

# AIMA Newsletter N°15 February 2020

## Part 1



Harvesting coarse salt on Noirmoutier  
Photo Sophie Normand-Collignon

**Agriculture \* Food \* Environment \* People**

A.I.M.A.

International Association of Agricultural Museums

Internationale Vereinigung der Agrarmuseen

Международная Ассоциация сельскохозяйственных музеев

Association internationale des musées d'agriculture

Asociación Internacional de Museos Agrícolas

(ICOM-Unesco Affiliated Organisation)



## Highlights

- ❖ **AIMA 2020 Congress at the MERL in Reading, UK**
- ❖ **Special Guest articles: sea salt, the *vallus*, roads before roads, the man who wrote on floorboards, come and see the wagon collection at the MERL!**
- ❖ ***Tools & Tillage* is now online: a collaborative project**
- ❖ **Announcements, Exhibits, Reports on meetings**



- ❖ Be sure to visit the **AIMA website** at <http://agriculturalmuseums.org/> for more information and frequent updates on subjects concerning museums of agriculture.
- ❖ ... and send this **Newsletter** on to your friends to encourage them to join us in the AIMA.





**AIMA Congress 20-23 July 2020**  
**at the MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) in**  
**Reading, UK**  
**“Past and Future Agricultures”**



Here in Reading, at the Museum of English Rural life (The MERL), we're just putting the final touches to an exciting programme for AIMA 2020 on the theme of *Past and Future Agricultures*. We expect online bookings to open in January and are happy to answer any questions in the meantime.

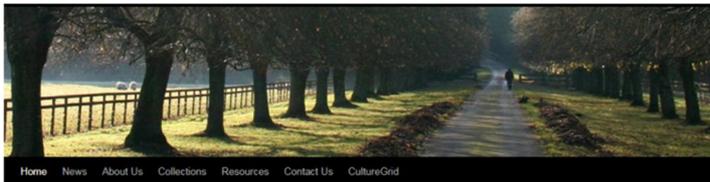
The last time the AIMA chose The MERL as a venue for its international congress was back in 1976. As you might imagine, a great deal has changed since then in terms of the wider UK sector and rural museums specifically, and of course the practices and patterns of British farming itself. We look forward to welcoming members of the AIMA and other partners to join us here at the University of Reading where we are set to explore these shifting narratives, and to share ongoing efforts to collect, preserve, interpret, and engage audiences in the world of English farming.



We are set to welcome participants from at least four continents and hope that this congress will extend efforts to reach out, to grow the AIMA, and to ensure that it becomes ever more inclusive and representative of farm histories worldwide. With the support of our partners in the UK's dedicated Rural Museums Network and with the help of an artist collective, we will give conference goers a taste of the popular MERL Lates programme. This evening of food, music, and creative interventions throughout the galleries will be a chance for delegates to meet and mingle both with each other and with members of The MERL's visiting public.

### Rural Museums Network

*A registered charity that promotes learning and encourages a wider understanding of the UK's rural heritage*



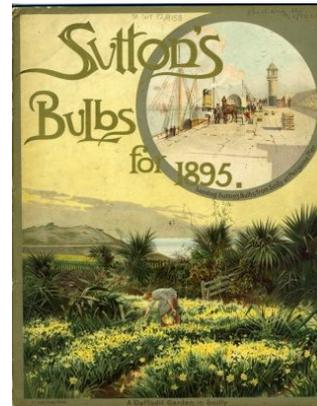
As well as the chance to explore The MERL's displays and collections in more detail, we'll also be laying on special visits to see how other UK museums tackle some of the shared challenges we face. Conference participants will be welcomed by colleagues at the nearby Chiltern Open Air Museum where delegates will be able to see an example of open air approaches to communicating agricultural heritage. We'll also pay a visit to the University of Oxford to see how agricultural stories play a part in the global histories that their world-famous museums and collections seek to display.



Right: Reading Abbey, Hospitium of St. John the Baptist, Author Tom Bastin, Wikipedia Creative Commons

And, of course, we'll have the usual blend of fascinating papers drawn from across our vibrant and diverse organisation and beyond. Together these will help us explore many different aspects and common challenges that lie at the heart of agricultural museum work. Interspersed throughout core congress content and a series of topic-specific breakaway sessions will be three headline keynote lectures, focussed on the role of intangible cultural heritage, the value of contemporary art, and the potential of social media as powerful vehicles

for generating, delivering, and disseminating agricultural histories, exhibits, and public programmes.



Reading itself is an historic market town, known for the ruins of an historic Abbey, and for the 'three Bs' of the nineteenth century, these being its main industries at that time: beer (Simmonds Brewery), bulbs (Suttons Seeds), and biscuits (Huntley and Palmers). Suttons and Huntley and Palmers both boasted a global reach and we hold their archives here at The MERL. Simmonds' buildings meanwhile were amalgamated into a larger British brewery and its site became home to a major shopping centre called The Oracle. Reading sits on the River Thames, a mere half an hour by train from central London and another half hour by train from Oxford. It serves as a gateway to the West Country and both Cardiff and the Welsh Valleys lie little more than 2 hours away.



We hope that this brief preview has whetted your appetites and that many of you will be marking those dates in your diaries. Watch this space or check the AIMA website from January onwards for details of how to reserve your spot at AIMA 2020. Bookings for congress attendance and accommodation will be processed via the University of Reading. We look forward to seeing you all next July.

Ollie Douglas (President) and Isabel Hughes (First Vice-President)



# Debra Reid (2nd Vice-President) on Agriculture Museums and the Environment

The public wants to know how museum collections can help them learn more about environmental change.

Agricultural museum staff have been advocating for this for nearly forty years, but the fact that the public wants it justifies a review of AIMA advocacy for this in the past, and some examples of addressing this public interest today.

AIMA member Edward L. Hawes, in April 1981, urged members of the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) to “go to the ground of your place, its natural and human history. Examine what changes have taken place over time” and show “the limits of our natural and energy resources which have shaped and will continue to shape human lives and society” (1981 ALHFAM Proceedings, quotes on pg. 2 and 4). AIMA met for CIMA VI later in 1981, at Julita Manor in Sweden. Participants took inspiration from “reiterated efforts” of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) to inform humans of their influence on nature and to restore ecological balance to the world. They believed that “agrarian museums” had unique potential to further this international goal and they urged AIMA to pursue this at its 1984 congress (CIMA VII) (*ACTA Museorum Agriculturae*, 1981-1982, vol. 16, nos. 1-2, pg. 3). Attendees to the 1984 CIMA held in Paris and Saint-Riquier, France, discussed “The Role of Rural Population in the Contradiction between the Development of Agricultural Production and Maintaining Life Environment since Century XVIII” (*ACTA Museorum Agriculturae*, 1985, vol. 18, nos. 1, pg. 13).

## Fast forward 35 years

The general public continues to embrace the potential of artifacts as evidence of environmental change.

I and David Vail, an environmental historian, co-wrote *Interpreting the Environment at Museums and Historic Sites* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019) to address this interest. We conceptualize museum collections as products of the environment and stressed how artifacts can inform environmental interpretation, providing examples of how natural landscapes support history interpretation and vice versa. We advocate for museums to ally with others involved in environmental education and sustainable development. For example, case studies document consumer products as evidence of resource exploitation. One contributor, Al Hester, Historic Sites Coordinator, South Carolina State Park Service, argues that plantation landscapes should be *designated as sites of conscience*.

My work allows me to test these ideas every day. As curator of agriculture and the environment at The Henry Ford, I interact with a huge collection that contains innumerable opportunities to document environmental change. The collection consists of about 1 million artifacts and a total of five miles in linear feet of archival material (representing about 25 million separate pieces of paper). Many artifacts result from exploitation of natural resources, be that ore turned into metal artifacts, or timber made into furniture, or quarried marble turned into tabletops. More specifically, the automotive and agricultural collections at The Henry Ford provide a launch pad to discuss environmental change on a global scale.



Dust storm approaching Stratford, Texas. Dust Bowl surveying in Texas. theb1365, Historic C&GS Collection, cfhyr, Author: NOAA George E. Marsh Album, Wikipedia Creative Commons; Selling Produce at an American farmers' market

Many people debate whether industrialization has had lasting influence on the permanent geological substrate of the planet. Two scientists coined the term “Anthropocene” in 2000. Since then the debate about whether this new epoch exists or not has moved beyond scientific debates to public discourse. The Anthropocene Working Group (AWG aka Subcommittee on Quaternary Stratigraphy, a constituent body of the International Commission on Stratigraphy within the International Union of Geological Sciences) voted “yes” to treat the Anthropocene “as a formal chrono-stratigraphic unit defined by the GSSP” (Global Boundary Stratotype Section and Point). For more information, consult numerous publications issued by the AWG available at <http://quaternary.stratigraphy.org/working-groups/anthropocene/>

The AWG identified the following phenomena as distinctive to the chrono-stratigraphic unit:

an order-of-magnitude increase in erosion and sediment transport associated with urbanization and agriculture; marked and abrupt anthropogenic perturbations of the cycles of elements such as carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus and various metals together with new chemical compounds; environmental changes generated by these perturbations, including global warming, sea-level rise, ocean acidification and spreading oceanic ‘dead zones’; rapid changes in the biosphere both on land and in the sea, as a result of habitat loss, predation, explosion of domestic animal populations and species invasions; and the proliferation and global dispersion of many new ‘minerals’ and ‘rocks’ including concrete, fly ash and plastics, and the myriad ‘technofossils’ produced from these and other materials.

Those who argue against the Anthropocene claim that human activity is not visible in geological time. The degree to which museum artifacts can (or cannot) document environmental change pivots on evidence of human activity in geological time. It seems to me most critical that artifacts document what has been *removed* from geological strata. It is difficult to identify an artifact in a museum collection that did not begin through a process of extraction and exploitation of petroleum, ores, and stone. This leaves lasting evidence of loss, not additions to the strata, as the AWG’s list of phenomena stresses.

Tangible collections at The Henry Ford also provide ways to assess change that affects the culture of people in a place (intangible cultural heritage). In other words, extraction of cultural integrity resulted from Henry Ford’s perpetuation of racial stereotypes that reinforced white male privilege. Ecofeminism shines a spotlight on the factors that link racial and gender inequality to human relationships with the environment. Numerous topics await exploration, but studying a food-related topic, growing iceberg lettuce at Henry Ford’s Richmond Hill property near Savannah, Georgia during the 1930s, documents how a combination of Ford’s personal and Ford Motor Company’s corporate purchasing power conflicted with survival tactics devised by rural people in the place where they lived.

The following research questions, which are most relevant to my responsibilities at THF, may have larger application:

1) Can agricultural artifacts in The Henry Ford collection document decisions made that affirm environmental sustainability goals and strategies?

2) Humans used agricultural artifacts historically to change the environment, to make it productive in “unnatural” ways. The general public, however, does not grasp the nuance. Instead, they often consider agricultural artifacts as evidence of technological “progress.” How can agricultural artifacts, instead, become the catalyst for discussing short-term and long-lasting influence on the environment? Overcoming the tendency to simplify technology-history stories as “improvement” or “progress” will take effort, and we can launch a process by which agricultural artifacts introduce and sustain conversations about the degree of damage that agriculture has done to the planet over centuries, as well as the methods farm families adopted to sustain their environments. Both factor into more inclusive histories of family farms that once collectively cultivated most of the U.S. land-mass. Today, approximately 1.5 percent of the U.S. population live on farms, and they manage a remarkable 40 percent of the U.S. land-mass. This warrants effort to understand more fully the art, science, and business of agriculture and its complicated environmental influence.

These two questions and the evidence for The Henry Ford collections document human influence on the environment over time. They can help create a formula by which to measure humans’ extractive tendencies as well as the consequences of those tendencies to the local and regional environment, and ultimately, to the planet and solar system. Ideally this evidence will prompt individual and collective action to sustain the whole. Debra A. Reid

[DebraR@thehenryford.org](mailto:DebraR@thehenryford.org)



## Special Guest articles



### **Between land and sea or the status of the salt-maker**

I am going to propose a small, special walk round in the marsh of the island of Noirmoutier off the western coast of France. Take a good, deep breath... and you will be able to smell the saltbush and the salt wafting towards you. Tourists love the charm of the landscape, as well.

When you, as an amateur, watch salt-makers at work, they look almost like tightrope walkers. This is because they move around on narrow paths and their long tool looks so much like a balancing pole...

However, behind this cliché for tourists, there are women and men. Who are these salt-makers, who work between land and sea?



Left: Blank administrative map of France for geo-location purpose, with regions and départements distinguished. Approximate scale : 1:3,000,000; Author Superbenjamin; This file was derived from [France location map-Regions and départements-2015.svg](#) Wikipedia Creative Commons; Right: Noirmoutier Island by SPOT Satellite; Author Cnes – Spot image, Wikipedia Creative Commons Source: [http://gallery.spotimage.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=1275](http://gallery.spotimage.com/product_info.php?products_id=1275),

Salt-makers have only officially had the status of farmers since 9 May 2019. Recognition of this status had been requested since 1988 when the Rural and Sea-Fishing Law Code was written up (in which Article L311-1 excludes marsh salt production activities from agricultural activities).

The French National Assembly voted unanimously for the draft law bill recognizing salt-manufacture as an agricultural profession. Until then, the profession had had a special status. Salt production was not agricultural, as that implied problems with safeguarding the activity, particularly for work in cooperatives. Nonetheless, salt-makers already depended on the MSA (La Mutualité sociale agricole / farmers' social insurance) for their social regime, the agricultural social mutual fund and the fiscal regime of people working in the salt marshes subject to tax on income earned in the agricultural profits category.

In addition to providing them with more legal security, this recognition enables salt-makers to be eligible for financial aid from the National Fund for Risk Management in agriculture, the FNGRA, in exchange for their contributions. However, producers cannot take advantage of European aid for agricultural production, because salt does not figure in Annex I to Article 38 of the Working Treaty of the European Union. Salt-making is excluded from agricultural production, because salt is a mineral and not a vegetal or animal product.

In France, the salt sector on the Atlantic coast represents 550 producers and 40€ million in sales revenues. These producers also provide a safeguard for the salt marsh areas.

For salt crystal production in the salt marsh process, the raw material used is sea salt, which contains the salt which the salt-maker gathers. Atlantic Ocean water contains around 35g of salt per liter and in the crystalizers, this is concentrated to 300g of salt per liter. Each time a liter of water evaporates, 300g of salt is formed.



Salt-makers construct their salt marsh so that water circulates over the longest path in a network of canals and basins. Water is kept as shallow as possible while moving, to favor evaporation, the only thing that makes crystallization work, and this takes place only in the salt evaporation pond (*oeillet*).

The salt-maker gathers salt in saturated water, both for salt flower (*fleur de sel*) or coarse salt. The alchemy of salt is fascinating, as a salt-maker says: “the liquid element turns into a solid, a solid that is beautiful, that I try to make as white as possible”.



Harvesting coarse salt

Salt from salt marshes is directly linked to the cycle of nature, the sun and the wind. It takes place on the surface of the land, absolutely no object is covered with earth and nothing is added in any way, except for hand-harvesting the salt.

Salt flower is “born” on days when the wind blows towards the salt marshes and wafts over the surface of the salt-saturated water. This brings about evaporation and crystallization on the surface. Tiny crystals float, pushed about by the wind, and pile up on top of one another to form a plate. This is what the salt-maker gathers delicately with the skimmer (*lousse*). Then, the plate is set out to dry naturally in the sun.



Harvesting flower salt with a *lousse*.

Coarse salt crystallizes and settles onto the bottom of the salt pond. It is gathered with a kind of tine-less rake and sits on the harvesting table overnight. The next day, it is carried out of the salt marsh to the working surface (*tesselier*), where the salt-maker builds up the salt pile harvested (*mulon*). After the harvest, it undergoes no treatment whatsoever.

Salt-makers see themselves as working in agriculture and lay claim to that status. In fact, they define themselves as *farmers of the sea*. Also, as for wines, salt marshes have their own *terroir*. Aside from the work of the salt-maker, the early start of the marsh or the arrival of the first salt is linked in part to the make-up of the clay. Furthermore, producers talk about the salt marshes which they call "the first ones" (*primes*). They talk about themselves when they talk about the clay of their salt marshes and this is the material the salt marshes were made from.

With the clay, the salt-maker meticulously keeps up the hydraulic network of the salt marsh. Without this element, there would be no salt marshes as we know them.

Clay is an impermeable material. Salt water must not filter into it through the bottom of the basins or else it cannot evaporate. In the process of crystallization, the sources of energy are underwritten by the clay bottom of the crystalizers (*oeillets*) that stock up on heat and let it off during the night, thus enabling the crystals to form.

This material has a direct influence on the gestures of the salt-makers and on the way they foresee and anticipate the activity, because the nature of the bottom changes over the course of a season. When there is a problem, the clay can become an element of resistance, especially when overheated, so the salt-maker pays special attention to the bottom of the various basins and especially to the bottom of the *oeillets*. It is up to the salt-maker to read the signs and decipher the traces left by the work s/he does.

Salt-makers' work is lent its pace by the cycle of the seasons. The salt season is in the summer months, because both sun and wind are needed to make the salt "come". This is when the rewards reaped make up for the long hours spent in slush in the spring for the hard work of carefully cleaning the salt marsh. When the first heavy rain comes, if there is not enough sunshine afterwards to make the salt evaporate... this means the salt season is over.

So, the salt-makers put their tools away and flood the salt marsh with a layer of protective water so the clay that makes up the hydraulic unit of the salt marsh will be safe from heavy rains and frost. Work will only take up again with the return of spring.

If you happen to come across the salt marshes during a winter walk, looking through the transparent water and the plashing of the thin waves, you may feel like you are discovering forgotten remnants. The marsh is also the heart of the long time (*longue durée*) of salt-making. A history over a thousand years old...

Sophie Normand-Collignon, ethnologist and salt-maker [s.normandcollignon@gmail.com](mailto:s.normandcollignon@gmail.com)

**NB The original French version of this article is available on the AIMA website:**

<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/news-2/aima-newsletters/>



## Harvesting with a cart: Pliny's *vallus* and Palladius' *vehiculum*

How can you harvest with a cart pushed backwards? This idea proposed by farmers in northern Gaul is original and unparalleled in the Roman era: it suffices to combine two implements, a cart (*vehiculum*) and a hand tool for cutting or stripping-off. The idea seems simple enough, but the machine that results from it is a bit more than complicated. Let's try to see better how this works.

We can start with testimony from Pliny (1st century CE) and Palladius (around 400 CE?): Pliny, *Natural History* 18,296: "On the vast estates in the provinces of Gaul very large frames (*valli*) fitted with teeth at the edge and carried on two wheels are driven through the corn by a pack-animal pushing from behind; the ears thus torn off fall into the frame." (Cited by K.D. White *Roman Agricultural Implements*, p. 158, translation not attributed)

Palladius, *Opus agriculturae* 7,2:

"In the more level plains of the Gallic provinces they employ the following short cut or labour-saving device (*compendium*) for harvesting. With the aid of a single ox the machine outstrips the efforts of labourers and cuts down the time of the entire harvesting operation. They construct a cart carried on two small wheels. The square surface of the cart is made up

of planks, which slope outwards from the bottom, and so provide a larger space at the top. The height of the plans is lower at the front of this container (*carpentum*); at this point a large number of teeth with spaces between are set up in line to match the height of the ears; they are bent back at the tips. At the back of the vehicle are fastened two very small yoke-beams, like the poles of a litter; at this point an ox is attached by means of a yoke and chains, with his head pointing towards the cart; he must be docile, so that he will not exceed the pace set by the driver. When the latter begins to drive the vehicle through the standing corn, all the ears are seized by the teeth and piled up in the cart, leaving the straw cut off in the field, the varying height of the cut being controlled from time to time by the cowherd who walks behind. In this way, after a few journeys up and down the field the entire harvesting process is completed in the space of a few hours. This machine is useful on open plains or where the ground is level, and in areas where the straw has no economic value.” (Cited by K.D. White *Roman Agricultural Implements*, p. 158, translation not attributed)

Pliny, who is very concise, emphasizes the large frame mounted on a wheeled axle. Palladius, who is more precise and complete, starts with the two-wheeled *vehiculum* on which the large frame or *vallus* or winnowing van is mounted. Some authors tend to use the word *vallus* unsuitably, as if that were the whole machine. This is not the case. *Vallus* means the frame doing the cutting that is mounted on the double-shaft cart chassis.

#### A. Invention of the double-shaft vehicle



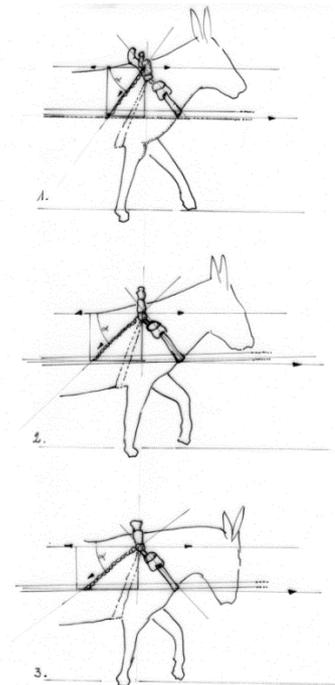
Stella of C. Valerius Ismarus. Two-wheeled vehicle pulled by double shafts. Verona, Museo Maffeiano. (G. RAEPSAET, *Attelages et techniques de transport dans le monde gréco-romain*, Bruxelles, 2002, fig. 123, p.224).

A shaft cart is unknown in Antiquity, as in prehistory. Whether having two or four wheels, vehicles in Antiquity worked with a single shaft plus a yoke, with the exception of the people of Gaul and Germania, where a new vehicle model was created in the first century CE. This was usually a two-wheeled cart with double shafts pulled by a single animal wearing a single yoke (*jouguet*). This represented a surprising innovation that broke entirely with the whole tradition of cartage since the Neolithic, at least in Europe.

This cart was highly successful in northern Gaul, Germania, and in Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy). However, curiously, while the other models based on Gaulish know-how were adopted by Italy, that is not the case for the double shaft. Funerary monument iconography is rich and abundant in northern Gaul and, when compared with archaeological remains, enables us to reconstitute the way it worked. In contrast to the modern double shaft, pulled by a collar or breast-collar, the Gallo-Roman vehicle was harnessed to a small single withers yoke (also called a “neck” yoke).

## B. Moving from draft to pushing requires another innovation that is no less important: the lines

The traditional structure of Gallo-Roman double shaft harness is based on putting the butt-ends of the shafts and the yoke together in a rigid manner. The energy produced by the animal passes from front to back. In the case of the harvesting machine, propulsion has to pass from the back to the front to free up the cutting edge. So the animal must be put at the back, in the double shafts, and only flexible lines enable this transformation of draft into propulsion. This is also a “first”. Double shafts and lines were not to reappear in Europe before the 10th century.



Donkey Marius between the shafts of the harvester. © Malagne.

Diagram from G. RAEPSAET, *Attelages antiques. Jougs et jouguet. Approches ethno-technologiques*, Etudes d'archéologie 9, Centre de Recherches en Archéologie et Patrimoine de l'ULB, Bruxelles, 2016, pl. 8, p.146.

## C. The cutting frame.

Ethnographic testimony provides us with various instruments, kinds of combs, that are used to cut, pull off or strip off ears or plants with seeds. For example, *mesorias* in Asturias. Only cereal plants with a fragile and breakable rachis can be harvested this way. It was François Sigaut who called researchers' attention to this specific point and who established the link between the Gallo-Roman harvester and spelt, a cereal that was frequently found in Gaul and Germania.

When it is fully ripe and the weather is dry, the older sort of spelt, when simply struck by the edge of the hand, would break. This is the principle the harvester works with. There is no crossed scissoring movement, as in mechanical harvesters developed in the United States in the 19th century. In the case of the *vallus*, the spelt ear is pinched in the rack-comb and, thanks to the speed at which it strikes, the rachis breaks and falls into the *vallus* frame.



The frame-comb during harvesting.  
© Malagne.

#### D. Does it really work?

Yes, without a doubt, when all the conditions required come together. Since 2000, a pluri-disciplinary team has been experimenting with the harvester at the Domain of Malagne – Rochefort Archaeopark (Belgium).

The experimental conditions have varied each year, either out of choice or necessity. Climatic conditions are highly changeable in our area, so cereal ripening changes, as does harvest time. Older spelt had the advantage of being able to stay standing once ripened for a certain time, unless there was a storm or heavy rain, but the climax period is short. When optimal conditions prevail, harvesting is rapid and efficient. In just two back-and-forth passages, over 90% of the ears are harvested. The pace is 3 to 4 times faster than harvesting with a scythe or sickle and, when weather conditions are changeable, this can save a whole harvest. Time is money.

After an interruption of several years following the death of our donkey, experimental work took up once again at Malagne in 2015. Having gotten used to the machine at a younger age than her predecessor, the jenny Capucine is more at ease with the *vallus*. Since she is more slender, we had to make some adjustments to the lines and the straps (girths) of the harness.

Now that our donkey is fully operational, we can push our data collection on harvesting farther. The Malagne team thus began measuring the ratio of working time, plot size and yield. We have also carried out a comparison with other agricultural implements. This information will still have to be collected over several years to enable us to draw conclusions.

In parallel to this experimental work, the Malagne harvester has become a highly valued educational tool we present to tourist and school visitors. On our thematic days, plots are harvested with the *vallus* in front of the public. It is obvious that this machine arouses a deep interest on the part of both the scientific community and our curious visitors.

Today, we know that the *vallus* is an innovative and efficient machine, but it has yet to reveal all of its secrets to us and we have years' worth of experiments for the future. In addition to collecting data in figures, the Malagne team plans to work on animal draft by measuring the force deployed by the jenny.



Metal tines, Warcq © Cellule Archéologique des Ardennes.



What is more, metal tines were discovered by archaeologists in Warcq (French Ardennes) in 2013. The first hypothesis is that they may be the tines of a *vallus*... In order to thoroughly examine this proposal, we plan to make replicas of these tines and test them in real work, by adapting the *vallus* we have at Malagne. This experiment is part of an Interreg micro-project led by the Cellule Archéologique des Ardennes (Ardennes Archaeological Cell), the Musée de l'Ardenne de Charleville-Mézières (Charleville-Mézières Ardenne Museum), the Musée archéologique d'Arlon et Malagne (Arlon and Malagne Archaeological Museum), with the support of the European Fund for Regional Development.

The results of this research will be presented in 2020 at Charleville-Mézières, as well as in an exhibit dedicated more broadly to agriculture in Roman Gaul at the Ardenne Museum. The exhibit will also be held in the Arlon Archaeological Museum and the public will be able to attend harvesting demonstrations with this new metallic comb during the Festival of Roman Gardens on the 16th of August 2020 in Malagne.



A new generation is now on the scene. © Malagne.

**E. Without double shafts and flexible lines, or without spelt, there would be no harvester. The Gallo-Roman harvester is a cross between traditional and innovative techniques.**

Whatever led people to conceive of this original mechanism? In a traditional and autarchic agriculture, with plenty of cheap manpower, investment in this machine is difficult to imagine. However, northern Gaul, from the Seine to the Rhine, was the grain basket of the Roman Limes. The *negiatores frumentarii* (crop dealers) who were supplying the Rhinish camps made a fortune. The camps' needs were impressive, just as were those of the cities of Cologne or Trier. The large rural domains were commercially oriented and their economic success in the first three centuries of the Empire are indisputable. The advanced technology of the harvester represents an interesting element in the quest for growth that has been more and more recognized in recent scientific literature.

Georges Raepsaet and Florence Garit [archeologie@malagne.be](mailto:archeologie@malagne.be)  
MALAGNE - Archéoparc de Rochefort

**NB The original French version of this article is available on the AIMA website:**  
<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/news-2/aima-newsletters/>



## The ethnology of the Old Ways: Travels in Scotland c. 1720-1830



Cattle being driven to Lowland markets. 'Droving' roads cover most of the Highlands.

The Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow is preparing an exhibition for this year, summer 2020, under the title 'Old Ways and New Roads: Travels in Scotland c. 1720-1830', and presenting the results of a lengthy research project based in Glasgow University under the leadership of Professor Nigel Leask, Dr John Bonehill and Dr Anne Dulau. The Hunterian is Scotland's oldest public museum and boasts superlative collections signified under their mantra of 'meteorites to mummies and Mackintosh', and the Museum and Art Gallery sustains a very active and varied exhibition programme.<sup>1</sup>

The coverage of this upcoming exhibition, 'Old Ways and New Roads', starts in the early 18th century with one of our vital early sources for the Highlands of Scotland, Edward Burt's *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to His Friend in London* (1754), and closes just before the coming of the railways. Within this period, travels into the Highlands and 'tourism' begin and proliferate, and we learn from a gathering store of prose, poetry and art how the Highlands of Scotland were 'discovered' and 'revealed' to an enthusiastic readership and the world. This was the period to which we apply the label 'Romanticism' and a key component of this movement and fashion was the publication in 1760 of the poetry of 'Ossian', a putative Gaelic poet of the early Christian era.<sup>2</sup> In very general terms, the view of the 18th century traveller was that they were in a primitive and exciting landscape inhabited by people who could not be understood - or who might speak English only with difficulty. The travellers' views were informed by Edmund Burke's treatise on aesthetics which defined the 'frisson' experienced when confronting the 'sublime', and of all the then accessible landscapes (with its growing network of 'New Roads'), Ossian's homeland was undeniably the most sublime!

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/visit/exhibitions/exhibitionprogramme/>

<sup>2</sup> The literary and linguistic phenomenon of 'Ossian' is now being more closely studied, having long been neglected or dismissed by what would stand for 'serious scholarship'; a consequence of Ossian being ignored in university study was that the wider public knew nothing about it and the name 'Ossian' was largely unknown.



Highlanders moved on foot over long distances, for example, going to the Lowlands for seasonal harvest work. In his early *Letters* in the 1720s, Edward Burt, who was said to be a surveyor or roads engineer (but may in fact have been another sort of civil servant), dismissed the roads and means of communication that he found in the Highlands of Scotland as ‘the old Ways, for Roads I shall not call them ...’; but any such prejudice is understandable since his job was to work with the government in laying out a network of ‘Military Roads’ being built following the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745. Being in a strange land, he concluded with a rhetorical flourish which bears scrutiny:

‘The Highlands are but little known even to the inhabitants of the low country of Scotland ..... But to the people of England, excepting some few, and those chiefly soldiery, the Highlands are hardly known at all.’

Significantly, the garrulous Dr Samuel Johnson made much the same point a generation later:

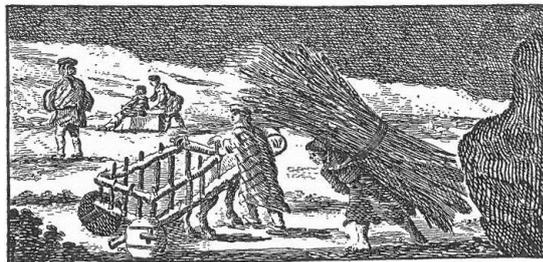
‘To the southern inhabitants of Scotland, the state of the mountains and the islands is equally unknown with that of Borneo or Sumatra. Of both they have only heard a little, and guess the rest. They are strangers to the language and the manners, to the advantages and wants of the people, whose life they would model, and whose evils they would remedy.’

The ‘New Roads’ are what we know about and which are still for the most part there in the landscape. As part of the research for the exhibition, I was asked to look at the topic of the ‘Ethnology of the Old Ways’ in order to explore movement and axes of communication and to dispel the notion that ‘roads’ did not exist in Gaelic Scotland (*pace* Edward Burt) before the ‘improvements’ of the Enlightenment. The historiography of roads has depended on conventional sources, and an accepted premise, for ever repeated, has been Burt’s claim that the ‘Old Ways’ were of no practical use and that the Highlands of Scotland were a more or less trackless waste. A *modus operandi* on what preceded the ‘New Roads’ seems to have faded into insignificance in the historical record; equally, travel and transport in the eras and zones of foot traffic and pack animals has not attracted the same attention apart from in ethnological studies. Furthermore, it might be said that the topic has been approached through a narrative of ‘English national history’ which customarily glorified ‘progress’ and from a

point of view located in the East and South of these islands. If we change our stance towards the Western Isles of Scotland – the Hebrides - and adopt a viewpoint from the West and North and looking the other way, a different picture emerges. Equally, if we draw into our studies language and literature that is rooted in the North and West of Scotland, we add to our repertoire the considerable evidence of the voices of the people of the ‘Old Ways’.



1



2



3

Edward Burt includes views of sledges and carts in the Highland ‘capital’ of Inverness in his *Letters of the 1720s*

Burt’s *Letters* distract us from other sources such as the survey work of Timothy Pont c. 1583-1596 and the vivid impressions of the *Atlas Novus* of 1654

with detailed insights into landscape and settlement patterns in late 16th and early 17th century Scotland. We know that ‘roads’ pre-existed and the literature, in terms of routes customarily followed or ‘old ways’, speaks copiously of routes followed by travellers and traders, ‘traditional’ routes of pilgrimage and ‘coffin roads’, routes taken by raiders and armies and, of course, the waterways and sea-ways. The significance of the sea cannot be overstated and Scottish Gaelic is rich in litanies of names in oral tradition of features that marked voyages. Historians have been notorious (in our terms) for pleading paucity of documents and sources for Highland history, but it might be said that such an excuse should no longer be offered. In terms of evidence to hand (and arguably neglected), we are blest with an ancient language with a ‘history’ pre-dating other European languages, and a language fully explored by the grammarians and philologists of Indo-European but not by our historians who have tended to treat Gaelic as something outside domains of scholarship in the Humanities.

I take up my stance in the North and West and project a different perspective. Far from being a backward and barbaric people, Highlanders of old were highly mobile and civilised with a pragmatic attitude to travel, whether at home or overseas. We can challenge the stereotype of the inheritance of a tribal and kin-based society behind the mountains. Highland society was not wholly patriarchal even if it was not wholly commercial, although it was both those things. The Highlander was well-travelled, with education on the Continent for the social elite and a healthy acquaintance with Scandinavia, Germany, France, Spain and Mediterranean lands such as Turkey and the Near East. At home, a vignette from a still-famous song, *Bothan Àirigh am Braigh Raithneach*, goes over the ‘shopping-list’ of the girl in the shieling in Rannoch (in the Central Highlands) around 1600, and the expectation that her lover would readily access a cosmopolitan selection of high-fashion and costly commodities! An anglophone literature has ignored such insights in favour of ‘trackless wastes’, a region remote and unknown, and a people self-absorbed and sunk in ignorance.



Mary Macpherson going up the hill to get peat or turf for fuel. Typically, she spins as she walks on the hill tracks.

The exhibition, which will display a rich selection of objects and visual material, will be accompanied by a lavish book in which the themes and sections of the exhibition are captured in chapters which also offer a ‘catalogue’ of images. My chapter explores past geographies and the ‘Old Ways’, and looks in some detail at their uses and the views of Highlanders on a *status quo ante*.<sup>3</sup> This study offers an historiography drawing on cultures on both sides of the ‘Highland Line’ – with preferential treatment for Gaelic sources in this instance – and challenges the reader also to consider the ‘material culture’ of travel in a land without ‘roads’.

Hugh Cheape [hc.smo@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:hc.smo@uhi.ac.uk) Sabhal Mòr Ostaig / Ionad Nàiseanta Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig / National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture / Am Faoilleach 2020.<sup>4</sup>

Note: John Bonehill, Anne Dulau Beveridge and Nigel Leask, Eds., *Old Ways and New Roads*.

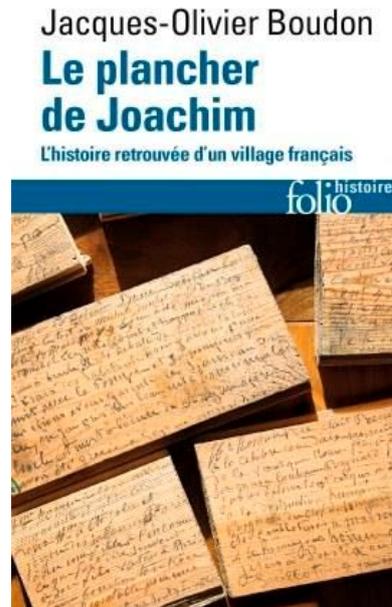
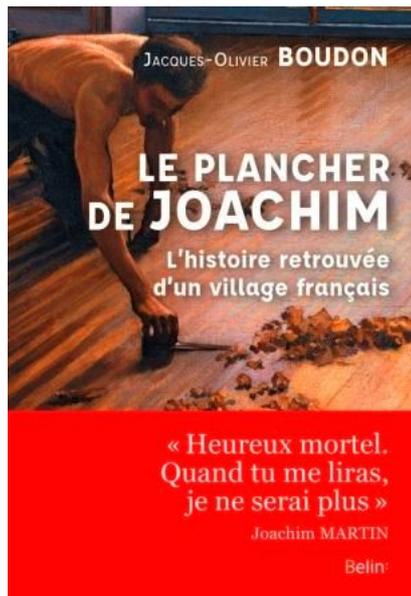
*Travels in Scotland 1720-1832*. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd. Forthcoming June 2020 (ISBN 978 1 78027 667 0).



---

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2. “There’s another road near the highway”: the ethnology of the ‘Old Ways’ in Gaelic Scotland.

<sup>4</sup> *Faoilleach* or *Faoilteach*: the last fortnight of winter and first fortnight of spring (Old Style), *Dwelly’s Illustrated Gaelic to English Dictionary*, 1901; 11th Edition 1994



**Title: Joachim's Floor, the rediscovered history of a French village; Editor's banner quote: "Happy mortal, when you read this, I shall be no more" Joachim Martin**

Left: cover of the Belin 2017 edition. Detail from a painting by Gustave Caillebotte, entitled "Les Raboteurs de parquet" (The Floor Planers), 1875. Right: cover of Folio Histoire 2019 pocketbook edition. Floorboards from the Picomtal castle, written on the back by Joachim Martin in 1880-1881.

## A carpenter as witness to his times. Craft and the rural world in southeastern France at the end of the 19th century

Book review of Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Le Plancher de Joachim. L'histoire retrouvée d'un village français*, Belin, Collection Histoire, octobre 2017, 256 pages. (Left, edition cited here). This book received the Georges Goyau 2018 Prize of the French Academy. Also published in pocketbook by Folio Histoire, April 2019, 288 pages (right).

The very title of this work harks back to Alain Corbin's work on Louis-François Pinagot [1798-1876, an "invisible" man and clog-maker in Normandy].<sup>5</sup> Corbin chose to study Pinagot entirely by chance while examining the Orne *département* archives and re-created the life of this illiterate clog-maker from the rare bits of information remaining about him, while placing him in the historical context of the period and region. In contrast, in Boudon's book, it is the carpenter Joachim Martin (1842-1897) who took the initiative of telling his own story by writing in black pencil on the back of parquet floorboards he laid in the castle of Picomtal in the Hautes-Alpes *département* in 1880-1881. This is why his journal is more akin to the "ordinary writings" (*écritures ordinaires*)<sup>6</sup> than to Alain Corbin's experimental approach. Nonetheless, the books dedicated to Louis-François Pinagot and Joachim Martin, to their "world" and their "village", may both be seen as part of the current of micro-history.

The will to bear testimony to one's life, work and times is rare in popular milieux when there is no political or labour-union commitment, as in the case of the carpenter Agricol Perdiguier, the mason Martin Nadaud and, in a more literary vein, the peasant-writer Emile Guillaumin.<sup>7</sup> Jacques-Olivier Boudon cites the memories of two woodworkers who lived in France in the late 18th and 19th

<sup>5</sup> Alain Corbin, *Le Monde retrouvé de Louis-François Pinagot. Sur les traces d'un inconnu (1798-1876)*, Paris, Aubier, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Fabre (dir.), *Écritures ordinaires*, Paris, POL, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> Agricol Perdiguier, *Mémoires d'un compagnon*, édition Alain Faure, Paris, Maspéro, 1977 (1<sup>ère</sup> éd. 1854-1855) ; Martin Nadaud, *Mémoires de Léonard, ancien garçon maçon*, édition Maurice Agulhon, Paris, Hachette, 1976 (1<sup>ère</sup> éd. 1895) ; Emile Guillaumin, *La Vie d'un simple*, Paris, Stock, 1904.

centuries.<sup>8</sup> Some familiarity with writing, which is a necessity in the professions where a pencil is part of the tool kit may have counted for these carpenters, along with other social factors. The originality of Joachim's text lies in the freedom lent by his choice of medium: no one would read him for decades, until the parquet was relaid (in reality, nearly 120 years later). He writes to whoever would be doing this work and was to be his first reader: "You happy mortal, when you read me, I shall no longer be here" (p. 210). Joachim doubtless knew he might reach a far broader audience for his work.



Left: Village of Crots, in the Hautes-Alpes (FR). © Eric Gaba – Wikimedia Commons user : Sting. Right: Picomtal castle at the foot of the wooded mountain, with spire of Saint Lawrence's church in foreground, village of Crots © Michel Zalio.

Behind the origins of this book, there is a double discovery. First, in 1999 and 2000, the discovery of Joachim's writings in the castle of Picomtal, when the parquet was partially relaid. Then in August 2009, when the historian J.O. Boudon, a specialist in the 19th century, spent a night there because the owners let out guestrooms and heard them talking about this unexpected source during a play about the castle's history. The castle is located in the area where Joachim lived in the upper valley of the Durance River – today on the shores of the Serre-Ponçon lake. The village was once called *Les Crottes*, a Provençal term that means "cellars, underground cellars". It adopted the name of *Crots* in 1970, due to the unattractive meaning of *crotte* in French [piece of dung] and to the fact that tourists would not understand the etymology of *Crottes*.

With the agreement of the owners, J.O. Boudon analysed this corpus of 72 texts including nearly 4000 words, and carried out research into the carpenter and his life, by utilizing many archives and work in local history.<sup>9</sup> His book shows us a character who is exceptional in his frankness, his pride in belonging to a craft group, his self-awareness and awareness of the passage of time, as well as his curiosity and will to write himself into history. There is no doubt he was highly sensitive to the medieval architecture the castle attested to. We do not know how many rooms he may have worked in and, thus, what proportion of his writings is represented by these 72 parquet floorboards. He may have done the same thing in other buildings (the investigation is under way, but has not yet provided any evidence of this). At Picomtal, Joachim was surprised to find "nothing that indicates History [sic]" Not a single stroke of the quill or pencil" and elsewhere, he writes "not [...] a single letter or number of any carpenter" who might have preceded him (p. 210, 215). This disappointment emphasizes the highly unusual character of his own behavior.

Joachim's character may be surprising, with his blunt side, his taste for nasty remarks, that are often bitter, and his settling old scores with his contemporaries. At times, he can be more likable, as when he writes this advice: "Friend and reader, when you take a wife, ask her how well-educated she is and not how much money she'll bring to the dowry" (p. 212). This may reflect his mother's

<sup>8</sup> *La plume et le rabot. Journal écrit de 1773 à 1828 par Claude-Antoine Bellod, menuisier et maître d'école au Grand-Abergement (Ain), [...] Bourg-en-Bresse, 1996 ; François-Joseph Fourquemin (1779-1880), Souvenirs d'un menuisier nivernais au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, [...] Autun, 1998.*

<sup>9</sup> Also see Jacques-Olivier Boudon, « Sous les parquets du château de Picomtal. Les écrits posthumes d'un menuisier des Hautes-Alpes (1880-1881) », *Histoire, Economie & Société*, 2014/1 (33<sup>e</sup> année), p. 72-86 ; and « Les maires d'un canton des Hautes-Alpes vus par Joachim Martin, charpentier au château de Picomtal », *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 2017, 94, p. 29-39 (publié en juin 2017).

influence, as she was a Protestant converted to Catholicism, who may have kept a high opinion of knowledge from her own up-bringing. The family history of our carpenter might explain, in part, his personality: he was an illegitimate son, born before his parents married; a mother who surely had an influence on him, but of whom he does not speak<sup>10</sup>; a period of loss of social position for his father, due to quarrels with other people in the area. Although he recalls his youth with nostalgia, his testimony completely lacks any idealization of the past that one finds so often in regionalist literature.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, *Joachim's Floor* has attracted many readers, surely touched by this unexpected document that takes us into the daily life and mental environment of one of our forebearers. It might well remind us of the singular character studied by Carlo Ginsburg, an Italian miller with a taste for reading and wild ideas, if we did not owe our knowledge of him to a trial by the Inquisition.<sup>12</sup> Both works astutely call our attention to the complexity of rural life in different contexts, far removed in space and time from our own, set between oral and written tradition, popular and learned culture.

Joachim's writings are reproduced at the end of the book in their original form. Still, it has not been possible to see what order they were written in, as only a few bear any brief chronological note. They were found alongside a letter to the Prefect of the Hautes-Alpes, dated 18 March 1884, denouncing the exercising of medical practice by the priest of his parish, another piece of evidence of Joachim's ease in written expression and of a certain amount of courage in the face of authorities. Photos in the book show two of these handwritten boards, the castle of Picomtal and the village of Crots, as well as of one of Joachim's sons. The book has been reviewed, there are many articles about it in the press, a radio programme on France Inter and a television documentary. Joachim Martin even has his own Wikipedia page!<sup>13</sup>

J.O. Boudon describes various aspects of life in a Hautes-Alpes village at the end of the 19th century, and the beginning of the Third Republic [1870-1940]. In a chapter dedicated to "The Republic in the village", according to the well-known expression of historian Maurice Aghulhon,<sup>14</sup> Boudon handles the political structures of the town, the canton elites, as well as Joachim's Republican convictions and the progress in schooling he profited from himself (Crots has had a school for boys since 1808). In another chapter entitled "sexuality as seen by Joachim", there are mentions of various practices, including infanticide, which he reacts to with tolerance, denunciation or fervent condemnation. His freedom of speech, even his coarseness of expression, are part of the way in which he chose to write. The Catholic Church, for its part, was still attempting to control the private life of believers, in spite of its members deviating from its norms. The following chapter entitled "The Church, the Priest and Women" reflects this, all the while showing that the Church's influence was declining, as regards actual practice on the part of the faithful (essentially masculine), or the contribution of the clergy to traditional medicine, which was both a recourse for the poor and the object of criticism. Moreover, Boudon's work provides us with much information about rural life.

According to the 1881 census, the local population was 1,313, divided between the village around the town hall and the church, plus some sixty hamlets or isolated farms. Since the mid-19th century, there had been a slow demographic decline that was to accelerate in the 1880s without being truly compensated for by the immigration of Piedmont workers, who came to work on railway-building. In addition to the farmers, who were in the majority, there were craftsmen, shopkeepers, two primary-school teachers, and so on. According to a monograph written by the owner of the castle of Picomtal in 1884, this mountainous area<sup>15</sup> was spread out over 5,176 hectares and 60 *ares* [100 sq m], of which

---

<sup>10</sup> He speaks very little of his brothers or sisters and not at all of his children.

<sup>11</sup> Il est très peu question de sa fratrie, et pas du tout de ses enfants.

<sup>12</sup> Carlo Ginsburg, *Le Fromage et les vers. L'univers d'un meunier du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, traduit de l'italien par Monique Aymard, Paris, Flammarion, 1980.

<sup>13</sup> France Inter, « La marche de l'histoire », Jean Lebrun, « Joachim Martin (1842-1897), un menuisier récalcitrant », 31/10/2017. France 2, « 13h15 le dimanche », Laurent Delahousse, « Les secrets sous le plancher », 3/2/2019. [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joachim\\_Martin](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joachim_Martin)

<sup>14</sup> Maurice Aghulhon, *La République au village. Les populations du Var de la Révolution à la Seconde République*, Paris, Plon, 1970. English translation *The Republic in the Village: The People of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic*, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris, 1982.

<sup>15</sup> Altitude varies between 778 m and 2 896 m.

2,078 ha of forest and pastureland in village property and 578 ha of idle lands. In addition to income from stock-breeding (3,000 sheep and 300 cattle and equids), there was also the wood business and various crops (wheat, rye, barley, oats, vegetables, orchards and a little low-quality wine). An 1852 inquiry also mentions walnut oil production (Joachim mentions the price). Pastoralism made up one of the main resources: the mountain grazing, managed as part of the commons, made up for the poverty of the valley lands, with herds from the village as well as from outside, the shepherds being paid by the village (*commune*); the local inhabitants collected the dung, for a modest fee, and there was also stock-breeding on a small scale: Joachim notes the price of eggs and fowl and he was fattening a pig. Oddly enough, he never mentions the mountain which was part of his environment and his silence on the subject reflects a way of experiencing the landscape that is different from ours today.

On his father's side, Joachim belonged to a peasant family, but his father worked as a carpenter and Joachim became an apprentice at the age of 15 under another carpenter in the village, when his father was a brick-maker. His mother was a seamstress, the daughter of potters who had settled in the area. Joachim talks about his work as a carpenter, which he finds is hard and poorly paid. An independent craftsman, he was also a farmer, although he did not really say so, thus affirming his standing in the social order. However, his concern with the weather and the harvests place him squarely in the world of the earth: for example, for Saint Roch's day on 16 August 1881, there was a storm with hail after a drought of four months (p. 215, 218). This vulnerability to the weather was typical of the countryside in the late 19th century.<sup>16</sup> Since Joachim only owned a few plots (40 *ares* at his death), he had to buy part of the food for his family, which made him attentive to the price of foodstuffs.

He was proud of his profession and his know-how, and critical of poorly done work (p. 2017). He also admired the castle-owner's library and was interested in the man's historical research. Although his status as a craftsman and his curious mind differentiate him, in his own view, from peasants, he nevertheless feels inferior to his employer: "Oh, you, my lord, who live in the castle, do not disdain the worker" (p. 218). He longs for his carefree youth when, still single, he led the life of a "minstrel" and played violin for balls "from Gap to Briançon"; although he still did it, it was far more limited (p. 217, 212). Times of real fun are rare: Joachim talks about an evening when he had too much to drink, about a meal at home with his relatives or neighbours, especially for Saint Laurence's Day, the patron saint of Crots, and also of village fêtes near Savines and Embrun (p. 211, 212 § 16 et 19; 210). It was a world where people lived one on top of another with narrow streets and no privacy (p. 216, photo p. VI) and there appears to have been little sense of making common cause, in spite of managing the highlands as commons. Does this reflect more on Joachim's character? Or does it provide us with testimony that should make us re-examine the image we have of mutual assistance in a rural area?

His writings mention several times that he is worried about providing for his family. His mentions of harvests and basic foods, especially bread, also talk about food and drink consumed at home or at work: soup, "pig" and "cake" without any more details, lemonade (less usual than wine or sugar water). Aquavit is associated with his memories of a silly youth. Local resources such as fish, hares and "Queyras cheese" are mentioned alongside grocery products such as the lemonade and the sugar already noted, and that "chocolate stick" (*baton de chocolat*, for *bâton*)<sup>17</sup> that is an odd remedy, with sugar water, for a hangover... "Meat" (from a butcher's shop), pork, fowl and eggs seem to have been eaten fairly commonly, although it is not possible to say how often, along with potatoes, pears and apples. People used walnut oil, surely made on the spot – as lard may well have been kept for Shrovetide (see above). If worries about bread and cereal grains are often noted by Joachim's pencil, food still appears to be fairly diversified. Nonetheless, this information does not allow us to see much about cooking or regional foods, with the exception of the mountain cheese and the walnut oil.

---

<sup>16</sup> See Karin Becker, Vincent Moriniaux et Martine Tabeaud (dir.), *L'alimentation et le temps qu'il fait – Essen und Wetter – Food and Weather*, Paris, Hermann, collection MétéoS, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> This expression might concern one of the six semi-cylindrical bars put together in the tablettes sold by the Menier Enterprise since 1836 ([http://www.prodimarques.com/sagas\\_marques/menier/menier.php](http://www.prodimarques.com/sagas_marques/menier/menier.php)).



Larch wood chest with wrought iron nails, dated on front 1628. © Ethnographic Collection of the Queyras. Musée museum départemental des Hautes-Alpes in Gap.

In spite of the genuine interest I found in reading the book, I still have some remarks to make. Maps would have made it easier to understand and knowing where the places Joachim mentions are would have helped us understand how he used and perceived of space. Furthermore, the read gets a bit lost in the family relations of our carpenter and the other villagers. Family trees could have brought out the matrimonial strategies of various social groups, as well as their ties to those outside (relations between Catholics and Protestants, work migration, and so on). The chests and buffets of the neighbouring region of Queyras which the author saw in the Gap Museum, some of them dated and/or signed by the carpenters who made them, could have been mentioned in the Sources. Even if they do not compare with the parquet floorboards of the castle of Picomtal, this furniture still attests to the relation with time and writing of the craftsmen concerned. And finally, the “patois” J. O. Boudon mentions, without quotation marks in the text, is in fact the Provençal dialect of Langue d’Oc, made up of several sub-dialects, notably the Alpine one used in the locality.<sup>18</sup> Joachim must have spoken this with his relatives and neighbours, even if his own writing has no trace of it (no expression transposed from Occitan into French, as is often the case with Occitan speakers).

After publication of this endearing book, we can only hope that the owners of the castle of Picomtal still have some parquet to relay, so more of Joachim’s writings may be discovered... Perhaps they might answer some of our questions.

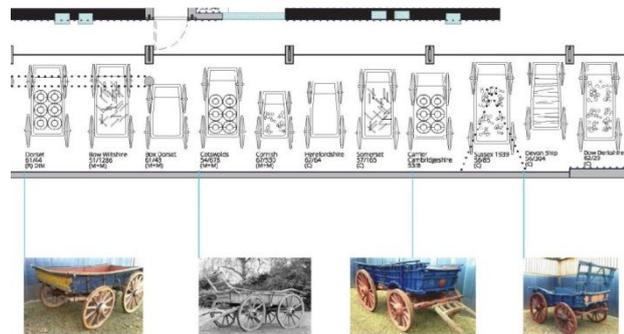
Monique Chastanet (historienne, CNRS, Paris) <[monique.chastanet@wanadoo.fr](mailto:monique.chastanet@wanadoo.fr)>

English Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joachim\\_Martin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joachim_Martin). The English translation as *Joachim’s Floor* will be released in May 2020 by Hachette UK Editions.

**NB The original French version of this article is available on the AIMA website:**  
<https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/news-2/aima-newsletters/>



## “The Wagon Walk” at the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) in Reading



Left: Taking pride of place in MERL’s “Year on the Farm” Gallery is its traditional C19 Sussex wagon, made and used at Lower Beeding (ref. 54/677). Photo: MERL, University of Reading

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Claude Bouvier, « L’occitan en Provence. Le dialecte provençal, ses limites et ses variétés », *Revue de linguistique romane*, 1979, 43, p. 46-62.

Right: The Wagon Walk faces the challenge of preserving the entire collection on show on one site in a relatively small space, whilst presenting them as individual as well as comparative examples. Photo: MERL, The University of Reading

Participants in the *Past and Future Agricultures* Congress, CIMA 19, in Reading in July 2020, will have much to see and enjoy at The MERL, as the host institution. The strength of collections, whether objects, books, records or photographic archives, is outstanding, fully deserving of their Designated Status. Very rarely do objects and related archives come together quite so closely in one place as here.

A particular feature, already trailed in the special issue theme in AIMA's Newsletter N° 14 last year, is the museum's collection of traditional farm wagons and carts, which now enjoys a focused display entitled "The Wagon Walk". There is a nice link here: <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org/2020/02/> to see a glimpse of how many ways you can make a wheel that might have belonged to one of these wagons. For more on the many skills, from handwork to the latest in digital tools, check out this [blog post](#) as a perfect complement to David's article here.



Here is gathered the major part of the museum's object collection of 22 English farm wagons, four carts and a timber carriage, the largest assemblage of English examples on public display anywhere in the country.

What is most immediately striking is the variation in size and detail in the design of each vehicle, when compared so easily side by side. Given their essentially fairly standard functional purpose, each one enjoys to a greater or lesser degree, graceful curves and smooth lining, evidence of skilled local craftsmanship and reflecting continuing traditions in design, labelling and colour schemes. Not to exaggerate it, but still, at their best, these wagons (and to a lesser extent carts, too) are immensely pleasing in their localisation and sense of place.



Left: The smaller size of this Cornish box wagon compared to its larger Shropshire neighbour is apparent in this pre-redisplay view. The date (c.1900), maker (in Callington) and owner (at Linkinhorne) of this excellent example from south-eastern Cornwall are all known (ref 62/530). Photo: David Viner

Right: A Devon 'ship' wagon, so named from the flow of the side raves over the rear wheels resembling the high back of an historic ship; a distinctive design feature found in Devon and Cornwall. Built in Cullompton c.1850

for the Pring family who later moved with it to their new farm in Berkshire. This later name and address is painted on the side (ref 56/304). Photo: David Viner

The evidence of all this can be found in the still-standard reference work, *The English Farm Wagon*, published by the University of Reading in 1961 and written by then Assistant Keeper J. Geraint Jenkins, who had undertaken a recording project ten years previously to reveal what had survived from around the country, and from where donations might be sought to build up the then-new collection. The outcome was a representative gathering, impressive if not fully comprehensive, of all variations in England. The museum is right in seeking to show it all in one place to best advantage.



Left: The Wagon Walk presents MERL's nationally-significant collection of traditional farm wagon styles. Here are examples from Dorset (Melbury Mills, Shaftesbury, ref 61/44), and the Cotswolds (Westington, Chipping Campden, ref. 54/678). Photo: David Viner

Right: In the Wagon Walk line-up are the distinctively bow-shaped Vale of Gloucester (Dymock, ref no 57/165) alongside a plainer but still attractive wagon of a Hereford or Welsh Border type (ref 62/64). Photo: David Viner

The West Country counties from Cornwall to Gloucestershire are well represented here and serve as good exemplars to share now. They also show a territorial overlap between the two distinctive types of vehicle design, a relatively shallow bow design flowing over the rear wheels, and the deeper box design, more recognisably standard with its origins in eastern England and into the near continent. A discussion of the thorny issues as to their origin requires much more space than is available in this short article!

David Viner has been a MERL Fellow and is the author of the Shire Library album *Wagons and Carts* (2008); see AIMA Newsletter N° 14, June 2019, pp.29-30. [dviner@waitrose.com](mailto:dviner@waitrose.com)



## **One Australian farm family's efforts to stay afloat amid the flames**



Rohan and Fiona Morris have frequently corresponded with the AIMA's many members and friends who use working animals, especially oxen, on their farms, in their museums and on their living history sites are, because Rohan still runs a full team of working oxen. Here are some extracts from their newsletter:

Did you celebrate the Spring Solstice last night? We did by going to bed. It's not our habit to dwell on a negative, but unfortunately the dominant news for us and other farmers around Eastern Australia is drought. There is good news below, please bear with us, it may be good for you to understand what we and other farmers are experiencing.

You could call it nature's way of sorting the strong from the weak, or an opportunity for us to find reserves of resilience and creative solutions to problems, but it doesn't change the fact that drought is a long, grinding, stressful natural disaster with no fixed end date. Our usually verdant Gleneden is currently all dry and brown, but hopefully with enough residual groundcover to hold the soil when the rain comes.



Our usually permanent creek is reduced to a few small pools, we haven't heard the roar of our waterfall since December 2018. In 9 months in 2019 we have received 120mm of rain (our average would be about 600 over this time), and this follows two drier than average years in 2017 and 2018.

In a completely natural ecosystem, drought forces the landscape to shut down into a rest mode, waiting for rain with the soil protected by vegetation grown in wetter times. For farmers with a financial imperative to remain productive, it is a balancing act between caring for the soil, the plants, your animals, your wallet and yourselves. The natural impulse is to try and save your animals but in the long term this can be to the detriment of all the other factors.

At some point, usually the earlier the better, the animals have to be removed from the system to limit the damage. We have been gradually destocking our farm for 18 months and currently have only our working bullocks still out grazing in our hill country. Our remaining cows are up the road on agistment [renting grazing land], while our sheep and pigs are in movable pens, living on organic celery and potatoes.

Managing the farm under these circumstances has become much more labour intensive, while input costs have risen and saleable productivity has dropped away. Our two interns – one from Germany and the other from France – have been an amazing help shouldering much of the workload. Now that their time is finished some changes have had to be made to ensure the sustainability of our workload and the pressure that we put ourselves under.

Time to plan our drought survival and recovery strategies, and to develop our less weather-dependent enterprises like camping and farm tours which will also be important as we go through a lengthy period of low productivity.

Despite the difficulties the drought has brought, there are still plenty of good news snippets we can share. Our spring babies are all arriving on cue, with lambs, chickens, kids, calves and piglets all born/hatched this month. Keeping them fed and healthy has brought some challenges this year but they are a constant delight in our daily work. To look after the nursing mothers we are weaning many of our lambs and calves early onto celery or even milk replacer for the younger ones.



We have been very fortunate to be able to put our cows on a property up our road, where they are migrating their way through some designated grazing areas while we enjoy the beauty of the landscape after 30 years of restoration. The creek through this property has been revegetated with the original native plants; Lomandra, Casuarina, Gums etc. It is not just lovely, it is healthy, with a still-functioning water cycle despite the drought, and the creek will be well protected by the plants from the flood that seems to follow every drought. It has strengthened our resolve to manage our section of the creek carefully, to produce the same result over time.

There are greener times to come and we are looking forward to wet soil, deep pastures, happy animals, swimming in our creek and shoulder massages from our waterfall some time this summer. Until then we will continue to plan and work hard, and try to take a lesson from these piglets - learn to relax and not worry too much.

Rohan Morris [morris@glenedenfamilyfarm.com.au](mailto:morris@glenedenfamilyfarm.com.au)



## News and Announcements from AIMA Members and Friends



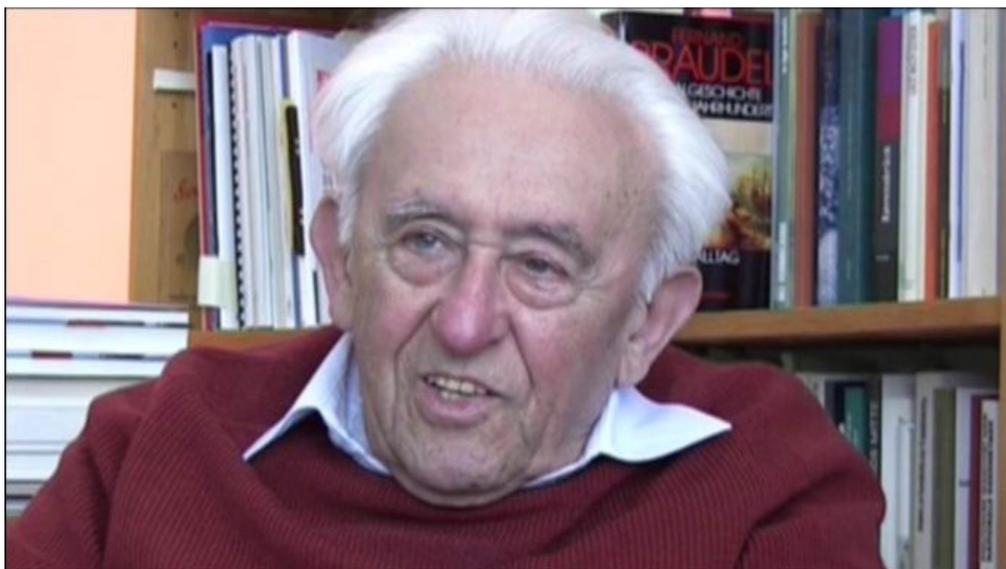
### Best wishes to the ALHFAM for its 50th anniversary

The ALHFAM and the AIMA continue their years-long cooperation through reciprocal participation in meetings, advice and assistance, especially in the exchange of ideas and collaboration in projects. For example, see the note below on online-publication of the outstanding journal *Tools & Tillage*. ALHFAM has many tools that enrich the background and practical experience of members, such as the **Skill Clips** presently being developed. These include some of the most practical subjects possible, such as.... “how to pet a horse”, demonstrated by Ed Schultz at his own farm as the first lesson in constructing a clip of one to five minutes: a clear introduction of who, where and why you are filming on your cellphone, then a demonstration including each step, how to wrap up at the end, being sure you have the permission of everyone in the video and that the audio and lighting are high-quality, and

finally how to upload the video to the STP (Skills, Training and Preservation section of the ALHFAM website (members only). Here is a preview of Ed and the other major actor in how to make your own SkillClip: [How to Pet a Horse](#)



## Homage to long-time AIMA member Wolfgang Jacobeit †29 July 2018



Michael Simon (Mainz) and Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz (Humboldt University Berlin). Picture taken from the film: “Ob ich mir vorstellen könnte, in Berlin zu arbeiten...” Wolfgang Jacobeit – a Grenzgänger zwischen Welten und Disziplinen. (“Whether I could imagine working in Berlin...” Wolfgang Jacobeit – a border-crosser between worlds and disciplines) Mainz/Berlin 2008

“Wolfgang Jacobeit was a non-partisan scientist who corresponded with many well-known colleagues in a very broad scientific network that included university institutes and agricultural history academies, as well as ethnographic museums and their international associations in many areas of Europe.” Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz, January 2020.

Prof. Dr. Jacobeit (born 13 May 1921) left his many students and colleagues the memory of a scholar for whom a commitment to warm relationships, fruitful international interaction and high standards of research, rigorously applied to both ethnography and museum practices, were central to his working philosophy and personal life. He was a major proponent of the study of material culture (*Sachkulturforschung*) and the museum was to be, for the public as

for the scholars working on its collections, a true learning place (*Lernort*), with special emphasis on agriculture.

He worked tirelessly at increasing cross-disciplinary and international networking, with special emphasis on his contacts with colleagues abroad, such as Rudolf Braun in Switzerland, Henri-George Rivière, André-Georges Haudricourt, André Leroi-Gourhan and Corneille Jest in France, and experienced much satisfaction over the founding of the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading or the National Museum of Agriculture in Szreniawa, Poland, among other agricultural museums that emerged after WWII.\*

Jacobeit was a master at communicating both theoretical and practical handling of inventorying museum collections, most especially tools and implements with an ever-present eye on the two key concepts he promoted, way of life and culture (*Lebensweise und Kultur*, at times closely identified with Bourdieu's *habitus*), as research strategy tools. A central preoccupation of his own work, as of the work carried out by his colleagues and many doctoral students, was people at work and how they conceived of their activities themselves, including remarkable insight into how researchers could penetrate the fascinating world of tacit knowledge.

Among his many specialties were the emergence of regional costume in light of country people's will to self-represent that took shape over the 19th century, the interweaving of work and the more general economy in sheep-herding, or the subject of his doctoral dissertation, the cattle yoke, which became a key angle of entry to study of the widest possible geographic distribution, how to establish a cartography of the evidence, and analyses of typologies. Such interests linked him directly to colleagues like François Sigaut or Jack Goody, who proposed extending comparative studies to the entire landmass of Eurasia. Jacobeit saw the cattle yoke as an "epistemic thing" (*epistemisches Ding*) and the examination of museum collections as among the most fundamental of scientific / research undertakings, wherever collections were made and however broad or specific a scope scholarship provided. Hence, specialized regional studies, as for the Börde area in present-day Sachsen-Anhalt, were among his and his associates' most in-depth investigations, a project often compared to the French ethnology efforts for the Aubrac. Always at the heart of their inquiries were the people making their own ways of life and the desire to engage the public in the process of transforming museum objects as the "thing in itself" into a "thing for us" (*das Ding an sich to das Ding für uns*).

As explained in his biography,\*\* Wolfgang Jacobeit moved from then West to East Germany to take up a career, at first he worked at the Academy of Science in Berlin, later becoming director of the Museum für Volkskunde (1970) and up to 1980 he held a professorship at the Institute of Ethnography at the Humboldt-University in Berlin. He expressed distinct disappointment over post-reunification replacement of East German academics and museum staff by what he deemed to be often less qualified colleagues from the Federal Republic, an ironic turn, in that he personally was renowned for his efforts to promote contact between eastern and western Europe, including his long-standing commitment to both the ICOM and the AIMA. He presided over the 5th AIMA Congress that took place in Neubrandenburg in 1978, partaking of the regular practice over many years of alternating meeting venues between "East" and "West" Europe.

Perhaps the AIMA will be able to live up to this standard of friendship and cooperation within international tradition, with an expansion already under way well beyond its first "home" in Europe, to the rest of our world, in a respect of the diversity and dignity of our present-day members and friends that Wolfgang Jacobeit might well have approved.

Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz and Cozette Griffin-Kremer

Summary drawn from Ute Mohrmann, Thomas Scholze, Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz "Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Jacobeit 1921-2018" in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde, Beiträge zur Kulturforschung*, 2019/1, 83-85, and Gottfried Korff

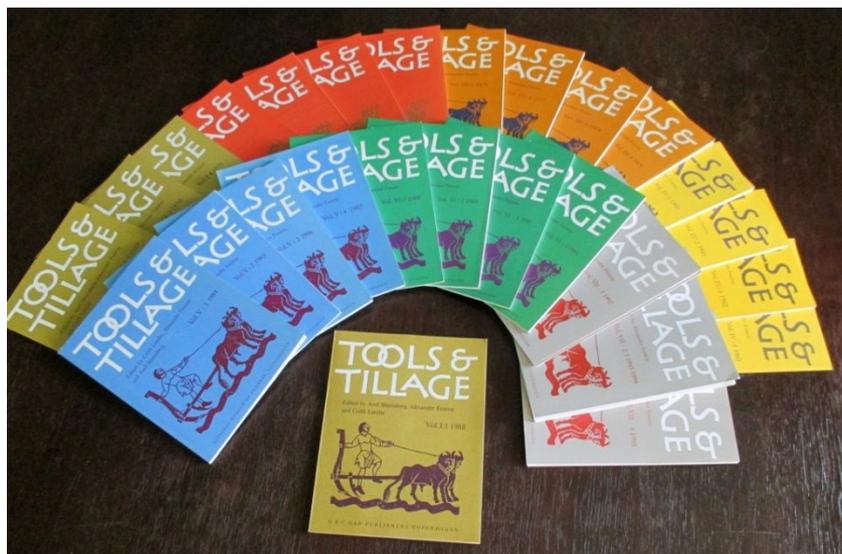
“Von Saubohnen, Kaffeelöffeln und epistemischen Dingen, Positionen und Perspektiven der Sachkulturforschung Wolfgang Jacobeits” in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 2011/II, Waxman.

\* See Zdeněk Tempír, [“Establishment and Initial Development of International Agricultural Museum Association,”](#) *Acta Museorum Agriculturae* 22 (1989) and Ted (E.J.T.) Collins, [“The history of AIMA: a personal perspective”](#) (2016) in the History section of the AIMA website.

\*\* Wolfgang Jacobeit *Von West nach Ost – und zurück*. Westfälisches Dampfboot Verlag, Münster 2000.



## ***Tools & Tillage* is now free access online! Thanks to a networking effort with AIMA partners**



The ground-breaking international journal *Tools & Tillage* is a great resource about historic farming techniques and traditional agricultural practices, combined with an (experimental) archaeological approach. Published over the years 1968-1995 it pulled together a great number of research projects from around the world, a remarkable effort in the days without internet.

As the number of people studying rural history increases, and museums continue to interpret meaning and method, several of us who work with agricultural museums, experimental archaeology, living history farms, and open-air museums decided to join forces to try and make *Tools & Tillage* more widely available.

As debates about environmental change gain intensity, and as agricultural practices factor significantly in these debates, the research published in *Tools & Tillage* seems more and more essential to our collective understanding. Yet, the journal was very hard to access. Three international organisations collaborated to increase access with the aim of engaging younger historians of rural and farm life with the essential knowledge and skills of agricultural techniques published over 27 years in *Tools & Tillage*.

We found an avid supporter in **Dr. Grith Lerche**, the only remaining editor of *Tools & Tillage*, and owner of the copyrights. She co-edited *Tools & Tillage* with Axel Steensberg and Alexander Fenton. Thanks to UNESCO-Welterbestätte Kloster Lorsch – Experimentalarchäologisches Freilichtlabor Lauresham (DE), the University Library Heidelberg (DE) scanned the material and made the material available, including a full text search of the 137 articles in 1,776 pages.

The full Journal is made available for dissemination and preservation of the electronic files under a (CC BY 4.0) license at:

- By volume: [https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/tools\\_tillage](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/tools_tillage)
- By article: <https://katalog.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/cgi-bin/search.cgi?sess=482b1e64efafa6037c6789ace59fbfc2&query=ga:uw68401978&format=html>

This project of making *Tools & Tillage* available was possible thanks to the persistence and good cooperative spirit of many. The partners in this project are:

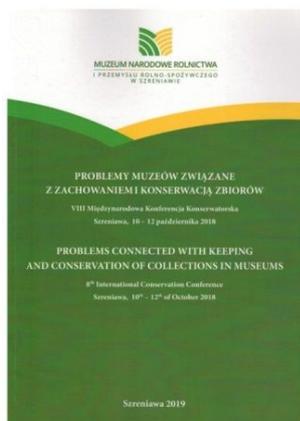
- EXARC, the International Network on Archaeological Open-Air Museums and Experimental Archaeology - <https://exarc.net>
- AIMA, the International Association of Agricultural Museums - <https://www.agriculturalmuseums.org>
- ALHFAM, the Association of Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums - <https://www.alhfam.org>
- tDAR, the Digital Archaeological Record - <https://core.tdar.org>
- The University Library Heidelberg - <https://www.uni-heidelberg.de>
- UNESCO-Welterbestätte Kloster Lorsch – Experimentalarchäologisches Freilichtlabor Lauresham - <https://www.kloster-lorsch.de>

For more information, contact Roeland Paardekooper, [r.p.paardekooper@exarc.net](mailto:r.p.paardekooper@exarc.net).

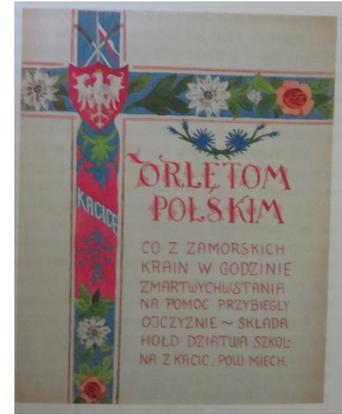


## Proceedings of "Problems Connected with Keeping and Conservation of Collections in Museums"

### 8<sup>th</sup> International Conservation Conference / Szreniawa, 10-12 October 2018



The National Museum of Agriculture and Food Industry in Szreniawa, Poland, has brought out the proceedings from the 2018 conference in a 284-page volume with handsome full-colour pictures and technical charts illustrating the 25 articles by authors dealing with highly varying issues from a railway museum in India or a living history museum in Ireland to a maritime museum in Germany, not neglecting diverse contributions from Polish museums or by a Polish author writing on the Henry Ford Collection in the United States – a feast of internationalism. The communications are organized into four sections: organization and management, conservation of organic-matter objects, objects exhibited in the open air, and static vs. dynamic display of technical heritage objects. There are 22 articles in Polish with English summary and 4 in English with Polish summary. For more information, please contact Hanna Ignatowicz at [h.ignatowicz@muzeum-szreniawa.pl](mailto:h.ignatowicz@muzeum-szreniawa.pl)



**Abridged table of contents**

**I Organization and management**

- Development and conservation of archaeological excavation objects at Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum
- RE-ORG methodology on the basis of ICCROM workshops
- Collections warehouse as basic concept and conservation tool
- Historical technology objects
- Conservation challenges at the German Maritime Museum
- National Rail Museum collections and display in New Delhi

**II Conservation issues for organic matter objects**

- Display of foodstuffs in museums
- Conservation and restoration of organic matter artefacts
- Conservation of ivory artefacts

- Conservation of skeleton of forest paleo-elephant
- Conservation-restoration of jacquard all fabrics
- Palm leaf manuscripts in India
- Letters from children at Museum of Writing and

**Printing**

- Inventory project at Museum of Writing and Printing
- Restoring historical wood from wood dust

- Freeze-drying of organic archaeological artefacts
  - De-acidification of paper with magnesium compounds particles
  - Caffeine in protection of historic wood
- III Conservation of objects displayed in the open air
- A day at The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation
  - Capturing the climate of an Irish province
  - Durability of small wooden objects displayed in the open air
- IV Static vs dynamic display of objects
- Hopeless cases?
  - A railway bridge
  - Demonstrations with historical agricultural machinery
  - Rational management of a railway museum
  - Historic windmills as working mills



## **Exhibit "Steam: energy that long served agriculture" COMPA, Chartres, 12 October 2019 – 26 January 2020**

For nearly 2000 years, the idea of utilizing steam as energy to power mechanical movement has existed. Although the first experiments in steam power go back to Antiquity, the most significant developments date from the 18th century.

The invention of the steam engine marks the beginnings of the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, first in England, then in France. The machine was to gradually replace human, animal and natural energy (wind, water...) in factories, on the railways, on rivers and seas, and in the fields! From the 1830s on, the first "locomobiles" made their appearance in the world of agriculture to run threshing machines, then "locotracors" appeared to drive various tillage implements.

Among the items from our collections in the exhibit, you will find superb animated models, miniatures and printed matter from the museum's documentary collections, all of them brought out of the COMPA's stores especially for the occasion.

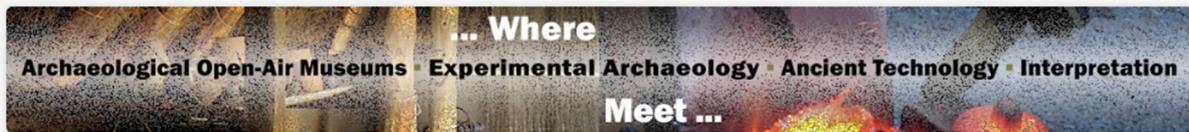
Come and meet the inventors – Papin, Cugnot, Newcomen, as well as Newton and Watt, and experience the history of the arrival of steam power for developing agriculture, from our "locomobiles" to the "locotracors"!

Eloïse CANAVESIO, project head [Eloise.CANAVESIO@eurelien.fr](mailto:Eloise.CANAVESIO@eurelien.fr)



"LA VAPEUR: une énergie au service de l'agriculture"  
COMPA – CONSERVATOIRE DE L'AGRICULTURE  
UN MUSÉE DU CONSEIL DÉPARTEMENTAL D'EURE-ET-LOIR  
PONT DE MAINVILLIERS – 28000 CHARTRES





## EXARC journal online and on paper, and annual meeting – back to the environment and on to tacit knowledge

As Vice-President Debra Reid emphasized in her contribution above, talking about agriculture without talking about the environment borders on cruel and unusual punishment in an age when farmers' work world-wide has the potential to damage or protect the Earth and its inhabitants.



## Documentation Strategies

The EXARC annual conference is co-organised this year by the Museumsdorf Düppel (DE) just outside Berlin and the Free University of Berlin.

There are probably about 3,000 archaeological house reconstructions around the world, most of them in (archaeological) open-air museums. **This means we have already a huge amount of information and experience “locked-in” to be found in these buildings. The same is true for all other craft activities carried out in open-air museums.** A lot of knowledge relating to crafts is known as **tacit knowledge**, meaning it is difficult to transfer using words. It is learned through experience.

On the contrary of objects in museum collections, which pinpoint to a specific time and place, in archaeological open-air museums we see the processes behind these, how they were made and used, what role these artefacts played in people's lives. **In fact, our museums are about people and actions.** Archaeological open-air museums are a process repository; our museums help preserve the understanding of these, our immaterial cultural heritage.

This wealth of information could be preserved and used for research and dissemination if documented and made digitally available in a standardised form. Only a few archaeological open-air museums have enough qualified staff to carry out standardised documentation. Another factor is that the tacit knowledge locked in many craft specialists can only be really preserved through teaching the next generation.

For details on the conference site, visits and the programme, see <https://exarc.net/meetings/berlin>



Since EXARC's philosophy is open access, the journal is available online at <https://exarc.net/issue-2019-4> for the latest issue, but it also comes out for subscribers in a paper format. The journal has peer-review lead articles, as well as the "mixed matters" section, and Issue 2019-2 has an article on how the open-air museum in Düppel – the 2020 annual conference host just outside Berlin – engages with diverse audiences to help visitors understand the environment. First, there is a presentation of the history of the site, discovered in 1939 by a boy playing, who found pottery sherds, and this led to setting up an open-

air archaeological museum centered on life in the 12th century in a reconstructed village with live interpretation of everyday medieval life. This involves volunteers who bring the site to life each weekend, some wearing as authentic clothing as possible, others left free to work in their blue jeans and t-shirts, although none of them attempt to engage with visitors through re-established language. They concentrate on engaging the public with their work, remaining in the present to speak of the past. The museum also functions as an open-air laboratory for archaeological research and experiment, for example, on iron smelting. Relevance is paramount and demonstrations attempt to bring out contrasts, as in making a medieval garment in the real time it takes, with statistics alongside indicating how much clothing is discarded per person per year in modern Germany – 18 kg on average! There is special emphasis on the cultural landscape of the village and its surroundings. Various landscapes and habitats were created along with the medieval house reconstructions in collaboration with researchers from Berlin universities, so that the museum grounds include forest and meadows with species that would have been present around 1200 in Brandenburg – the 8 hectares of the museum even has a "primeval forest", as well as managed woodland for grazing, arable fields and gardens.

Julia Heeb "Engaging Diverse Audiences at the Archaeological Open-Air Museum Düppel in Berlin" in *EXARC Journal* 2019-2, p. 18-19.



**ICOM General Conference in Kyoto, Japan  
1-7 September 2019  
“Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition”**



**Museums have no borders,  
they have a network**



Photos courtesy of Roeland Paardekooper, EXARC

This report is thanks to our networking with EXARC, the experimental archaeology open air museums association, and was written up by Dr. Roeland Paardekooper. The much longer full report is online here: <https://exarc.net/issue-2019-4/mm/museum-worlds-convention-kyoto>

EXARC was in especially close contact with its counterparts in Japan, so the report is purposely subject-specific, but many more general points are brought out. For example, that no museum in itself is a hub, but that it is people in many museums, other institutions, and researchers working together in networks that form the hubs which the ICOM endeavours to encourage world-wide. This especially emphasizes cross-border comparative studies of what museums are, do and *can* do, both to increase the quality of their own offering to the public and to insure museums and their friends have a greater impact.

There were dozens of parallel sessions in the conference centre. Many International ICOM Committees generally do not just have a single session, but have a program which takes several days. As for the AIMA, where we have long since understood that fine agricultural collections are not limited to museums with the “agricultural” label, many being held in regional, city, ethnographic and even art museums, the EXARC report notes that there are archaeological open air museums which are not in their own direct network. This is recognized as a fundamental thought behind EXARC’s networking efforts.

As befits the independence and inventivity ICOM wishes to encourage among its members of all stripes, EXARC cooperated to organize excursions on its own, alongside the official visits, with special concentration on joint impact through collaborations. Sessions EXARC participated in also focused on international perspectives and reconsidering how museums operate in relation to developments in contemporary archaeology.

Among the major preoccupations of the ICOM Kyoto meeting was work on a new definition of museums and this could be seen in the seriousness of the debate around the question, in which EXARC has a vote, being an affiliated museum. This debate lasted all week, producing a draft definition developed over the last three years of what a museum is or should be, which

was presented to the community prior to the General Conference (see the 2007 definition and the new proposed definition below). It was clear that not many delegates had seen this far-reaching new suggestion coming and the debate created some rifts in the community, with several of the European National Committees as well as some International Committees urging a delay of the decision, while others believe it is high time museums change and see their responsibility in society. Larger museums were worried that the new definition would be hard for them to adhere to, and therefore they could lose attractiveness for public support and perhaps funding.

The EXARC point of view on the new definition is that it will not cause problems for archaeological open-air museums, on the contrary, that it offers many angles on how any museum can become more professional, with or without support. Obviously, the Kyoto meeting was a wake-up call for many museums and EXARC looks forward to discussing the definition with its own members. This should enable opinions to evolve in light of the new information and the results of the debates.

The EXARC report concludes that attending the General Conference is well worth while, with all the highly enriching shoulder-rubbing with other professionals from around the globe, which is only possible when people meet in person.

**The next triennial ICOM meeting will be in Prague (CZ) in August 2022.**



#### **Current (2007) Museum Definition**

“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.”

#### **Draft (2019) Museum Definition**

“Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.”

Both are available at [http://archives.icom.museum/hist\\_def\\_eng.html](http://archives.icom.museum/hist_def_eng.html) EXARC report by Roeland Paardekooper, summary by Cozette Griffin-Kremer



**The AIMA was represented at ICOM Kyoto** by former President and organizer of the 2017 triennial congress, Mrs. Merli Sild, Board Member of Estonian Rural Museums Foundation, who has written a preliminary report for the AIMA Executive Committee, which will utilize the definitions and debates to further discussion of AIMA’s development.

**“Museums have no borders, they have a network”**



## European Rural History Film Database advances

### European Rural History Film Database Association

The European Rural History Film Database Association promotes the documentation, conservation and study of films on rural history. It maintains a film database which provides an overview of the film production of rural Europe in the 20th century. A selection of more than 100 films is now digitised and open accessible via the Beta-Version of the ERHF-Online-Portal. [RURALFILMS.EU](http://RURALFILMS.EU)



**Dietlind Hüchtker, Leipzig**

**Niccolò Mignemi, Paris**

**Mícheál O’Fathartaigh, Galway**

**Debra A. Reid, Michigan**

**Nadine Vivier, Le Mans**

Organised by the members of the ERHFDBA: Archives of Rural History, Bern; Centrum Agrarische Geschiedenis, Leuven; CLUE+: The Interfaculty Research Institute for Culture, Cognition, History and Heritage of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; Fryske Akademy, Leeuwarden; Frisian Film Archive, Leeuwarden; Institute of Rural History, St. Pölten; Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), Reading; Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Hilversum.



## EURHO European Rural History Organization Newsletter

eu | ropean  
r | ural  
h | istory  
o | rganisation

If you would like to receive the wealth of announcements of events in the EURHO Newsletter, please contact Ulrich Schwarz-Gräber at [ulrich.schwarz@ruralhistory.at](mailto:ulrich.schwarz@ruralhistory.at)



## Agricultural collections outside agricultural museums

Just a reminder to members and friends that many museums which do not have “agricultural” in their titles often have outstanding agricultural collections. If you know of any, please tell us!

# folk life

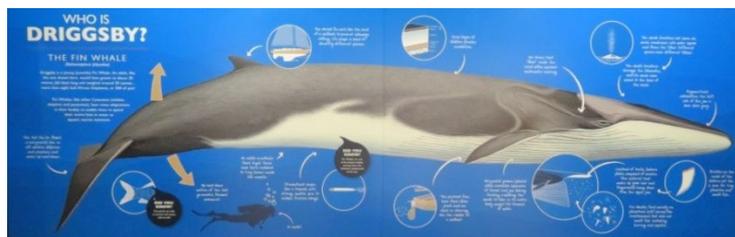
## Society for Folk Life Studies Annual Conference 12-15 September 2019

### Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle, Cumbria, England

The SFLS has an ambit that enables both diversity and continuity, since we visit a different area in the British Isles each year, for venues frequently in museums, or closely associated with them. This enables the many keepers and researchers working on museum collections to compare, contrast and appreciate how collections are handled and presented to the public.

#### **Tullie House: “a collections-centred approach to delivering a sustainable museum”**

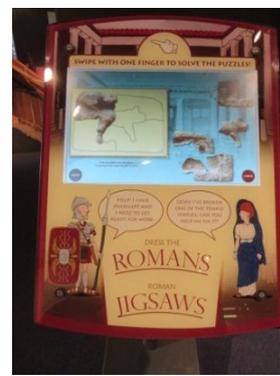
This deep commitment to engagement with the public is at the heart of our 2019 host museum’s work at **Tullie House**, Carlisle, in Cumbria in northwest England, near the famed Lake District. The collections on exhibit have a very broad scope – from geology to natural history with special sections on botany, entomology and taxidermy, then on to local traditions in foodways or popular culture. The museum’s records have helped document a long-term inquiry into the local bumblebee population, for example. There is special attention to how to enhance discussion on the **environment**, or how to transform a sad media event into a continual learning experience. A young whale, washed up on the shore became the star witness in a gallery of its own on the coastal environment, with the public involved from the beginning..



The young whale found in Drigg in west Cumbria. An appeal to the public decided on his name for the museum – Driggsby, transformed from an accident victim into a now-famous “teacher” of marine biology

Carlisle was a native settlement predating the Roman occupation that saw plenty of action and commerce, due to its proximity to **Hadrian’s Wall**, begun in 122 CE to mark the northern border of the Empire, and today a major tourist attraction. Typical of the sense for **relevance** demonstrated by the museum staff over the years, there is an extensive exhibit on the archaeologically dense Roman presence, but in the same exhibit room a wall-long testimony to what **walls** may well mean, evoking landscapes painfully riven by a “them and/or us” division in today’s world. Among the issues addressed in the exhibit is how to produce enough **food** to keep up legionnaires of all kinds, from infantry to cavalry, including their

attendant families and slaves, all done through interactive challenges. Result? For a tent-worth of eight men per year: 4 bags of 600 *denarii* coins each, 70 goats, and 4,400 kg of grain, then multiply by the number of men in the army. It helps to have a garden on the museum grounds to show you the plants imported by the Romans: fig, juniper, myrtle, grapevine, acanthus and bay. If there is anything young (and older) visitors enjoy, it is the **opportunity to break a museum piece** and put it back together, so this is another task of the exhibit's interactives.



Roman legionnaire's kit bag, weighing up what he needs to keep him going and the interactive jigsaw puzzles to "break" collection pieces and put them back together with a "swipe"

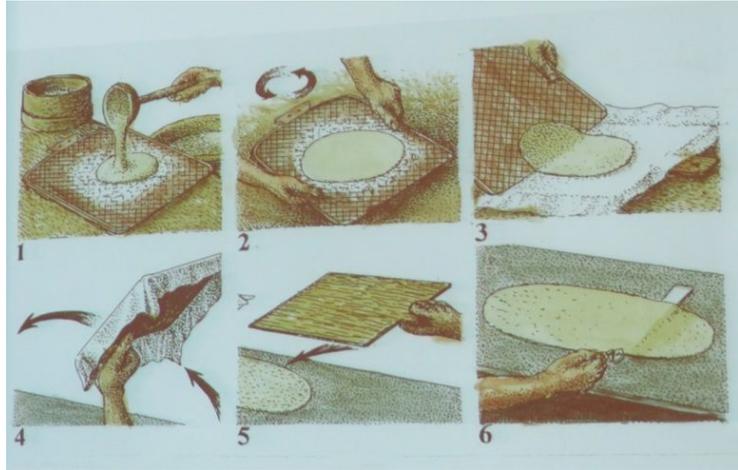
The temporary exhibit was on a popular event that still pleases both town and country – the **fairground** – and it was a surprise. There were many of the attractions of a fair such as trick mirrors, but the heart of the exhibit was the many automatons that took life as soon as their button was pushed by the children (and adults) visiting. These ingenious exhibits – all specially prepared by artists – were the springboard to explaining just how they worked, from cogs to pulleys to gears to cams, all totally hands-on, and there were plenty of hands on them.



The SFLS meetings always have a full programme of papers – a mix of **subjects of interest in folk life**. Of course, the main emphasis is on the host museum, its holdings and how they are used in research and to engage with the public, so the quilt collection (techniques, personal histories and conservation) was examined in detail.

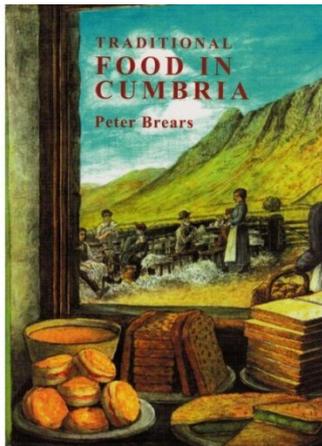
Several of the papers dealt with subjects of direct interest **to agriculture and rural traditions**, as well as a major photographic collection with many images of farming.

Of special interest, there were two presentations on agricultural tools and foodways directly based on the Tullie House collections, first highlighting **agricultural hand-tools** by the nationally recognized expert Peter Brears – from horse pattens to the sealskin flail links.



An “unrollable” ladle and how to make a larger ultra-thin oatcake by flipping it out

Later in the day, Peter went on to give us a foretaste of his latest work on **foodways in Cumbria** – he has already devoted books to Shropshire, Yorkshire, Northumbria, Leeds and various periods such as Tudor and Early Stuart England, Medieval England, Dining with the Wordsworths (18th-19th-century Romantic poet) and still more. He is a specialist in presenting foodways in all their nuances, emphasizing that the **calories needed for work defined the food consumed** and varied highly on any single farm. Peter can show you how to make an ultra-thin oakcake (but says the best idea is to hire a lady who really knows how to do it)



Left: Peter Brears *Traditional Food in Cumbria*, Bookcase, Carlisle, 2017, black and white illustrations, recipes, 412pp, review forthcoming in *Folk Life*. Right: Expert renovation of lake boats



Left: quarry museum has everything from granite to slate + an outdoor museum-parking lot for aficionados of old digging machinery

Getting to know the area SFLS meetings are held in is among the main objectives of the meetings, so the excursions are a highlight, so there was a visit the **Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam & Stories**, a reminder again that country life includes fishing and tourism. The museum has its own full-time restoration shop and we were guided through the process, plank by plank, nail by nail, by an expert boat restorer. See <https://windermerejetty.org/> Next on our list was the **Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum**, since “country life” has long included massive exploitation of quarry sites. Visit at <https://www.threlkeldquarryandminingmuseum.co.uk/>

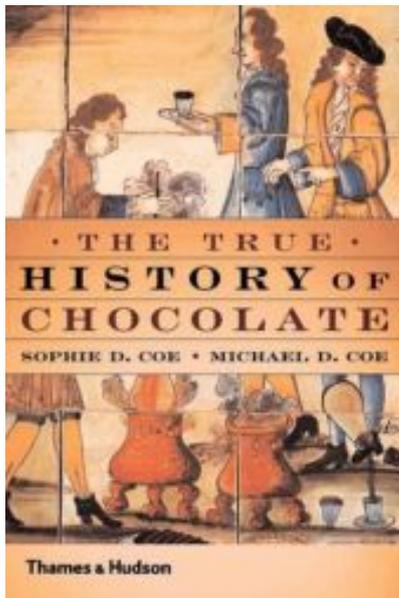
The Society for Folk Life Studies’ **peer-reviewed journal *Folk Life*** is a major resource on **farming and rural life**, covering both tangible intangible popular traditions. The annual **folk life newsletter** reports on the conference, on the venue for the coming year, and on members and friends’ announcements, as for the **AIMA 2020 triennial congress in Reading, England**.

The SLFS offers a **free student place** to attend its conference each year to a qualified candidate still in full-time education (not including travel expenses; requires fluent English). Contact Conference Secretary Steph Mastoris [Steph.Mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:Steph.Mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk)

Cozette Griffin-Kremer



## The Sophie Coe Prize for original writing on food history



The Prize was founded in 1995 in memory of Sophie Coe, the eminent anthropologist and food historian. The Sophie Coe Prize is awarded each year to an engaging, original piece of writing that delivers new research and/or new insights into any aspect of food history. We welcome entries of up to 10,000 words on any relevant topic. The Prize is £1,500 for the winning essay, article or book chapter. Authors may submit one entry only each, and they must be delivered to us by this year’s **closing date of 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020**.

Announcement received from The Folklore Society. For full information, see <https://sophiecoeprize.wordpress.com/>





## Update on the A.R.C.O.M.A. – a collection without a home



In Newsletter N°6, we invited Bruno Micol to describe the trials and tribulations of a small French association's collection, the A.R.C.O.M.A., which specializes in research and conservation of craft tools and their users. They were long the number one job creators in the Pays du Giers, although no official public institution has undertaken to assist with the collection, which has about 12,000 objects. The association has organized some 35 exhibits on tools representing 84 crafts or trades dating back to the seventeenth century.

In spite of promises from the two latest candidates for the local mayorship, little progress has been made, outside of allowing the association to use a storage and renovation space for part of the material. This does not enable them to continue exhibits, and association members, as in so many places, are getting older and discouraged, with only some twenty people left, of whom four or five can be active. Even when twenty associations for local heritage banded together to form a collective, it brought no signs of relief. However, local people continue to donate objects, sometimes quite extraordinary ones like the medical instruments from three generations of doctors, late 19th-century clothing and printing equipment. On the other hand, the A.R.C.O.M.A.'s website is a success with over 100 visits per day by Internauts from some forty countries, enthusiastic about the 350 articles on display and over 6000 photographs, but Bruno is the only one who works on this. The association, all volunteer-run, has low operating costs, but struggles to meet insurance fees.

On the up side, the association is involved in the European Heritage Days, when they are able to exhibit both tools and some items made by craft people in the building trades. They also hope that projects with a tool-maker and a local newspaper will work out. Bruno Micol [arcoma2012@yahoo.fr](mailto:arcoma2012@yahoo.fr) Please visit the website of the A.R.C.O.M.A. (Association pour la Recherche et la Conservation des Outils des Métiers de l'Artisanat) at <https://www.arcoma.fr/fr/> and leave a message of encouragement for Bruno Micol.



## Crossing classic paintings of rural life and analysis of posture



### Free access to 19-century rural life paintings by French artist Julien Dupré

Julien Dupré's (1851–1910) paintings portray scenes of hard work in the fields and also show the complicity between man and animal. The people portrayed are not frozen in Academic poses, but are shown in movement, acting, when they are making an effort, as when they are resting, all emphasizing their humanness. The landscapes in *Haying* (“*La récolte des foins*”), even if often imaginary, are inspired by the countryside of Picardy in the area of Saint-Quentin and Nauroy. The author died in 1910, so his works are in the public domain for all countries in which copyright lasts for 100 years or less.

This extract taken from a note published 4 December 2019 by **Claude Moinet** [claudemoinet@free.fr](mailto:claudemoinet@free.fr) and our thanks for his generous assistance. Meet Claude online at <http://patrimoineetmuseesruraux.e-monsite.com/> and see his **remarkable list of agricultural museums by *département*** (the administrative unit approximately the size of an English county) in France on the map on the same page, as well as sections on farming machinery (tractors a-plenty), steam-powered materials, the history of mills, brick-making sites, agro-forestry and permaculture, machines of the future in agriculture, local fêtes, bibliographical references (including films and videos), a virtual photo library, a selection of museums in the US, Belgium and Germany, miscellanea, and still more.

<http://moinet.jalbum.net/Sc%C3%A8nes%20de%20la%20vie%20ruraleJulien%20Dupre/>

### Analysis of posture

**Thea Sawyer** took a degree at the EHESS (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales) on posture, specifically targeting carry poles and shoulder yokes for dairy work, under the direction of François Sigaut.



Then on the illustrations in Claude's online website: The paintings are beautiful and every single one of them shows the posture typical of that time. It is not easy to describe in a way that people will see the difference without contrast pictures, of which there are none. They are all perfect! You have to develop an eye to see it. One way is to *feel* the difference by imitating a given stance, which makes one realize it's not so easy.

**Now, let's move on to the second series of photos below, all from Claude's website:**

In the second series, I tried to find some photos connected with agriculture, but found few clear ones. The most stunning photo was the one of all the women in a row on stools (!) working away, probably on the telephone. There you could really see how far back the pelvis is placed, which facilitates a straight spine without holding it. It is really a question of balancing weight. This is hard to see most of the time unless you know what to look for or try it on yourself.



Charrette pour le transport des gerbes (hay cart)  
The standing position of this man is typically "old-world": open chest, elbow far back, weight in the back of the foot, vertical alignment of the whole body – from head to heel.



Rémouleur (knife-grinder)  
<http://patrimoineetmuseesruraux.e-monsite.com/medias/album/diapositive7-1.JPG>  
This is the posture we see today: sitting with the tail-bone underneath leads to gradual shaping of a rounded spine.



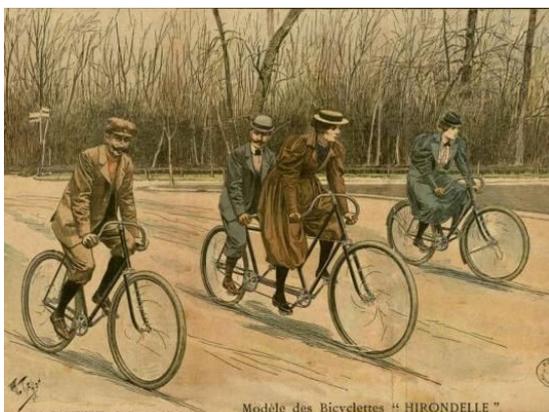
1936 Battages Virson (Virson threshing) Les hommes portent une ceinture de flanelle noire serrée autour de la taille pour leur tenir les reins (Men wearing a flannel belt tight about the waist to sustain the lower back)  
<http://patrimoineetmuseesruraux.e-monsite.com/medias/album/1936-battages-virson-1936.jpg>

This belt was a wonderful support for the musculature that keeps the trunk aligned, front and back. It functions as a small corset. The person appears slightly seated while standing, with his weight over the heels. The open chest enables the arms to move way back!



Post card caption incomplete: Manufacture française d'armes et Cygues de Saint Etienne Salle de chargement de cartouches (French Arms Manufacture Saint Etienne, Cartridge-loading Hall)  
<http://patrimoineetmuseesruraux.e-monsite.com/medias/album/diapositive30.jpg>

Sitting up straight without back support. Note the straight line from the ear to the center-hip of the first woman at the table. Her pelvis is well turned with a deep hip-crease (at the groin) so that the pelvic bowl provides internal support for a tall spine. She easily pivots forward to reach, hinging at the hip. This was the typical posture of the time. Compare the second woman at the table, who is beginning to change. Her pelvis is not turned front to back, but in reverse so that she sits on her tailbone. This throws her weight back. To lean forward she pivots from her waist. See the difference in profile.



Another good example of the postural norm of that time: the forward rotated pelvis. It was the key building stone for a straight spine, effortless and graceful.





**Editorial Disclaimer:** editor and contributors have made every effort to identify copyright-holders of free-access online material. We apologize for any errors or omissions and would be grateful to be notified of any corrections, which will be incorporated in future issues of this Newsletter.



## **Join the AIMA via PayPal**

**Membership forms and Paypal are available online in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish on the AIMA website under the heading JOIN US!**

**Individual membership €10, Institutional membership €40.**

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