



ECOVAST REPORT 60

December 2015

Editor: Phil Turner
46 Hatherley Road, Winchester, Hampshire UK
SO22 6RR
E mail : p.turner@semantise.com

website <http://www.ECOVAST.org>

Discussion sites :
<http://ECOVAST.webs.com/>

<http://www.dorfwiki.org/wiki.cgi?SmallTowns>

Contents

Editorial

Report of the President

News from the Sections

ASSET project

Ecological Living

Partner organisations

Events notified to the Editor

EDITORIAL

In this newsletter our President tells of the reports on Small Towns that have been presented at the European Rural Parliament in Austria, and at the Danube Strategy event in Ulm, Germany. Valerie has now a full list of small towns in England, UK, and Angus Fowler has compiled a list of small towns in the inner German 'Green Belt' (former Iron Curtain landscape). Brigitte Macaria has presented small towns and the landscape to the Council of Europe.

The project ASSET, Action to Strengthen European Small Towns, initiated at Retz in 2005, is now ended, with the research and publications to influence DG Regio, the Council of Europe and others. Now the funding of 9000 euro is spent. The three sources of that money no longer exist: SEEDA (2000 euro), APURE UK (2000 euro) and CRC (5000 euro).

A positive result of ASSET is that the recent European Rural Parliament (ERP), featured on page 12, has an Action Programme for 2015-17 which includes Small Towns, stating that ASSET has generated a very useful network of local authorities, NGOs and others.

ERP is saying that the opportunity now is to formalise that network; to promote practical exchange of experience and ideas between all who are focused on the subject; and to build up an evidence-based case for a significant policy shift within the European Union, whereby the rural and regional funds might in future include, or be complemented by, a mainstream policy focused on small towns. There is a suggestion from Austria (page 14) that ECOVAST could lead an initiative to create a European Small Towns Association. The existing European Federation of Towns and Municipalities of the European Union (CTME) might help to avoid re-inventing the wheel.

That would be a good way to attract new members to ECOVAST, who could be active in supporting the President in the necessarily great effort and time involved in setting up such an Association or project and in the task of seeking funding from official European funds aimed at rural/urban development (through the Common Strategic Framework and Community Led Local Development) and private sources such as banks that operate throughout Europe.

However, ECOVAST across Europe, and in the national sections, is struggling to continue to engage existing members in events and activities. Younger members are needed.

Those of us who are beyond retirement age are finding difficulty on travelling for many reasons - health, income, caring responsibilities, security at national borders are among the factors.

The report from the German Section, page 5, says that at the recent AGM there was some discussion on whether the German Section should dissolve itself, its members concentrating on work for the international organisation ECOVAST.

The International Committee of ECOVAST should consider in 2016 if it is possible to take on the initiative of creating a Small Towns Association, or whether to face dissolution if insufficient numbers of people attend meetings.

A decision on whether or not to dissolve would have to be taken at a Special General Assembly, with four months notice given. The national sections that are registered in their own country could continue to operate.

At the time of writing the dates of 2016 meetings of the ECOVAST International Committee and General Assembly have not been decided. It is possible that there will be a themed meeting in the Spring on the border of Austria and Hungary, suggested by Arthur Spiegler.

Experience over recent years has been that a location in Germany would be the most likely to result in a quorum at a General Assembly.

Please make your views known to me or the President : valericarter@ecovast.org

A PDF of this newsletter can be accessed at: <http://www.dorfwiki.org/upload/PhilTurner/ECOVASTNewsletter60December2015.pdf>

Please send copy for the next Newsletter to me, at p.turner@semantise.com by March 31 2016

Phil Turner
Editor ECOVAST Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello and welcome to you all. I hope you have had a pleasant summer. I have been away to the Pennine hills in England with my family (fifteen of us all in total – including my youngest grandchild of 9 months).

I have not done so much travelling abroad for ECOVAST this year but have had 2 events in England (the Cambridge event already reported on).

I have informed you about our General Assembly in the Czech Republic where we agreed to continue our work on small towns but concentrate on the Danube area in order to influence the emerging Danube Strategy which involves 14 countries; and the Krakov event in Poland where I was invited to speak at the European Congress of Local Authorities. All of these involved promoting our work on small towns.

Since then I attended 3 events all of which promoted small towns.

Exeter University Event

I am a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in the UK and was invited to attend their Annual Conference to present our research work on small towns. The event was very much focused on academic research and I met the usual problem that they were surprised that any other kind of people did research – yet my career in local, regional and national government has involved quite a bit of research!

Details of the events in Ulm, Germany and Schärding, Austria are described later in this newsletter.

ECOVAST has produced a **Supplement Document** to the 'green glossy 'The Importance of Small Towns' which just included examples of towns within the Danube Basin. This has involved a lot of new research on best practice but it has found some really good examples.

I had also prepared a series of **posters** on ECOVAST – with help and advice from Arthur Spiegler. There are 6 generic posters about ECOVAST – the organisation and our work on small towns and 8 photos of individual towns: Waidhofen an der Ybbs, Austria; Lovech, Bulgaria; Samobor, Croatia; Berching, Germany; Szentendre, Hungary; Carasebes, Romania; Bardejov, Slovakia and Ptuj, Slovenia. Copies of these posters will be added to our ASSET pages on the ECOVAST website. They could be translated and used by National Sections if required.

I took copies of the 'Importance of Small Towns' to all these events and copies of the Danube Supplement to Ulm, and gave out many copies at the events together with ECOVAST leaflets. I carried with me more than 70 documents – The Importance of Small Towns'; The Evidence Base and the Danube Supplement and the ECOVAST Leaflet to the events and all documents were distributed – hopefully carrying our messages widely about small towns. I do not wish to take so much documentation with me again when I travel – it was too heavy by air – and too difficult to negotiate the stairs on train stations – but I felt the effort paid off in the end!

I would like to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Valerie Carter

News from the Sections

Austria

There is an application for a project pending of a co-operation with ECOVAST Hungary at/ across the common border concerning small towns and their landscape. Final decision is expected at the New Year.

Arthur visited the G.A. of the German section, end of October, reporting about small towns along the Green Belt. An agreement of mutual co-operation was elaborated that should develop in a common project of the two sections. A great amount of voluntary survey has been done, mainly by Angus and Arthur, that is meant to be the basis of the project application.

Brigitte Macaria ECOVAST Austria Secretary General, at the invitation of Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons of the Council of Europe, took part at a workshop, in Andorra, on implementing the European Landscape Convention. Brigitte spoke for the first time to these landscape experts about small towns (and their landscapes). Her view and this comprehensive issue had been highly appreciated and the matter of small towns from now on seems to be taken seriously.

The Austrian section also took part at the meeting of the European Rural Parliament (ERP) taking place in the lovely Historic Small Town Schärding, Upper Austria, on 4. – 6. November, co-organised by Michael Dower, a regional management (with Mr. Müller) and supported by officials of the province and the state.

The ERP dedicated an own chapter of its official statement, the “European Rural Manifesto” to the very complex issue of small towns.

As consequence of the meeting and the Manifesto, ECOVAST Austria is aiming to organise a first meeting of selected and interested people and organisations, targeting to place the small towns in the European network of the ERP and to implement special politics in favour of the small towns.

We undertook very effortful - but until now futile - attempts in finding a lead partner for the Austrian cross border project about the Green Belt among Austrian official institutions.

We placed an article about the Green Belt the professional journal of the “Austrian

Geographical Organisation” about its landscapes and small towns.

We also held an introducing workshop for our new geographic member Katharina Rybnicek who recently found a paid job and therefore, at least for the moment, lost her interest in ECOVAST.

Arthur Spiegler & Brigitte Macaria

Croatia

A book "Landscape as Cultural Heritage - Methods of Recognition, Valorisation and Protection of Cultural Landscapes of Croatia" by Dr. Biserka Dumbović Bilušić, Vice President of the Croatian section of ECOVAST, was presented in Mimara Museum in Zagreb on November 3rd, 2015. After the presentation of the book a round table "Preservation and Sustainable Development of the Landscape" was organized, as part of the 2015 European Heritage Days in Croatia. The meeting was opened by Berislav Šipuš, Croatian Culture Minister.

Dr. Biserka Dumbović Bilušić thanked everyone who helped the book to be published noting that the theme of the landscape affects us all. By signing the European Landscape Convention in year 2000 Croatia assumed the obligation to take care of its landscapes. But the landscape protection is important not only because of the formal obligations. Landscapes are an important element of the Croatian spatial identity. Preservation of the landscape is not possible only through the formal protection of the conservation service, but it is important to recognise and protect its values in other disciplines such as spatial planning, nature protection, tourism development and others. Landscapes may be an element of socio-economic development and should therefore not be considered as a limitation to development, but as an important potential for social, cultural and economic development, especially in the field of tourism.

In Croatia, features and values of the landscapes are still not sufficiently recognised and valued. The Register of Cultural Assets records only ten protected landscapes. Minister Šipuš pointed out that the most complex types of heritage landscapes greatly contribute to increasing knowledge about the values of the landscape, establishing a methodology for identifying, typological classification and valuation of the landscape and provide the basic conditions for the adequate protection of cultural landscapes.

The annual Assembly of ECOVAST Croatian Section took place on September 18, 2015 in the Institute for Tourism in Zagreb.

The main task of this meeting was to adapt and change the Statutes according to the new Law on Civil Society Organisations in Croatia.

ECOVAST Croatian Section was also active in the work of the Croatian Rural Development Network (HMRR - Hrvatska mreža za ruralni razvoj). Nikša Božić participated at HMRR annual gathering in September in Drniš where the HMRR Assembly also adopted its new Statutes. The Croatian Section of ECOVAST was one of six founding members of HMRR back in 2006. Today this network brings together 38 associations from Croatia dealing with rural development, among them many LAGs (Local Action Groups) that use the LEADER principle for local rural development. In Drniš a new presidency was elected, and Nikša Božić from Croatian section of ECOVAST was re-elected as one of members of the HMRR Managing Board.



HMRR Assembly

Croatian Section was also active in preparations for the Participation Day of the DCSF (Danube Civil Society Forum) of the EUSDR (European Union Strategy for the Danube Region). The event was organized on October 28, 2015 in Ulm, Germany, for which Tihana Stepinac Fabijanić prepared a detailed Work Group Report while ceased to serve as a member in the Executive Committee of the organization. A presentation on 'Small Towns in the Danube Region' was given by ECOVAST president Valerie Carter at a workshop of the conference in Ulm.

Tihana Stepinac Fabijanić and **Nikša Božić**

Germany

The Committee of the German Section held its late summer meeting at the end of August in the small town of Groitzsch in the west of Saxony with a visit to the small town of Pegau nearby, in an area where brown-coal mining continues. Small towns in the area suffer from the effects of the mining around them, we saw that both are doing their best to deal with their situation. Their history goes back to Slav settlements in the 9th century and particular to development with colonisation of the surrounding area in the late 11th and 12th centuries under the well known powerful magnate Wiprecht von Groitzsch. Much of the landscape which developed in the medieval period has been destroyed/alterd by brown-coal mining. Both towns are engaged in programmes of urban renewal and regional development. The committee meeting was particularly concerned with preparing the AGM and the accompanying seminar of the Section.

In October Peter Thran represented the German Section at the Europa Nostra prize ceremony for the long-term dedicated service of the Rundlingsverein, the association for round villages, partly of Slav origin, in the Hanoverian Wendland. Contacts of the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen (Marburg) to leading members of the Rundlingsverein existed already before the foundation of ECOVAST and the German Section, one of the contacts, Lotte Reusch, was involved in the early development of ECOVAST in Germany and the foundation of the German Section, her husband was Treasurer of the German Section of ECOVAST.

Angus Fowler attended the meeting of the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen Berlin-Brandenburg in Potsdam to commemorate its 25th anniversary and the AGM of „Future for Religious Heritage“ in Brussels. Shortly before the Verband der Kirchbauvereine in Sachsen-Anhalt (association of NGOs for churches in Sachsen-Anhalt) with help from DenkmalWacht Brandenburg-Berlin and the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen Berlin-Brandenburg held a successful major public discussion together with church and conservation institutions on sustainable conservation of churches by regular inspection and basic repairs as carried out by the Monument Watches in the Netherlands, Belgium/Flanders and the Monumentendienst in the Weser-Ems area in western Lower Saxony.

In the summer and autumn Angus Fowler spent much time preparing the statutes of the International organization, as altered at the end of March at the AGM in Frantiskovy Lazne, and the election of the officers and committee of the International organization for registration at the responsible French court, the Tribunal, in Sélestat in Alsace. We thank Michael Strecker and Anne-Marie Nothis-Bloch (Strasbourg, formerly at the Council of Europe) for their help with translation into French.

The AGM and seminar of the German Section took place at the end of October in Neuhaus near the River Elbe in an area where the federal states of Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg and Sachsen-Anhalt come together and where the City of Hamburg is not far away. We thank Ivar Henckel and Peter Thran for their careful preparation of the events.

The mayoress of Neuhaus and local experts on regional and rural development took part and informed us on the problems of the area in the Green Band, which although belonging to the Prussian province of Hanover but being north of the Elbe and difficult of access was given by the British military administration (Montgomery) to the Russian zone in 1945. In the early 1990s it left the new federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and because of the former historic connection and also the prospect of better development became part of Lower Saxony. The area is part of the important nature reserve of the Elbe valley. We visited the information centre of the nature reserve in the old building of the former local administration (Amt Neuhaus), the site on the edge of Neuhaus of the medieval and renaissance castle of the Dukes of Sachsen-Lauenburg and went out to see the Elbe meadows, the ferry across the Elbe and a museum on the Green Belt area and the hard experiences in the area 1945-1989.

We were very happy that Arthur Spiegler came especially to our seminar to talk about the Green Belt and the work by the Austrian Section (Arthur and Brigitte Macaria). We discussed with Arthur the possibility of cooperation on the subject with the German Section. In the meantime Angus Fowler has put together a list of small towns and information on them in the inner German Green Belt area and also on the Czech towns bordering on Bavaria. He and his Berlin colleague Michael Strecker (DenkmalWacht Brandenburg-Berlin) attended a talk on the Green Belt at the German Museum of

Communication (Post Museum) in Berlin which concentrated almost exclusively negatively on the differences between nature experts and farmers/developers and clearly showed that ECOVAST is one of the organizations best informed and active on the social-cultural and other aspects of the Green Belt, both Strecker and Fowler contributed to a lively discussion.

The AGM in Neuhaus was in particular concerned with the survival of the German Section, similar to the International organization of ECOVAST, with the problem of finding a younger Chairperson and committee members. After two full terms of office Irmelin Küttner wished to retire as Chair in particular as she has not been in good health. She herself was not able to attend and soon after went into hospital for a major serious operation which she survived and is now recovering. We congratulate her. The German Section is very thankful for her service as Chair. She was and still is very active representing the Section in Brandenburg 21/the Brandenburg Village Movement. Just before going into hospital she attended the Brandenburg Village Day in south Brandenburg in the active village of Garrey, preparing for the European Rural Parliament in Schärding, and led a section on villages and their vernacular architecture. She most recently attended, together with Michael Strecker, a meeting in Berlin of the German Landscape Forum (Bund Heimat und Umwelt, Inge Gotzmann) dealing with oral traditions and landscape. A major theme was also the European Cultural Heritage Year 2018 with which ECOVAST and its members should be concerned and consider how ECOVAST and they can actively contribute.

At the AGM there was some discussion (begun by Andrea Weigert) on whether the German Section should dissolve itself, its members concentrating on work for the International organization ECOVAST. It was considered that this would lead automatically to a loss of the solidarity and cooperation between members which has developed since the foundation of the Section in 1988. The German Section is responsible for participation by Max and Olaf Linke in a project funded by the EU and the federal state of Sachsen-Anhalt which continues until 2021 so that the Section must continue formally at least until then. Angus Fowler agreed to become Chairman to ensure continuity, Irmelin Küttner agreed to continue as committee member, Ivar Henckel and Olaf Linke were willing to be re-elected as committee members.

However we have lost Andrea Weigert as Treasurer of the German Section and responsible for looking after the membership. Andrea wishes to devote more time to the International organisation as its Treasurer. We thanked Andrea for her long-term service to the German Section and will miss her in the Committee and will have difficulty in filling the gap.

The Committee will hold its next meeting in connection with the Green Week in Berlin in the second half of January, possibly in connection with a meeting of local partners in the German Landscape Forum.

Angus Fowler

Russia

A series of lectures was organised in the framework of the exhibition "Russian wood. View from the twenty-first century", which opened in MUAR September 3, 2015. Olga Sevan, architect, a specialist in Russian wooden architecture gave a lecture in the Shchusev Museum of Architecture on 28 November.

As part of the same show, the same day, Olga Sevan took part in the presentation of the first volume of the book "Russian wood. Glimpse of the XXI century". The book contains drawings, paintings and photographs of monuments of Russian wooden architecture of XIV-XIX centuries, as well as articles of professionals working in this area, including Olga Sevan.



Olga left (wearing a red jacket)

United Kingdom

LISTED BUILDING OWNERS PROUD TO CARE FOR HERITAGE - Heritage Counts Report 2015 Published by HISTORIC ENGLAND

- 93% of owners see their property as important to local character and enjoy owning a slice of England's history
- Owners are committed to maintaining their property
- More needs to be done on guiding owners through the planning process

The owners of England's listed residential buildings say they feel privileged to be custodians of our heritage, according to this year's Heritage Counts report published on 3 December 2015 by Historic England on behalf of England's leading heritage organisations, who make up the Historic Environment Forum. Heritage Counts 2015 focusses on the people responsible for looking after the local historic environment, two thirds of which is privately owned.

Over 1,000 listed building owners across the country were surveyed for the report. The results reveal that owners are proud to be conserving heritage for the future and enjoy being a part of our collective history. The survey also found that 93% of owners believe their home is very important to the character of the local area, with 88% recognising the importance of the listed building consent process for protecting the special character of their property.

Caring for heritage

Heritage Counts 2015 demonstrates that owners actively care for their listed homes, with two thirds performing regular maintenance including window repairs and gutter clearing. Owners also say they are committed to investing in their buildings - 35% applied for listed building consent in the past 5 years and around 44% of these had spent or planned to spend £25,000 or more on work. Despite this, owners are concerned about the expense and would appreciate VAT exemption.

Consent process and local councils

Half of owners who have applied for Listed Building Consent (LBC) say they have had a good experience of the planning process. But a third said their experience was poor. Owners who feel they are clear on what types of work require LBC are more likely to have a good experience of planning. Those who did not go

ahead with their application for LBC seem to be put off by the cost of skilled professionals and the complexity of the planning process.

Since 2012/13, the number of listed building consent applications has grown, whereas all other planning applications have stabilised at lower levels than the peak of 2004/5. This is in the face of further decreases in local authority staff. Since 2006, the number of archaeological specialists has fallen by 23% and the number of conservation specialists has fallen by 35%. The Historic Environment Forum is concerned about future funding cuts to local councils and the impact it could have on protecting our historic places.

The report demonstrates that the heritage sector needs to do more to simplify the planning process and improve awareness through better information.

Sir Laurie Magnus, the Chairman of Historic England said:

"A huge number of individuals and organisations are responsible for looking after the extraordinary quality and diversity of England's historic environment. Private owners of listed residential buildings care for the greatest share of our historic fabric. It is therefore particularly encouraging to see the evidence of their commitment to preserving the historic character of their properties and their readiness to cover the costs of regular maintenance. There remains more that can be done to improve the efficiency of the listed building consent system and to support these private owners, particularly at a time of continuing decline in local authority heritage staff. "

ECOVAST UK member, John Sell, Chair of the Historic Environment Forum said:

"I am delighted that the research carried out for Heritage Counts this year confirms what many of us have long believed – that owners of historic buildings care deeply about them and want to look after them as well as they possibly can. The lesson to be drawn is that the more good quality advice can be given, the better old buildings will be looked after."

For infographics of this year's Heritage Counts click here: [<http://bit.ly/1IziNWR>]<http://bit.ly/1IziNWR>

Read more about Heritage Counts here: [<http://hc.historicengland.org.uk/>]<http://hc.historicengland.org.uk/>

Heritage Counts is an annual survey of the state of England's historic environment produced by Historic England (previously known as English Heritage) on behalf of the Historic Environment Forum, which represents the major heritage organisations in England. The report summarises policy changes from the year and reports on a wide range of information and data that helps the sector make decisions and influence policy.

The Historic Environment Forum members are:

ALGAO
Architectural Heritage Fund
British Property Federation
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Church of England
Civic Voice
Council for British Archaeology
Country Land and Business Association
Heritage Lottery Fund
Historic England
Historic Houses Association
Historic Religious Buildings Alliance
Historic Royal Palaces
Historic Towns Forum
Institute of Historic Building Conservation
Joint Committee of the National Amenities Societies
National Trust
Natural England
Royal Institute of British Architects
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Royal Town Planning Institute
The Churches Conservation Trust
The Heritage Alliance

Phil Turner

ASSET

Meetings of the Danube Civil Society Forum (DSCF) Ulm, Germany - 27 & 28 October 2015

Valerie Carter was invited to the Danube Civil Society Forum meetings being held in the Town Hall in Ulm, Germany in October. There were separate events – the 3rd General Assembly meeting on 27th October and the Participation Day on 28th October.

Tihana has been our lead working with the Danube Strategy Group for the last few years and had managed the Danube Workgroup 1 – Connecting the Danube Region. She was set to go to the General Assembly meeting and I was invited to take part in the Participation Day - Tihana having made great progress on raising awareness of the importance of small towns in the Danube Basin area and DSCF had agreed to have a special group on small towns at the Participation Day.

In the event Tihana was unable to go and I was invited to go to the General Assembly instead as well as running a Working Group at the formal Participation Day.

DSCF General Assembly on 27th October discussed reports from 2013-2015 and the Work programme. Tihana had provided the Danube Strategy with a full report of her work with Workgroup 1 and the meetings she had led. I led a the Working Group 1 in the afternoon - but only one person in my group had even attended one of Tihana's meetings and it was difficult to get any resolution about what the group had felt from the meetings so far.

My general impression was that there is a lot of enthusiasm among those attending but members do not have to belong to any specific group and chose when to and what to attend. Without regular attendants it is difficult to assess progress and therefore the work of the formal Working Groups seemed weak and unfocused.



The Participation Day, which followed on 28th October, was very well attended by Austria, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia and the Ukraine (all Danube countries); and representatives from Italy, Latvia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Netherlands, Poland as well as myself from the United Kingdom.

ECOVAST was given a display panel at the Participation Day where I used our new posters on Small Towns and displayed our publications.

The Workshop on small towns, for which I was facilitator, was one of 12 and was not particularly popular – the current refugee crisis did dominate a lot of the proceedings. My group was very small with only members from Ukraine and Serbia attending – but they were

very committed to the smaller communities and agreed to report back with 5 key points they wanted the DS to take on board. The rapporteur from Ukraine reported back to the plenary session on our 5 conclusions:

- i) we promote the importance of having strategies for small towns and the villages they serve, with every community taking part – the strategy belongs to them
- ii) small towns and villages should be linked up together – they share a cultural and history in the Danube region; they offer opportunities for thematic trails: and the countryside around them offers places for relaxation supporting families with children and old people and health recovery particularly for mental health
- iii) small towns are places where local farmers should be encouraged to sell their local produce recreating historic local markets and where growers can meet their consumers
- iv) individuals living in small towns and villages should be encouraged to become formal 'ambassadors' for their communities – promoting their assets as well as becoming local leaders
- v) one of the most important aspects of small towns is that they should retain their educational institutions – for children of both primary and secondary ages. Having the experience of growing up in a small town can encourage young people to recognise their benefits and stay in the town when they become adults and form their own families – or at least come back to live and work there eventually.



The ECOVAST display

We finished our list with a slogan – 'Please take note of small towns and do not ignore us' In the summing up of the Participation Day the words 'small towns and cities' was clearly mentioned and hopefully will appear in the printed report of the event.

Small Towns in Germany on the Danube

I took the time between this Ulm event and the European Rural Parliament event by staying in Germany for a few days to visit some of the beautiful small towns on the Danube in Germany. It was actually the same cost as flying home and flying out again. I met a lot of interest during my travels – people always want to know why you are travelling alone and to places not necessarily visited by the main tourist routes.

Valerie Carter

Ecological living for local Communities

With the elimination of many trade barriers over the last decades, the economy has become global, and with production by computer-controlled automation, we have primarily become consumers of goods produced elsewhere. This is the very opposite of ecological living in community. The following are suggestions for a different way of life practiced in a perceived locality of human scale, such as a village or small town. Even large towns and cities contain such areas, which are visibly, tangibly distinct.

The basic necessities for human life are food, clothing and shelter – of which much can be produced locally. These suggestions therefore include not only service economy, but also some locally produced items, dependent on the type of area, whether rural or urban.

1. Vegetables and fruit grown in market-gardens and private allotments rented from the Local Authority. These could be sold at a weekly market.
2. Small personal businesses for repair of clothes and dressmaking.
3. Similar businesses for plumbing and electrical work, and for maintenance and decoration of buildings.
4. A small bank or lending agency, in which local residents only, participate for low-cost lending or borrowing among themselves.
5. Tree planting and tree-care, in which children and young people can participate and be personally responsible for certain trees.
6. Gardening Services for old people and for any residents who are handicapped.
7. Community transport including car-journey sharing.

8. Use of Church buildings for wider purposes, such as morality plays, concerts and music groups.
9. Regular discussion groups bringing in outside specialists, to be held in the local Church or school.
10. Self-built homes. In the late 1940's and 1950's, there were many such developments of up to 30 houses on land provided by the Local Authority with the necessary infrastructure of roads, drainage etc. the purchasers of individual sites formed a co-operative group to do the construction themselves. They employed a full-time building-manager and any specialists that may have been required.

The cost of a house built in this way was only half of that by a building contractor. However, this could be very difficult now, because of the big increase in the price of land, and other factors such as insurance etc. Nevertheless, for a pair of semi-detached houses, it might still be possible for skilled building operatives to undertake for themselves.

Any of the above services might be chosen to form a group for ecological living in community, but the very first necessity would be to form a discussion group to make any decisions, when the whole of a local population have been consulted as a first necessity. It will be noted also that such a new way of living reflects that of the early Christians recorded in the New Testament. They practiced shared ownership of property, and of all the good things of life.

It will be noted that the recent encyclical of Pope Francis issued in Summer 2015 urges Christians to an ecological conversion. Such a movement would be appropriate for the whole of mankind at the time of this present environmental crisis, which will be discussed in the international conference in Paris in December 2015. For background reading, Benedicte Manier's book is recommended "Un Million de Révolutions Tranquilles", which gained the award of the Prix du Livre Environnement 2013. It enumerates how much is already being done by ecologically minded people across the world, and the whole ethos can be summed up in the phrase – co-operation, not competition.

Royston Edge. Phd Univ. Bordeaux

Partner organisations



EUROPA NOSTRA UK

Local Awards Ceremony: Young Archaeologists' Club

Dr Peter Collins (Chairman of Europa Nostra UK), Gunilla Carlbom and I (members of the EN UK Committee) enjoyed the events around the Annual Meeting of the Council for British Archaeology, on Monday 9 November, at the British Academy, Carlton House Terrace, London.

<http://new.archaeologyuk.org/news/celebrating-excellence-in-archaeology>

There was an informative panel debate on the context of proposals to develop the A303 Trunk Road at the world famous Stonehenge, and the 35th Beatrice De Cardi Lecture was presented by Professor Mike Parker Pearson, drawing together years of research to share new interpretations of the prehistoric site of Stonehenge and the landscape in which it sits. I was privileged to sit in the front row, next to Beatrice, who is 102 years old. A former Secretary of the CBA, she excavated in Pakistan and the Persian Gulf.

Peter presented the Award, in the category of Education, Training and Awareness-raising, to Dr Kate Pretty CBE, Archaeologist and pioneer of the now many and active Young Archaeologists Club Branches throughout Britain.



Kate Pretty, left, with Peter Collins

The Young Archaeologists' Club is a community-led programme which engages children in archaeology and the built environment. The Club began at the University of Cambridge in 1972 and its programme is now delivered by 600 volunteers at 70 Branches throughout the UK. In 2013 the Club provided opportunities for 7,000 children to get involved in archaeology.

At Young Archaeologists' Club Branches, young people (age 8 -16 years) can learn together, develop strong identification with their communities and understanding of their place in the world. They develop team-working and communication skills in real-world situations.

<http://www.europanostra.org/awards/179/>

Phil Turner



Europa Nostra International European Heritage Alliance 3.3

Launched in Amsterdam in 2008, the name of this newly created Alliance refers to the article 3.3. of the consolidated version of the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union which stipulates that "[The Union] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced." The organisations and networks represented in the Alliance have advocated together the necessity to develop a future EU strategy for cultural and natural heritage.

<http://europeanheritagealliance.eu>

The advocacy has already made progress:

An international "Heritage Counts" conference on the economic, social, environmental and cultural impact of built cultural heritage was organised on 3-5 February 2015 by the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation (KU Leuven) in Leuven, Belgium.

This resulted in a publication by Koen Van Balen and Aziliz Vandesande (Eds.), "Heritage Counts", Reflections on Cultural Heritage

Theories and Practices". A series by KU Leuven, vol. 2, Garant: Antwerp – Apeldoorn, October 2015.

On 30 July 2015 The European Commission published "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe". This paves the way for an integrated approach to cultural heritage in Europe. This important policy document aims to help Member States and stakeholders to make the most of the significant support for heritage available under EU instruments and also calls for stronger cooperation at EU level to share ideas and best practices, which can feed into national heritage policies and governance. It highlights the opportunities for Member States and stakeholders to work more closely across borders to address the many challenges facing the heritage sector, and also to ensure that cultural heritage makes an even stronger contribution to a sustainable Europe.

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/publications/2014-heritage-communication_en.pdf

The Committee of Regions had made a policy recommendation on the above, entitled "Diversity and an integrated approach to cultural heritage"

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014IR5515&from=EN>

In September the European Parliament recognised the vital role of heritage in Europe and the opportunities it represents for our economy and our development by adopting with a large majority (613 votes in favour, 70 against and 19 abstentions) a Resolution calling for the implementation of an integrated approach towards cultural heritage for Europe.

<http://www.europanostra.org/news/643/>

Europa Nostra welcomed this renewed European commitment towards cultural heritage. "We are particularly thankful to the European Parliament for sending such a strong message to the European Commission and the Member States that cultural heritage counts for Europe in a variety of ways. We wholeheartedly support the policy recommendations put forward in the Resolution, starting with the call to designate 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage," stated EN Secretary General, Snenska Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic.

In February, after witnessing the successful Leuven conference, and in October 2015, representing EN UK and member organisation ECOVAST, I attended meetings of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3 at Europa Nostra's office in Brussels.

Walter Zampieri, Head of Unit, Culture Policy and Intercultural Dialogue, DG EAC, European Commission, attended and spoke with enthusiasm.

I was impressed by the range of organisations represented at the meeting:

European Historic Houses Association
European Landowners Association
Network of European Museum Associations
European Museum Academy
European Museum Forum
European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres.
European Association of History Educators
European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways.
Industrial and Engineering Heritage Committee
Foundation for the Urban Environment
Future of Religious Heritage
European Association of Historic Towns and Regions
ICOMOS
International National Trusts organisation
European Association of Architectural Heritage Restoration Companies
European Federation of associations for industrial heritage and technical heritage.
CivilScape
Moderated by: Piet Jaspaert, Board member, EUROPA NOSTRA
Organised by:
Danaé Anastopoulos-Chaimowicz and Louise van Rijckevorsel, Brussels Office, EUROPA NOSTRA.

Phil Turner



PREPARE and EUROPEAN RURAL PARLIAMENT

European Rural Parliament, Schärding, Austria – 4-7 November 2015

The European Parliament – the 2nd event of its kind – was held in Schärding, Upper Austria, and was hosted by a local Leader Group centred on Schärding town. It was attended by more than 200 people from the following countries:

(From the Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain, Sweden and Wales. A notable absence was France)

From the rest of Europe: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Norway, Serbia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;

From other countries: Armenia; Turkey and the USA)

I was invited to say a few words about small towns in the Marquee in the main square. The main European Rural Parliament was held in the Kubina Hall on the site of the former town castle.



The Marquee



Kubina Hall

The Rural Parliament was organised by a Steering Group led by PREPARE, ERCA (European Rural Communities Association) and ELARD (European Leader Association for Rural Development) and the Co-ordinators – who did an excellent job over 16 months – were Michael Dower of PREPARE and Vanessa Halhead of ERCA. National Champions had been identified and had carried out meetings with their rural areas and had contributed ideas to the major document called ‘All Europe Shall Live – the voice of the rural people’ which forms the background to the draft ‘rural manifesto’ which was to be discussed and agreed at the parliament gathering. These national Champions also helped develop the agenda and took strong leads in the proceedings and leading several of the workshops.

The UK had 4 national Champions from England; Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The delegation from England was represented by the English National Champion – ACRE (Action with communities in Rural England).



Photo – Valerie and the English delegation

I attended on behalf of ECOVAST International and as the ECOVAST member of the PREPARE Organising Group. Franz Nahrada and Brigitte Macaria from ECOVAST Austria also were part of the ECOVAST delegation but Arthur Spiegler had fallen ill and was unable to attend.

ECOVAST put on a display on small towns with posters illustrating the work of ECOVAST Austria on small towns in Austria and the small towns work carried out in South East England. Copies of our ECOVAST publication 'The Importance of Small Towns' and the ECOVAST leaflet and copies of the Austrian 'Land und Raum' Booklets on both small towns and the Green Belt project were displayed on our desk.

I was invited by Michael Dower to attend the ERP event and manage one of the 12 workshops – the one specifically targeted on small towns. My Rapporteur was from the Czech Association of Small Towns. Our two workshops were not attended by many people but did include a reasonable spread of countries – Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Northern Ireland, and Norway. Our task was to listen to the views about what were the most important things to highlight in small towns and contribute to the specific part of the formal ERP Manifesto which set out the clear messages of what the countries of Europe wanted to see happen for 28 specific issues set out in it (number 20 was about small towns). We agreed with the draft written statement but wanted to add several points to recognise the large number of such towns; the importance to the economy and the major opportunities for future tourism.

The whole manifesto was finally approved at the end of the conference by all those attending – under the slogan '**All Europe Shall Live**'.

I quote below the agreed statement on small towns, and all ECOVAST members should quote this if they attend events where small towns are discussed. **ECOVAST formally agreed to this manifesto.**

"20. Small towns, which number thousands in Europe, have crucial importance as social, economic and cultural centres for rural communities. They are the centres of commerce, public and social services, secondary schools and healthcare; offer major opportunities for tourism; and collectively make a major contribution to regional and national

economies. However, they are not recognised as a major target of national or European policies and programmes, often being perceived as neither rural nor urban.

We advocate a mainstream European Union policy focussed on small towns, recognising all the important contributions they make in the social and economic structures of rural regions and their vitality; and for greater focus on the needs of small towns in national policies.

We call for increased cooperation between communities, organisations and authorities in rural and urban areas in order to gain the full benefit of social, cultural and economic links which such cooperation can bring; and for the vigorous exchange of ideas and good practice between those involved in rural and urban areas."

The likely outcome is that ECOVAST International and its National Sections will be asked to be the 'champion' for the Manifesto Item 20 and develop ideas on the proposals in the Manifesto and link with other networks – such as associations of municipalities and develop practical proposals with them.

Not only was the ERP an excellent event, very well organised, and real rural topics intensely discussed by so many countries, it was very apt that the event was staged in a small town. Scharding is town of 5,000 people and a superb example of the thriving historic and architectural gem – and demonstrated the significant assets that such towns possess, which enabled them to accommodate and act as a very effective host of so many international guests.

Valerie Carter

Full details of the European Rural Parliament event and the full manifesto can be seen on

www.europeanruralparliament.com/

You can still watch the recorded live streams of the plenary-sessions via YouTube. Please follow up this links:

5 Nov. Opening Session 9.00-11.00: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9jU2OuGxN4>

6 Nov. Plenary Session #1 9.00-11.00: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnbeujTfAdU>

6 Nov. Plenary Session #2 14.00-17.00: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkQsMXP7pgc>

Following the ERP, Franz Nahrada suggested to Michael Dower that ECOVAST could turn its small towns project (ASSET) into the initiative to create a European Small Towns Alliance.

Michael replied:

I believe that the short text on small towns in the ERP manifesto, with its clear target of achieving a mainstream EU programme focused on small towns, could be the starting point for a campaign led by ECOVAST, working with the Austrian Association of small towns and with other small-town groupings of which ECOVAST has knowledge through Pam Moore's research and Valerie's meetings around Europe. I am happy that you discussed this with Arthur, and that he likes it. I mentioned this to Valerie Carter when I talked to her about 10 days ago. I know that she is sympathetic in principle to such an initiative. I believe that she is the right person to take the lead, and I will be happy to support her in my continuing capacity as Coordinator of the European Rural Parliament. It will be for her to react to the specific proposals that you make in your message below.

Phil Turner

Events notified to the Editor

15 - 24 January 2016, Berlin

Established in 1926, **International Green Week** is taking place for the 81st time in 2016.

The IGW is a one-of-a-kind international exhibition for the food, agricultural and horticultural industries. At the same time, the IGW is the point of origin for the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) with more than 70 departmental ministers.

Producers from all over the world come to IGW to test market food and luxury items and reinforce their brand image. Following consumer trends, regional sourcing plays an increasingly important role. Renewable resources, organic agricultural, rural development and gardening continue to gain importance at International Green Week.

9th February 2016, Yorkshire UK **MAKING RURAL SETTLEMENTS WORK – PLANNING & AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

at North Yorkshire County Council in Northallerton.

The event will consider if planning reforms are breathing new life into rural communities or bringing them into battle over unwanted developments.



23 April 2016, Turin, Italy

CivilScape

General Assembly 2016

The General Assembly 2015 in Barcelona has decided to hold the next CivilScape General Assembly will be held in Turin

20–22 April 2016 Turin

TASTING THE LANDSCAPE

The 53rd IFLA World Congress will be held in Turin, Italy, from 20 to 22 April 2016, organised by the Italian Association of Landscape Architecture (AIAPP) which is a founding member of CivilScape.



25-29 May 2016 Trier, Germany. 'Water Management during the Time of Frontinus

Buildings - Technique - Culture'

International Conference on the Occasion of the Anniversary of the Frontinus–Society with Archaeological Excursions to the Region Trier – Luxembourg – Metz.

An international archaeological conference at one of the most important places of the Roman time north the Alps. Many remnants of this prosperous period in which Sextus Iulius Frontinus acted as the Curator Aquarum of Rome along with his many other important duties in places throughout the Roman Empire still exist. Trier (Augusta Colonia Treverorum) with its important Roman buildings is the ideal background for this conference during which scholars as well as younger scientists will present actual research results to an international audience.

<http://www.frontinus.de>