

In brief

Examples of events and happenings in Europe, 2004

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If you are interested in archaeology, living history or education and want to be informed or entertained, there are numerous activities taking place all over Europe. We try to keep a listing on the EXARC calendar, but this merely gives an impression, not an overview of who is doing what and where in Europe. The brief listing below is based upon that calendar, on which we had 86 activities. As in most cases these activities return every (second) year, for contact addresses and URLs, we therefore refer to the calendar on the EXARC site: www.exarc.net.



SWEDEN Living history actors playing board games at Eketorp (all the pictures by Roeland Paardekooper). ■



DENMARK Medieval sales at the Middelaldercentret. ■

Conferences and Meetings

- The European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) had a session at their yearly meeting on “recent approaches in experimental archaeology”. The session was mainly attended and presented by French archaeologists and we hope for the results to be published soon.

- In Denmark, the national network of what they call “historical workshops” – archaeological open air centres and the like – celebrated its respectable 25th anniversary in January at one of the old generation sites: Vingsted. These gatherings are attended by over 100 people from all over the country, their address list covers as well parts of the surrounding countries. The motto for this jubilee was “human interaction with nature”.

- A European championship, combined with a meeting, was held in Ramioul, Belgium in April. Specialists on the pre-historic bow and the spear thrower or atlatl were invited for a championship and a colloquium. Similar archery meetings took place in Foteviken, Sweden (national archery competition) and we know of a Danish national championship as well.

- A travelling conference / workshop is the one on metallurgy. It was held once in Aubechies (Belgium) and once in Italy, then it took place in Beynac (France).

EXARC met twice in 2004, once in Barcelona and again in Biskupin. Besides the informal part, the participants learnt about the situation in the different regions of Europe visited and discussed common network plans.

- The Baden-Württemberg Museum Association organised a conference on the theme “from the miracle room to near the camp fire”. This session, with representatives of many different corners of the museum world was quite inspiring. The results have already been published in their “Museumsblatt”, Heft 38, April 2005 (ISSN 0939-6373).

- In October, traditionally, the yearly meeting of the sister organisation of EXARC, EXAR took place. This association is open to all individuals interested in and working with experimental archaeology and education in Europe. EXAR is strong in the German speaking countries but attracts many foreigners as well.

- In November, the biannual meeting “Arqueologia i Ensenyament” took place in Barcelona. This session on archaeology and education is slowly becoming more important and ... more international.

Markets & Festivals

- A famous market – not archaeologically based, though – is the Jokkmokk Sámi Market which yearly takes place from the first Thursday in February until the Saturday afterwards in the most Nordic region of Scandinavia. In 2004 it was the 399th market where one could obtain any kind of Sámi craftwork or product.

The Crannog Centre in Scotland is one of the locations with themes on food and drink. In April, a festival took place here with a combination of prehistoric cooking and local traditional cooking.

This cross over between “own interest” (i.e. archaeology) and “local interest” can be a key to success. They organised as well a regional archaeology week, in cooperation with the Perthshire Tourist Board and many other local and regional partners.



THE NETHERLANDS Romano Celts or Celtic Romans? Historisch OpenluchtMuseum Eindhoven. ■

- In Asparn, Austria, the 8th Celtic or “Beltane” festival took place which marked the start of the summer season. Celtic horsemen were present and sports could be tried out, with the task to excel in 5 different fields.

- Viking markets, in all shapes and sizes, take place all over the season (and beyond). Some of the better known are at Moesgård (DK), Ribe (DK), Roskilde (DK), Foteviken (S), Schleswig (D, though not every year), Eindhoven (NL) and for example Archeon (NL) and Eu (France).

- A large historical, folkloristic and archaeological festival – with 300 re-enactors – is yearly held in Cesis (Latvia): the Baltic Medieval Festival.



POLAND Sales boot at the Biskupin Festival. ■

- The largest archaeological festival in Europe is held in Biskupin, Poland every year in September. In 9 days time, 90,000 visitors passed through, visiting this year's theme festival "Celts in Europe". Another important festival is held yearly in Kernave (Lithuania), the "days of living archaeology" on which more elsewhere in this volume.
- Roman festivals took place in among others Oerlinghausen (Germany), Zug (Switzerland) and Eindhoven (the Netherlands). At Hjemsted (Denmark), the festival took 20 days, at Archeon (the Netherlands), 10 days.



THE NETHERLANDS Children, posing in front of Roman legionary shields, Historisch OpenluchtMuseum Eindhoven. ■

Themed activities

- Themed activities which you will not find everywhere in Europe yet are, for example, "between sword and spindle" (life in the times of Emperor Barbarossa and King Lionheart) or "a black art: tar production the medieval way" in Düppel, Berlin.
- Another sort of themed activities was organised at Archeon (the Netherlands): "smithing from flint to steel" and "textiles and clothing". Lejre in Denmark has some events, you will not easily find elsewhere: "Iron Age cavalry", "building prehistoric ovens", "experimenters in archaeology" or "folk beliefs and superstition".



POLAND Building a prehistoric oven, this case: an iron smelting kiln at Biskupin. ■

- A re-enactment market – mainly meant for the living history actors themselves, took place in the Middelaldercentret (Denmark). This site was also the location for an event on canons and artillery.

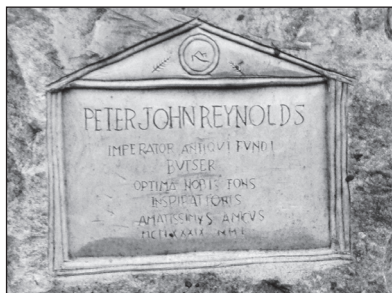
- The Long Museum Night is becoming increasingly popular in “archaeological Europe”. And why not? It offers great chances to give the public an unexpected view on the past. This counts as well for the evening activities at Midsummer or St John, celebrated for example in Aubechies (Belgium), Skäftekärr (Sweden), as the Dew Feast in Kernave (Lithuania) or the Sankt Hans Aften in the Middelaldercentret (Denmark). The last category of evening activities of the year are the Halloween or Samhain nights, for example at the Crannog Centre (Scotland). In many other sites in the “Celtic countries” attention was paid to this theme as well.



DENMARK Playground with medieval inspired toys, Middelaldercentret. ■

Various

- In Lejre, Denmark, they “invented” the idea of having modern families living and working for several weeks in summer time in their Iron Age village. During opening times, these families are living history actors, some of them having already spent every summer there since 1974. The idea is spreading to other archaeological open air centres.
- In Roskilde, at the Viking Ship Museum, one could follow a course in sailing a square rig. This is the type of rig, a traditional Viking ship is equipped with. The course took 5 days and included a two-day cruise in replicas of Viking ships and an overnight outdoor stay.



UNITED KINGDOM The Memorial stone, erected at Butser Ancient Farm for Peter Reynolds. ■

- Stone Age activities have been gaining popularity across Europe in the past years, as for example at Ertebølle (Denmark), Zug (Switzerland) and Asparn (Austria). Bronze Age life was the focal point of the yearly event at Hitzacker, Germany.
- At the end of March, at Butser Ancient Farm (UK), the proud opening of the Roman Villa, as starred in the Discovery Channel Series, could take place. This new house is an important impulse to Butser.
- 2004 was celebrated in Southern Germany and Switzerland as the 150th anniversary of research into lake dwellings. At different locations expositions were opened on specific themes like “living”, “transport” or “everything from wood”.
- In Százhalombatta (Hungary) in the summer time, theatre evenings were organised: a ritual play “pyres over the Danube” as well as musical rituals on the four elements.

When reading the reports or reviewing first hand experiences, it seems that the number of activities as well as the variety is increasing. Of course, some activities – like the Viking markets and Autumn holidays are children activities – and you will find them everywhere. But there are enough creative ideas turned into attractive smaller or larger activities. The calendar can still though take up more events!