

Aldeburgh was in 2003 Cultural Village of Europe. Aldeburgh is the birth and working-place of the most important composer in Britain of the 20th century Benjamin Britten. And it is a Coastal place not far from London. Understandable that Aldeburgh has chosen 'tourism' as a theme for the year. In this Newsletter a survey of the contributions of the different villages on the conference in april. The complete texts are published on the website www.cultural-village.com under 'history'.

We publish the report of the Aldeburgh Gazette and a personal impression of Donald and Maggy Wilson the couple that was the heart of the organisation.

As Bystré did in 2001, Aldeburgh invited all villages at the same time to Suffolk.

A difference was the weather. In Bystré it was raining all day long and we were outside,

in Aldeburgh it was sunny and we were in the Concert hall of Snape. All villages made their performance there. They appreciated to meet each other by playing together more than 6 hours. Playing was the most important part of the meeting. The villagers are forced to because their knowledge of language is not enough to sit around the table and talk. The famous Dutch historian Johan Huizinga writes in *Homo Ludens* that European Culture in the 19th century forgot playing and started only working. This village-festival showed another face of European Culture.



Benjamin Britten

Bert Kisjes

Tourism is a necessity for small towns and villages



Alan Britten during his opening speech in the Jubilee Hall. To the left Maggy Wilson and to the right Felicity Bromage, mayor of Aldeburgh

On the mayor-conference in april it was Alan Britten who had an introduction to the theme of the year 'Tourism'. Alan knows Aldeburgh because he is a nephew of Benjamin Britten; and as the Chairman of the English Tourist Board he knows Tourism. He made some important statements.

Tourism is one of the very few, sure-fire, growth industries in the world. Its potential benefits for villages are enormous, and growing more important by the day as employment migrates to large towns and cities.

There are three parties concerned: the consumer, the provider and the community.

The consumer first of all wants to enjoy himself. He wants to go home feeling he has had a good time. Secondly, he wants what we can call Quality Assurance.

The Provider should have an answer on the standard question from visitors these days is "I have 24 hours in this place. What should I do?" Everyone, all of us who are interested in encouraging high-quality, discriminating tourism, must be able to answer that question without hesitation, giving a number of options.

And concerning the community, we cannot take support for tourism amongst the local community for granted. And yet, widespread support for tourism within the Community is a pre-requisite of a good experience for customers.

Local authorities have what we call a selling job to do. They need to persuade residents that tourism brings something valuable to the area. For villages, and indeed all rural areas in developed urban societies, tourism is an economic imperative, and frequently a matter of survival. What other industry is going to provide jobs, real jobs, rewarding jobs, for young people who would otherwise drift to the towns? What other industry is going to provide the employment which agriculture provided in the past, but which the modern farm has very little need for. The challenge is to foster tourism, without degrading the environment.

Manmade Paxos

Villages and small towns offer a beautiful natural environment, picturesque habitations, recreation and entertainment, and, of course, a different culture from that of the large urban centres. These factors constitute the investment capital of each place and, as in the case of any business capital it must be invested correctly for these to be an assured long-term return. History of mankind is a continuous interaction between humans and their natural habitat, and the form, which the latter takes is determined by human activity, in other words it becomes 'manmade'. Our age is characterized by the existence of vast technical possibilities and resources, their rational utilization is, however still being sought. Easy as tourist development of a place may seem, it is equally easy to destroy it. It is up to all of citizens, local government, state, through our intervention, planning and decisions, to determine our future and us.



Paxos

To sum up, I would like to restate those actions, which I believe essential for the maximum benefit of our villages from Tourism.

Town planning and definition of land usage.

- Careful planning of infra-structural works.
- Protection of the quality of natural wealth.
- Preservation and display of agricultural heritage.
- Development of 'mild' forms of tourism.
- Improving the quality of service supply.
- = Preservation and promotion of cultural identity.

The dilemma of Porrúa

Our big dilemma is to know whether tourism is the solution for the big crisis that our farmers are still suffering or whether we should let urbanism and second residences grow... This is a controversial question that makes serious opinion confronts, but can be solved with a sustainable development politically always respectful with environment.

A consequence of massive tourism is the construction of big residential areas, like those we can see in the Mediterranean coast. That's why in our region the main political debate is the urbanism and building norms. It's interesting to point out that many farmers from Porrúa work also in the construction sector.

The increase of tourism has favoured cultural exchanges and new initiatives development. This has been the case of Porrúa with the creation of the Ethnographic Museum that doesn't only try to investigate and recover our popular culture but also to offer more leisure opportunities to tourists. We can point out too the pictorial work of an important Spanish artist Agustin Ibarrola who has painted the concrete cubes of the port of Llanes called now "The Memory cubes" and where different elements from our culture and local personality are symbolized.



Visitors from Porrúa with a dancing loaf of bread.

The Wine Road in Palkonya

The Wine Road is a micro-region that one can walk in a day. The Villány-Siklós Wine Road Association was founded in 1994, as the first such organisation in Hungary, based on examples from Europe. The founders were seven municipal governments, non-governmental organisations, private persons and entrepreneurs (they were 18 altogether). In 1998 the self-governments and entrepreneurs of further three settlements joined the programme. The positive effect of the wine road on the development of the local economy, the growth of the number of jobs and the sustainable development of the micro-region of 10 000 inhabitants can be demonstrated by the results achieved during the past seven years.

Coming from its role, the association, which was the first of its kind in Hungary, gives a significant support to the creation of new wine roads. Due to this activity, in the recent two years alone, five new wine road associations have been founded in South Transdanubia: the Szekszárd, the Tolna, the South Lake Balaton, the Zala and the Mohács-Bóly Region White Wine Road. The co-operation of the six wine roads and the introduction a single regional system of qualification requirements and information signs, created by the example of Villány, can amount to the birth of the South Transdanubian Wine Road Network by the next tourism season. The establishment of the Villány-Siklós Wine Road is of historical significance for the development of the region, defining the directions of the development in the coming 50-100

Wijk aan Zee has its own history.

Wijk aan Zee had fishermen and agriculture after the Middle Ages. Tourism brought a new way of existence at the end of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century the national steel factory was raised nearby and it brought a lot of employment. The factories nowadays are very nearby. The contrast between the village and Corus is enormous. Corus brings dust, smoke and bad smells. Sometimes, not always. It depends on the wind. Of course there are strong controls. There's something like a love and hate-affair between us. Corus brought

us the world-famous Chess Tournament. Corus brings us temporary employees from abroad who live in the village, who drink beer in the pubs, etc. A long time the impact of those workers was that they lived in cheap hotels and cheap and bad looking summerhouses. This situation is changing now, but still nowadays it influences the quality of the total of Wijk aan Zee.

The impact of Corus and 'cultural village' is that there's a terrain now between the village and the steel-factory with a unique art-exhibition of works in steel, opened by our queen and visited by all kind of interested people.

Schachdorf Ströbeck

The number of visitors was always small. Even the people of Ströbeck didn't do much to attract tourists up to the German reunion. There were only few overnight accommodations and sights accessible for visitors.

Finally after 1990 we began to present our rich cultural history to a wide public. At the same time we changed our village's name from Ströbeck into "Schachdorf Ströbeck" which means "Chess-Village of Ströbeck". We have got a small chess-museum, and we make publicity in several ways.

We are just at the beginning of this development. But we know very well that we won't reach the touristic

importance of our neighbouring cities with 30.000 inhabitants and a functioning infrastructure. Only our special quality in culture will make possible a modest development in tourism and simultaneously some activities on job market.

The objectives are:

- Creation of an unmistakable image by the attractive sight of the village and an intact cultural scene
- Improvement of the villages infrastructure, for example by the promotion programme "LEADER+"
- Integration of the community into a wider region

Despite these things hospitable inhabitants should make the unmistakable image for touristic development

A positive view of our efforts: Mellionec

- Difficulties in defining the boundaries of a particular tourist area, defying accurate definition for further communication
- Quantitatively there are not so many tangible attractions and these are often spread over a large area
- There are few great natural sites or grandiose buildings with tourist appeal
- Break even point is difficult to reach
- A real lack of professionalism at every level: promotion, organisation, reception...

Nevertheless the tourism remains an interesting way of developing an area such as ours. We have advantages now that will help to carry this evolution to a successful conclusion. Our social organisation gives way to social interaction. Because of the commitment it requires we know the value of meeting with others. This authenticity of human relationship is our main advantage.

In a preserved environment, we can address a public looking for quietness and simple values.

As a result of our central situation in Brittany and of the increase in popu-

lation with more spare time (for example senior citizens and people benefiting from a shorter working period) a tourism of short holidays and weekend trips could be developed.

We are already delighted with the results we have: this is a positive view of our efforts as seen by others, this awareness of our rural identity, this desire to share.



Before the Czech visitors go home they want to taste the Northsea.

European example Pergine Valdarno

In Nineteen eighty five (1985) the Tuscan Region made a law about tourism in the countryside which offered the possibility to all farmers to welcome tourists into their farmhouses, thus creating a tourism connected to the land and the farm products. The possibility to restore ruined buildings, without paying all the taxes, in order to host tourists, was provided. This saving convinced many people to make investments in old farmhouses, renovating them to create a place for tourists. The money generated by the tourism in these farmhouses combined with the products of the land has allowed many farms to continue working. The countryside has not been abandoned for the city. This has allowed us to keep the Tuscan countryside alive, and today our landscape is considered to be one of the most beautiful in the world.

Another very important aspect which has been shown in recent years thanks to tourism in the countryside is the success of our typical products -olive oil, but more importantly wine -in particular the red wine of our area.

The impact of tourism in the countryside is extremely positive and Tuscany is a European example.

Until a few years ago people came to Tuscany to visit Florence and other cities of art. Now in 2003 they come for farmhouse holidays. They still visit the cities of art, but at the end of the day they return to the peace and quiet of the countryside.

Is Bystré attractive?

We are in the situation, when we can talk more about impact of not being able to be an attractive destination for tourists. It is necessary to support inhabitants of our countryside. They should realize the traditions, habits, costumes, dances, products, food, way of life and all the precious heritage they can inherit and give it to the next generation.

I can see the possible solution in getting together with a few villages which are close to each other and they make up collective management and promotion. They could make connected service system. Financial expense would be divided to more bearers and we could offer more. In spite of it, if we want to reach a good result, we need the support of state. We will not compete with cities or bigger towns because villages can always offer folk art, traditions, opportunity to relax in beautiful nature.



Sculpture of Henry Moore next to the Concert Hall.

Tommerup: no mountains, no sea

We know there could be a future in tourism, but we aren't that good in organising and promoting.

I also think the Danish "Jante Law" which means you shall not believe that you are somebody and you shall not believe that you are capable of doing anything, plays a role. Perhaps we think in the same way when we are describing the landscape in Tommerup. The first things to mention when we describe the landscape are; we don't have the sea, it's rather hilly here but we don't have any mountains. I think we have a bit of an inferiority complex which also gives us a good excuse for doing nothing.

I think we have a lot of nice places in Tommerup and we sure could use them much better as we do today.

We have some good examples all though there are few of them but one have already had a lot of success. Some local though it was a pity that the old railroad was not being used anymore. They got the idea to build Trolley cycles. Now you can rent a trolley and you can enjoy countryside from the trolley cycle. A lot of people do that and the money earned on that goes to run a museum an old Brick-work. We also have a project called The walking Trails of Tommerup. The network consists of 16 paths and extend for more than 100km and criss-cross the entire Borough of Tommerup. These initiatives are not commercial. All the work at the trolleys and the old brick-work are voluntarily. We haven't got any commercial tourism and you can hardly rent a room for the night when you are visiting Tommerup.



The orchestre of Kirchheim.

Killingi Nomme

There is no tourism in Killingi Nomme.

“Therme Geinberg” near Kirchheim

A few years ago, people started looking for oil in Upper Austria, in the surroundings of Kirchheim/Innviertel, instead, they found hot water: a thermal spring. What should they do with the opportunity? A new project was born: a water-park, even though nobody really believed in it... This region of Upper Austria was not known for its tourist attractions and the start wasn't easy. Now the project includes ca. 1.200 m2 of indoor and outdoor pools and lots of activities and facilities and involves 14 communities in the region, Kirchheim included.

Overnight guests: 1999: 48.000, 2002: 195.000

Impact of the “Therme Geinberg” on the small communities involved in the project,;

1. Family, social topics: sports and social activities, 250 jobs, merger of 14 communities in the region
2. Economy: hotels and restaurants, fitness and well-being facilities, sports activities
3. Arts and culture: exhibitions, concerts, meetings
4. Environment: “soft” tourism (biking, hiking, natural resources like water...), sales of organic farm products

Tourism is a fairly new phenomenon in the region, and the focus is on good tourism and balance between tourism and the different aspects of rural life. This means we have to ensure that the heritage and environment of the villages does not disintegrate under the influx of new visitors. We think the Therme Geinberg is a good opportunity for the region and for our community of Kirchheim.

Complete texts www.cultural-villages.com

Cultural Village of Europe 2003

Donald en Maggy Wilson

The year started in April, between 24th and 27th, when all the mayors and a few others came to Aldeburgh to discuss the coming year and to present the papers on the theme, ‘The impact of Tourism on small towns and villages.’

There were a number of visits arranged for the Friday 25th . April including a visit to Adnams Brewery in Southwold, which brews our most popular beer in East Anglia. In the evening a welcome dinner was arranged in the Aldeburgh Yacht Club where a splendid dinner was given and a lot of fun was had by all.

On Saturday each village gave a presentation on the theme and the Chairman. Alan Britten who is Chairman of the English Tourist Board and who is also the nephew of Benjamin Britten, gave a summary after each speaker which was very well received. Present at the ceremony were the Lord Lieutenant for Suffolk, the Lord Tollemache, who represents the Queen in the County, and the High Sheriff, John Thurlow, who is the senior legal person in the County and the Right Honourable John Gummer who is the Member of Parliament for the District and many other prominent people in the area. The book *Vital Villages*, was formally launched by Bert Kisjes and the first copy was presented to Lord Tollemache by Maggy Wilson, the Chairman of the Cultural Village Committee.

In the evening a Dinner was given in the Thorpeness Country Club where many friendships were cemented. On Sunday 26th. April a tour of the Snape Maltings Concert Hall was arranged which is where the presentations in the September Meeting will be held., followed by a reception given by Suffolk Coastal District Council and a visit and lunch at Sutton Hoo which is a

famous historical site. All who were there looked forward to the September visit when all villages will be present together from 1st. to the 21st.

Some of the villages arrived on Thursday and some on Friday. A number of visits were arranged, the most popular being a lunch at the Parrot and Punchbowl Pub where the Austrians gave their first performance and their super brass band who were so popular over the whole weekend.



Leonora Becker the mayor of Palkonya plays the beat gardon.

Saturday 20th. was the high point of the weekend when each village gave a presentation of 30 minutes in the Snape Maltings Concert Hall and all said what a marvellous location it was and brought out the best in everyone. The standard of the presentations was superb and some of the

photos demonstrate this very well. In order to make sure that everyone had a chance to perform, we had to be very strict and we are grateful that you all did just that!

In the evening there was a dinner in Leiston followed by a lot of dancing and merry making. On Sunday morning there was a closing ceremony in the Jubilee Hall once again Chaired by Alan Britten who gave a summary of the year and made many helpful remarks. This was followed by a speech by the Right Honourable John Gummer, Member of Parliament for the District who in turn handed over to Bert Kisjes. Finally the Mayor of Aldeburgh said a few words and gave some gifts to the other Mayors present. Unfortunately the Mayors of Paxos and Palkonya had already left.

The rest of the day was taken up with an outdoor street party where many of the villages presented their local products and especially because of the lovely weather, which had been so all weekend, it was a fantastic conclusion to the weekend.

The Committee who organised the April and September meetings would like to say what a pleasure it was to have you all and most of us look forward to coming to Paxos in 2004.

Village-Festival in Aldeburgh

19-21 September 2003

(Aldeburgh Gazette)

Forget the G7 Summit and the Worls Trade Organisation conference, Aldeburgh had its very own international assembly last weekend when some 345 visitors from eleven countries across Europe came to town. This year Aldeburgh is Cultural Village of Europe for 2003 and therefore hosted the annual gathering of representatives from the other eleven 'villages', one each from Austyria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Spain and The Netherlands.

The first arrivals came on Thursday 18th, the remainder throughout Friday and early Saturday, and they were greeted at a number of welcoming parties. It was quite an achievement to find accommodation for everyone and the visitors were hosted at homes not only in Aldeburgh and Thorpeness, where the groups from Austria, Denmark, Holland and France stayed, but also in Benhall, Snape, Sweffling,

Rendham and Saxmundham. Welcoming parties were held at a number of locations on the Friday evening including the White Lion Hotel in Aldeburgh where, despite their sometimes long and difficult journeys (particularly the Danish and German parties!) the guests enjoyed meeting up with old friend and making some new ones.

A truly international 'concert' took place on Saturday 20th at Snape Maltings Concert Hall. Each village performed in music, song and dance representing their own local culture. The whole experience was hugely entertaining and ranged from a full band playing the music of Austria that nearly brought the house down to a duo from Hungary playing the beat-gardon (cross between a cello and a drum), flute and fiddle, and singing some wonderfully haunting and evocative traditional local music.

The Spanish group from Porrúa danced and sung to traditional mountain music, including a symbolic piece involving a large loaf of bread

being tossed up and down by the whole group from what appeared to be a blanket! Local costumes and intriguing traditional instruments added colour to the whole experience and each village was cheered and applauded with unrestrained by the large audience.

With villages as far part as Tommerup in Denmark to Paxos in Greece, the performances were as diverse in content as could be expected and hoped for. There was nothing stereotyped about the presentations and it was refreshing and heartening to see the visitors enacting their own villages' culture rather than employing the perhaps more familiar national imagery we are all used to.

The weather was unbelievable kind for mid-September and the visitors enjoyed a break during the morning performance, taking refreshment outside the Concert Hall, many of them fascinated by the whole Maltings complex. The whole day was a great success and hugely enjoyable for everyone. It was good to see some townspeople at the performance and a pity that even more didn't take the opportunity for some fun and entertainment. A long and hectic day was rounded off with a dinner held in the evening at Leiston Leisure Centre.

Sunday 21st was again fine and sunny – much to the relief of the organisers who had arranged an ox-roast and party with dancing around the Moot Greens. At the closing ceremony at the Jubilee Hall Suffolk Coastal MP, John Gummer, said that the Cultural Villages were leading the way with their grass-roots international communication. Mayors from all the villages were presented with a gift by our Mayor, who received tokens in return.

Representatives from all the villages said how much they had enjoyed their visit and thanked the town for its hospitality.

The final event of this special weekend was a party around the Moot Greens. A large crowd enjoyed the warm sunshine and some excellent entertainment from the band and took the opportunity to talk to talk with the visitors before they returned home.

All in all the weekend was judged a success by the organisers – if a little exhausting. All the visitors we spoke to were enthusiastic in their praise and said how much they had enjoyed themselves.



In procession the guests go from the Moothall to the Jubilee Hall for the opening on the 26th. April.

A cultural week in England

Tanja Winkel

Did I want to go to Aldeburgh? Of course, why not. I had never been in England and whoever can say that he went with three boys on a holiday? So I represented Wijk aan Zee together with Auk, Gijs and Mark Zee on the meeting with youth-delegations of all countries. On beforehand we got some orders to mail data and pictures. In the mails we were warned for hard work. 'Time off, there won't be much of it' we had been told in the planning. So we got the idea of detention barracks. Gijs and Auk participated in such kind of weeks in the Czech Republic and in Italy, but did not know what to expect because these weeks were totally different.

At last, after a few 'meetings' that consisted of looking after the orders and afterwards drinking something together, the time of departure was there: Very early we went en route and listening Gijs' psychedelic music we arrived in the harbour. The boat was very nice. There was a cinema to kill the time, a Mc Donalds and a Pizzahut, where we took a breakfast and a shop where Mark and me bought sunglasses to get the highly necessary holiday-feeling, that after a short night was missing.

In contradiction with the Netherlands, England had a perfect weather. We travelled by train to Ipswich. It was not 20 minutes but 1 hour and twenty minutes that we had to wait (we forgot to change our watches). So we used the time to walk into the town. It was a pity that we almost had to return in the moment we reached the centre, but nevertheless we got a first impression of England. After a short trip by train we were picked up at the station. It was well organised.

We were sleeping in an old convent with much more older ruins in the garden. We were the first group that arrived. After a visit to our sleeping room we made a trip to Dunwich. The theme of the week was to bring together images and sound of the villages and the surroundings of Aldeburgh. So before we left we got the inevitable recording-, photo and video equipment.

One after the other arrived the different groups. The other days we made a multi-media exhibition. Everything was recorded in detail. We began to understand what was meant with working. And how tight everything has been organised it did not feel like working.

What did we do actually? A lot of different things. Record songs, translate quotes in all languages and try to pronounce these correctly, filming the surrounding villages and assemble them on big amounts of mac's, recording and deforming sounds, a rap-workshop, filming of a fire-drill and much more.

In the evening after dinner (at the end of the week the catering got a rousing send-off) we were free. Time for playing football, for a talk, visit in the pub and drinking in the convent because the pub closes at 11 p.m.

On Thursday evening there was a presentation of the material for the VIP's of the villages who were the sponsors of the project as well. It was a pleasant evening where we answered questions and showed the things we made on, again, lots of high tech equipment.

The last day was not the nicest of course. After a week of sunny weather it was raining and cold and smoggy. (I thought almost that rain in England was a concoction). The idea that the week was over was unpleasant as well. We got lists with phonenumber and addresses. Many participants have mail and/or msn. With a part of them I am in contact. And everybody looks forward to Paxos next year!

Cultural-Village Chess Tournament

Ferenc Langheinreich, a German Chessplayer from Erfurt won the Cultural Village Tournament in Wijk aan Zee that has been held from 24th November - 3rd December. He got 6,5 points out of 9 games and did not only win the first prize of €750,- but also a Masterresult. Because it was his third Masterresult he got the Mastertitle. The second place was for the Dutch player Merijn van Delft with 6 points. Also for him it was the third Masterresult and he will be also a Master of Chess.

It was a closed Mastertournament for ten players from 4 countries. From 1987 these tournaments have been organised in Wijk aan Zee. First under the name Sonnevand-Tournament and since this year under the name Cultural-Village Tournament.

Next year a Tournament like this will be organised in Schachdorf Ströbeck. The know-how of the Cultural-Village Tournament will be used.

Short news

Christmas Market

In Bretagne (Plouguernevel) will be organised a m international Christmas Market on the 20th of December. Products from all 12 villages are welcome.

Contact: mellionec@villages-culturels.com

Museums

The museums of Porrúa, Locarn (central Bretagne) and Schachdorf Ströbeck are going to cooperate. In 2005 the three museums will make an exhibition about the history of country-life and in 2006 they will exchange of these exhibitions. The exhibitions will be made in four languages, in French, Spanish, English and German.

Schools

A project for cooperation of the schools of the Cultural Villages will be prepared. The aim is to come to an exchange of experience.

Information can be given by Ferdinand Reindl in Auroldmünster in Austria (ferdinand.reindl@ideenkreis.com) or the email address of this newsletter.

Easels and Brushes

Next edition of the symposium for painters in Wijk aan Zee will be from 6th - 16th of May 2004. For a limited amount of participants from abroad a bed and food for free can be arranged.

The theme: 'Treasures from the Sea'.

After the symposium there is a possibility of selling the work.

Info: village@cultural-village.com

CULTURAL VILLAGE of EUROPE

Colophon:

This newsletter is published by Cultural Village of Europe in Wijk aan Zee
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Website: www.cultural-village.com
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Editors: Jacky de Vries, Ab Winkel and Bert Kisjes
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