

Notes from the 10th EXARC meeting in Asparn / Zaya (Austria), November 12th, 2005

as remembered by Roeland Paardekooper.

See for the list of people present the annex.

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1. Opening

The meeting was opened at 14:23h.

At this meeting, we have 8 new participants (of the 21), who haven't been in our circle before: *Kjersti Jacobsen*, Lofotr (N), *Ernst Lauer mann*, Asparn (A), *Armin May*, *Hans Peter Volpert*, *Steffi Zint & Mirjam Rettenbacher*, Bajuwaren hof (D), *Sven-Hinrich Siemers*, Bachritterburg Kanzach (D) and *Joël Confalonieri* (F).

Magdolna Vicze from Százhalombatta (H) takes the chair of *Ildikó Poroszlai* in our circles.

Geir Sør-Reime EU advisor, (N) is welcomed as guest.

Last meeting, we had 35 organisations as member. This amount has not grown since, although today we have *Joël Confalonieri* registering. Different centres have shown interest, but nobody registered. This is not the year meeting, but the in-between meeting, where we take up other matters which the board takes together with the members.

2. Remarks on last time notes

Biskupin meeting: The board will try to set up contact with the association from Oldenburg.

- Informally there is contact, otherwise not. Roeland discussed it with Dr. Fansa but it is not clear how he feels about this.

Jack: there should have been more time planned for the members meeting.

- The board planned more time this time.

Roeland will see if EXARC is linked to from all members' own pages.

- 16 Members link. 10 Members do not but could. 9 Members cannot or will not.

Bert would like a document from the board, stating the prospective future of EXARC. The new EU project will not be there before 2007. What are we going to do, what do we need? How do we solve our financial situation, how do we get more members? EXARC needs a strategy document, a vision on and by EXARC.

- The board promised to have this ready at next meeting, i.e. here in Asparn. This is not the case, but this is the very theme of this meeting. If Bert still wants a letter after this meeting, we will provide him with one.

3. Messages from the board

Meetings

The board has discussed the quality and quantity of the members meeting. The proposition is to have 2 kinds of meetings.

We will emphasise the single year meeting in Spring, being the year meeting. It will be like here in Asparn, but a more distinct programme. A bit more excursion. ½ a day excursion, ½ day speeches, ½ day member meeting. All meetings should be Friday / Sunday. You have to be able to reach the meeting on Friday, starting about 13:00 – 14:00. We end up the meeting at around lunch time, so you can be home that night.

The Autumn meeting should be more of a study tour to a place with reconstructions, experimental archaeology and living history, or we use that site for communication and discussion. New partners can also discuss with us. The excursion point leader gets a lot of feed back – 25 consultants in the room. We will not just look into the experimental part, but also the other aspects of running such a place. We want in every Autumn a board meeting and a short member meeting, the rest live on the place et cetera. A hands on programme with discussion.

Peter: when visiting EXARC, I add an extra day to see more of that country. I think these meetings would be much better if there would be a one day excursion. Go around the local area. Meeting to see the local area. You want to go to the best practice example, for the study trip and take that up, start from there. We had an EU project called Ancient Times with a lot of study trips. Even if the best practice example is outside Europe, we will go there, even to the States or so. These trips contribute and produce so much. It is very cheap to go to Istanbul for example than to one or the other centre locally. One day of talking, one day of study trip .. we will have much more benefit.

Björn: the local partner should take over and be in charge of the organising of the meeting. Including the local excursion. We need for the legal part for the year meeting 1 hour, 2 hours for members, then presentation of new member, all together 1 day. Then 1 day local study tour. Starting time first day 12:00h, last day ending by 12:00h again so people can travel easily.

It is decided to open and close our meetings on Friday and Sunday as proposed. It is as well decided, that the host takes care of everything and communicates with the board through the secretary.

Roeland as present secretary will put some guide lines on how to be a host.

The second meeting of the year is the study tour, a 2 to 5 days session in Autumn, depending the content and how much time you actually need. We are not going to have meetings then, but exchanging. We need informal hours together with the study programme. How many days should such an Autumn meetings be? Three days is normal. It is intensive but you can do it. Then there is no host, but there must be a coordinator of this tour, organising. The board has contact to this coordinator through the secretary.

Peter: we had 3 days with study trips and diaries. I can show how we did it.

The decision is taken to have two different kind of meetings. The board suggests to have next meeting – year meeting in Hungary. March 17th – 19th. The Autumn trip in 2006 will be to Southern England. Three days. Peter will be in charge of that.

4. LiveARCH

The point made is how LiveARCH will relate to the other EXARC members. We should clarify our status and goals and policy

We have two groups: one doing experiments and the other running museums. We have 10 different kind of issues to discuss. We should not be changing direction with EXARC, but make things more clear. We need a definition.

It is like a booklet on how to start with experimental archaeology and the such. We both incorporate the factory function (science & craft) and we have the shop status (open air centre). These might get in conflict.

We have 35 EXARC members now. The key word is experimental archaeology, but another keyword is communication with the public. We have been talking about clarifying what we stand for, what the aim should be and why we are meeting. One way of doing it, with all of it is in the LiveARCH project.

There is a similar organisation called EXAR. The suggestion is to clarify what we actually are doing and by doing that you end up with communication in a living history part. The base is historical facts, with experimental archaeological data.

We could take the LiveARCH name when we decide in the next year meeting have our basic paper ready what we should stand for.

Joël: you want to abandon the name EXARC?

Björn: with changing the name, we make clear what is the end result, where there is involved the research et cetera. We do not abandon experimental archaeology. We want also all small initiatives to join in to us, we can show where things lead to, a policy and being a speech man for these organisations to raise awareness and getting funds both locally and internationally. A kind of taking a stand.

Bert: we need a discussion on both the project and the future of EXARC. We could relate these two, but not sure how we end up in one organisation. It might be good, but who is going to do it?

Björn: I give the Sweden network (NSLF) as example. We are changing that organisation broader than just Sweden. We could have the same rules for that sub platform and the European network (and other sub networks elsewhere in Europe).

Bert: Who is going to do that? It is not just changing the name. Who is going to lead the process?

Björn: the board has to lead it until next year meeting, else we should never have suggested it.

We can divide the European network into sub networks. We in that case have meetings in the regions in Europe with an umbrella organisation on top of it. If we would get the EU project running, it will be

very similar. We will go this direction, either with this EU plan now and if this does not work, we will have another application next time.

Bert: I would agree in having the EXARC and LiveARCH to join in three years. The Board should present plans on how to do it and who is going to do it. It should not just be working when we are together and not in between the meetings. EXARC should exist in between the meetings. Otherwise, we are sitting in 6 months and exactly doing the same again. I asked the board 6 months ago and I ask again: make a plan!

Björn: Me and Arwo will make a plan, together with the board.

Bert: I am willing to support. I will be with Roeland running the coordination of LiveARCH-EU

Björn: we also have to look into the future: we will see who are small and which members are big. We should support the new members and the small members, we all have been there. All members should be able to raise their voice.

5. EuroREA

The board wants to have more coverage for the yearbook. Therefore, we want to collect addresses of archaeological magazines across Europe and send them a review copy. We need getting these addresses and contact persons. Please send them to the secretary. We expect to send off 40 – 50 of them. At this meeting, over 150 books have been ordered by the members present.

Björn: also see who in your neighbourhood can sell the books.

6. Questionnaire

Roeland gives a short summary of the results of the questionnaire. See the attachment for details.

Regarding adding new questions:

Peter: each member should describe a success for use for other members. That would be a top 10 list of most successful things to do with your public? So members can adapt it.

Bert: can't we ask for financial numbers?

Björn: that might be complicated.

Jack: a solution might be, that costs can be given in percentages, divided in 5 – 7 categories.

Bert: this could be an inspiration for next budgets.

Björn: we will divide the questionnaire in 2 parts: 1 average info and another form about finances for budgeting reason. This latter can be anonymous.

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Brake 15:17h – 16:06h, to see the insect eating public in the museum

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7. Open discussion

Who would do an event with insect eating? Is there historic evidence? It is nice to do once a year, it does attract visitors. Maybe in the future we should have a certain theme per EXARC meeting, like marketing, schools, insects, ..

Jack: changing name in LiveARCH could be good publicity.

Bert: there should be budget for promotion.

Peter: In the UK there must be an organisation of open air museums, the board should contact them.

Roeland: In the ICOM two committees. Contact has been, will be promoted.

Björn: we should support Roeland rather than giving him more work. Can someone outside the board be the press contact? Together with the board sending it out, local members translate it and send out to the local press? Who can do this? Jack will take this position.

Joël: what about legislation? Can public visit the houses, how to make this possible. In France you are not allowed to have visitors visit a reconstructed house – it is considered not safe. How do people manage this in their sites?

Björn: there are a lot of regulations, to start with fire and food regulations. You can work out an area and saying the museum is independent. This is a fun way of doing it, to make the officials understand what we mean.

Peter: it sounds silly that one cannot enter reconstructions. Maybe EXARC should play a role.

Joël: we say it is experimentation, so it fits no rule.

Geir: in the UK they have safety regulations, making things impossible. There are a lot of extra regulations because of the EU. And what about universal access: open for blind and handicapped people. That is why we need a lobby organization, like EXARC, so they make the right exceptions.

Jan: in Austria: using nails.

Wolfgang: setting up your own republic is very difficult. You might get arrested. Making the mayor of the local city the leader is making him having the big risk, his responsibility. That works. In Austria, we say it is not a house, but it is an archaeological model. And we should have some checks when ready, so we say it is never ready. This all works as long as nothing strange happens – no accidents.

Björn: think of the EU laws on keeping animals. Suddenly all places living history villages became zoos – lots of regulations. But many did it as living history and experiment and the public is welcome to visit us, but we are not a zoo.

Helle: you can make the officials making friends, inviting them over to your place. This makes them understand a bit.

Joël: this does not work in France, they don't make friends these security people.

Kjersti: why did Foteviken not become a farm? We did this and this was a way of working around it.

Björn: different countries, different solutions. EXARC can be a platform for lobbying, and EXARC can show its point of view for all over Europe.

Wolfgang: we are in a law less area, we all need directions. But if in one centre in Europe victims fall, ½ of all centres will be closed.

Gunter: we had fires 25 years ago. With the big houses, we make plans with architects and officials. There are possibilities when you involve these people.

Björn: if for example one replica ship would get in trouble.. all of them would suffer.

Peter: Insurance. International better than national.

Closed at 16:26h

Decisions summary

- Over the year, EXARC will have two meetings: in Spring the official year meeting, in Autumn more something like a field trip;
- The Year Meeting is decided to start on Fridays around lunch time and close the same time on Sunday. The programme would involve ½ a day excursion, ½ day speeches, ½ day member meeting;
- Roeland will put together some guidelines for the host organisation of each Year Meeting;
- The next Year Meeting will take place in Hungary (March 17th – 19th), during the international conference on experimental archaeology and archaeological parks;
- The next Autumn Meeting will be a 3 day field trip through Southern England. This will be coordinated by Peter Vemming;
- The board prepares a discussion for next Year Meeting on clarifying the goals of our organisation and the relation between EXARC and LIVEARCH. Björn & Arwo will make a first move;
- The board will send off 40 – 50 review copies of EuroREA to the leading (popular) archaeological magazines across Europe;
- The board will divide the new questionnaire in two parts, one on content, the other one on numbers. Information will only be shared amongst those having sent in their questionnaire;
- The board should contact an organisation in the UK on open air centres (Peter);
- The board continues its efforts in getting contact with the right ICOM Committees;
- Jack will be EXARC's press contact, preparing press messages for sending out to the members through the secretary.

Attachment

Results questionnaire 2004

The detailed results will be sent to all who contributed to this. For all others, there is only this abstract. EXARC grew in 2004 from 22 to 30 members. 20 of them filled out the questionnaire, which results can be compared to information dating back to 2001 to 2003.

2. Shop

The amount earned per centre visitor is very different all across Europe. Probably, it has to be taken into account, that in some cases the number of shop costumers is taken instead of ALL centre visitors. This still has to be checked. Also, one should see, that the largest centre has up to 100 times more visitors than our "smallest" centre, meaning the total sum earned in one shop is totally different than of the other. There are two groups: one series of members has an income of between E 0,22 and E 0,38 per visitor. The other group has an income of between E 1,25 and E 4,00 per visitor. In some cases, a centre's shop is just a book store, in other cases it is a tourist attraction in itself. What works well are items below E 5,00, made of natural materials, with a flair of prehistory or the Middle Ages, depending on where you are. Another good group of products are souvenirs with logo (post cards, cups, key ring holders).

3. Living History

Quite a few members rarely use Living History (LH) groups, like the AÖZA, Hitzacker, Montale, Asparn, Kernave and Unteruhldingen. The latter is unique in not organising markets or festivals either, were LH groups or individuals are employed.

In other cases, it is striking to see the same names popping up in different centres. It is unclear in how far personel or volunteers act out as LH as well. The 50% who do use LH groups are not totally dependend on those for addressing the public.

4. Visitor numbers & entrance fees

14 Museums grew in visitor numbers, compared to 2003 (hot summer back then), only in 4 cases, the numbers dropped. The total amount of visitors we counted in these museums were 1,3 million, 0,1 million more then in 2003. With Biskupin's visitor numbers remaining unchanged and Unteruhldingen dropping by 15.000 (6%) this is a remarkable growth.

Five members calculated a higher entrance fee, in most cases E 0,20 to E 1,10 per visitor. 9 members kept their prices the way they were. In some cases, comparisons could not be made, as numbers of both the years were unavailable.

5. Problems / succeses 2004

The problems in general are a rising of the continuing expenses without enough rising of the income. In some cases, it is a matter of survival, with better possibilities when growing. In some cases, the tourist season is only 6 weeks long and a lot depends on one large event. There is a very fine line between failure and success. The risk cannot so easily be spread. Good PR is something members should invest in, both free publicity as paid. Modern facilities need to be improved, but often one is dependent on external funding. The members could generate more income by addressing the business adult group market (incentives).

EXARC Added Value

The added value members seek in EXARC is very different. It starts with seeing a nice discussion group of like minded people, in the same business, to exchange of information, people and goods. Some even look further and see an exchange on business information, and research issues. The question remains:

- What is in it for me?
- What can I do for EXARC?

participants in the 10th EXARC Meeting, November 2005

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06.2	Olofsson	Jan	S Kalmar Läns Museum - Eketorp	eketorp@kalmarlansmuseum.se
08.2	Vicze	Magdi	H Matrica Múzeum és Régészeti Park	vicze@mail.battanet.hu
09.1	Schöbel	Gunter	D Pfahlbaumuseum Unteruhldingen	G.Schoebel@t-online.de
14.1	Veldman	Jack	NL Archeon	info@archeon.nl
14.3	Geerlings	Nico	NL Archeon	archeonaut@casema.nl
19.1	Jakobsen	Björn M.	S The Museum of Foteviken	bmj@foteviken.se
23.1	Vemming	Peter	DK Middelaldercentret	peter@middelaldercentret.dk
23.2	Krogh	Helle	DK Middelaldercentret	helle@middelaldercentret.dk
25.1	Lobisser	Wolfgang	A Vienna Institute of Archaeological Science (VIAS)	wolfgang.lobisser@univie.ac.at
26.2	Jacobsen	Kjersti	N Vikingmuseet på Borg	kjersti.jacobsen@lofotr.no
27.1	Lauermann	Ernst	A Museum für Urgeschichte des Landes Niederösterreich	ernst.lauermann@noel.gv.at
31.1	May	Armin	D Bajuwarenhof Kirchheim BHK	Arminmay@gmx.net
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