

live ARCH

**LIVING HISTORY IN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
OPEN AIR MUSEUMS**



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*live*ARCH Final Event H⁸

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by Gunter Schöbel,
Museum Direktor, Project Partner *liveARCH*



Although, 1:1 productions of “Living History” lost their actual meaning in the German speaking countries at the end of WW II, they gained importance and became trendy again after the new beginnings in the 1990s, especially within the fields of folklore, prehistory, early history, and history in general. In archaeological open air museums, which are committed to communicate and interpret history spanning from the time of the first hunters and gatherers to the late Middle Ages, this form of presenting history, the 1:1 productions, becomes increasingly important. But also outside of the museum landscape, the realistic presentation of the past has won in popularity and has resulted in high viewing rates for TV productions. This opens the way for event managers, city authorities, and event park managers, to exploit themes of the historical sciences, in order to market their establishments and leisure programs more effectively to the public. These marketing strategies, however, suggest that the quality of “Living History” programs offered in a scientific context at open air museums would be of lesser quality. This is especially true when profit is the main objective, as can often be observed in commercially oriented establishments. What do we mean by quality, when we speak about “Life History” presentations? The issues surrounding this question were addressed in theory and practice during a conference titled “Reorientation in the convergence zone between

leisure events and educational mission” that took place on May 21–24, 2009 in Unteruhldingen at Lake Constance. This conference volume presents a summary of the contributions and the results.

The debate was opened by representatives of 11 European countries, who met at Lake Constance on May 21 and 22, 2009 for a conference to the EU project LiveArch, Culture 2000 Education and Culture of the European Union opened the debate. The conference “H⁸ – Eight countries present ‘Living History’”, focused on the educational mission of the archaeological open air museums and the question how to reconstruct the past most authentically. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the spectrum of methods and to exchange knowledge and experience concerning the effective interpretation and conveyance of historical facts from different points of view. The dialogue centered around the exceptional projects of individual countries, such as the renowned “Biskupin Festival” in Poland, and the depiction of certain epochs, such as the life style of Roman soldiers and gladiators, that have been presented by the senior historian **Markus Junkelmann** for many years. Nevertheless, there was also room for highly unusual projects like the one of **Otto Jolias Steiner** (Agency for Adventure Worlds, Switzerland), who staged the project Matterhorn “Zermatlantis” as an excavation. Other participants and presenters had sent representatives of



state museums and universities, who reported about their approach to live interpretation of past epochs. **Ulrich Mehler** discussed the theme of medieval markets and their effect as a historical component. **Ruth Bader** introduced the first plans for the 600th anniversary of the Council of Constance (1414–1418). **Harald Siebenmorgen** from the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe elucidates the “Evènements” in his house as highlights for the museums visitors. **Erwin Keefer** discussed in depth the possibilities of visitor oriented productions of history at the Württembergisches Landesmuseum in Stuttgart, a traditional museum housed in an old castle and located in the center of the metropolis.

The touristic view was presented by **Rainer Hartmann** (Institute for Leisure and Tourist Management at the University of Bremen). He illustrated the overall results of the event marketing and aspects of tourism and leisure science, which became the basis for a workshop. Following the conference on May 23 and 24, the theoretical discussions became practice for the conference participants and museums visitors.

At the festival weekend, 14 historical groups presented throughout the Unteruhldingen open air museum, a variety of Living History events that are rooted in various European regions with the goal to authentically convey 5000 years of European history. Actors and participants of the ARD TV series “Stone Age – The Experiment” were part of the festival together with the Celtic group “Carnyx”, Roman gladiators and Magyars, who demonstrated the fighting techniques of the early Eurasian nomads (Hungarian horse people). An additional highlight of the festival weekend was the test run of the archaeologist **Dominique Görlitz** in a prehistoric reed boat in preparation for his plan to cross the Atlantic. Beyond these major events, all participating European museums provided insight into the wide range of specific presentations staged by archaeological open air museums at their respective locations. This was in spite of the multiple different languages a great benefit for the conference. Scotland, for example, illustrated environmental history and prehistoric plant utilization based on results of palaeobotany. The Netherlands employed the “Museum Theatre” as a form of interactive historical conveyance, Latvia demonstrated music archaeology in their presentation, and Sweden explained the life and combat equipment of the Vikings based on archaeological finds and historical written resources. Italy demonstrated the bronze foundry technique, a self-

explanatory ancient practice for metal processing.

In addition to the broad spectrum of historical groups, there are a vast number of re-enactment groups. At the festival, popular amateur groups from the region staged events from Celtic times to the High Middle Ages. The spectators greatly enjoyed the "Camp Life" and the "Tournaments and Lancing" of the "Ulfinger Alamanni" or the "Württemberg Knights". The Celtic group "Carnyx" and the "Roman group Junkelmann" demonstrated scientifically reconstructed living conditions during the respectively chosen periods. After the first staging of "multi-period events", a concluding evaluation of these events was conducted by students of the Eberhard Karl University Tübingen based on a visitor survey. The study and an internal evaluation by the organizers, clearly evidenced the weak points of such a major historical festival with more than 5000 visitors, but they also showed benefits. The Lake Dwelling Museum Unteruhldingen and the community of the archaeological open air museums have learned a lot from the H⁸ conference and the historical festival that followed. Living History as an important instrument to convey the past has become an integral part of the museum's central mission. After the conferences of the Open Air Museum for Cultural Heritage Cloppenburg and Kieckberg at the University of Freiburg and

the Landesmuseum Bonn in 2008 and 2009, the archaeological museums are now focusing more strongly on the still controversial topics. As "playgrounds" and "showcase" of historical science, it is their responsibility to provide entertaining exhibits and events that convey historical context. The question remains whether this conference has send a clear signal for a more intense cooperation between science, museums, and the protagonists of the illustrated experimental archaeology.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all representatives, colleagues at the participating 8 museums, and the more than 200 contributors and participants of the event, named at the end of this conference volume.

by Gunter Schöbel,
Museum Direktor, Project Partner *liveARCH*

Good morning,

I would like to first welcome our esteemed guests Vice District Administrator Kruschwitz, Mayor Lamm, and Mr. Haaga from the Pfahlbau Association's Board of Directors, as well as our colleagues from the *liveARCH*, and our speakers.

In the name of the Lake Dwelling Museum Unteruhldingen, I would like to sincerely welcome you at Schloss Maurach at Lake Constance. I am pleased that the State Bank Baden-Württemberg offered to us the opportunity to meet for the conference, here in the former monastery of the Cistercians Order with its wonderful ambience. In particular I thank those, Mr. Sauer, Chair of the Board of Directors, and Mr. Ziegler, member of the Management, who have made this possible for us. I also sincerely thank the project members of *liveARCH* and the Directorate-General of "Culture 2000" in Brussels, who initiated this event.

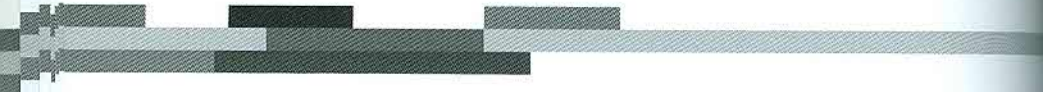
liveARCH is a union of eight European Museums in a three-year project that stretches from Lofoten at the Polar region in the north to Modena in Northern Italy in the south. These eight museums attempt to communicate living history at the archaeological open-air museums, hence the name *liveARCH* that stands for living archaeology. The efforts are directed toward a broad audience across

all social classes. The purpose is to decide on how to reach the goal to provide quality conveyance and educational work, and the variety of opportunities in a museum.

Meanwhile this is the 7th *liveARCH* conference since 2007, and we have already learned about the different facets of the work in an open-air museum. The Dialogue with the visitor in Scotland, quality standards in Sweden, marketing in Norway, craft skills in Latvia, or the first European Congress of the archaeological open-air museum in March in Modena, Italy, as well.

We have learned from each other, how "good museum" is made today, and we hope that we can now implement our knowledge accurately and profitably to the visitor for the benefit of our countries. Europe and the world are at a threshold, and we need orientation and togetherness in our cultural representation. This is why I am especially pleased that today representatives of politics, Vice District Administrator Mr. Kruschwitz, and Mr. Lamm, our Mayor will open our conference, and Mr. Haaga, Vice Chairman of the Pfahlbau Association, the museum's funding body, will welcome us on this beautiful day.

For the organizational procedure, there will be short discussions, either individually or in a block after the presentations, for you to join in. Today, Mr. Peter



Walter from the Lake Dwelling Museum and at noontime, Mr. Roeland Paardekooper from the project office will lead the conference, and I would like to express my appreciation to them. Ms. Floetemeyer, whom I also welcome sincerely, will try to translate the contributions to the discussions from German to English. Other contact persons for all questions of organization are Mr. Walter, Ms. Sabine Schöbel, Ms. Schmidt-Henning, and Ms. Siebenhaller or me.

My greatest wish is that all things you have worked for in this conference, you will take back to your country and into your museums. These are, however, not only qualified expert presentations, but also things you enjoyed in this extraordinarily beautiful location, an old monastery at the lake. And, if the weather becomes too hot, just refresh yourself with a swim in the lake. Internalize the tranquillity and the virtue of this place – so that it not only becomes an unforgettable event contextual, but also a personal – well, just a magnificent event.

