

# OPEN ARCH

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2015



# Archaeological Open-Air Museums and the Dialogue with the Museum Community



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WP 6: "The Dialogue with Museum Organisations"

This guide was produced in the context of the OpenArch project, as part of Work Package 6 – The Dialogue with Museum Organisations.  
The partners are:

- Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (Wales – UK) further referred to as “St Fagans”
- Archäologisch Ökologisches Zentrum Albersdorf (AÖZA) (DE) further referred to as “AÖZA”
- Archeon Novum BV (NL) further referred to as “Archeon”
- Arheološki Institut – Archaeological Park of Viminacium (RS) further referred to as “Viminacium”
- Comune di Modena – Museo Civico Archeologico Etnologico (IT) further referred to as “Parco Montale”
- EXARC
- Municipality of Oulu – Kierikkikeskus/Kierikki Stone Age Centre (FI) further referred to as “Kierikki”
- Nordiska Organisationen för Kulturell förmedling ekonomisk förening (SE) further referred to as “Foteviken”
- OAM Fundació Castell de Calafell – Ciutadella Ibèrica (CAT) further referred to as “Calafell”
- Stichting Borger, prehistorisch hart van Nederland – Hunebedcentrum (NL) further referred to as “Hunebedcentrum”
- The University of Exeter, College of Humanities – Dept. of Archaeology (EN) further referred to as “University of Exeter”





## FROM THE EDITORS

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The present publication is a product of the outputs of the Project OpenArch, funded by European Union Culture Programme 2007-2013. The project was an international co-operation of eleven institutions from eight different countries across Europe: nine archaeological open-air museums, one university and the ICOM Affiliated Organisation EXARC. The work plan of OpenArch was structured into 7 work packages. One of these work packages, number 6, focused on an issue relevant to all archaeological open-air museums: The dialogue with museums and museum organisations.

The objective was to foster stronger links between archaeological open-air museums, the traditional museum world and other museum organisations. We do believe there is still much to learn from each other by improving the dialogue within the community, all the more so when the museum world is facing new challenges.

The OpenArch project, during its implementation period (2011-2015), has positively contributed to making archaeological open-air museums more visible within the museum community and its forums, through the active role of EXARC as an archaeological open-air museums representative. With the support of OpenArch, EXARC has participated in ICOM meetings and has been in contact with delegates of relevant networks as ICMAH, CECA or AEOM.

In the year of the project completion, the main activity in work package 6, was specifically a seminar on networking in archaeological open-air museums, held at National Museum Cardiff (Wales) during the 9th OpenArch conference (May 2015). This publication has been prepared as a result of the aforementioned seminar with contributions from museum specialists and OpenArch partners.

With this booklet, we hope to do our bit to be helpful to archaeological open-air museums in particular, but also museums in general, in order to motivate networking and to move forward to face new challenges. Cooperation makes us stronger.

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# PREFACE

By **Hanna Pennock**

EXARC represents archaeological open-air museums and experimental archaeology in the international museum world, and as such it is one of the affiliated organisations of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). This booklet deals specifically with archaeological open-air museums and their place in the professional museum world. A place which is not so obvious at first sight, because in many ways the archaeological open-air museums are quite different from the 'classical' museums.

Archaeological open-air museums are a relatively new phenomenon, linked more to the tradition of the open-air museum than to the 19th century archaeological museum. They usually do not have collections, nor white clean walls – quite the contrary, archaeological open-air museums are outdoor, open to rain, wind, sun and snow. They are seasonal, with many visitors in a busy time of the year. Living plants, crops, animals are an essential part of the presentation.

Archaeological parks show reconstructions or evocations of life in ancient times based on the latest scientific insights. Archaeological research is a sine qua non for an authentic representation. But what does authenticity mean, how much do we really know? What is authentic and how does it relate to us? This is what practically all museums have to deal with. In a way the interpretations always reflect our own time and our own society. Yet at the same time the stories that are connected to what is presented make us see things in a different light. The representation of, say, prehistoric times opens our eyes to different ways of life, offering us a reflection of our own life today. This is an important role of the museum, to carry us beyond the limits of our lives and open our eyes to other ways of being. It helps us to become more aware of other cultures and societies. In this professional dialogue the archaeological open-air museums have much to offer to the international museum world.

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# Archaeological Open-Air Museums, Some Critical Remarks



Fig 1. Can an AOAM be a mirror of the past? (Photo: M. Schmidt)

by Martin Schmidt

**In a contribution this short, it is impossible to illuminate the phenomenon of Archaeological Open-Air Museums (AOAMs in the following) in sufficient depth. Thus, only a few select subjects will be touched upon.**

What is the definition of an AOAM? Does one “prehistoric” building in the backyard of a museum or on a greenland site suffice, or should there be more than one? EXARC’s definition can be found at [www.exarc.net/about-us/definitions](http://www.exarc.net/about-us/definitions). We normally talk about AOAMs, but many avoid using the word ‘museum’ in their name. Some years ago, Gunter Schöbel has collected more than 40 different terms that avoid the word museum. Do “museums” have an image problem, are they perceived as boring?

There are a number of different reasons for founding an AOAM. These can be political and ideological, as with the NS “Freilichtmuseen deutscher Vorzeit”, or connected to archaeological research and experimental archaeology. I am not going to look at the question in any detail. Today, the main reasons are doubtlessly education and tourism!

AOAMs are not currently perceived as genuine, that is, Folklore-museums, as nothing in an AOAM is original, and a collection of archaeological objects is not normally present. Only under the recently introduced label of ‘intangible heritage’ have AOAMs gained acceptance, and EXARC is now affiliated to ICOM.

In the last instance, only the aims of operators, scholars and the visiting public are of any importance - and, of course, what the operators or scholars think the aims of the general public ought to be. The main question is, how AOAMs can be financed and in the same time filled with appropriate content.

I will not touch upon the question of reconstructions of prehistoric environments. Even if today almost all of the bigger sites display heritage plants or “ancient” races of domestic animals, I cannot name any large scale reconstructed environment that also includes prehistoric game and domestic animals. In addition, many visitors will not recognise any species beyond their pets and the content of the domestic larder. The subject of Experimental Archaeology will also be ignored, as there are almost no AOAMs dedicated to scientific research. For me, the only ever example was Peter Reynold’s first “Butser Ancient Farm” which in its heydays consisted of two installations, one for the general public and one for research.

The boom of newly founded AOAMs has been going on for decades and seems unabated. Nobody knows how many AOAMs or related places exist by now; the best overview can be found at [www.openarchaeology.info/venues](http://www.openarchaeology.info/venues).

There is no theory of AOAMs. Mullan and Marvin’s (1999) book ‘Zoo-Culture’ is an excellent introduction to the subject, as AOAMs and zoos have a lot in common. For example, visitors are mainly interested in subjects they already know. A Rhino is a Rhino, but the rarest exotic bird is just a bird. In contrast to zoos however, that are striving hard to become more scientific, AOAMs mainly aim at leisure, tourism and education.

AOAMs are perceived as successful, because they attract numerous visitors and are relatively cheap to maintain. To build an AOAM is normally cheap, especially if it is located in an economically underdeveloped region. Sites are often donated by the local municipality, and materials can be acquired cheaply or are donations. The costs of running AOAMs are comparably low as well. However, they are only cheap because they are normally run by a minimal and normally insufficient and underpaid crew of permanent employees and because their general administration is severely under-funded. They rely on a high number of unpaid volunteers, and need to earn a lot of money simply to keep running. In contrast to indoor-museums, almost no AOAM has a sufficient and secure financial basis.

The cheap foundation phase is often followed by a crisis and frequently a lingering decline. Grants run out, the number of enthusiastic volunteers declines. Suddenly the place requires substantial funds, permanent jobs have to be created and investment is needed for marketing. An AOAM needs a continuous input of labour, the development of sound and sustainable programs for visitors and incessant innovations. Demonstrations and programs that attracted visitors in droves some years ago may today only call forth condescending smiles. An AOAM that remains unchanged for several years is as boring as a glass-case museum with a dated permanent exhibition.

Generally, AOAMs are still mainly about houses. I call them life-size models, not reconstructions, as there is normally nothing left to reconstruct in prehistoric buildings. However, at present outreach, demonstrations, life action and re-enactment increasingly take centre-stage, buildings are increasingly reduced to stage-props. Also, the more AOAMs are created, the more similar they seem to get. Instead of reflecting a possible prehistoric reality, the houses mainly tell us about their makers and present-day fashions.

Following the ground breaking work of C. Ahrens, a neat typology of reconstructions can be made. The first models were built using literary or mythological sources. This was followed by the lavish and ideologically charged buildings of the NS-era, aptly labelled ‘mod-con reconstructions’ by Ahrens. This was followed by deliberately primitivistic structures. The seventies and eighties saw the phase of “rustic reconstructions”, that were believed to be top-notch in terms of research. Today, a postmodern “everything goes” is prevalent, which sometimes produce outstanding perfectionism and sometimes pure crap.

Today, in my opinion the biggest problem is that most of the life-size models do only refer a little bit to archaeological finds and features. There is rarely any justification for the choice of specific structural solutions, be they taken from archaeology or local vernacular architecture. Publications of detailed discussions of technological choices or templates are even more rare. Beyond the collection of archaeological building facts and features there is a lot of work that remains to be done: theoretical discussions, nature of analogy and how to use it, technological choices, chaine operatoire: concepts discussed in archaeometry, but not in AOAMs. Just to name a few. However some Universities who cooperate with AOAMs start to fill this gaps.

Many houses thus look like badly made film-props. Take some softwood-beams, smoothly cut with a chain-saw, greenish pressure treated two-by-fours, modern doors and metal fittings and cover it all with a mighty thatched roof, and you get an instant prehistoric look. The visitor certainly will not notice, how could he? And why don’t we tell the visitor? Don’t we have an educational mission?

If one takes the trouble to recreate a prehistoric house, at least the visible structures should be constructed using tools, materials and techniques that are attested for the specific period in question. This implies skilled craft persons who pay attention to the archaeological material and do not simply use modern carpentry techniques.

Any life-size model in an AOAM is a compromise, for economic and safety reasons, especially if it is used by thousands of visitors per year. Even the usual seasonal opening is bad for the upkeep of the houses.

It is difficult to decide whether to build a single house for each time period, or many houses from the same time. This is problematic, as a single house without context does not properly represent a settlement. Sometimes, a replica of an excavated settlement is constructed in situ, in other cases, a one-phase settlement or at least a settlement from only one archaeological period is constructed in a randomly selected location. Other museums adopt a pick-and mix approach with a whole range of buildings, from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages. Also, visitors often miss the chronological differences altogether. A comparison of AOAMs shows that all houses, be they of Neolithic, Bronze Age or Medieval date somehow look very much the same, all crowned by a massive thatched roof. There is little realisation of other possibilities of roofing. For the visitor, these monotonous thatched roofs mask constructive differences in the framework of the houses. Informations for the visitor thus has to be far more extensive than assumed by the curator.



Ultimately, all of these attempts are insufficient, as the historic conditions, the original landscape and geomorphology, climate, fauna and flora cannot be regained. No historical reality can be sufficiently “reconstructed”.

Even if all available archaeological features are painstakingly collected, the result is rather sparse. A purist like Peter Reynolds built a life-size house-model with the simplest possible technology. There are many stages in between this primitivist approach and the supernatural model that uses the whole gamut of building techniques from the Stone Age to the beginning of the Christian era. One is as wrong or correct as the other.

Fig 2. When past and present meet...  
(Photo: M. Schmidt)



This means that museum-curators carry a large responsibility. It is easy to cheat and tell the unsuspecting visitor: “this is how it was!”. We can also be completely honest and point out compromises and deficits as well as good practice. To use an old fashioned term, we can educate a critical visitor, even if he or she may then spots mistakes we did not want him or her to detect. This is the only way for museums and educative facilities to remain ahead of cheap and primitive reconstructions offered by the hessian-clad leisure parks. If we keep the visitors ignorant, we will have to face the backlash. It does not make sense to conceal the excellence of scientific reconstructions only in order to hide some defects that could have been avoided with a little more care.

Until about 25 years ago, most houses were furnished, as living rooms or as workshops. This so-called holistic approach was mainly pursued by folklore museums and is difficult to realise in an archaeological museum. At present, furnished houses tend to be rather dodgy. The visitor, trained to believe everything that is presented by the specialists, will trust any picture presented. Actually, there is an impressive range of archaeological furniture remains, but almost no complete furnishings have been preserved. In whichever way a house-model is furnished, it will always be wrong. Again, we need to explain carefully what evidence our recreations are based on. In the 1980s, this problem led to a massive purge. Small thematic exhibitions were placed into the now empty houses, or only the naked architecture was presented. The latter also tended to confuse the visitors, who asked whether there were no beds in prehistory and concluded that life had been distressingly primitive. This leads us back to the problem already touched upon above: preconceptions cannot easily be counteracted by explicit purism, because the latter is not necessarily perceived as such.

**So, what are the visitors’ expectations in an AOAM, and how do AOAMs transmit content?**

In my opinion, the majority of visitors is only looking for entertainment, a nice day out. Many of my colleagues disagree and call me a pessimist, but I stick to my conviction. The best way to attract visitors is by presenting “action” and events. This has a positive and a negative side, as demonstrations and outreach programs are also events. In this area, AOAMs are well equipped, and it comes as no surprise that many indoor museums shamelessly copy the programs offered by AOAMs. I personally prefer small events that only attract a small number of visitors who can then study everything intensively without shoving and pushing, who can ask questions, explore, touch and try out things and who then often stay for a very long time. But you need big events, like a Viking-fair to fund them. If a Viking fair is marketed more correctly as “daily Life in the early Middle Ages”, the number of visitors will be reduced at least by half. Still, a flashy label need not prevent the presentation of a high-quality program.

Several studies have documented that children are interested in historical subjects. There are also numerous adults that visit AOAMs not only because their children like them, the weather is too bad to go to the beach or no other more pleasant activity comes





Fig 3. Learning by doing and enjoyment (Photo: M. Schmidt)



to mind. Unfortunately, many AOAMs only present activities for children, and not enough that also offer activities at different levels of complexity for grown-ups. Normally, the visitors are not very knowledgeable about prehistory, but they have some very persistent preconceptions: people were rather small but had a lot more leisure-time than today. There is almost no chronological differentiation; things are simply “very old”, be they from the 17th century, the Bronze Age or the Stone Age. A very limited number of questions are asked time and again: how tall were people and how old did they get? How did they live, how bright were the interiors of the houses, what did they eat, etc. AOAMs can answer these questions more easily than normal museums, in this sense, they better meet the publics’ expectations. This does not imply that they are unscientific. However, they should help the visitor to develop more and different questions.

In an AOAM, instruction and the dissemination of knowledge is difficult and needs special attention and extremely skilled staff. Signs and display boards, leaflets, catalogues and audiovisual systems distributed, or

chatty guided tours are some of the more commonly used options. The results are not very impressive. As already pointed out, there is no background knowledge, and receptiveness for new information limited. Many only visit to reinforce their preconceptions. This is not the only time when the lack of popularisation of the discipline by archaeologists in the last decades comes back to haunt us. It should come as no surprise that *Flintstones* has done more to inform visitors about the Palaeolithic than 150 years of academic research.

Now it would be easy just to complain about shallow visitors. Visitors are what they are, but they are also intensively interested to find out how archaeologists obtain their results and postulates. They are interested in facts, but also want to know where fiction starts. Unfortunately, we often do not offer enough of a challenge to visitors.

If we want to grasp the visitors’ imagination, we have to present pictures, pictures that in a way reach all their senses. But we also need to deconstruct these pictures, because what we can offer is only a theory, never a fact. That is the reason I have learned to love the fire extinguishers and huge plastic dustbins you find in some AOAMs. In my opinion, they create a certain distance, because they shatter the illusion of “this is exactly what it was like in the past”.

For this reasons, I am opposed to educators wearing “period dresses”. These dresses can be well attested archaeological and reproduced in quality (even if they rarely are), but they create a dangerous proximity. For the visitor, these dressed-up people



are “real” prehistoric people in striking distance, while they are only our neighbours and behave in quite the same way as we do. We do not know much about prehistoric mentality, and the past, as L. P. Hartley (1953) famously said, is a foreign country, and they do things differently there. Who knows how they greeted each other in the Linearbandkeramic or the Roman Iron Age, maybe by touching each others genitalia?

It is impossible to completely represent the past, because of a lack of finds, problems with representing things and lacking feasibility. For example, all AOAMs are far too clean. There is no rubbish, stench, dung on the paths or deep mud when it rains. Of course, visitors expect an amicable, park-like atmosphere. If an AOAM turns too authentic it looks dingy and runs the danger of being closed down by the health authorities. Even the usual seasonal opening is problematic. In summer, everything is nice, green, warm and cosy. A visit on a cold and wet day in late November will produce a completely different impression.

The main problem, however, is modernity. Open-Air Museums present the technical face of normal daily life in the countryside. A hundred years ago, nobody but city-dwellers would have been much interested, as this was, with a few exceptions, the normal environment. Today, we are very far removed from past living conditions. The changes in reaction to levels of lighting, warmth and cleanliness have been quite dramatic, as well as the loss of manual dexterity and craft techniques. This is why we have to constantly lower the skill levels demanded in educational programs, as elementary manual abilities are missing. Today’s kids may know the Pop-Charts by heart and operate complex computer games standing on their head, but cooking a simple soup, form a clay ball or even keep a fire burning proves a hard task for the Nintendo-thumb. An open fire is so exotic on its own that informations about prehistory pales in comparison. However, maybe it is exactly this type of experiences that attract the visitors.

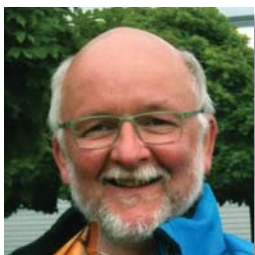
## Which future for AOAMs?

There is no doubt that AOAMs do have a future. Many have advanced from adventure playgrounds eyed with weary contempt to serious museums that have gained acceptance in the discipline. This acceptance, however, is not always based on the research done in these museums or the scholarly foundations of the models presented, but rather on their publicity value and the work they do in popularising research, thus increasing the public perception of archaeology in a time of shrinking resources.

The big task of the future will be to assure the scientific quality of the displays and, at the same time, manage the museums as perfectly as any Disneyland, as funds become more and more of an issue. It is also important to better connect Open-Air and Glass-case museums, to build on common strength and to alleviate common weaknesses.

The coming years will bring a boom of new foundations. However, the capacity of the market is limited, the wheat will be separated from the chaff, and many creations will founder horribly. There will be some uninhibited Stone Age pleasure parks, comparable to the popular entirely commercial Medieval markets. There is lots of money to be made in commercial planned holiday entertainment of any flavour.

As long as we are after content, we have to keep a careful distance from such enterprises. I have kept this text as critical as possible on purpose in order to underscore that running an AOAM is very labour-intensive and carries a high level of responsibility. It will be our task to match serious science with joy. This is more work than creating a Stone Age funfair, but it is achievable and very rewarding. Many AOAMs, the participants of this EU project and EXARC are aware of all this, as the following pages prove in quite an impressive way.



**Martin Schmidt** studied Prehistory, classical Archaeology and Geology/Soil-sciences at German Universities Münster, Cologne and Frankfurt/M. Has been from 1993 till 2002 the director of the Archaeological Open-Air Museum in Oerlinghausen (DE): [www.afm-oerlinghausen.de](http://www.afm-oerlinghausen.de) Since 2003 he is the Deputy Director of the Lower Saxon State Museum in Hanover: [www.landesmuseum-hannover.de](http://www.landesmuseum-hannover.de) He is initiator, cofounder and actual chair of EXARC: [www.exarc.net](http://www.exarc.net)

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EXARC Journal & Bibliography is a major resource for all topics discussed in this paper.



# WE ASKED

What contacts do you have with museum associations or independent museum networks? Are you a member, are you active?



## → St Fagans

St Fagans National History Museum is accredited under a voluntary scheme managed by **Cymal: Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales**. This means that we demonstrate nationally agreed standards of museum management, collection care and public service. This status is reviewed periodically. In addition, St Fagans (as part of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales) is also an organisational member of the **UK Museums Association**. In addition to organisational membership, many members of our staff have gained a professional qualification with the **Museums Association**. At a Wales-wide level we are members of the **Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales**, and internationally we are members of **ICOM** and of the **Association of European Open-Air Museums**.



## → AÖZA

We are an active member of the **Museum association of Schleswig-Holstein** (Museumsverband Schleswig-Holstein e. V., Rendsburg) since 1999; I (Dr. Rüdiger Kelm, Director of AÖZA, ed) was member of the Board from 2002 – 2010, responsible for the smaller museums in Schleswig-Holstein. Our museum is also a member of the **German Museum Union** (Deutscher Museumsbund e. V., Berlin), since 1997, and of **ICOM** (Paris) since 2011; here we only participate by taking part in conferences or with smaller publications.



IMTAL  
EUROPE

## → Archeon

Recently Archeon has worked closely with the **Dutch National Museum Association**, to become a member. This national organisation has a large number of museums as members and enforces strict guidelines with regards to how these museums function. Locally and regionally, Archeon often works with museums in Leiden (like the **National Museum of Antiquities**) and has a very close partnership with the **Archaeology House / Roman Museum** which is just outside of the site itself. Internationally, Archeon is a member of **EXARC** and works with different museums that are fellow members. Archeon sometimes forms partnerships for projects, both nationally and internationally, as is currently the case of the Limes project. We are also in touch with regional **Museum associations** and the **EMA** (European Museum Academy).



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS



EMA  
European Museum Academy

## → Viminacium

Viminacium is not a member of any museum association or museum network. The archaeological park Viminacium sometimes offers its exhibition spaces for exhibiting material from other museums. One of the greatest exhibitions of this kind was in 2013, when the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan was celebrated. Apart from this exchange with museums, we also “share” visitors with the **National Museum in Požarevac**, as a lot of finds from Viminacium are being kept and exhibited in it. Last, but not least, we have contact with AOAMs Europe wide, especially through projects like OpenArch. Outside our project, such examples would be Aquileia or Carnuntum.



NEDERLANDSE  
Museumvereniging

## → Parco Montale

The Park of Montale has been part of the European network from its inception and has been working in synergy with leading open-air museums throughout the continent for years, often thanks to its membership of **EXARC** (we have been a member since 2004 and the director Ilaria Pulini performed the role of EXARC board Chair in 2011-2012). The Park is **ICOM** affiliated as an open-air section of the Archaeological Ethnological Museum of Modena and since January 2015 and is a member of **NEMO** (Network of European Museums).



At a more local level, it is included in the territorial network of the **Province of Modena Museums** and in other local thematic networks (gastro-oenological roads network, castle networks, ...) connected to the territory of Montale Rangone, where the Park is located.



### → EXARC

We are an ICOM Affiliated Organisation which means we theoretically have access to 30,000 other museum members worldwide. Having that status makes contact with other affiliated organisations like AEOM and ALHFAM but also AIMA, as well as with International Committees like CECA and ICMAH easier. Finally, we are in active contact with associations on experimental archaeology which hold many museums like EXAR in Germany, VAEE in the Netherlands or EAS/AES in Switzerland. Subjects discussed are as varied as management of Board work, member's management as well as more museum related subjects. We often visit international meetings of colleague organisations.

### → Kierikki

Until end of the year 2012 Kierikki was a so-called professional museum supported by the state. It was a member of the **Finnish Museum Association**, the central organization of Finland museums. After merging with the museum of Oulu, Kierikki became part of the bigger city museum organization Luuppi consisting **nine different museums and one science centre**. Now only Luuppi is a member of **Finnish Museum Association**. Kierikki is still a member of **Europa Nostra Finland** and **EXARC**. I (Leena Lehtinen, director of Kierikki Stone Age Centre, ed) am personally have been a member of ICOM since the 1980's and some other professional associations. Kierikki is more of an ordinary member and not very active.

About **The Finnish Local Heritage Federation** which is in charge of Europa Nostra in Finland. In Dec 2014 they published a theme number of Europa Nostra winners in Finland. The first grand prix winner Kierikki Stone Age Centre was on the cover and had an article (written by L. Lehtinen) inside. "Mitä kuuluu Kierikki" can be translated as "How it's going, Kierikki". In Oulu Museum and Science centre Luuppi there is also another outdoor museum Turksaari 14 kilometres SE from Oulu. It has 40 historical buildings and this year it is their 90th anniversary.

### → Foteviken

We at the Museum of Foteviken, believe that collaboration with other organisations within the field of mediation of archaeology and history is an essential element for a better and in the future clarified presentation of the past. Our network is wide. I (Björn M Buttler Jakobsen, director of Fotevikens Museum, ed) am the contact for many organisations in our network: I sit as a chairman **NOOAM**, and the Association **SVEG**, Scandinavian Vikings Explorer Group. I am vice chairperson for **DESTINATION VIKING Association**; **IMTAL**, and a Director of the **International Museum Theatre Alliance**. We are also involved in **FUIISM** association, for educational development in Swedish museums, **FREE open-air museums**, **ICOM**, **ALHFAM** Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums and **EXARC**.

### → Calafell

Basically we have contacts with **local museums of the El Penedès area** and the **Museum of Archaeology of Catalonia (MAC)** through the network 'The Iberian Route'. Regarding the museums of El Penedès it is usually a friendly co-existence with collaborations on common activities in isolated cases. With the MAC, there is a more active collaboration, with regular meetings and specific actions every year, like the Iberian Weekend early October. From an international perspective, we have been a member of **EXARC** since 2007. The links with EXARC were also active from the beginning, especially after our participation in EU projects (Didarchtik 2010-2012 and OpenArch 2011-2015).

### → Hunebedcentrum

On a local level we are a part of different networks, like the **Museum Association of the Province of Drenthe** (around 40 museums) and the **Heritage Network of Site Museums in the province of Drenthe**. We also co-operate with individual museums. On a national level we are a member of the **Dutch Museum Association**. On a European level we are a member of **EXARC**, **Megalithic Routes** (museums, areas, universities and Geoparks with megalithic monuments as a main topic) and part of the **Geopark network**. Sometimes it is a real co-operation and sometimes it is on friendly basis, it depends on the project.



## We interact with museums rather than museums associations.

### → University of Exeter

The Archaeology Department in Exeter has global interests and several colleagues work with museums as a part of their research collaborations. Sometimes these are collaborative publications with researchers and curators from museums and joint projects.



Fig 1. Crafted replicas and 3D print replicas, 9th EA Conference, January 2015.

For example; Dr Linda Hurcombe has worked on the **Touching the Past Project with the National Museum of Scotland**, and smaller island museums and heritage centres in Orkney, Bute, Lewis and Sanday. **The AHRC project** had a first grant to explore different ways of providing tactile experiences in museums and in a second grant to directly compare public reactions to crafted replicas and 3D print replicas. This led to collaboration with **Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, UK**, for a three-month exhibition to present the Whitehorse Hill discoveries<sup>(1)</sup>. This sequence of collaborative museum research has featured in presentations at Kierikkki, Viminacium and St Fagans and some of the Whitehorse Hill material is currently with Dartmoor National Park. The research has resulted in an award winning article<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> PITT, F. and HURCOMBE, L. in press Digital Interaction in the exhibition 'Whitehorse Hill: A Prehistoric Dartmoor Discovery' – how Prehistory met the Gamers & Scanners, in *With Fresh Eyes: new ways of using collections*, Society for Museum Archaeology Annual Conference 2014

<sup>(2)</sup> DIMA, M. HURCOMBE, L. And WRIGHT, M. 2014 Touching the past: haptic augmented reality for museum artefacts, *Proceedings of HCI International 2014, Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality: Applications of Virtual and Augmented Reality*. Lecture Notes in Computer Science vol 8526, 2014, 3-14. Springer-Verlag.

Best Paper Golden Award Human Computer Interaction conference, Crete 2014 (ie the best from all c1,500 published and presented paper from the HCI involving researchers from 77 countries).



Fig 2. Bronze Age sewn plank boat project.

Linda Hurcombe has also collaborated with the **National Maritime Museum, Cornwall** to build a Bronze Age sewn plank boat within the museum. OpenArch participants have visited the project and its shipwright, Brian Cumby has participated in OpenArch events<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(3)</sup> Van de NOORT, R., B. CUMBY, L. BLUE, A.F. HARDING, L. HURCOMBE, T. MONRAD HANSEN, A. WETHERALT, J. WITTAMORE, A. WYKES, J. 2014 Morgawr: an experimental Bronze Age-type sewn plank craft based on the ferriby boats, *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 43(2): 1-22.

Dr Marisa Lazzari has worked with **South American Museums** on issues of identity and heritage<sup>(4)</sup>

<sup>(4)</sup> Museo Etnográfico 'Juan B. Ambrosetti', Universidad de Buenos Aires  
<http://museoetnografico.filo.uba.ar/portalMuseo.html>  
 Instituto de Arqueología y Museo, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán (International Research Associate)  
<http://www.unt.edu.ar/fcsnat/iam/>  
 MURR Archaeometry, University of Missouri  
<http://archaeometry.missouri.edu/>

Dr Gill Juleff has experimental and archaeological research on wind powered steel furnaces which has contributed to museum presentations. In June 2014 the National Museum, Colombo, in collaboration with IESL, opened a new permanent gallery dedicated to Ancient Technology showcasing five major engineering achievements, including Monsoon Steel, with a replica furnace and animated explanatory video created by the Open University of Sri Lanka.

# Managing Archaeological Open-Air Museums: Current Issues, Future Trends



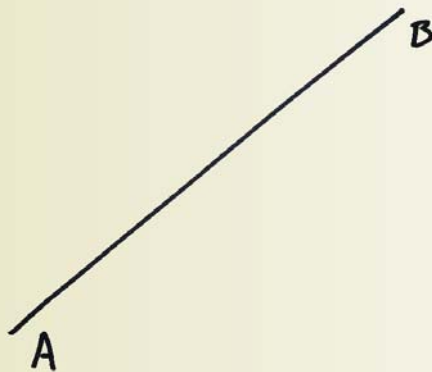
Fig 1. Maquette in the exhibition on Pastor Mgr. A. Suys , founder in 1923 (Museumpark Orientalis, the Netherlands).

by Margriet Lestraden

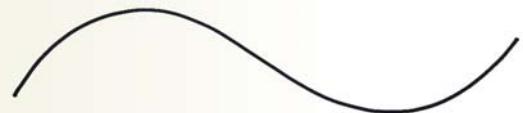
As a consultant  
I am usually called  
when a crisis or at  
least a growth spurt  
occurs.

In almost all cases  
I need only two  
lines to explain the  
problems.

The first line is this one:



and the second is this one:



That's all that's needed.



## Elements of life cycle

### Pioneers Phase

- Organisation adapts itself to surroundings
- No own identity
- Autocratic leadership
- Informal, flexible organisation
- Improvisation
- Everybody working together

### Organisation or Differentiation Phase

- Autocratic leadership but now formal
- Specialisation and professionalising
- Mechanisation and standardising
- Inhibited

### Crisis

- **Bureaucratic**
- **Quality people leave**
- **Apathy**
- **Creativity outside organisation**
- **Conflicts staff and line workers**
- **Losing motivation**
- **Problematic coordination**
- **Internal and external relations under pressure**

### Social or Integration Phase

- Subsystem dominant
- Development of vision
- Creativity and creativity are rewarded
- Enlarging of tasks and responsibilities
- Training and education
- Oriented on outer world

### Transformation

- Old patterns are left
- Detaching of the old behaviour
- New perspectives
- Smaller organisation

Above: Characteristics of the stages of the life cycle – Jan Verhaar, Museum Management.

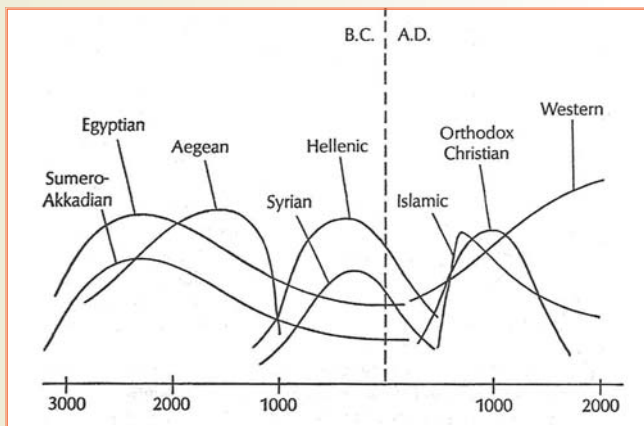


Fig 2. Rise and fall of cultures from The Turning Point: Science, Society and the Rising Culture by Fritjof Capra.

When I was asked to give a lecture on the subject ‘What can Archaeological Open-Air Museums learn from museums?’ my initial thought was “that is easy” but as usual what looks easy is mostly complicated. Where does it start and where does it end? It can be the broadest topic you can ever imagine. What to do? Look at best practices? Where? In management or education? Presentation or finances? Scientific work?

And then the second problem is that Archaeological Open-Air Museums differ from each other like the two sides of the rainbow as do most museums. If we look at examples: are the museums the best teachers? A lot of my crisis work comes from museums. So to keep ourselves on track today, I will address some of the major trends in society that force museums to adapt.

As an introduction, I will explain a bit more about my two lines. The gulf is about the life cycle of an organism or organisation. As a year has a sleeping period to regain energy, a new spring, a high season and decay, it is renewing itself constantly. So is the human body with an illness. So are societies.

And in the same way organisations are born, grow, have a period of high season and then decline starts. The organisation has to regain energy to start a new period, otherwise it dies. In a scheme, it looks like this:

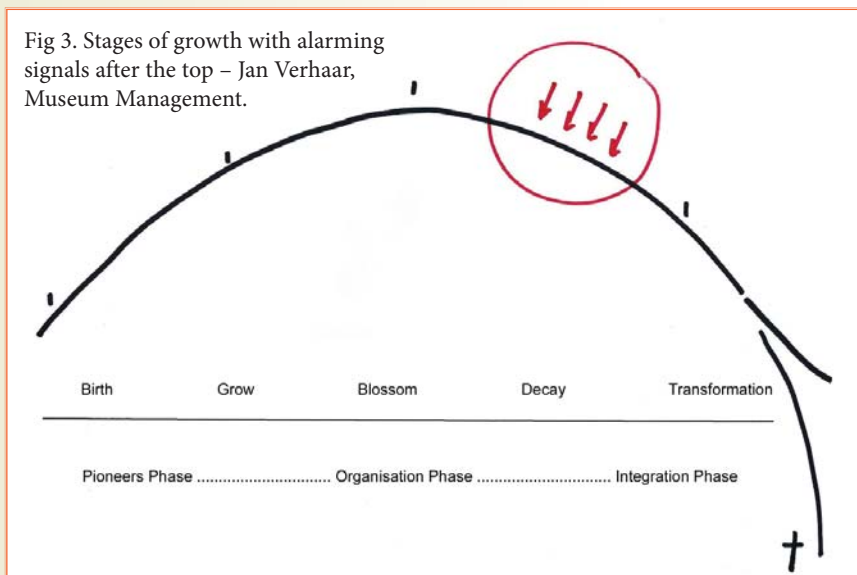


Fig 3. Stages of growth with alarming signals after the top – Jan Verhaar, Museum Management.

The most interesting period is when signals show clearly that the present situation does not work anymore and cannot continue. In our world it looks like an inadequate budget, declining visitor numbers, dissatisfied politicians, criticism.

The other line is the straight line from A to B. It is like a trip you make in summertime from Amsterdam to Rome. You buy maps, you take money, passport, family, clothes for hot weather and rainy nights. You get your car checked. You get injections for your dog et cetera. In other words you go well prepared. If you do not go well prepared you might lose the way, spend too much money, have adventures you do not want, get robbed, be stopped by the police. If you prepare well, check your goals, feed yourself in time, and sleep well, you will reach your hotel in good shape and you are able to write a rather successful story in your travel blog.

**So, instead of listing examples of good practices I will concentrate on some major developments in museums, trends that follow the signals in society.**

## Position of Museums

In my opinion the development with the most far reaching consequences is the internet. The information society is the fundamental factor in the landslide that is going on. To google and to surf are new verbs. The world is getting much smaller by internationalising. In his book *'The disruptive museum'*, Arnoud Odding states that in the old days museums were respected institutes, temples, but now they have lost this authority. The visitor is an expert himself. Compare this with the medical doctor who has to explain everything to his patient because the patient did some thorough research himself. There are now more critical views of what we are doing; we have to give explanations of what we are doing, who we are, for whom and why. We can no longer be a hobby for hobbyists. Quality has to be argued for. The museum has ceased being a respected gentleman. Museums are subject to the same powers of the market in which commercial firms have grown for 100s of years, blossomed and disappeared. So we too are forced to create values and earning models.

To illustrate this I would like to quote Michael Edson. He is Web and New Media Strategist of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. In a meeting during the Annual Conference of The Dutch Museum Association in 2013 he blew my head off by saying that visits to the Smithsonian have gone from a steady 26 million personal visits to 100 million internet visitors in 2014. He also said that a new initiative is not accepted if the results do not show a 10% improvement. Specific information can be found on <http://dashboard.si.edu>.

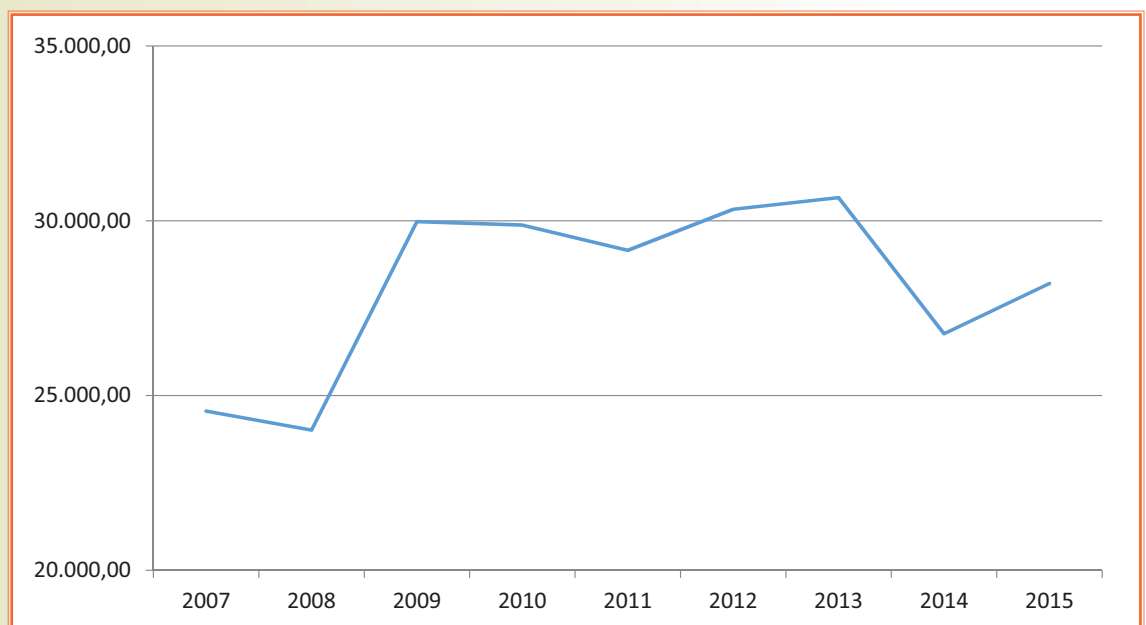


Fig 4. Smithsonian Institute visitors historical, from <http://dashboard.si.edu>

The dashboard is in my opinion a new development. To be open about your results. Hardly ever do I find in museums any research on performance. So if we have to have examples we have to go to American museums because they are better. If we have to take examples, we should take it from the business world and marketing. Museums sometimes have a tendency to run around like headless chickens, filled with love and dedication. That is beautiful but it starts to be dangerous when we have to explain ourselves. Openness is not usual for museums. We try to hide behind the words 'No admission – Staff'. We are used to giving perfect products in perfect silence in perfect exhibition rooms. Hardly any visitor has a clue as to what is going on behind the STAFF door, of the crises passed, stress, creativity, financial problems and tricks, or anything else that has to be juggled behind the scenes. There is a tendency to keep the dirty laundry inside. But why? For visitors it is very exciting to hear about our jobs. The Metropolitan Museum explained why they needed the money people were asked to donate as an entrance fee and how exactly it was used. German museums also tell us what is involved in a restoration process; this knowledge is a way to assure ourselves of a better understanding by the public. Recently Netherlands institutions with ANBI status (good purpose status with tax benefits) are obliged to put their board, financial report and policy plan on the website for any person to consult.

So, to conclude, how many times have friends asked you 'How on earth can you be overworked?' This is because we are inhibited creatures and give absolutely no information on the exciting jobs we have.



## Conscious Performing

As I said before, we have to explain ourselves. We have lost the automatic respect of being a temple. Around us are specialists, whether they are politicians, sponsors, funds, Rotarians, visitors or boards. And they will ask us to explain why we are doing what we are doing. In the Netherlands almost all museums suffer from shrinking subsidies and in some years museums with high reputations are closed. Local museums especially suffer. When Municipalities concentrate on key tasks culture is very vulnerable, especially since the local parties focus on local benefits. International exhibitions are not interesting for them. Nonetheless they want the museums to perform with very limited budgets and any interesting initiative has to find its budget from within existing funds or by sponsorship. National funds request national emanation. So city and towns museums are stuck between rock and a hard place. In this movement the local museums are rather defenceless. Often they do not act like firms or businesses with policy, strategy, vision, marketing, analysis and tools that are customary in that area. Only the big museums are beginning to work like that. In the province of South Holland where I worked in the eighties and nineties a members list counted 123. Twenty eight have since disappeared and five are new. Among the vanished museums were several of outstanding quality, which I never thought would be under discussion. But nationwide museums also disappearing, even former state museums. So, be prepared.

## Quality and professionalism

I hesitate to say that museums still use the word 'leuk' for their actions. Leuk is a typical Dutch word that cannot be translated but google translates it as (e) nice, entertaining, amusing, jolly, prettily, (fr) drôle, amusant, plaisant, (d) Schön, (sp) agradable, (i) bello, (p) ładny). This is **not** a convincing argument. Find social, historic, psychological or economic arguments. Museums are not used to such criteria and benchmarks. Somehow we are caught up in enthusiasm, love, dedication, addiction, blindness, rust, tradition or the attitude "We always did it like this, so it is good". This becomes very clear when the American system of accreditation of assessment is examined closer. In this system, executed by the American Association of Museums now called the American Alliance of Museums, the performance of museums is measured by standards. The standards had to be set first. For decades discussions by the peers of the profession went on as to what the standard are for management, educational programs, volunteer management, climate, security etc. The standards were related to the size of the museum and the goals mentioned in the statutes and the mission statements. It is quite interesting to see how AAM is advertising itself. Also that they work for museums, institutions and individuals.

**"The American Alliance of Museums' mission is to nurture excellence in museums through advocacy and service."**

**The American Alliance of Museums (formerly the American Association of Museums) is the one organization that supports all museums. Through advocacy and excellence, the Alliance strengthens the museum community. They support 21,000 museums, individuals and companies by:**

- **Developing standards and best practices**
- **Providing resources and career development**
- **Advocating for museums to thrive**

Consequently there is a huge list of publications in their bookshop on standards (next to other very nice services). So, in relation to my assignment I would advise you to have a look at American developments because they are far ahead of us ([www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org)).

Another master we could consult is the business world. If an organisation is not performing well, it will go broke. Easy laws count. How much money is coming in and how much is going out. If the balance is good, the firm is ok. There are lots of systems to check.

For ages they have worked with management concepts, marketing and public relations. The balanced scorecard, SWOT, BCG, Ansoff, 4 P marketing, SMART are all well used instruments. Museums are not used to sit back and do research on themselves, so sometimes we act like steering a boat in the mist.

## The internet boost

Back to Michael Edson, the modern media strategist of the Smithsonian Institute (17 museums). He did another presentation on internet use (The Age of Scale) and took the example of the National Gallery of Art. Between 1978 and 2011 this museum received annually ca 4.000.000 visitors. The growth in 33 years was -1%. But with Wikipedia 250 million visitors visited in 2008 and 470 million in 2011.

There are 2.4 billion internet users, that equals 34% of the world population, so today we have a global audience!!! Billions can engage and contribute. Some examples:

- **Kickstarter** is an American crowdfunding website. In 2012 2.241.475 people from 177 countries pledged \$ 319.786.629 to support 18.109 cultural programs in [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com).
- **Europeana.eu** is a website with Europe's cultural collections. There are 20 million CC-) records and 2.400 content providers. Scale is really at the heart of the business model for Europeana.
- **Resource.org** had 20 million views on You Tube and 20 million on Internet Archive. Of the museums here present today, only 2 have information on Europeana.

A professor can reach 200 students a semester but Smart History reached 750.000 users in one semester.

Michael Edson concludes his performance with words I totally agree with:

**"There are more powerful ways of accomplishing museum missions than getting people through the doors".**



## Who is going to survive?

During an annual conference of the Committee for Regional Museums in Latvia we invited Kenneth Hudson, author of 'Museums for the 1980's' and founding father of the Museum of the Year Award as a keynote speaker. His health was not good and so instead of coming he sent a videotape.

On this he stated the only the specialised museums and "the museums with a table" would survive. Museums with a table were museums who gave personal attention to visitors. A table to have talks, a table to sit together, to answer questions, to involve people. Then I jump to a keynote speaker during our Museum conference in 2009. His name is Tom Palmaerts and he is a trend watcher of youth societies. He talked about the visual societies of youth and the delays of museums to respond to this. He showed an impression of how a youngster's brain absorbs information. It is fundamentally different to the way we are used to absorbing information and quite shocking because it seems to be a totally different language.

And then back to the book 'Het disruptieve museum' of Arnoud Odding. In the internet we are dealing with millions of specialists. These changes are either threats or chances for museums, but it is clear museums face new demands. Museums have had for a long time the capacity to select quality but that is no longer their privilege. We are now rooted in a complex, kaleidoscopic world and more and more we share truths. We have to create values. 'WE The Museum' was the centre of a network and now the public is in the central position. Not as a client but as a part of the organisation. This is a 180 degree turn from when we had collections in the central position. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam puts the wishes of the public at number one and their presentation is chronological. Museums are the laboratory of local history, diffuse, all is possible, all is moving, we are helping people to root. Questions should be asked: What can a museum contribute to society? What is that society willing to pay for? In the society of networking, are we serving society? We used to be a commodity of the governments but now we change into institutions working together with society.

A new book considered 'The Handbook for the Soldier in the Cultural World' is published. It is *De Culturele Stad* by Cor Wijn. It talks about the creative city, attractive city, experience in a cultural city and a model of a cultural city. It clearly talks about culture as an asset.



Fig 5. (Top) The village Beth Juda (Museumpark Orientalis, the Netherlands).

Fig 6. (Middle) Demonstration of bread making in the caravan serail (Museumpark Orientalis, the Netherlands).

Fig 7. (Bottom) Visitors in the Arabic village (Museumpark Orientalis, the Netherlands).



## A very fine example of a museum that had to adapt is the museum from the Holy Land Foundation Museumpark Orientalis

It opened its doors in 1911 as a Catholic institution. Pastor Suys (1870-1940) travelled in 1903 to the Holy Land and felt that the Holy land by its landscape, its population, and its habits formed a 'fifth gospel' that made the other four more understandable, made the life of Jesus closer to people and would make them love him more. On 70 hectares he recreated the Holy Land.

*"The Holy Land Foundation wants to improve the understanding of the Bible by the knowledge of Palestine situations and habits, wants to make the stories into a moving reality and thus makes that the person thinks back with love and gratitude of God."*

He was convinced that when the Dutch realised what had passed in Palestine before 1900, the population would awake from its sleep of a Christianity that was meek and bourgeois, without much thankfulness and an outer decency dogma. Where love was frozen and action was rusty. He wanted to give something to the Netherlands of the youth, the enthusiasm and freshness of the new life that was so evident in Palestine. He saw the fences between the many Christian churches, which lived opposite each other with mistrust dropping down and wanted a Netherlands that had become one big religious unity and brotherhood for all Christians based on the gospels.

So he built the Tent of Abraham, Holy Heart Basilica (only narthex, now a museum), Station of the Cross, Nazareth, Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Eastern Inn, Garden of Olives, Mount Calvary with Crypt, Holy Sepulchre, Chapel of Pentecost, graves, Eastern Street (Hellenistic and Roman).

By 1950 the Netherlands was a confessional society. Declining visitors and interest forced the organisation to adapt. In the 60s it took a recreational form. In the 70s it concentrated on the historical background of the bible. In the 90s a permanent exhibition was created about the bible in relation to the ancient cultures of the Middle East, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece of Alexander the Great and Rome. Also including a line from the Koran and differences and similarities between the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions. Added were an Arabic village 'Bayt al-Islam', a Caravan serai and a Hidden Garden (Israelite). They also started with the first experiments in living history.

In 1999 a new policy plan was developed and the name was changed in Museumpark Orientalis. In 2009 the park had to close due to lack of funds but it reopened in 2012. It is the biggest religious ensemble in Europe with 29 national monuments. When you visit this museum, it is obvious how they have had to adapt in a changing society. Today it is still struggling, but it has a very relevant function in our world of cultural and religious diversity. New challenges lay ahead.

## Conclusion

So, in my opinion we are heading to a new era with new role within networks, accessible to millions of people. The old and traditional museum will soon be gone. We should seek new relevance. Let's take up the challenge!



Fig 8. True to life figures from a presentation in the Roman village, long before living history concepts started to emerge (Museumpark Orientalis, the Netherlands).

## Sources of inspiration

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ODDING, A. (2011) *Het disruptieve museum* (Den Haag)

ODDING, A. *De Nationale Museum Agenda* (Den Haag)

VERHAAR, J. *Museummanagement* (Delft)

WIJN, C. (2013) *De Culturele Stad* (Amersfoort)



**Margriet Lestraden** (1952) is museologist and art historian. She worked from 1980 till 1993 as Provincial Museum Consultant in the province of South Holland (NL). Heading a team of ten people she gave expert professional advice to 120 museums on issues ranging from policy, finances, climate-control, conservation, sponsoring, management and other matters. For many years she was chairperson of the Dutch National Association of Museum Consultants (LCM). She also served several terms as a board member and chairperson of the International Committee for Regional Museums (ICR) of ICOM. In 1993 she began her private practice, Lestraden Museum Consultancy, specialising in museums in developing countries. In this period she worked for ca. 70 (museum) institutions and governments. In 1998 she started with the development of the birthhouse of Latvia's most famous painter Vilhelms Purvītis into an international center for young people around culture nature, research, traditions and tourism ([www.purvitishouse.com](http://www.purvitishouse.com)).

# WE ASKED

Why are you in contact with the museum associations?  
Do they live up to your expectations?



## → St Fagans

As a national museum we have a responsibility to demonstrate best practice in the cultural sector. We do this through the establishment and maintenance of internal systems and also by playing a part in wider policy initiatives that national and international associations develop. Furthermore, by maintaining links with external bodies, we ensure that we are aware of developing trends within the culture sector, and can react accordingly.

The useful output depends on the organisation and the policy objectives they are pursuing. Our level of involvement varies accordingly. In recent years our organisation has been very heavily involved with the UK Museums Association – our Director General, David Anderson, was chair of the MA until 2015, and the National Museum Wales played a leading role in the organisation of the MA's 2014 annual conference.



## → AÖZA

For us - as a smaller museum in a rural region far away from large cities / universities – it is very important to exchange knowledge and ideas with the colleagues, for example during conferences. It is also for us a (simple) way of training / education.



## → Archeon

Mostly a wider audience for our version of history. Archeon uses the experiences of other (more 'classic') museums to enhance its own visitor experience. One example is the use of signage – taking cues from the museum world, informative signs are beginning to take a proper place in Archeon.

It depends on the project and the association. The recent project to become a member of the National Museum Association has been very fruitful, not only with regards to our own policies and processes, but it also gave Archeon the opportunity to become a part of certain national programs and take part in subsidies. The main one is the national Museum Year Card, which gives free access to all associated museums. This is a big step forward for Archeon and one of the prerequisites is membership of the association.



## → Viminacium

We are not in contact with museum associations, only some of the museums. The museum organisations do not live up to our expectations. Apart from the very personal benefit one can achieve by entering different museums for a reduced price or for free, there is no real connection between the museums. The impression is that it is "Every museum for itself". Needless to say, they care little about AOAMs.



## → Parco Montale

Through these international networks we expect collaboration, sharing and growth. To be part of these networks allows the Park of Montale to be placed in a higher, international context which strengthens it and could facilitate its access to further economical resources. An association/network is a guarantee for visibility and support and a useful tool for a larger shared and diffused communication about museums and heritage.

## → EXARC

We feel that we are just as much a museum association as the ones we are in contact with. We like to know what is important to them and exchange handbooks, tips & tricks et cetera. Often they have discussed subjects which also are relevant to EXARC and its members. For example, ALHFAM in the US recently published a series of free online resources on museum docents & public, very interesting for our members so why should we reinvent the wheel? In contact with other museum associations we know very well they cannot solve all our problems and cannot solve them now – we have to work as well and be pro-active.







### → Kierikki

Practically all professional museums in Finland are members of this central organization. Education, annual meeting etc. Other reasons are ethical codes of museum work and you can ask for help, especially with problems concerning museum practices. Without this general organization it would be difficult to know what other museums do. The Finnish Museum Association is also the main organiser of different museum courses and seminars. It also organises the annual museum conference, attended by hundreds of museum workers and also politicians responsible for museums in the municipalities.

Over recent years Kierikki has been a little bit passive in this co-operation due to its small staff and merging with Oulu. Although we have several outdoor-museums in Finland they do not have their own organisation.



Personally I (Leena Lehtinen, director of Kierikki Stone Age Centre, ed) have gone to a couple of courses organized by this association in previous years which were very good. The main thing is that these courses focus on practical issues of museum work: what to collect, preserve and when you need conservation. Because in the museums there are a lot of people with different backgrounds (from customer service to building houses and exhibitions etc.) it is important that all museum workers have a chance to develop their museum practices and meet colleagues. The association has also had internet courses for museum studies which I participated in 2007 and I found them to work well.



### → Foteviken

To keep up with developments, creating networks that provide knowledge and strengthen our museum concept on how to communicate.

The network of contacts is useful to have access to when you need to solve problems, "where do I get bark" or "How do you deal with this issue," etc. It is very useful to be part of a project that gives you long term contacts.



### → Calafell

To be in contact with local museums and museum networks is a good way to position our museum at a local/regional, but also at a European/international level. It creates synergies that can contribute to the growth and promotion of our museums through collaborations, seminars, common projects, making contacts and other positive networking possibilities and not being too isolated in the museum community.



Results are often below the expectations. In our experience, this is sometimes inevitable. There are different tempos and motivations usually due to big differences between the museums involved. Sometimes synergies are based more on a good will between partners rather than organisation of the work. In a certain way, it all depends on the activity carried out and if outputs are visible. Useful outputs come when collaborations are fruitful and associative work is seen, as much in joint projects as in co-operation on a specific action (i.e a temporary exhibition). If there is nothing more than a simple meeting with colleagues and there is no obvious output, that is when the experience may become frustrating.



### → Hunebedcentrum

To learn from each other, to make exhibitions together, exchange information at the academic level (most research on our topic is done in other countries), to buy products for the shop, to exchange knowledge about experimental archaeology, to make combined routes. You can do a lot together. You can give visitors information about other places of interest, what we also do is give discount when buying tickets for two or three museums (or making a passe partout for more museums). Another example is that we are part of a Geopark - that means that we make PR for the area we are part of, not only our museum - we tell people to visit the others to.



Mostly it is just nice to see each other but sometimes it is a real co-operation for activities, joint exhibitions, experimental archaeology and other things. It depends on the project. Sometimes it is nice to see and sometimes it is a real co-operation.

## Kierikki

## OPENARCH PARTNER



## Member of ICOM: YES

The archaeological exhibition at the Kierikki Stone Age Centre displays **objects from the Stone Age**. In addition, activity programs in the reconstructed Stone Age Village offer a unique opportunity to experience life as it was lived **thousands of years ago**. Other attractions include a restaurant, hotel and museum shop.

## FINLAND

[www.kierikki.fi](http://www.kierikki.fi)

**Best practice:** According to my own (Leena Lehtinen, director of Kierikki Stone Age Centre, ed) opinion, the best practises come from long-standing commitment to a certain project or work in-progress. You must have a plan, vision and people who are really ready to work for the goal. In museums you never get anything fast or easily. You also have to convince the owners of the museum about the goal.

**Bad examples:** The worst things in my 40-year museum career has been when economical profit is the only thing that matters. Museums are not commercial businesses and they are not economically viable, at least not in Finland. That's why society has to support the museum work. Here in Finland we have good museum law, which says that "museum is a non-profit organization".



Above: Stone Age Market 2010. Photo by Elina Helkala.

## Archeon

## OPENARCH PARTNER



## Member of ICOM: YES

Founded in 1994, Archeon covers **10,000 years of human development in the Netherlands**. From hunter-gatherers in the Stone Age and farmers in the Bronze and Iron Ages, through the Roman period and right up to everyday life in 1340 AD, "Archaeo-interpreters" show what life was like in "their time" in the **43 reconstructed buildings**.

## THE NETHERLANDS

[www.archeon.nl](http://www.archeon.nl)

**Best practice:** the National Museum Association membership is proving to be a great success. Hopefully it will boost visitor numbers, though we have to wait at least a year before it shows. The self-reflection that the imposed guidelines force is also a great help in re-organising some aspects of the organisation. A recent knowledge day was very inspiring, with great talks from the founder of Museum Hack (NY, USA) and the online communications director of the Efteling (largest amusement park of the Netherlands) on improving visitor experiences through staff motivation.

**Bad examples:** As there is a gap between classic (subsidies, funded) museums and the open-air museums that function almost solely from their own income, communication can be difficult. A sales-based or commercial attitude is a difficulty within the museum world and can cause misunderstandings between open-air museums and the more classic (for instance national) museums.



Above: Opening of a temporary exhibition on the Roman Limes at Archeon. Also the official announcement of the Landmark that came about partly due to the OpenArch project.



## Parco Montale

## OPENARCH PARTNER



## Member of ICOM: YES

The terramara of Montale, near Modena in Northern Italy, is a **typical Bronze Age settlement** with pile dwellings surrounded by a ditch with water and imposing earthwork fortifications. Next to the site is an Open-Air Museum with life-size reconstructions of **two houses furnished with replicas** of the original finds dating back 3500 years.

ITALY

[www.parcomontale.it](http://www.parcomontale.it)

**Best practice:** It is important to be an active partner in the networks, otherwise the risk is to be flattened by the others without a specific profit. It is important in fact to make the right choice of partnership.

We try to get better from all the experiences we have had in networks: collaboration, new ideas, increased knowledge about management of an open-air museum. We found out that a network is more useful and has a greater possibility of success in the achievement of the goals, when the definition of the objectives is very clear to the individual partners from the beginning.

**Bad examples:** Some “dangerous” elements of cooperation:

- the time span of a project: we verified in fact that a 5 year long project, like OpenArch, sees many changes in the partner museums and, at a higher level, in the definition and organisation (mission, management, finances... the result can sometimes be a bigger bet) of our institutions, while a 36 months project would be considered a more “prudent” choice in general;
- the definition of the expected results: in our first experience of an European project, *Archaeolive*, the topic of the objective was very well delineated by the partners and particularly concrete, it brought realization and opening of our and other archaeological open-air museum;
- the number of the partners: when the partnership is numerous, while there are positive exchanges with a higher number of countries, cultures and experiences, we saw that it was less simple to maintain the balance in quality and quantity of products/activities.

## Viminacium

## OPENARCH PARTNER



## Member of ICOM: NO

Viminacium is an **ancient Roman site** on the right bank of the Danube in eastern Serbia. In an area of about 450 ha are the **remains of a military camp, a city and cemeteries**. Remains of a Roman bath, a mausoleum and one of the gates of the military camp can be seen, as well as a replica of a Roman villa.

SERBIA

[www.viminacium.org.rs](http://www.viminacium.org.rs)

**Best practice:** What always goes well (even if unexpected) is the good connection and a lot of help between the museums like Viminacium and the Iron Gate museum, or Lepenski Vir. We are situated on a single route and we very often share visitors (like all of us experienced last year - 2014, during our regular AOAM meeting). Neither Lepenski Vir nor Viminacium belong to a museum organisation of any kind, but they still co-operate very well.



Above: In 2012, as a part of the OpenArch project, people from Viminacium hosted a conference “Archaeological Heritage and its Role in Education, Presentation and Popularization of Science”. During this conference, members of the Koryvantes group presented their Martial arts and showed the participants some ancient Greek fighting techniques.

# Benefits from an International Museum Network



Fig 1. Japanese Presentation at the June Meeting of ICOM in Paris.

by Luc Eekhout

**Almost 70 years ago, in 1946, an international council of museum directors met in Paris. This was the start of a global network of museum professionals, called ICOM (International Council Of Museums), nowadays counting more than 32.000 members from 20.000 museums. A bureau, the headquarters of a standing organization, is still in Paris, adjacent to UNESCO. The international staff runs a worldwide programme of activities, and lobbies. Why are so many museum professionals interested in ICOM, and what are the activities of this worldwide organization?**

To start with, ICOM is not open just to anyone. It defines a museum as follows:

*A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.* As you notice, this definition can be applied to the majority of archaeological open-air museums (AOAMs)! When we produce our own buildings and artefacts, it is only after we acquired knowledge and researched on the base of the 'tangible and intangible heritage'.

ICOM wants to serve the common interests of museums worldwide. The network is therefore organized in two dimensions. First, there are the national associations in 136 countries: the National Committees. ICOM members pay their annual fee to them and receive their membership card. A remarkable benefit of this card is, that most of the museums worldwide give free entrance to their ICOM colleagues although this is not an obligation! Attractive as this benefit is, the National Committees are well aware that they have to censor the many applications for membership. You have to prove that you work in or for a museum in a professional way.

Once you are member of ICOM, you are also expected to take part in the other dimension of the network: the theme oriented 30 International Committees, 5 Regional Alliances and 20 Affiliated Organizations. Take for example CECA: Committee for Education and Cultural Action (over 1.000 members in 85 countries) or ICMAH: International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (about 500 members). EXARC, that we know so well, is on probation as an Affiliated Organization. We will definitely be accepted as soon as 50% of the EXARC members are registered as ICOM members as well.



All National Committees, International Committees/Organizations and the General Secretariat organize conferences, workshops and other activities to support and develop the expertise of its members. All of this is done on a peer-to-peer basis, colleagues helping each other voluntarily.

As an ICOM member you can apply for travelling grants. This facilitates your participation in international events and programmes.

The present programme of ICOM focuses on five themes:

- Fighting Illicit Traffic
- Art and Cultural Heritage Mediation
- Museums Emergency Programme
- Intangible Heritage
- Cultural Tourism

As you can imagine, the ICOM network also offers help when a disaster occurs. Using short ICOM-lines, the national committee of Nepal asked for support, when in April 2015, earthquakes damaged important cultural heritage like temples, other monuments and museums. Other committees are willing to provide knowledge, helping experts and funds. Accidents like these offer opportunities to experience salvage and rescue techniques.

Development of museum professionalism is one basic goal of ICOM. Recently an ICOM International Training Centre for Museum Studies was founded in Asia, in the Palace Museum in Beijing. Dissemination of knowledge is done in courses, conferences, travelling programmes and journals. In our AOAMs we are studying methods of artisanship, daily life and other intangible heritage. Perfect subjects to publish about in the ICOM International Journal of Intangible Heritage.

Every three years an International Conference is organized. The 2013 Conference was in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). The theme of this conference was “*Museums (memory + creativity) = social change*”. This refers to the fact that museums should combine their historical knowledge and creativity to take an active part in the development of their surrounding world. EXARC was represented there and presented a lecture about volunteers in Archaeological Open-Air Museums. Especially the members of ICMAH showed interest in the method of living history, as it is common ground in our Archaeological Open-Air Museums. The EXARC representative was invited to the Historical Museums of Basel, Switzerland. In January 2014 he did a workshop with the board and management of the museums. The management team discussed the ways in which volunteers could be valuable to the organization and how the professional staff could develop a way in which the two groups could co-operate. They discussed the initial idea that the volunteers should be a separate ‘regiment’ with its own management. Many EXARC museums however embrace the formula that volunteers are integrated in the organizations, as individuals working under the guidance of professionals. The participants of the workshop discussed the fear of

some professionals that volunteers would take their place and the museum could economize on salaries. On the other hand they recognized the advantages of building a network in society, to the (political) benefit of the museum. And they should recognize the difference in interests, and thus of approach of paid and unpaid staff.

In EXARC many museums originate from volunteer projects and this history defines their approach to and appreciation of unpaid assistance. In the ‘classical’ museum world many organizations have a long professional tradition and they fear an amateur approach from volunteers. How to bridge the gap between these two ‘worlds’? Small scale pilot projects seemed to be the answer.

In the afternoon the director and the board of the horsepower (carriage) museum brainstormed with the EXARC representative. This time the approach was different. Could volunteers be used to position a museum more in the centre of the local community? In Basel scientists were volunteering in research. But what about catering staff? Students? Educational assistants? Could amateurs be an asset to a fairly closed organization as a professional museum can be, in the way that they stimulate the interaction with the rest of the world? Again they felt the tension between the somewhat defensive professionals and the eager amateurs. Is there a challenge for the professionals to train the amateurs, and on the other hand to accept different views on their professionalism?

The interaction between the volunteer approach, as EXARC knows so well, and the traditional view of museum professionals proved to be an exciting subject to discuss. The Basel Museums sought the confrontation in inviting an EXARC member for discussion. Are there more EXARC members to follow in organizing discussions with their neighbour museums?

The next general conference of ICOM, to be held in 2016 in Milan (Italy), has the theme “*Museums and cultural landscapes building up a cultural heritage*”. Artefacts in museum are linked to historical locations. Buildings and other historical constructions, even monoliths like menhirs, enrich and define our landscapes. And what about historical reconstructions, like our sites, theme parks and open-air museums? EXARC should present itself in Milan with one or more lectures about our reconstructions of landscapes and buildings, and other forms of Archaeological Open-Air Museums.

We should notice that the interaction of AOAMs and ICOM members would benefit both sides. The specific social oriented experience of the development of EXARC members proved to be interesting to the ‘classical’ museums, as ICOM Rio showed. On the other hand the global network of ICOM, the expertise of its numerous members and the high professional standards of the dozens of committees offer chances to the AOAMs to develop its museum qualities.

**The role of the museum**

- Human and social dimension = in the **service** of society and communities (**relevance**). Museums are “**loveable**” places dedicated to the **well-being** of communities
- They are agent of **social change**, and show **empathy** for the communities
- **Helps people** investigate, understand and experience the world and their heritage

Places that **raise questions** ≠ provide answers  
Museums are places for **learning** ≠ “Education”

ICOM

Fig 2. The role of the museum, presentation at the June Meeting of ICOM in Paris.



Fig 3. Representation of EXARC at the June Meeting of ICOM in Paris.

When we focus on a national level, we will find a variety of national museum associations, foundations, federations or other forms of professional networks. According to national traditions and culture they function in their own way. Some are state subsidized, some depend entirely on their members' contributions. On a smaller scale you can find the regional and local organizations. These might be independent museum institutions or integrated in a broader oriented heritage 'house'. As for the AOAMs, these organizations might – at first sight – look different from our own way of functioning. They come from a tradition of collection oriented museums, focused on protecting and safeguarding artefacts. These differences in focus should not distract us from the many themes we have in common. Think of financial themes, like lobbying for subsidies and funds, or professionalizing your administration, or even sharing services like insurances. Think also of staff related themes, like structuring and managing an organization, human resource management and so on.

Professionalizing an AOAM might seem complicated, and might distract us from our core business. But in the end a smoothly operating museum enables us to give more time and attention to this core business! I can speak from personal experience, as I was a director of a Dutch AOAM. This museum, rooted in a tradition of volunteering, experienced rapid growth and then was entangled in the demands of legal regulation, subsidy contracts and other business-like matters. New staff had different expectations to the veterans and founders of the museum. Just like many museums experienced this process in recent decades, It took some difficult and painful years to change company culture and traditions that, in time had become handicaps.

This process of fundamental change does not start spontaneously. Successes of the past can make you blind and deaf to the chances and threats of the present. The pioneers who start an organization have to adapt their style according to the development of the organization. This requires a mental change, which is difficult to achieve.

When you are a member of a museum network like ICOM or a local organization, you can find support from those networks. Museum magazines, congresses, consultants and above all colleagues are an important source of knowledge and experience. And nothing gives more comfort than visiting a colleague and seeing that you are not the only one wrestling with certain difficulties.

Comfort, knowledge, comradeship...most important of all, however, is inspiration!

We, as volunteers, staff and managers of an AOAM, we flourish when we are inspired and can improve our own open-air museums. Many look for their inspiration in the field of their specialization. I would like to plead for us to broaden our scope, to search for inspiration in other meadows than our own field. The museum networks, museum organizations and institutes I mentioned offer different though comparable views. Thinking in different patterns challenges us to innovate our daily routines and concept of our museum. To start with, EXARC should be closer to ICOM and its members would benefit from the excellent programmes ICOM has to offer. Not to mention the membership card of ICOM that gives us easy access to museums worldwide. To our AOAMs we are obliged to reach higher than our daily standards.



**Luc Eekhout** (1959) studied History and joined the Naval Staff as lecturer. In 1992-2010 he was director of the National Carriage Museum, organized a project of the three European Carriage Museums and was board member of the International Association of Transport and Communication Museums. In 2010-2014 he merged the two historical museums of Eindhoven, including the archaeological open air museum. As board member of EXARC he was delegate to ICOM. He lectured about volunteers in museums. From 2015 on he is director of Heeswijk Castle and chairman of ICOM Netherlands.



## Hunebedcentrum

### OPENARCH PARTNER



#### Member of ICOM: NO

Lying on the Hondsrug in Borger, in the North of the Netherlands, the Hunebedcentrum takes you back to **prehistoric times** and shows you the lives of the **first farmers in Drenthe**. They constructed impressive **monumental tombs** and the remains of 54 of them can still be seen, **the largest one standing right next to the centre**.

## THE NETHERLANDS

[www.hunebedcentrum.nl](http://www.hunebedcentrum.nl)

**Best practice:** a co-operation with the National Museum of Wales – they made an exhibition in the past, later on we got it in our museum. We had not only an exhibition but also lectures and products. Another good example is the co-operation in Megalithic Routes where once a year every member organises a joint activity.

**Bad examples:** we see that in the museum network of the province there are small museums, bigger museums and a really big museum. It seems that it is very hard to co-operate with a museum which is too small or too big. The best co-operation is with similar organisation like yourself.



During the period of OpenArch we have constructed a completely new open-air museum next to our existing museum. Without the help of other museums it would not be possible to reconstruct this area. Above Bronze Age farmhouse built next to the Hunebedcentrum.

## AÖZA

### OPENARCH PARTNER



#### Member of ICOM: YES

The “Stone Age Park Dithmarschen” in Albersdorf (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany) has been reconstructed as a **Neolithic cultural landscape** from ca. 3.000 BC. Lying close to megalithic tombs and grave mounds dating from the first farmers in **Northern Germany**, the site offers educational activities like flint knapping, archery and leatherwork.

## GERMANY

**Best practice:** For us the concrete output is in the form of conferences (sometimes also in our museum!). The sharing of knowledge with other institutions is very important. There are also some seminars for example in Schleswig-Holstein on education, marketing etc., which are useful. Also the practical support on regional level (for example in form of “letters of intent” in political discussions or help with conservation of archaeological findings) is important.



Above Conference organised in Albersdorf in cooperation with the Museumsverband Schleswig-Holstein.

[www.steinzeitpark-dithmarschen.de](http://www.steinzeitpark-dithmarschen.de)

# WE ASKED

In what ways should the museum organisations change to become more useful for Archaeological Open-Air Museums?



## → St Fagans

I (Steve Burrow, Head of Historic Properties at St Fagans, ed) think this is the wrong way to look at the relationship between AOAMs and the wider museum sector. I think that each individual AOAM needs to assess whether they see their future as being a registered museum and, if so, they should adapt towards the standards of the museum sector. But this is an expensive and time-consuming path that is not necessarily desirable for all – furthermore, there are other cultural models that might be more appropriate to some AOAMs' vision of themselves: park, heritage centre or activity centre to name a few. The ability of AOAMs to change the museum sector will increase once they are on the inside, not when they're knocking at the door to come in.



## → AÖZA

There should be established more special working groups under the roof of a bigger association (like for example the new working group "Archaeology in the Museum" in the German Museum Union); the AOAM's could eventually be also included in the working groups for "classic" ethnographic Open-Air Museums.



IMTAL  
EUROPE

## → Archeon

Mostly they should regard AOAM as a form of museum – different than most but still an important guardian of heritage. A special category of sorts for AOAM would be useful, with different guidelines for membership and documentation geared towards improving museum practices in AOAM.



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS

## → Viminacium

They could encourage their visitors to visit the local AOAMs, since what they were able to see in their museums as mere objects, they could experience in a local AOAM. In Serbia, this is never the case.



EMA  
European Museum Academy

## → Parco Montale

Even if archaeological open-air museums have existed for more than one hundred years, mainly in Scandinavia and Northern Europe, the definition of AOAMs is quite recent and needs to be strengthened with the support of other organisations, institutions, networks and others dealing with the museum world. AOAMs are a peculiar kind of museum with some special problems and needs, which through a wider spread of information about them, should be better supported and developed.



NEDERLANDSE  
Museumvereniging

## → EXARC

Each museum organisation is doing what they are good at: they represent their members and help them to become better museums. As it is not their job to help EXARC members, we do not think our colleague organisations need to change much. What is important however, is that each organisation makes clear what they are good at and where possible shares their resources of knowledge. Sometimes such associations are not very open to outsiders and it is hard to explain how much common ground we have. Yet again, it is our own task to see what pearls colleague organisations cherish and equally share ours with their members.

BUND  
MUSEUMS  
DEUTSCHER  
MUSEUMS  
BUND

ALHFAM  
The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums





#### → Kierikki

This is a difficult question and depends on the culture and background of different ways of administration and working culture. For example in Finland working with volunteers is not common and it also is not accepted in many municipalities. The best way is to have co-operation on low-cost and low-administration projects that may include participation of old and new partners without money playing a large part, for example experimental archaeology and festivals. It has to be concrete, not too big or expensive and it should be done by the institutions to keep continuity. There could be a network between all types of open-air museums because here in Finland we have just two archaeological reconstruction villages: Kierikki and Saarijärvi. In a larger network we could get more credibility and visibility.



#### → Foteviken

Archaeological Open-air Museums have to change the way they regard these groups or organisations. It is about trust and quality foremost, the cooperation between open-air museums and, for instance, AOAM need to be founded in mutual respect and eagerness to evolve and educate. By showing seriousness and knowledge this opens doors and helps other organisations see AOAM and other museum organisations as equal partners.



For example, by organising and facilitating meetings between these organisations and open-air museums with clear local and global themes they will increase the parties knowledge and increase the network between similar organisations. Open-air museums also need to be opinion leaders that cultivate a working relationship with politicians on state and municipal perspectives. Especially on issues that concern AOAM and their activities.



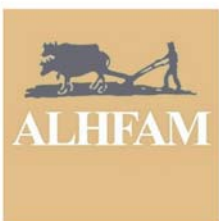
#### → Calafell

In our case, it would be advisable to consider another way of approaching, perhaps more open-minded. These associations should perhaps be more open to foster dialogue with (and between) AOAMs so that potential collaborations bring synergies between the traditional museum world and the AOAMs. The more regular co-operation would be beneficial and produce nice results for all partners, and at the end for the society. There is a lot to learn from each other. Good will from associations and pro-active collaboration plans are essential in order to help many AOAMs to become more visible in the museum world. It is a complicated question to answer but readiness for dialogue and effective co-operation from both sides is necessary.



#### → Hunebedcentrum

That is very hard to say. But what is most important is that you have to respect each other and not think that as a 'real' museum you are better than an open-air museum or vice versa. Respect comes first and then the recognition that you can learn from each other. We especially see it with art museums – they think differently about open-air museums. But it is changing because museums in the Netherlands have to work more with experiences – and that is something where the open-air museum specialises.



#### → University of Exeter

This is not something an academic can change but I know that the museum curators welcome more interaction but are sometimes pressed for time.



# Redesigning the Roadmap? Facing Challenges in a New Era for Museums, and other Considerations



Fig 1. Workshop about metallurgy at Palazzo dei Musei, Modena (Italy) during the 3rd OpenArch conference, 13 April 2012.  
Photo: Museo Civico Archeologico Etnologico di Modena (Italy).

by Manel Gómez Gutiérrez

The present publication for the EU Culture Programme project OpenArch has been prepared within the frame of the work package named “The dialogue with museums and museum organisations”. Its main goal is to link the archaeological open-air museums (AOAMs) more closely to the museum world at large. During the five years of project implementation, EXARC kept an active role within the museum community by having contact with representatives of relevant ICOM International Committees for AOAMs such as ICMAH or CECA or participating in the General Conference of ICOM held in 2013 in Rio de Janeiro, the theme of which was “Museums (Memory + Creativity)= Social Change”.

We live in a world of constant change. The classic museum conception as a temple of culture is shifting and this implies that we need to adapt in order to meet the social role that museums must play in the community. Museums are key places to contribute to building of a better society, as they represent culture, science, economic development and more, However in modern times they can no longer be focused only on the collection; artefacts, objects shown in display cases in a hall, waiting to be discovered by the public. The Museum paradigm is changing into a new era where the dialogue with society is urging new approaches.



In times of democratization of culture, it seems clear then that museums must develop strategies for the public to build their culture and not only be a recipient subject. Strategies aiming to get the public to participate: a sort of “what can we do together” instead of “what can we do for you”, setting a dialogue between persons and objects, strengthening the local community. This means involving citizenship to build values as identity, for instance: if museums succeed in making the local public discover them and have a nice experience, they may return often. Even better: they can be the museum’s best ambassadors by recommending new potential visitors.

During a panel discussion at a conference I attended in 2015 focused on museums, one attendee in the audience said he often visited the local museums during his vacations. But when he asked for recommendations at local restaurants and stores on interesting places to visit, he was told to visit a leisure theme park located 30 kilometres away, despite having wonderful local museums with a wide range of activities for all kinds of public very close. Unfortunately, these kinds of situations happen often. Despite the hard work behind everything we do, there is still much to do in order to improve interaction with the public. An effective communication strategy is a condition sine qua non to involve community in our museums. The possibilities that internet and mobile devices offer to the museum world are a chance to make the most of, especially with the new generations of visitors. Communication is a key issue in changing the paradigm. We can learn from the museum community how to achieve public engagement. In OpenArch, because of the importance of communication for the visibility of our museums, we produced a practical manual for museums on communication strategy.

Museums must be regarded as meeting points for the community to foster dialogue and break cultural, ideological and economical barriers. An alternative leisure activity for the visitor to discover and learn in an informal and recreational way through an activity plan with informal and recreational content, methodology and a continuous research and innovation. These activities need to be understandable and attractive to a wide range of public (Sabaté & Gort). An attractive offer is a must have in our roadmap.

Nevertheless, the current global political and financial trends make things very complicated for the museum world to survive: Issues such as budget cuts, the lack of funding do concern the museum community and can determine the roadmap decisively. To top it all off, archaeological open-air museums being traditionally focused on crafts, have often been forgotten in the funding hierarchy.

In light of this scenario, archaeological open-air museums are urged to develop strategies to face a variety of challenges with the aim of raising standards in a competitive world, where we need to gain the visitors’ attention. Among such challenges one can identify the need to be sustainable in terms of finances. We should also check priorities, of course, scientific aspects are relevant, but it is not sufficient for the

success of our AOAMs. One can have the best scientific reputation but it is paramount to combine it with an effective management strategy to make the AOAM viable and visible. A good management, with a broad long-term vision, that opts for innovation (creativity) and rigorous approaches (quality). Creativity and quality are crucial factors in order for AOAMs to have their own personality and brand, to avoid the risk of homogenization or Disneyfication.

The dialogue with policy makers, funding bodies, stakeholders and so on, is also another key issue. We have to be able to communicate the benefits of AOAMs to decision makers and mettre en valeur our projects. *“The museums need to maintain good relations with local government and vice versa. If the local administration does not have a good understanding of what a museum is about, and the value of the museum for society, their support will evaporate. If however the understanding is right, the museum can benefit greatly, for example when it comes to issues of local infrastructures, such as roads and the provision of signs”* (Paardekooper, 278). It also would be desirable to create structures for career development in AOAMs. The specific literature on AOAMs is still scarce and makes it difficult to foster a professional continuity among new generations who enter this world.

Obviously, as with many other aspects of life, there is no certain formula to provide easy solutions to face the multiple challenges of the future. Nevertheless, I would like to emphasise for the purpose of this publication, the importance of dialogue with the museum world as an aspect to strengthen AOAMs. In order to improve and become better professionals AOAMs can learn a lot from traditional museums and museum associations and use their experience and toolkits to benefit themselves. In this sense, I am keen and optimistic about the advantages of networking with different types of museums and organisations. It is unfortunately true that there is often a lack of support from the museum associations or sometimes the experience can be frustrating in terms of results, but in my opinion most of the time collaborations, when they happen, are positive. Our participation in OpenArch has been a cornerstone for La Ciutadella to strongly believe about the importance of having links with colleagues and being more visible within the museum community.

One of the objectives of OpenArch, as mentioned before, was to raise awareness of the importance of being actively in contact with the museum world. For this reason, one of the milestones in the work plan designed by EXARC and La Ciutadella Ibèrica de Calafell was the organisation of a seminar that took place at the Oriol Suite of the National Museum Cardiff in 26 May 2015 with participation of 50 delegates linked to the museum world from over 15 countries. The core of this seminar, moderated by Martin Schmidt, Chair of EXARC, were three keynote speeches by three European specialists: Margriet Lestrade, Luc Eekhout and Martin Schmidt himself. They know quite well the reality (or better said, the multiple realities) of the AOAMs world and shared their experience with the public for the debate. In this publication you can find their articles revolving around the content of those

Fig 2. Seminar about AOAMs and the museum world. Cardiff, 26 May 2015. Photo: National Museum of Wales.



keynotes. The seminar went on with statements from the OpenArch partners about the added value of co-operating in European projects such as OpenArch. Overall, they valued the fact of learning about other colleagues work from other AOAMs and institutions from other countries and cultures, the exchange of ideas, the scientific and teaching potential of AOAMs. The last section of the seminar focused on presentations about issues of and solutions for open-air museums, which revolved around subjects such as regional identity, accessibility, quality standards in educational programs, financial sustainability, experimental archaeology, AOAM management and best practices for volunteers at AOAMs and were very inspiring for the audience. A comprehensive report of this seminar can be found in the EXARC Journal Issue 2015/3 <http://exarc.net/issue-2015-3/mm/managing-archaeological-open-air-museums-current-issues-future-trends>

I would also like to stress the importance of paying more attention to sustainable development in AOAMs and implementing actions on this subject. Sustainable development according to the classic definition given in the Brundtland Commission Report is: “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” quoted from: United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. Our Common Future. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. Our museums are outdoor places where one can raise awareness regarding environmental sustainability: *A sustainable approach is the way forward in the long run. Include sustainability in all aspects of the museum: people, planet, profit. Visitors to archaeological open-air museums interested in the past and being outdoors will share an awareness of sustainability* (Paardekooper, 278). Many open-air museums are developing environmental ethos. For example, one of the OpenArch project partners, St Fagans National History Museum in Wales, developed an experiment about sustainable thatching by planting and growing their own crops of spelt in their farm infrastructure, minimising the transportation costs. Also related to environmental issues, the same partner (St Fagans) presented to the OpenArch delegates their new gallery (currently under construction) during the project conference they hosted in May 2015. Once it is completed, this energy efficient building will achieve a BREEAM rating of excellence and will contain at least 10% recycled materials. Another example of how much we can learn from other colleagues.

Because of the important social role that museums play in the community, an approach to “greening” our museums can rebound to a positive impact by disseminating the benefits of sustainable practices. In this sense, AOAMs can be ideal places to promote civic engagement on environmental issues: *Museums are uniquely situated to lead. As storytellers, educators, preservationists, and community gathering places, we can be models for sustainability. By ‘telling the story’ of sustainable practices, we play a vital role in creating sustainability in the communities we serve. Our efforts can make a tangible difference* (GMI Green Museums Best Practices Guide).

There are several ways to develop sustainable practices in our museums, from recycling to the energy consumption issues (use of renewable energies, better lighting systems...). Luckily, one can easily find useful online publications from associations working for the promotion and dissemination of sustainable practices in museums. Needless to say, sustainability is a process and it implies a commitment to take steps towards social responsibility with the environment, but if we can raise awareness in our museums and keep “green thinking” in our planning over the long term, that would be a good mission for the museum and consequently for society and the environment.

In light of the changes taking place, in general, archaeological open-air museums need to be prepared to find new directions to avoid getting smaller due to the pressure of a political and financial character. Despite the weaknesses and threats that we may find wherever we are, we do have a great potential as cultural assets for society and to be more relevant within the museum community. We have to believe in our strong points. In the field of education and learning, one of our clearest strengths, we provide our visitors, whether school children or adults, a hands-on learning approach so that they can see the production process in an attractive and practical way rather than, for example, by using a tablet. This educational experience is a great value that we AOAMs do help to better an understanding of the world and therefore are a social service. Research behind is essential to communicate this knowledge. And the methodology is also relevant: We foster more participation with the public and stimulate critical thinking more than perhaps any other type of museums. Our reconstructions are tailor-made for living history activities, which as an educator and re-enactor, I consider to be one of the best ways to tell the intangible past to the public. Traditional museums can learn from how AOAMs tell the past. Informal learning is definitely one of our benchmarks of quality. We put passion in to what we do and that is one of our best engines.



Also among our goals: keep the work for the cohesion of society. Many AOAMs are involved in projects of social inclusion as part of their mission. Last but not least, it is important to stress the value of volunteering in archaeological open-air museums. They are usually motivated people who love their local heritage and their involvement in AOAMs agendas is highly appreciated.

**In a nutshell, we should have a regular critical view of our museums, in order to keep moving forward and face the challenges for the future. However, there are reasons to defend our contribution to society in light of the current situation. We offer social hope and passion. Being part of active networks like EXARC or the collaboration in EU projects like OpenArch shows that we are not isolated, we are part of something. The co-operation in OpenArch took work but in the end, we hope the results are worthwhile for as many AOAMs (and other types of museums) as possible. Now the project is coming to completion, the legacy of OpenArch will be looked after by EXARC not only for the eleven project partners but also for other AOAMs and future projects. The learning experience we have achieved together has had a big value for us and will likely be profitable in redesigning the roadmap.**

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**Manel Gómez Gutiérrez (1978).** Graduated in History at the University of Barcelona. Educator, re-enactor and coordinator of projects and communication at La Ciutadella Ibèrica de Calafell (ES). Project Manager of EU Culture Programme project OpenArch (2011-2015).

Fig 3. Sustainable buildings. Presenting the construction of the new gallery at St Fagans National History Museum (Wales)

# WE ASKED

OpenArch is a forum where you can meet with museum colleagues. What is the added value for you from a museum perspective?

## → St Fagans

We have benefited enormously from the link with the other AOAMs in OpenArch. So far 19 members of staff have been on trips, sometimes multiple times. This has greatly increased our awareness of the range of approaches adopted in AOAMs – it has broadened our horizons. From that perspective it is a good medium.

## → AÖZA

The exchange of knowledge (especially in form of Staff Exchanges) and of educational programmes (in the frame of practical workshops) is of great importance to us. The practical help and the discussions about the same questions at our different museums is a good medium (here the international perspective, which is normally missing, is also very important!)

## → Archeon

It is a superb medium, as a networking and communications tool. It is very enlightening to see different types of AOAMs come together and discuss their differences and similarities.

## → Viminacium

It is a good medium. People exchange ideas and learn from each other. They give each other hints and ideas, even by performing the tasks directly, so that all of the partners benefit from it.

## → Parco Montale

We have tried to improve with all the experiences we have had in networks: collaboration, new ideas, increased knowledge about management of an open air museum, improvement of research and in particular of the experimental aspects. This happened also in the frame of the OpenArch project: in being active partners and not inert, in contributing to advice and enriching the network itself we all were able to create useful tools, with a specific on the dialogue with visitors, in skills improvement, in communication enhancement, in exchanges on research and maintenance. So OpenArch has been a good medium in supporting and facilitating the dialogue between more than the 11 partner museums and institutions, on fundamental topics such as dialogue with science, skills, visitors, management of museums and communication.

## → EXARC

For us, OpenArch is a great way to learn more about ten of our members and follow them over five years. The partners have taught us about the needs and qualities of museums in many aspects. The museums in OpenArch are all of very different size and background and therefore a good sample from the 100 museum members in EXARC.

## → Kierikki

Yes, the travel money and visiting other places is very important. Face-to-face meetings are always better than just emails. We travelled to meetings, experiences, seminars and festivals. Otherwise people have to pay the costs themselves and it is not going to work.

## → Foteviken

The knowledge and contacts. Through meetings with partners we can see good examples to assimilate but also to bad examples of how not to proceed.

## → Calafell

It is a good medium to have a regular and strong link with other European institutions and to share experience, advice, best practice and gain knowledge. In addition it is a big opportunity to meet experts from other countries thanks to the conferences and workshops. Especially it allows us to learn how other museums deal with their day to day work, challenges and difficulties or to learn from partners with a large experience and strong links with museum world.

## → Hunebedcentrum

It is a good tool. We started as a normal museum within a building. The last few years we started an open-air museum. For us it was all new, so we had to learn from others how to act. We are still learning from the partners in OpenArch. Because of the network it is quite easy for us to ask questions of our colleagues in OpenArch (and EXARC).

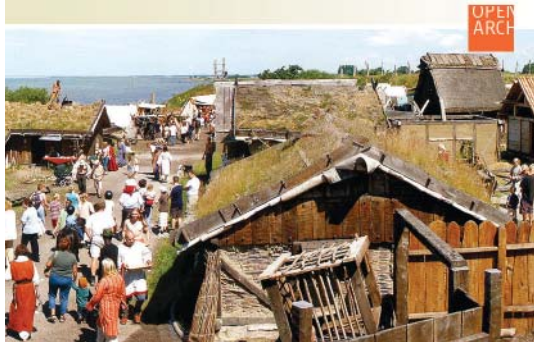
## → University of Exeter

It is a good medium. The conferences have often featured sections on different kinds of museums or museum interactions and these have been informative and of benefit to the wider community of scholarship on heritage issues.



## FOTEVIKEN

### OPENARCH PARTNER



Member of ICOM: **YES**

25 km south of Malmö, Sweden, you will find the Archaeological Open-Air Museum of Foteviken. **Inside a city wall open toward the sea, the world's only attempt to recreate an entire Viking Age town** shows a number of streets with 23 houses and homesteads, reflecting life in a late Viking Age and early Middle Age town in 1134 AD.

## SWEDEN

**Best practice:** As an example, three, four cases linked to the organization DVA resulted in EU projects at European level and strengthening the development of the Viking concept in Europe. They strengthened participating partners and strengthened the notion of Vikings in the tourist answers considerably.

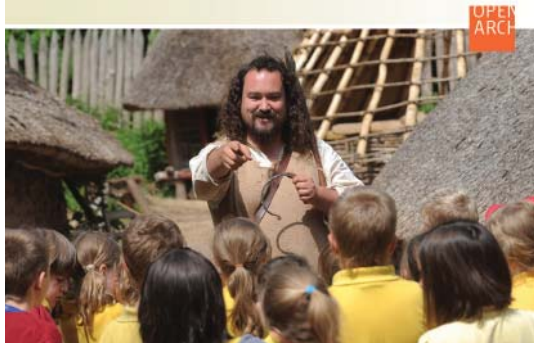


Above: Visiting remains of historic roundhouse building in Shetland.

[www.foteviken.se](http://www.foteviken.se)

## St Fagans

### OPENARCH PARTNER



Member of ICOM: **YES**

Located to the northwest of Cardiff, the museum was created in 1946 in the grounds of St Fagans Castle. It features **dozens of reconstructed buildings**, brought from across Wales, and is in the **process of building an Iron Age farmstead and medieval royal court**, based on excavated examples. St Fagans is one of Europe's leading open-air museums and has been voted the UK's favourite tourist attraction.

## WALES

**Best practice:** Our involvement with the UK Museums Association is a clear example of good practice for us. Influenced by the leadership of our Director General, the campaigning agenda of the MA shifted to include a more pronounced social remit for museums, and our organisation was seen as a driving force in this shift. This in turn, aligned the museum sector more closely with government goals at a time when resources were under threat.



Above: Seminar in Cardiff on managing AOAMs during OpenArch conference. May 2015. Photo: the National Museum of Wales.

[www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/stfagans](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/stfagans)



# Branding

## Archaeological Open-Air Museums



Fig 1. Branding EXARC, branding Archaeological Open-Air Museums.

by Magdalena Zielińska

### What is an Archaeological Open-Air Museum?

An Archaeological Open-Air Museum (AOAM) is a permanent non-profit institution with outdoor true to scale architectural reconstructions primarily based on archaeological sources. It holds collections of intangible heritage resources and provides an interpretation of how people lived and acted in the past; this is accomplished according to sound scientific methods for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment of its visitors. There are about 1,000 such museums worldwide. This definition was designed in the EU Culture Project *liveARCH*, a cooperation project between eight members of EXARC.

Looking closely at Europe we find about 350 of AOAMs. Many have existed for more than 10 years, but there are also some which did not succeed and after a few years had to close. These museums form a grass root movement and are seldom initiated top-down. Most of them get funds for building the museum, but not for running them. Many are run by enthusiastic volunteers with just one or two regular staff members. There are also huge ones with almost 100 staff and volunteers.

AOAMs are spread widely across Europe. Early on they were mostly created in the richer western countries. In the last 10 – 15 years we have seen more centres appearing in Eastern Europe as well. There is a huge difference between the museums in regard to their overall size, the years of experience, their total budget, their PR budget, number of staff / volunteers, number of visitors they attract and not the least the language spoken.



**So the challenge to create a NEW common brand for all is very complicated. Even if one forgets about the budget they have: which language would you choose, if a big group speaks only Spanish or Italian, and others get for example only a German public who do not care about information in English?**

Another issue is that many have almost only school groups, meaning a Common Brand is hard to define. We should probably need to work more with a logo and a general feeling, maybe a one-liner, rather than larger statements in one or other language.

## What is EXARC?

With so many AOAMs there was a need for better communication and interaction. In February 2001, the first international meeting was organised by the initiative group, in Oerlinghausen, Germany. Fifteen participants from six different countries convened. It was underlined again how much archaeological open-air museums have in common and how lonely they feel in their own environment. They are not always seen as equals by traditional museums. In 2015 however EXARC counted 100 AOAMs between its 250 members from 30 countries. Many Individual Members of EXARC are closely connected with an AOAM or similar organizations.

We would like the members of EXARC to be proud of being members. Creating a “Family feeling” is very important when you want to stand together in one line defending your ideas and goals. Although many definitions are made, no two archaeological open-air museums are identical. Instead of trying to make everybody alike, we are looking for things which unite us, and try to emphasize them.

## Previous Attempts of Branding

In 2009, under the EU Culture Project *liveARCH*, the *Guide to Archaeological Open-Air Museums* (Pelillo 2009) in Europe was published. The list of 220 museums got expanded under OpenArch and presently consists of 600 museums ([www.openarchaeology.info/venues](http://www.openarchaeology.info/venues)). Back then a logo was also designed for AOAMs to use. All this was done in close cooperation with EXARC. Although the book itself was a huge success, after a short period of time it was shown that the logo was not well integrated in the AOAM world. People did not use it, they did not feel it was theirs.

**Branding is the design and the use of a unique name and theme fitting the organisation like a glove.** The brand is not only a well-recognised logo. It also embodies the corporate identity and is therefore the perfect tool to be used in the communication. A brand needs to be dissimilar to any other, highlighting the unique selling points. It must be relevant to the users, easily linking with the world of the visitors.

Having two logos used by one and the same organization was difficult. So in 2012, when a new Corporate Identity was created for EXARC, the logo was much simplified – the EXARC Logo now become a symbol AOAMs can relate to. Therefore the AOAM logo was abandoned.

## What was the Use of OpenArch?

During the OpenArch project we designed a Corporate Identity for the 11 members to use when communicating about OpenArch. There was a variety of products designed including roll up banners, several kinds of flyers, brochures, shields, letterhead, flags, boards, adverts and websites. We also created a PR BOOK with advice on communication for AOAMs.

During the 5 years project we realized that it is extremely difficult for partners to follow all the rules. When many are still struggling with their own Corporate Identity and Branding, adding new things is not easy. That is why in the *PR BOOK* (Zielińska & Paardekooper, 2013) we included simple TIPS & Tricks, and Does & Don'ts about PR and communications, including stories from the field, and explaining branding and Corporate Identity. It was sent to over 150 Archaeological Open-Air Museums in Europe, and from March 2015 is also available on line as open access.

## Social Media

In the years 2011-2015 (thanks to OpenArch support) we have made a huge growth on Social Media. By the end of 2015 we will have 15,000 followers on different media. We concentrate on the issues which we have in common: experimental archaeology and archaeological open-air museums. Reporting on different conferences, what is happening to our members, responding to issues, replying to many questions, helping students, colleagues and museums – not to forget promoting OpenArch activities – the EXARC brand has become one of the strongest within the AOAM world. We have been also advising partners within OpenArch about use of Social Media.

In 2015 we checked if there are any huge differences with 2013 in the strategies on Communication between partners in OpenArch. It was nice to see that partners who were not making such a good use of PR materials in 2013 added extra products. It would be good to know in a year or two if they saw any positive effect from it. It is also good to see that people are still using Social Media, and some even have more accounts than before. Again the question is raised – how often do they post? The websites of almost all the partners have been updated within the last 3 years: excellent.

It is a proven fact that when we have motivated partners and somebody who can guide them and help, museums do change. Of course they also have to make changes due to the changing market, but especially the smaller museums can use the help of more experienced ones and of EXARC.

## Building the Brand

We believe that small steps such as adding a common logo, or using a common flags / banners could make the museums stronger and make them part of the bigger family. We realize that many AOAMs are actually using the EXARC logo when organizing a conference. So the work done over the past years has paid off. We have been asked many times to help with marketing and promoting members' events. That also proves that they feel connected.

Over the years EXARC created several products. The Corporate Identity has changed, but the branding message has always remained the same:

**EXARC is a platform to connect and exchange information about Archaeological Open-Air Museums and related subjects, and promote this kind of Museum and Experimental Archaeology to the wider public.**

We need to remember to not make the AOAM brand overscientific or overcommercial. Brand experiences should never contradict each other, even if used in different stages and with different target groups. EXARC is an ICOM Affiliated Organisation representing archaeological open-air museums, experimental archaeology, ancient technology and interpretation. Those four legs are designed in such way that they support and supplement each other. Coherence in communication adds to that overall credibility. Using the same style of Corporate Identity makes it easy for the public to navigate and makes it more reliable.

**A corporate identity is the overall image of your museum in the minds of all people involved: visitors, staff and stakeholders.**

It keeps all your communication in tune with each other giving a sense of identity and direction to the museum in question. Every single piece of correspondence you issue to customers carries your company's image and reinforces your message. Visitors and stakeholders will immediately recognise that what they see or hear is yours and therefore trust the message better. Massive repetition is crucial. The corporate identity should be applied throughout all your products, those online and printed.

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EXARC website: [www.exarc.net](http://www.exarc.net)

OpenArchaeology website:  
[www.openarchaeology.info](http://www.openarchaeology.info)

OpenArch website: [www.openarch.eu](http://www.openarch.eu)

## TIP

With not many people knowing exactly what to expect, it is important to start using a one-liner describing the brand of EXARC as part of all the communication.

What you promise with your brand should be coherent with what you deliver. So we do not do unexpected things. A good brand which is used well, helps raise esteem and reputation. It is a foundational piece in the marketing communication. It is better to use existing network of EXARC and its strength to the brand of AOAM, instead of creating something new which would duplicate the message. Therefore OpenArch activities are used to strengthen the EXARC AOAM Brand. We need to be consistent.

### Where do we stand?

EXARC has different means of spreading the message:

- The online Journal which is published 4 times a year;
- The printed journal (EXARC Digest) appears twice a year;
- EXARC organizes or helps organizing several conferences throughout the year;
- EXARC staff joins several conferences a year, where AOAMs are presented, including their history, goals and problems;
- EXARC is very active in social media with currently over 15,000 followers in Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and more.

From 2011 to 2014, the numbers of EXARC members rose by 250%. The EXARC logo and Journal are well known symbols of the organization. AOAMs use it to tell their stories in relation to others, making their message stronger and lasting longer.

### EXARC is the brand for Archaeological Open-Air Museums!



**Magdalena Zielińska** is working for EXARC since 2003. She has been designing flyers, folders, Journal and made several websites for EXARC. Within EXARC there have been many EU projects, which she also got involved in like "Delphi" (2004-2005), "liveARCH" (2006-2009), two Grundtvig projects (2010-2012) and "OpenArch" (2011-2015). In 2011 EXARC commissioned a complete new Corporate Identity because EXARC was growing that fast. In 2013 Zielińska edited and published the *PR book for Archaeological Open-Air Museums* with EXARC and made the current PR plan. Presently she is busy with the plan of reinventing EXARC.



# WE ASKED

## Has OpenArch contributed to improve your links on the dialogue with other museums?

### → St Fagans

Seeing how other museums carry out their work is always useful and helps to generate new ideas. We also used the opportunity of our conference to invite in speakers from the wider museum world in order to broaden our professional network. It was a very positive experience. We already had a good dialogue with the UK museum sector before the start of the OpenArch project, but over the course of the last five years our awareness of the AOAM sector has increased greatly.

### → AÖZA

Yes, OpenArch has, especially with regard to the spread of knowledge to other museums. By presentations at conferences and publication of articles in OpenArch in museum newspapers. These international co-operations created ideas for future projects in the museum sector.

### → Archeon

Yes, a great deal. There is a lot of attention paid to Experimental Archaeology, but this seems to be aimed largely at sites that have a prehistoric setting. The WP2 on managing AOAM and the future of AOAM in general seems to have not had as much attention paid to it. But the friendships we have built are permanent.

### → Viminacium

OpenArch has contributed to an improvement to our links with the 'Dialogue with museums'. During the project, we have visited many museums in different countries and are now planning to continue our co-operation with some of them. As for museum organizations, no improvement took place.

### → Parco Montale

Yes, OpenArch improved our links with other museums, especially through the direct participation in meetings and conferences organised in the frame of the project. The partners of OpenArch have met several other international museums/institutions exponents in order to take part, present and share their experiences, cases of study, best and worst practices.

### → Kierikki

The main source has been the OpenArch website, where I (Leena Lehtinen, director of Kierikki Stone Age Centre, ed) read about new experiences and other things. OpenArch has been important for Kierikki because before it we did not know much about what the other archeological open-air museums do and in what type of staff, buildings and work with visitors they have. OpenArch has had enormous effect on our contacts, it also gave money for travel and showed us in practice how our colleagues work. Luckily for all the partners are rather different from big to small.

### → Foteviken

Yes. The project has given all participants an opportunity to network with and deepen their relationship with other like-minded individuals and organisations. It helps tremendously to see the different areas and the stories these museums have. They also provide us with ample learning opportunities where we can see the result of both successful and failed concepts and/or practices. This helps with learning how to foresee future problems and take pre-emptive actions against them. Learning about their AOAMs closely and asking questions about how they work, mediate and resolve technical and personnel issues can provides us with several epiphanies and realisations.

### → Calafell

In our case, there is still a long way to go, but being involved in such a project is inspiring. It makes us improve and stimulate connections with local museums as well as on the national / international level. As a matter of fact, during the project life we have increased our participation in seminars about museum networking, trying to be as much active as possible. Also we are currently considering applying for ICOM membership.

### → Hunebedcentrum

In 2011 when we started in the OpenArch project we had one Stone Age farmhouse near our museum. It was a stood alone and we used it once in a while for activities. From 2012 onwards we learned in the meetings with other museums (OpenArch partners but also others in the Netherlands) how to work more with living history, and about creating constructions and products in the right way for educational and also scientific purposes. We learned what to do and what not.

Another thing we did was an exhibition about the dolmens of Wales in our museum. This was a co-operation between the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff and us, so also an outcome of the OpenArch project.

# New Challenges for Archaeological Open-Air Museums



Fig 1. Entrance of one of the reconstructed dwellings at Terramara of Montale Archaeological Open-Air Museum (IT).

by Cristiana Zanasi

**The study of ancient peoples undeniably constitutes a powerful tool for understanding the world around us, and a universe in which the answers to so many unresolved questions can be found, by looking in the mirror. A theme which now demands a concrete commitment from those whose job it is – schools, universities, museums – to promote knowledge and understanding of the most ancient of human civilisations.**

Archaeological parks and open-air museums play a unique role in this field. With almost a century of tradition behind them, archaeological open-air museums developed first in Germany, Scandinavia and other countries of Anglo-Saxon origin. Today, they offer an exciting interface between scientific research and education, bridging the gap between academia and the public. By reconstructing the environments and activities of the past in a striking and evocative way, they manage to convey to a wider audience the results of excavation and research.

The development of archaeological open-air museums has gone hand in hand with the emergence of experimental archaeology. Indeed, this scientific discipline has found fertile soil for testing its procedures and methods in this kind of museum. In addition, there is a growing demand by the public and schools for a form of archaeology-tourism that is increasingly taking the form of *edutainment*. Here the *learning-by-doing* philosophy evinces the visitors' emotional involvement: they are transported backwards in time, where they are immersed in the atmosphere of bygone ages. Not infrequently, this process is facilitated by the presence of qualified staff dressed in period costume and skilled in historical re-enactment.

In this sense archaeological open-air museums are an enriching counterpart to more traditional archaeological museums, with a cultural offering that bridges the gap between the object/find and the context in which it was found and offers visitors the opportunity to see and experience it in its original context.

Today these museums are called upon to meet the challenge posed by rapidly evolving forms of communication. This requires innovative tools and language that actively engage the public to effectively portray the traditions of ancient populations in all their complexity: the actions, gestures, environments and symbols that are part of the foundation of our very identity.



The extensive experience that open-air archaeological parks have in interpreting history and bringing it to life make them the ideal places for “performing” the past. Thanks to the increasingly sophisticated tools and methods used in archaeology and other fields, it is now possible to analyse with greater precision the traces that humans have left over the course of millennia, thus allowing us to reconstruct the socio-economic organisation and the technological development of ancient peoples and to identify the defining characteristics of their settlements and the environment in which they lived.

The interactivity offered by new technologies and by storytelling, are tools that enhance representations of the past, creating new opportunities for exchange and involvement with schools and the public.

An awareness of the social reach and communicative capacity of museums – a concept which is now widely accepted – should encourage them to define strategies for achieving the objectives defined by ICOM: “A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution [...] which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.” (ICOM definition of a museum).

Such strategies must also strive for an “affective” openness towards the community, that is, the “democratization of the museum”. In this sense, one of the more relevant topics of debate among museum professionals is the revision of language and the search for an experiential dimension to the visit, aimed at actively involving visitors.

Museums today look at the “narrative” with renewed interest, recognising its powerful cognitive value, but also its enormous educational potential. After all, “there does not exist, and never has existed, a people without narrative” (Barthes, 1966), and from Homeric poems to medieval minstrels, narrative has been the primary storyline of communication. Dialogue between theatres and museums could create a mutual short-circuit, in which theatres help museums to support the communication of certain themes, stimulating the emotional dimension of knowledge, and museums encourage theatres to find new forms that reinforce their role as a communicative and educational tool.

Regarding the role of ICT, focus has now shifted from initial doubts about its use in museums, to how it can be used most effectively. This means choosing from the vast array of available options the device (or devices) that are best suited to a museum’s specific needs and purposes. LBS (*location-based service*) applications, the services *near me* and *mobile application*, augmented reality (AR) and real video images (RVI) can become an indispensable tool, as they can facilitate understanding and active involvement, without replacing the museum itself. In particular, *virtual archaeology*, effectively used for years as a means of verification and evaluation of data as well as representation of research results, is now fully considered a high-profile instrument for educational communication and dissemination. Digital environments and tools, when properly used, offer tremendous opportunities for experimenting with models of communication and promotion that can reach and connect geographically, linguistically and culturally diverse audiences.



Fig 2. The app Calafell Open-Air Museum (CAT) uses augmented reality technologies.



Fig 3. Storyteller and demonstrator in AOZA (DE).

**These are the challenges that face AOAMs nowadays. The experience underscores the fact that there are no definitive formulas for relating with diverse audiences in different museums, countries and archaeological contexts. Each AOAM is called to define and test (along with other museums or cultural and education institutions, possibly of different countries, in a process of discussion and exchange of experiences and best practices) specific solutions and tools for the public involvement and the development of new audiences, using innovative forms of cultural offerings and communication.**



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She graduated in Ancient History at the University of Bologna with a study in Archaeology about protohistoric settlement of the Terramara di Redù - Nonantola (Modena, Italy) and she obtained a Certificate of attendance of the Specialization Course in General Didactics and for Museums at the University of Rome.

## Calafell

## OPENARCH LEAD PARTNER

**Member of ICOM: NO**

The Iberian Citadel of Calafell is a **centre of experimental archaeology**, an archaeological open-air museum where visitors can see what life was like in the **Iron Age 2,500 years ago**.

It is the first archaeological site in the Iberian Peninsula to have been reconstructed by using experimental archaeological techniques.

## CATALONIA (SPAIN)

**Best practice:** Contacts with Museum of Archaeology of Catalonia (MAC) are useful for us. Despite the fact that La Ciutadella is not a museum linked to the MAC organisation, the 'Iberian Route network' has allowed for closer contact and for the dissemination of La Ciutadella work. Recently we have co-operated on exhibitions organised by MAC about the Iberian world. With the Ullastret site, we collaborated on their successful exhibition on a national level, "Els Caps Tallats d'Ullastret" and their international exhibition "Northern Iberians: Life, Death and Ritual on the other side of the Pyrenees") to which La Ciutadella provided material (including material produced thanks to OpenArch).

Another positive example of networking, in this case not only with museums but also with other cultural institutions, was our participation in the roundtable organised by the Institute of Penedesian Studies, which resulted in the making of "The White Book of Culture in El Penedès". It was an interesting discussion forum about the museums in the area.

**Bad examples:** Of course, there are always upsetting experiences, as some attempted to create a local museum route for cultural tourism but did not succeed, because the lack of continuity and a clear leadership.

[www.calafellhistoric.org](http://www.calafellhistoric.org)

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**NEMO** - Network of European Museums Organisations: “NEMO is an independent network of national museum organisations representing the museum community of the member states of the Council of Europe. Among its objectives, NEMO supports European museums in their aim to learn from each other by networking and co-operation and shows them ways to participate in the existing European cultural policies in its function as an information channel between European institutions and museums”. <http://www.ne-mo.org>

**ICOM** - International Council of Museums: “ICOM is the international organisation of museums and museum professionals which is committed to the conservation, continuation and communication to society of the world’s natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible”. <http://icom.museum>

**ICMAH** - International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History: “ICMAH is the ICOM International Committee dedicated to museums of archaeology and history. It offers museums of archaeology and history an opportunity to communicate with each other, providing them with advice and information. ICMAH publishes a newsletter, ICMAH Information, leads several working groups and organises an annual Meeting”. <http://network.icom.museum/icmah>

**CECA** - Committee for Education and Cultural Action: “CECA is one of the oldest International Committees of ICOM. With over 1,000 members coming from about 85 countries, CECA is also one of its largest Committees. To promote the development of museum education and cultural action and to encourage scientific research are among its aims”. <http://network.icom.museum/ceca>

**IMTAL** - International Museum Theatre Alliance: “Since 1990 IMTAL has promoted theatre and live performance as interpretative techniques in cultural institutions”. <http://imtal-europe.net>

**IAMFA** – International Association of Museum Facility Administrators: “IAMFA is an international nonprofit organization devoted to meeting the professional needs of museum facility and security administrators, conservators, and their suppliers especially in their efforts to set and attain standards of excellence and quality in the sustainable design, construction, operation and maintenance of world-class cultural facilities”. <http://newiamfa.org>

**AEOM** – Association of European Open Air Museums: Affiliated Organisation to ICOM, AEOM “is composed of directors and of senior staff members. The association’s objectives are the exchange of scholarly, technical, practical and organisational experience in relation to open-air museums and the promotion of their activities”. <http://aeom.eu>

**NOOAM** – Nordic Association of Archaeological Open Air Museums: NOOAM is “the association of Archaeological Open-Air museums, parks and projects that brings living history alive through education and/or experimental archaeology and technology in the Nordic countries”. <http://www.nooam.se>

**ALHFAM** – The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums: “ALHFAM draws its membership from a broad spectrum of individuals and organizations involved in the collection, preservation or interpretation of material culture, traditional skills and historical processes. Members include volunteers, reenactors, institutional staff and vendors of goods or services. ALHFAM’s original focus on farming and agriculture has expanded to embrace disciplines from architecture to zymurgy and many in between. ALHFAM maintains, and seeks to expand relationships with other museum, historical and interpretive organizations with related interests”. <http://www.alhfam.org>

**EUROPA NOSTRA** - “Europa Nostra is the Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe, representing individuals and organisations active in the field of cultural heritage. In 50 years Europa Nostra has built a network of more than 400 member and associate organisations from all over Europe. They represent millions of citizens supporting or working for heritage as volunteers and professionals”. <http://www.europanostra.org>

**EUROPEAN FORUM OF HERITAGE ASSOCIATIONS** - “The European Forum of Heritage Associations was constituted on 18 April 1990 in Rome as a platform for the European volunteer movement in the field of cultural heritage. Its primary aim was to heighten public awareness about the cultural heritage of Europe through the creation of a network for the non-professional world, in particular in the field of archaeology”. <http://www.heritageforum.org>

**EMF - EUROPEAN MUSEUM FORUM** - “The European Museum Forum operates under the auspices of the Council of Europe and is involved in far-ranging activities throughout the cultural field. It is one of the leading organizations in Europe for developing the public quality of European museums and has established this primary position after 37 years of providing its service”. <http://www.europeanmuseumforum.info>

**EAEA - EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS** - “EAEA is a European NGO whose purpose is to link and represent European organisations directly involved in adult learning. Originally known as the European Bureau of Adult Education, EAEA was founded in 1953 by representatives from a number of European countries. EAEA promotes adult learning and access to and participation in non-formal adult education for all, particularly for groups currently under-represented”. <http://www.eaea.org>

**EUROPEANA** - “Europeana rolls multimedia library, museum and archive into one digital website combined with Web 2.0 features. It offers direct access to digitised books, audio and film material, photos, paintings, maps, manuscripts, newspapers and archival documents that are Europe’s cultural heritage. Visitors to [www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu) can search and explore different collections in Europe’s cultural institutions in their own language in virtual form, without having to visit multiple sites or countries”. <http://www.europeana.eu>

**MUSEUM CHANGE LIVES** - The most influential and ground breaking document in the UK museum sector at present is Museums Change Lives. This sets out the social role that museums can play, and AOAMs are ideally placed to play a part in this. <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives>

**THE HAPPY MUSEUM** - The Happy Museum project pursues an agenda that reimagines the nature of museums in a manner that is linked to well-being and environmental sustainability, both areas in which AOAMs can excel. <http://www.happymuseumproject.org>

**THE PARTICIPATORY MUSEUM** - The participatory museum looks at how museums can embed themselves into their local communities and make themselves more relevant. Again, this is an approach which plays to the strengths of AOAMs. <http://www.participatorymuseum.org>

**HO!I** – Hands On! International Association of Children’s Museums: “HO!I is an international professional organisation representing and advocating for its non-profit member institutions from around the world. HO!I supports the important role of children’s museum as centres which foster curiosity and imagination and where play inspires creativity, informal and lifelong learning. With over 90 members representing more than 30 countries, the association provides an international forum for discussion and professional development” <http://www.hands-on-international.net>



# OPENARCH

A five year Culture project with 11 partners, based on EXARC's key strengths - its supportive community and international perspective. OpenArch built a permanent partnership of archaeological open-air museums, raising standards among participants and improving the visitor experience across Europe.