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ERIH NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2020

Welcome to the ERIH November newsletter. The main topic: the ERIH Annual Conference at the **Altenberg Zinc Works LVR Industrial Museum** in Oberhausen, this time under the headline "Keeping the wheels turning – Succession Planning for Industrial Heritage". For the first time the conference was held as a hybrid event. 36 on-site participants and 45 online guests witnessed an inspiring programme of lectures with lively discussions in the afternoon workshops. The only downside: personal exchange during the breaks and in the evening was limited for many. But it was nice to see everybody again (at least online). This newsletter outlines the most important issues – including and especially for those who were not able to attend.



*Participants (on- and offline)
of the ERIH Annual
Conference 2020*

The topics at a glance:

- Annual Conference 2020: The General Assembly
- Annual Conference 2020: The conference presentations
- Annual Conference 2020: The workshops and their results
- ERIH Review: Further important issues

Annual Conference 2020: The General Assembly

The ERIH General Assembly was a hybrid meeting itself for the first time. It adopted the board's report for the previous year and the financial and audit reports without amendment, discharged the board, approved the budget for the upcoming year and, as an amendment to the articles of association, decided that in future general assemblies and board meetings may be held online if required.

Annual Conference 2020: The conference presentations

Following addresses by host Dr Walter Hauser (DE) and ERIH President Prof Dr Meinrad Maria Grewenig (DE), **TICCIH** President Dr Miles Oglethorpe (UK) acknowledged the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) recently signed between ERIH and TICCIH. This MoU has long been



recently signed between ERIH and TICCIH. This MOU has long been talked about because of the manifold overlapping of tasks and objectives of the two organisations and seals the determination to intensify cooperation.



*Greetings Dr Miles
Oglethorpe, TICCIH President*

The keynote was delivered by **Jaap Nieweg** (NL), President of the European Federation of Museum & Tourist Railways **FEDECRAIL**. Among other things, he referred to a technical manual on steam-powered engines written by a former Dutch naval chief, which volunteers still use today as a resource for the restoration and maintenance of steam engines. Nieweg believes that a key factor in keeping the wheels turning is the successful adaptation of industrial heritage to the environmental requirements of the European Green Deal. This affects, for instance, the question of fossil energy sources as authentic part of the industrial heritage, illustrated by taking coal as an example: Which collieries will we be preserving for the generations to come? How do we safeguard the miners' knowledge? Which sites are sufficiently interesting to continue operating them for demonstration purposes? Should coal continue to be mined in this context and do we need special permits to operate, for instance, historical steam locomotives under "zero carbon" conditions?



Jaap Nieweg

Thorsten Dette (DE) from the Wuppertal Municipal Archive introduced the next best practice model: the EU project "Virtual Reality Archive Learning (**VIRAL**)". It involves six museums, archives and educational institutions from Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Croatia, Portugal and Sweden collaborating on a transnational programme on industrial history for adult education. It aims to enable people seeking further education to use free e-learning tools – Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), 360-degree videos – to explore buildings or landscapes relevant to industrial history. One of the tools mentioned, for example, asks "What is (post)industrial heritage?" and invites participants to establish teams and submit an essay on a particular industrial heritage site of their choice. The programme targets teachers in the field of adult education, unemployed industrial workers, museum directors interested in new methods of knowledge sharing and, quite deliberately, also migrants who are interested in technology and seeking to connect with people. It is scheduled to be available free of charge as of 2021.



Thorsten Dette

How can teenagers and young adults between 13 and 25 years be inspired by industrial heritage? This is what **Ashleigh Taylor**, HwB Torfaen (UK), discussed in her presentation on the **Blaenavon World Heritage Youth Ambassadors**. The idea behind the project, which is now being carried out at five World Heritage sites in the UK, is the observation that while industrial heritage sites cooperate with schools, pupils and students are not very well represented amongst industrial heritage volunteers. To overcome this, the Youth Ambassadors programme focuses on young people and their lifestyles, using industrial heritage primarily as a means of making contacts, for example in youth clubs. The subsequent setting-up of



Ashleigh Taylor

small groups helps to ensure that everyone has a say and that working together proves to be fun, not least because it boosts self-esteem and the ability to solve problems, qualities which the participants can also put to good use in everyday life. The young people organise community events on a voluntary basis, assist in the preservation of historical monuments, conduct audits, visit museums together and much more. In the end, they shall not only understand the local or regional industrial culture and its influence on the community, but also take an active role and make their ideas heard.

Two best practice cases from the Polish voivodeship of Silesia addressed the issue of capturing oral memories as a joint industrial heritage project.

Dr Beata Piecha-van Schagen from the **Coal Mining Museum** in Zabrze (PL), which includes the ERIH Anchor Points "**Guido**" **Coal Mine** and **Queen Louise Adit**, shared in-depth interviews with former miners.

Hundreds of such interviews create a comprehensive archive of childhood memories and individual descriptions of everyday working life, the functionality of buildings and machines, as well as common pastimes such as boxing, gardening or raising carrier pigeons. The concept of recollection also includes the hands-on application of the recorded knowledge, ranging from handicraft workshops with children designing school bags related to the local industrial heritage, to guided tours of industrial monuments, attended not only by external visitors but in particular by local residents.



Dr. Beata Piecha-van Schagen

Keeping alive the memory of the Silesian steelworks, which, unlike the mines of the region, have left hardly any tangible remains, is considerably more difficult. That is why the **Museum of Metallurgy** in Chorzow (PL), which **Adam Kowalski** introduced and which is currently being established, deliberately aims to create a place of shared memories. This is the only way that the two ironworks Königshütte and Bismarckhütte with their massive but almost completely disappeared industrial compounds that once shaped Chorzow can remain a living part of the collective memory. A key role in this respect is played by working with pupils who generally have no prior knowledge of steelworks or even of regional industrial history. Touch points only emerge through projects such as interviewing parents and grandparents. These surveys reveal that virtually every family has at least one person with a professional background in the Chorzow steel industry. Another project involves primary school pupils in developing a choreography based on typical steel worker gestures. It is no surprise that the same pupils took part in the ERIH dance performance "WORK it OUT" this year, given the similarity of the concepts.



Adam Kowalski

The **Museum of the Printing Arts** in Leipzig (DE), which was presented by the last speaker **Dr Susanne Richter**, offers completely different conditions. Demonstrations of its historic machines and presses, which occupy the four floors of a former printing plant, are on show in full action, and visitors can also try their hand at printing in classes and workshops. Since 2018 the museum has also been running a project to preserve historical



printing techniques. The museum staff, some of whom come from entirely different sectors, have acquired these techniques from skilled craftsmen in order to teach them to a wider public. Since digital media play a vital role in this project, it is also attractive to young people. This combination of tangible and intangible heritage is actually fortunate, as is not so easy to achieve in the steel and coal industries, for example. Yet the Leipzig model still provides exciting insights into a part of industrial heritage that successfully implements succession planning and knowledge transfer.



Dr. Susanne Richter

The PDF files of all presentations are available on our website: [Service](#) | [Downloads](#) | [Presentations on ERIH events](#).

 [The presentations](#)

Annual Conference 2020: The workshops and their results

Three afternoon workshops were on offer: succession planning, knowledge transfer and corona effects. The following summary focuses on the results.

Workshop I: Succession Planning

Succession issues are particularly absent in the event-management sector. Other activities face a different situation: Both monument protection and the professional preservation of buildings as well as communication skills such as storytelling and social media management require expert knowledge that cannot be easily covered by all-rounders and volunteer work. The same applies to political networking and knowledge about funding opportunities and programmes.

In this context, the limited appeal of industrial heritage among students has proved to be a major issue for succession planning. While the sector is increasingly employing young and female professionals, it competes with more popular subjects. In order to encourage young talents, a multi-level cooperation with universities is worth considering. Specialised academic curricula with a focus on industrial heritage, for instance, which are currently not available in most countries, might be a potential incentive for individual career decisions. In addition, universities could be increasingly involved in human resources management and recruitment.



Finally, it takes new narratives to attract the attention of qualified junior staff. Once industrial heritage links the past with prospects for the future, it might gain popularity among young people as well. A similar effect results from the combination with outdoor and leisure activities and sporting competition, as well as an accentuation of interdisciplinary work and the feeling of being part of a community. Internships or the opportunity to explore and be involved in industrial heritage during a voluntary gap year could also attract more attention and interest.

The generation change relates to various aspects of knowledge: the operation and maintenance of historical machines, the functionality and preser-



vation of buildings, the social conditions of industrial work and – closely related to this – the different roles of the protagonists with their dependencies and interconnections. The final aspect particularly involves the ability for emotional storytelling based on selected biographies: How did people live, feel and, thus, unintentionally make history?



The challenge consists in transferring the knowledge of experienced senior staff in a way that resonates with the young. Hands-on assistance is provided by archives, interviews with witnesses of the relevant periods, handbooks or tutorial videos.

However, there are no examples for this kind of knowledge transfer, because most of the programmes designed for cultural education either neglect the technical heritage or do not take it into account at all. In this context, cooperation with technical vocational schools may be considered. However, particularly the technical aspects of industrial heritage are highly complex, and because nowadays most experts belong to the generation 60-plus, the youngsters tend to feel that the content and discussions are obsolete and also exclusive, i.e. difficult to access.

One possible solution could be to establish a mutual and equal transfer of knowledge: experienced industrial workers provide technical expertise and "oral history", while the young bring in their digital skills. At the same time, ERIH could set up a travel and exchange programme aimed specifically at young people, thus creating an incentive to engage in the industrial heritage sector on a professional or voluntary basis. This could include networking with operating companies acting as ambassadors of a forward-looking industrial heritage community, both among first-time employees and students as well as the general public.

Workshop III: Corona effects

At the heart of this aspect are the immediate implications of the lockdowns and other contact restrictions: the enforced suspension of the entire operation of a site, the dramatic decline in visitor numbers, the associated loss of revenue and the ensuing cost-saving measures, including cutbacks in personnel. A glance into the past reveals that it was exactly this kind of dramatic economic upheavals that, in the first place, allowed most industrial museums to emerge. This raises the question of potential new tasks for industrial museums under the current conditions, whether they consider this to be an opportunity and how they can be enabled to meet this new role.

The challenges are obvious: it is about staying in touch with the target groups and convincing them that visiting the sites in future is possible without any health risks. The key to achieving both these goals is to push ahead with digitisation. This requires online tools, staff training and strategies for developing attractive service options for users. Once established, this type of online service can potentially reduce costs and possibly even generate income, for example by providing fee-based virtual museum tours and other chargeable activities.

This can only be achieved via user-friendly content, wherever possible with additional event elements. Furthermore, attention should be drawn to cooperations: with other heritage sites, but also with partners possibly based in completely different contexts and addressed by thinking outside the box. Structural adjustments are needed, too. This includes offers for small groups as well as an increased use of outdoor facilities. On the other hand, digital communication holds opportunities in terms of increased



reach, focused monitoring and improved crisis management. As a network, ERIH can provide assistance by further expanding its corona crisis website section and supporting the identification of new partners by sharing contacts.



Acknowledgement

That this conference could take place at all is due to the outstanding flexibility of the hosting site: once it emerged that the pandemic would render the initially planned event at the Industrial Museum in Ghent impossible, the [Altenberg Zinc Works LVR Industrial Museum](#) kindly provided support for the hybrid concept, as it was now developed. All participants, be it online or offline, will confirm that the hybrid debut was a success. A major role in this was played by zoom coordinator Katharina Hornscheidt from the [Berlin Centre for Industrial Heritage bzi](#). We would like to thank her and the staff of Zinkfabrik Altenberg for their great commitment!

 [Photo gallery ERIH conference 2020](#)

ERIH Review: Further important issues

WORK it OUT

This year's dancing performance "WORK it OUT", involving a total of 29 participating sites in 9 countries, turned out to be a great success once again, regardless of the delay caused by the pandemic. The same is true for the social media response. The dancers of the [Workers' Settlement Ficus](#) in the Polish town of Ruda Śląska collected the largest number of Likes. Second and third place went to the teams from the [El Pobal Ironworks](#) in Muskiz in the Spanish Basque region and another Basque factory museum, ERIH Anchor Point [La Encartada Fabrika-Museoa](#) in Balmaseda. As a side effect of the corona pandemic, digitisation has been pushed forward heavily. The event's programme was live-streamed from the centrally located ERIH Anchor Point [Lage Brick Works LWL Industrial Museum](#) with TV presenter Shary Reeves. As a result, WORK it OUT scored even higher on the web than in the first two years.



Links to the live stream recording as well as to the dance videos of all participating sites are available on our website. Enjoy our composite video: a cheer up in this challenging time.

 [Photos and Videos of "WORK it OUT" 2020](#)
 [The ERIH "WORK it OUT" 2020 Composite Video](#)

ERIH website

The ERIH website is celebrating a new milestone: it now includes over 2,000 industrial heritage sites across

Europe – 125 more than before. In addition, 25 new biographies have been added, bringing the total number of accounts of the lives of personalities who influenced Europe's industrial history to 187.

Another new feature is a constantly updated list of links in our service section (experts and best-practice databases) relating to the

 **Coronavirus/Covid-19 crisis. Impact on museums and tourism**

The ERIH Industrial Heritage Barometer Survey 2020 has been postponed to early 2021. In addition to the data collected so far, the questionnaire will include questions on the state and impact of the coronavirus crisis. The reason for the postponement is the current increase in the number of infected persons in almost all European countries. This has led to the implementation of measures which prevent the collection of meaningful data and only allow a snapshot of the ongoing pandemic. From a survey perspective, it is more reasonable to look at closed processes or survey periods – such as a calendar year – which makes it all the more promising to collect the barometer data only after the end of 2020. This allows us to generate data for both 2019 and 2020 and thereby map the previous effects of the coronavirus pandemic in a year-by-year analysis.



ERIH - European Route of Industrial Heritage e.V.

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