision was made to offer Shieling to the state.

Legal proceedings were started and I worked closely with Commissioner George Gilman of the Department of Resources and Economic Development, with Theodore Natti, the State Forester, and with Lawrence Rathbun of the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests. In March 1980, Governor Hugh Gallen accepted Shieling Forest for the State of New Hampshire. We had always thought of the area as 'the woods', but it had attained the dignity of Forest. A woods might be any assemblage of trees, a forest was a place designated for a specific purpose. Shieling Forest would be for the enjoyment of all who used it, but its intent would be to demonstrate proper land use and principles of conservation.

Legal language has a nobility to it and the Resolution of the Governor and Council contained words that heartened me. Referring to me as they did, behind them was the memory of my husband and the vision shared:

... she has always had a deep and abiding interest in the conservation of our forest and land resources, especially the small

private ownerships which comprise more than sixty per cent of the State; and she has shown by example how such local forest holdings can be managed for practical as well as aesthetic purposes and wishes to have her property in Peterborough serve in this way for generations to come. . . .

The gift had made me a benefactor, but the satisfaction and joy I receive have made me a beneficiary.

Such a gift is not given without means for maintenance. A trust fund was established and put under the care of the New Hampshire Charitable Fund. It began with approximately \$200,000. The interest would be used for care of the property and operation of the programmes. With wise management and occasional contributions, the original amount has doubled.

When the state went into action as owner it made a careful survey of the land, using the old deeds and precise measurements. Splashes of blue paint on trees, stone walls and rocks marked the boundary. Trails were indicated with white blazes on trees and wooden posts bearing the names – Boulder, Flower, Tree, Ridge, Brookside. Bridges that spanned the brook were rebuilt; then came the renovation of the barn. Dating from 1810, it was sound in structure and, once stalls and stanchions were removed, skilled workmanship made it into the Forestry Learning Centre. Here, a meeting room, a display area, library, kitchen and facilities make possible gatherings of many kinds, seminars, and lectures, often with slides. Events and activities, varying with the seasons and always 'rain or shine' start at the Centre and are often followed by a forest walk. Tree-identification, Edible Plants, Soils and Geology, Woodlot Management are among the subjects and notice of them is given through mailings and by the press.

'It belongs to us all'

People coming on their own for the first time can pick up a Trail Guide and follow it. At the edge of field and forest is a mulberry tree, relic of a silkworm culture that had been embarked on not too successfully many years ago. It stands in all its proud and ancient beauty, late to leaf in the spring and long to hold its wide green leaves that turn to pale parchment in the fall, host to birds with its white mulberries and as welcome to them as it is to the people who see it beckoning to forest adventure. From it the trail leads down the granite steps through a stand of red pine to cross the bridge over Dunbar Brook. If it is early spring and the dace seek spawning the water may look crowded. The trail goes on past

many maples, through a hemlock hedge, to the massive boulders. Rock-climbing skills can be practised here. Children scrambling up the granite sides experience the thrill of height. At one point the trail joins an old wood road, then goes by the quarry and through a small and lovely area where the Peterborough Garden Club is establishing a woodland garden with many varieties of native flowers and ferns, identified by small close-to-the-ground markers. Past the remnants of long-ago brick-making the trail goes, across another bridge, up a slope, into the open field and back to the Centre. Four to five miles may have been traversed, or more if lesser trails are explored.

If it is a windy day there may be kite-flying going on in the field. Children may be playing games. Dogs may be romping. A family looking for a picnic spot may be finding it along the stone wall. 'It belongs to us all', is a phrase heard often by the wind, and sometimes by me with ever-deepening thanks that this relatively small area can give so much and ask in return only respect and appreciation.

Care is constant. A tree may be levelled by a storm, a portion of a trail may become hazardous; repairs are made by the foresters, but to a large extent the forest takes care of itself. Always ahead, as funds permit, are plans for the future – a new trail, a small amphitheatre at the far end of the field, a logging operation for trees of post-mature growth, a few more picnic tables in likely places, but no trash cans. Let people learn the fundamentals of woodland housekeeping as the children do. After one of the first school groups had gone through with a forester I followed with my dog. There was not so much as a gum wrapper anywhere. Commenting on it to the forester in charge, his smile forgave my ignorance. 'They are told before they go out that what goes in with them comes out with them. What are pockets for?'

Trails for all moods and ages

J. B. Cullen of the Division of Forests and Lands has much to say when it comes to the part trees play in the environment:

Forests provide a wide variety of goods and services to an ever-increasing number of residents and visitors to New Hampshire. They are pleasant surroundings for outdoor recreational pursuits; critical habitat for fish, birds and wild animals; a giant sponge to absorb and cleanse our water supply. Management of forests is not simple but a very complex matter. The problem of providing enough wood and water with land for recreation and wildlife is

becoming more acute as our population increases. We need citizens who are aware of the role of our forests in the state's economy and the factors involved in forest management, and who want to learn. That is our goal for Shieling Forest: to serve future generations as an example of proper forest land use and as a learning centre for the application of practical forestry.

Of the many who use the forest, I asked three to share their thoughts with me. One, a teacher retired from his work but not from learning, spoke of the trails as fit for all moods and ages with their gentle slope and steep inclines:

The scolding squirrels, the crafty fox, the playful otter, the woodpecker drilling a hole in a dead tree are all part of the experience. What an appropriate name Shieling is as it implies a sheltering for all forms of life – human, animal, plant.

A hospice worker begins her day with a dawn walk and to her the forest is:

a place of peace offering moments away from time and 'doing' and into the timeless mystery of being. It is a gift for all and yet a gift for me alone, as private and personal as it is public. The boulders in their grandeur and immobility speak of the mystery of the ages and the earth itself. A birdcall reminds me that I am one with all and in contact, and the melody of the stream invites my return to sound and time, restored and ready for what the day may bring.

A lawyer, who walks daily in the forest with deliberate thoughtful stride, spoke of it to me with great tenderness:

Over the years since Shieling Forest was opened for public use I have formed the pleasant habit of wandering and wondering there in this small paradise for all seasons and all weathers. I experience, amid the sounds and sights of ongoing natural events, a certain stillness of spirit which refreshes me. There I can commune with trees nobler than men, sense the Spring beauty of garlands 'briefer than a girl's' be exhilarated by a sudden summer thunder shower which makes the forest dance in wild alarm. One autumn morning after a windy night I was amazed to find the paths and the slow-running sections of the brook adorned in a bright calico of drifted leaves. When winter serenely lays her white mantle on the woods I go on snowshoes to cross-stitch my own trail in the snow. There is always an element of surprise for those who stroll alertly in Shieling Forest.

So: the forest speaks for what it is and what it does. ■

WFFM Chronicle



Newsflash: Friends of Museums represented at SIME

'A voyage through the extraordinary world of museums'. With this slogan, the Third International Museums and Exhibitions Show (SIME) opened its doors to the Friends of Museums from 12–20 January 1992 in Paris.

Divided into three sections (collections, publishing and museum suppliers and services), the show was an extraordinary occasion for international meetings and an ideal place for curators and the public to discuss the most timely museum issues. The Friends of

Museums, represented by the French Federation with its 258 associations, and the WFFM which now counts more than 600,000 members, took advantage of the show to establish contacts with representatives from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Slovenia, all of whom were participating for the first time.

On the initiative of the French Federation, a European meeting was promoted so as to strengthen ties between European museums through their publics and their Friends Associations. ■

Call for contributions

Museum welcomes suggestions and articles on all subjects of interest to the worldwide museum community. Proposals for individual articles or themes for special dossiers should be addressed to the Editor, *Museum*, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75015 Paris (France). We promise a prompt reply!

And what's more . . .

From tigers to people in Rajasthan

A Museum report

Although not strictly speaking an open-air museum, Ranthambhore National Park in Rajasthan (north-eastern India) should certainly be of interest to readers of this issue. The following article is based on information kindly supplied by the Ranthambhore Society, an international body of specialists set up in response to the urgent pleas and concerns of villagers, conservationists, naturalists and others involved with environment.

A thousand years old, Ranthambhore's brooding fortress stands silent witness to a turbulent past. Today, its crumbling ruins dominate the Ranthambhore National Park, a wilderness of arid forest teeming with wildlife and one of the finest habitats for tiger in the whole world. As the Duke of Edinburgh recalls: 'Ranthambhore National Park was one of the most important protected areas created under the "Operation Tiger" initiative, jointly sponsored by the Government of India and the World Wildlife Fund [WWF] in 1973.'

By the early 1980s the haunts of this normally elusive, nocturnal predator had changed thanks to excellent protection and dynamic management and resulted in the tiger rewriting its own natural history. New and fascinating aspects of the tiger emerged from the reserve for the first time.

In the last few years, however, many areas in India have reeled under consecutive drought. Increasing livestock population and a sharp decline in water availability and fodder have resulted in enormous pressure on the wilderness areas of the subcontinent.

These problems are compounded by a human population of 870 million. Human population growth is gradually eroding environmental quality and precious natural resources that the community depends upon. Diminishing resources from an impoverished environment directly affect the lives of everyone, and the situation is especially acute where people depend upon agriculture.

As the Duke of Edinburgh said at the time: 'As the pressures of population growth and the demand for agricultural land increase,



© The Ranthambhore Society, Leatherhead (United Kingdom)

Young tiger in Ranthambhore National Park.

the need to give the unique ecosystem in Ranthambhore National Park adequate protection becomes ever more urgent.'

If anything, life has actually worsened for the some 40,000 people who live in the park area. With park staff mainly committed to protect the flora and fauna in their care, relationships became strained when famished graziers and woodcutters entered the zone illegally. The results were disastrous.

Then, however, a realization dawned that, as Indian naturalist and Ranthambhore Foundation Chief Executive Valmik Thapar put it: 'If wildlife is to survive, man and nature must find a harmonious balance as neither can really live without the other.'

At Ranthambhore National Park, a new concept of conservation has thus emerged, linking wildlife protection with grass-roots economic and social development. The most urgent objectives now being acted upon are to explain the importance of the forest to local people and to prevent the land eroding into semi-desert. Concretely, efforts focus on stimulating the co-operation of the surrounding communities in:

1. A mobile preventive health care and family planning project.
2. Skills training and income generating initiatives designed especially with women in mind.
3. Educational programmes directed towards the young in an effort to improve their understanding of the vital links between themselves and their environment and the importance of conservation.
4. An afforestation project essential to maintain and raise the ground water levels and purify the air.
5. Encouraging stall feeding and improving livestock standards to help discourage unrestricted grazing (alternative fodder sources must be developed).
6. Introducing improved cooking systems with smokeless stoves to reduce health hazards and cut firewood consumption in half. Wherever possible bio-gas plants will help provide an alternative energy source.



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Part of the eleventh-century Rajput fort.

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Museum twinning: Algeria and Hungary

Mohamed Bentabet

The twinning of museums is a noteworthy idea for bringing a diversity of cultures into museums of folk art; Mohamed Bentabet, Director of the National Museum of Folk Art and Traditions in Algiers, describes one impressive example.

After several experiments in interactive relations with the Algerian public, the Museum of Folk Art and Traditions began looking for broader-based cultural and technical exchange outside Algeria. A draft agreement between the Director of the Museum of Algiers and Mr Hoffmann Tamas, Director of the Museum of Budapest, was signed in July 1990. It provides, first of all, for an exchange of exhibitions: in November 1991 a collection of Algerian embroidery was presented in Budapest along with a 'fashion show' featuring traditional Algerian costumes; European jewellery from the Hungarian Ethnographic Museum was on display in an exhibition in Algiers. The

Museum of Folk Art and Traditions in Algiers has also undertaken to set up permanently at the Museum of Budapest a Kabyle house complete with furniture, utensils, costumes and agricultural tools and to receive three students on a study trip to make a 30-minute documentary on the habits and customs of the Kabyles.

From a more technical point of view, the Hungarian museum has undertaken to send the equipment necessary for a restoration workshop (they will also provide fourteen dummies), and to train two people in restoration work. ■