

5th Canadian River Heritage Conference, Winnipeg, June 10-14, 2007

Research, Conservation and Tourist Development on Heritage Waterways – The German Case –

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1. Research and Methodological Aspects

1. 1. Inventory on the landscape and its elements

A good example of completed inventory and management of land- and waterways is: the IVS, Inventory of “Verkehrswege” (Historical Traffic Routes) of Switzerland, in the mapping scale of 1:25.000. It took about 20 years to complete it (between 1984 and 2003) and was prepared with the University of Berne in Accordance to the Swiss Law on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage. The inventory has collected information on historical land- and waterways under the aspects of morphology and historical value of the associated features such as inns, wayside crosses, chapels etc. It serves both tourism and hiking publications as well as planning purposes at the local and regional level.

In Germany there are different developments to establish a common “Kulturlandschaftskataster”. Within the cultural sovereignty (Kulturelle Länderhoheit) of the Federal Republic of Germany it is very difficult to agree on one central way of spotting, registering and conserving cultural elements of the landscape. For example, if you ask for how many canal buildings or waterway stretches under protection there are in Germany you would get no answer. I tried so for the task of evaluating the Technical Monuments under protection in The National Atlas in 2002. It was nearly impossible. So I focused on 4 elements (breweries, watertowers, railway stations and saltworks) and found out that Germany had 1.418 railway and metro stations under protection, 535 watertowers and 559 breweries or ancient brewery houses, half of those in Bavaria – so that research did not include waterways.

Nevertheless, in a second survey of the elements mentioned in a reputed Technical Tourist Guide (Reclams) it was possible to measure the importance of sectors like production, energy, traffic and infrastructure. On that one you could see, that many important and obviously interesting canal buildings are to be found especially in Northrhine -Westphalia , Lower Saxony and in third position Schleswig-Holstein which are the regions to provide later examples.

So much for the protected or well known elements of the cultural landscapes but there are many different kinds of less well-known elements that it seems to be nearly impossible to get them all listed. Essays for that purpose are under way in Germany, but until now more or less on a regional basis like the *Kuladig* from Bonn or the *Kleks* from Neubrandenburg.

Cultural geographers from Hamburg have been doing research on cultural landscape at first by looking on the landscape, divided into “built-up” and in “non-built up” areas and also by

the current processes of landscape change. Urban non built-up areas are examined by Broermann (“Urbane Freiflächen”).

The second step is to look closer by economic sector (e.g. industry, transport, infrastructure and leisure) which are examined from the viewpoint of the industrial archaeology.

The third step would be to look at the type of elements after the shape, like insular, areal or linear outfit.

In the end generally similar mapping codes had to be devised which were adapted to the special subject., such as landmarks, e.g. towers , chimneys as well as more extensive, areal elements, like parks and urban spaces and linear ones, like historical landways, railways and waterways.

1.1.1. Locks

Among the most interesting parts of waterways are the constructions such as locks, ancient weirs, inclined planes and lift-locks.

They are to be examined within a sort of basic technical inventory which can be done without special engineering knowledge. Usually emphasis is on the measurements of the structure, the building material, the condition and current use. Besides that they are accompanied by a subjective judgement of the site.

Three types of lock are normally recognised, 1.flash locks (no chamber), 2. pound locks and 3. chamber locks

The canal architecture could be more detailed if the inventory included with masonry and shapes of houses, locks and stone bridges.

1.1.2. Other Waterway buildings (without locks)

Mapping code No. 2 is similar to No. 1 but deals with other waterway - side buildings like houses of lock-keepers, horse stables, storerooms, dwellings of ferry-men, inns. These are all related to traffic.

In many cases watermills are sited by weirs and locks, in which case they should be recorded with a separate mapping code, similarly this procedure would apply to the industries allied to the watermill or more recent technologies, such as hydroelectric power-stations.

1.1.3. Stretch of Waterway

The third of the three mapping codes applies to the linear stretch of the river or canal. It deals with the morphological aspects, if the waterway is in its original course, cut in or elevated, altered or perhaps dried up or even vanished without any relics.

Other linear manmade - structures, related to the traffic on the waterway or crossing the waterway go into this inventory. These are mainly tunnels, viaducts and bridges which of course would need a special mapping code regarding the type of bridge.

Embankments and ditches running besides the waterways are noteworthy, as are artificial ponds and lakes supplying canals which tend to run dry. These reservoirs can have a major impact on the landscape by providing secondary functions, such as irrigation and recreational purposes. Ancient ponds can be spotted especially by air even hundreds of years after closure of a waterway.

2. Waterway evaluation in the context of the surrounding landscape

The inventory of the first phase should be followed by a second one, judging the waterway and its surrounding landscapes by subjective criteria such as “beauty of scenery, wilderness, home, historical or technical information”.

2.1. Landscape Aesthetics

Landscape planners, geographers, tourism related planners and others, like landscape sociologists, agree that landscape impressions are very difficult to judge because of the diversity of individual feelings. But they agree on some points: an interesting landscape should possess a certain *beauty* and *diversity*, should contain *information* about historical development and could convey a feeling of *familiarity* (with Nohl). The tourism market is interested in landscapes and resorts that can present a uniqueness, in German a so called “Alleinstellungsmerkmal”.

So there are possibilities to judge, to what degree a landscape is intact and how many changes e.g. by windpowermills or river-corrections would be acceptable. Pritzkat-Gerthenrich has worked with that in France by a reviewed concept on landscape evaluation by aesthetic and emotional criteria.

2.1.1. Evaluating waterway – landscapes, with some examples from France

The first results of his landscape analysis, done in Southern France, gave the following ranking of some chosen Waterway locations (River Gard, River Ardèche, Rhône - Channel at Donzère-Mondragon, River Loire estuary at Nantes).

3. Waterway Heritage in Germany

3.1. Canal Societies looking for Protection and Survival of Waterway Heritage

3.1.1. The Stecknitz Canal and other Canals in Schleswig-Holstein

The Stecknitz-Canal was opened as early as 1398 and was closed officially in 1896. It linked the Rivers Stecknitz and Delvenau in Schleswig-Holstein and was mainly built to transport salt from the salines in Lüneburg via the Rivers Ilmenau and Elbe to Lübeck. From there it was mainly sold into the Baltic States who needed it badly in the fishery sector. The canal was

the first one in Europe to climb over a watershed of 18 metres. (This is in contrast to the highest canal in the world which is the Trent Canal at 256 m above sea level at Balsam Lake in Ontario!) The first flat boats could each transport 7,5 tons of salt although by the end of the 19th century, ships could be loaded up to 37 tons. The length of the waterway was 97 km between Lauenburg and Lüneburg, depth was only about 85 centimetres.

The impact of the saltworks on the landscape which were operating since the 10 th century and have been closing down only in 1980 was enormous. Not only that the production created a net of landways and the Stecknitz-Canal but with the hunger for wood it developed a huge area of secondary heathland, the “Lüneburger Heide”.

So the interest in salt, the “white gold” of the Middle Ages could be stirred up much more in the future, if the heathlands should be lucky enough to get a place on the UNESCO world heritage list. The Hanseatic Town of Lübeck figures already on that list and the region tries to exploit the common history and the salt. Lübeck has a set of medieval salt storehouses, Lüneburg has a salt museum and Lauenburg and Mölln both exploit the history of the Stecknitz-Fahrt within local museums. Hamburg Geographers (Goldammer and Krebs) have produced a film-show on the Stecknitz –Fahrt which is presented daily in the Museum of Mölln.

In 1900 the modern successor of the Stecknitz-Canal opened. It followed nearly the same stretch from Lauenburg to Lübeck and used the old canal bed in many parts. For the engineering interest in its lock systems and the practice of water retaining basins it came under protection in its entire stretch as well as the relics of the Stecknitz-Canal. The latter has some places of interest including a graveyard for bargees as well as two remaining locks (out of originally 14, later 17). One of these locks is in good condition, although lacks gates, the Palmschleuse at Lauenburg. It is a chamber lock in an oval form and the only one of this type in Germany . The chamber lock was allegedly introduced very early on this canal but it is argued that it was previously in use elsewhere. The Palmschleuse was rebuilt out of stone and bricks in 1814 after having been destroyed in the Napoleonic wars.

The other conserved lock has a normal, rectangular shape and is north of Büchen (Dückerschleuse). The foundation of a Canal Society (“Förderkreis Kulturdenkmal Stecknitzfahrt e.V.”) in 1988 was of importance to the renovation of the lock, which cost an enormous sum (half a million DM) and still, lock gates are missing here as well.

The Stecknitz-Verein caters to tourism of canal-history in several places along the ancient stretch, the missing renovations and tries to keep the remaining waters open. As several protected waterplants have been established there may be money from different sources as nature protections and the European “Wasserrahmenrichtline” from Brussels (protection, renaturation e.g. of running water). Within this frame even a restoration of the gates in the Dückerschleuse where the Delvenau Creek joins in seems possible.

Regarding publications and publicity the Stecknitz –Verein amalgamated in 1999 with the bigger “Canal-Verein” from Rendsburg. This one was set up in 1980 to renovate the three remaining locks out of six on the Eider-canal (1784-1895). The Eider-Canal linked Kiel on the Baltic sea with Tönning on the North Sea, with only 43 km of canal in the total length of 175 km. It could carry vessels of 300 tons and was well-used by seagoing sailing ships, avoiding the long and dangerous passage round the Skagerak.

The Canal-Verein did a very efficient work on two of the old chamber locks (Rathmannsdorf

und Klein Königsförde) and the third one (Kluvensiek) is awaiting renovations which are difficult because road and other buildings have covered partly the locks. The Eider-Canal-Bed was integrated in big parts in another canal as well when the Kiel Canal opened in 1895.

The Canal-Verein has broadened its interest more and more from merely local Schleswig-Holstein Canals to waterways all over the world on which it has published a 25 volume series. In additional successful publicity efforts its own postage stamp appeared in 1984 commemorating the 200 years-jubilee of the opening of the Schleswig-Holstein Canal.

3.1.2. The “Deutsche Fährstraße“ and its Transporter Bridges

The touristic German Ferry-Road starts in Bremervörde, Lower Saxony and ends up in Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein. It links the river Oste to the River Elbe then follows the Kiel –Canal from Brunsbüttel to the Baltic (Kiel).

This road was created, and is promoted, by several private societies in order to highlight the many ferries crossing this line-up of waterways which normally do not have a great coherence. The Oste is a smaller river for national smaller ships, the Elbe an international important seaway as it is the case with the internationally-renowned Kiel-Canal.

The main focus is on the two transporter bridges, one in Hemmoor / Oste and the other one in Rendsburg / Kiel-Kanal, which is suspended underneath a railway viaduct . When a new bridge over the river Oste was built in 1974 and tall ships did no longer sail on the river Oste, there was no more need for such an elevated steel construction, so the old transporter bridge should have been torn down To save the important structure (80 m wide, over 30 m high), which was built by Louis Pinette, a scholar of Gustave Eiffel in 1909, a private society (“Fördergesellschaft zur Erhaltung der Schwebefähre Osten e.V.”) was founded in 1975. More recently a set of new societies have completed in order to highlight the whole region and the waterway line in its entire length of 250 km, containing 50 technical monuments like bridges, locks and ferries, thus showing all the different possibilities of crossing a waterway.

The AG Osteland e.V., established in 2004, has a very interesting homepage and a newsletter, highlights the touristic marketing and invented the logo “Fährienstraße”. It managed to interest the Austrian Post Office in producing a special stamp on the Transporter Bridge of Oste-Hemmoor. The next aim is to have a German stamp for the centennial of the monument in 2009. Some other of this type of ferry-bridge had already their turn as they are, Rochefort (France), Portugalete (Spain) and Rendsburg (Germany). . They adopted as well the clever word play of “Fähre” (ferry) and “Ferien” (holidays). So they helped proclaiming the “Deutsche Fährienstraße” which in its double-meaning makes publicity with a smile.

In 2007 a new institution has emerged specifically to save one of the smaller ferries in the Oste-Region, in Brobergen (“Fähr-und Geschichtsverein Brobergen”). The president of this society, Corinna Kolff, is preparing a doctorate in Geography on then subject of “Deutsche Fährstraße”. Smaller ferries such as in Brobergen are not electrified, so qualified employees are important and difficult to find once the older ferrymen retire. So the twin aims of this new society are to care for the continuing working of the ferry and the historical reconstruction of the landscape. At the site of the Brobergen ferryman’s present home an archaeological survey has attested a former castle. So another aim is to reconstruct the castle and some other historic buildings in Brobergen.

Another circle or subdivision in the AG Osteland cares for the cultural entertainment of tourists and locals. It looks for detective stories with a regional touch and presents them in inns, ferrymen-houses and other locations on the border of the Waterway . For that they have created the logo “Krimiland”. (homepage)

Of course there is another subdivision , built up in 2006, only caring for the Transporter bridge. This type of monument got worldwide attention when one of the last seven specimens in the world became a UNESCO world heritage : Portugalete at the mouth of The Ria de Bilbao (Spain). The Spanish King Juan Carlos promised at the heritage ceremonial in 2006 to take care that the other “ ferries” should be inscribed on the heritage list as sort of “annexes”, which seems intended to reduce new nominations and improve the chance of adding other monuments of the same type in other countries.

With the “ILEK Kehdingen-Oste” (Integrated Concept of Rural Development) the whole region between the Oste and the Elbe is successfully on the search for an instrument on the development of a peripheral region and money from different sources.

The second transporter bridge on the Deutsche Fährstraße is in Schleswig-Holstein, on the Kiel-Canal at Rendsburg . It was opened in 1913 and was built by the German Dr. Friedrich Voß. The viaduct itself has a length of 2.486 m and the actual canal-bridge is 313 m wide. The overall height is 68 m, although the height for sea-going ships to pass underneath is only 42 m. The toll-free ferry (as by law for all artificial waterways, not the Oste - ferry!) is suspended over the Kiel-Kanal beneath this amazingly high and winding railway-viaduct! So this monument incorporates two different means of transport and so is not regarded by “purists” as “a real “ transporter bridge, but never mind...

The Rendsburg – Osterrönfeld viaduct and ferry became necessary with the first widening of the Kiel-Canal in 1914 when the railway, until then crossing the smaller canal (of 1895) on a normal bridge had to wind up in an artificial serpentine in order to manage the steep gradient. Together with that, the engineering task was to search the best emplacement for a railway station serving the town of Rendsburg and that was found high up on the viaduct. Otherwise it would have been too far out of town. The whole serpentine railway construction is 7,5 km long All this together makes the suspended transport ferry and the railway crossing a very remarkable and outstanding monument of engineering. It had a postage stamp on its own as well.

4. The Tourist Dimension - Museums

4.1. Ecomuseum Schaalfahrt

Besides the tourist use of heritage waterways by all kinds of private boats a landside-proposal for a linear “ecomuseum” should not be unmentioned on this occasion. The French concept of “ecomusée” of the nineteen hundred sixties and seventies has been used and abused all over the world but has not been largely tried out in Germany or Canada. The concept largely tries to involve the inhabitants of the surrounding communities :

The “fathers” of the concept, Rivière and de Varine are to be cited as follows:

“1. Georges-Henri Rivière, 1985. The ecomuseum - an evolutive definition. *Museum (UNESCO)*, no. 148. (UNESCO translation, revised by Patrick Bouillon)

. An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public [e.g.. local] authority and its local population. The public authority's involvement is through the experts [staff], facilities and resources it provides; the local population's involvement depends on its aspirations, knowledge and individual approach.

It is a mirror for the local population to view itself to discover its own image, and in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations that have preceded it... It is a mirror that the local population holds up to its visitors to be better understood and so that its industry, customs and identity may command respect.

It is an expression of humankind and nature. it places humanity in its natural environment. It portrays nature both in its wilderness and as adapted by traditional and industrial society.

2. Hugues de Varine, 1986. *Nouvelles Muséologies*, Editions W. /M.N.E.S., Macon, France; Patrick Boylan's translation)

A few simple principles: the objective is the service of humankind and not the reverse; time and space do not imprison themselves behind doors and walls and art is not the sole cultural expression of humanity.

The museum professional is a social being, an actor for change, a servant of the community. The visitor is not a docile consumer, regarded as an idiot, but a creator who can and should participate in the building of the future - the museum's research. “ (<http://www.city.ac.uk/ictop/mus-def.html>)

The worldwide spread concept has only recently rooted in Germany. An example of Switzerland , the “Ecomuseum Simplon”, an alpine transport - pass -way might as well for waterways serve as linear model , showing historic social and economical aspects of life by highlighting the way itself and its side – emplacements, such as overnight stops, churches or judgement places.

Goldammer choses the stretch of the ancient Schaalfahrt for experimenting on an ecomuseum. The Schaalfahrt has never been completed. It should have linked the River Elbe to the Baltic sea, passing through the Duchy of Mecklenburg. Finally it has been converted to a log-floating-transport-system direction North-south alimenting (again) the Saltworks of Luneburg . All in all it say its heydays in the middle of the 16. century linking the saltworks of Lüneburg to the woods of Mecklenburg on a waterway of 142 km. The Schaale-Canal represented 37 km with 13 locks , in the end only 5 locks. Log floating ended in the 19 th century.

As central museum place the Schaalsee-Museum, already in existence, seems very appropriate to be developped as an ecomuseum-center. The Schaalsee-region is protected Natural Park and a Reserve of the Biosphere., due to the situation that it has been four 45 five years on the closed border line between the then two German States. Points of interest (the so –called antennes) could be ancient fords, lock emplacements with remaining potholes and wood deposits (Holzhuden) with some remaining buildings as well as relics of water-feeders (reservoirs). A watermill and even a typical “Gut”(big, noble farm estate) with a classical

building from 1789 could be integrated.

The Ecomuseum Schaalfahrt is not yet established but the realisation of a posted and explained hiking trail is under way.

This kind of “*Linear Ecomuseum*” could be indeed an appropriate form of reconciling personal involvement as well of area inhabitants as of visitors with the conservation and touristic development of peripheral regions

4. 2. The Lock Park of Henrichenburg (Northrhine-Westphalia)

A last example of canal buildings becoming integrated in a regional, national and international network of industrial heritage is the lock park of Henrichenburg. The central attraction is the ship lift, opened in 1899, carrying ships up to 800 tons over a height difference of 14 meters. The lift lock was then , together with a neighbouring chamber lock to bring ships from the Ems-Canal to the industrial town of Dortmund . With bigger and longer ship convoys a new lift lock came into being in 1962 (in the meantime out of service as well) and the Old Henrichenburg lift lay derelict since 1970 and came into decay. It was a hard fight for regional groups to have it saved although in 1992 they opened it as a museum.

In 1989 a new very large lock opened, housing a second museum with topics on historical and actual canal transports. The old lock, not needed any longer was partly filled up and provided with an inclined brick road, adapted for sports-boat-transport from one canal-level to the other. So there is a group of three ancient (lift)-locks and one working lock at the Henrichenburg-Waltrop Park . It is a local attraction as well as for the whole area, being part of a 400 km “Route der Industriekultur” This one came into existence after a ten year long reshaping program of an old industrialised area (IBA Emscherpark 1990-1999).

Recently the Lock-Complex became integrated as well in another network which has to be called a virtual route . It is a collection of similar monuments in different countries and not accessible on a signposted route, called the European Route of Industrial heritage (ERIH)

5. Conclusion

5.1. Methodological Aspects

- To give a conclusion to the last regional part first of all, here is a methodology for categorising different heritage waterways in a triangular graph. So you can easily distinguish different stages of originality or conversion
- Using such a methodology, salient aspects of heritage waterways can further be investigated and evaluated by different mapping codes, applying to locks, other buildings and the waterway stretch itself. Physical aspects such as measures, architecture, and actual use are followed by a personal evaluation (ranking).
- At different emplacements (sections) the waterway should be evaluated as an important part of the landscape which ideally should satisfy at least partly the landscape users search for beauty, diversity, information and familiarity. Other criteria might be added of course.

5.1. Canal Societies and Tourism

- Tourism can be helpful by supporting structures and regions suffering from decay. As official regional or national inventories, as a basis for future planning are only at their first steps, investigations and help of private enthusiasts is a need, which is always welcome and mostly very effective

Mentioned in this paper are the following effects due to private initiatives cooperating with official institutions :

- foundation of local museums
- plans for a decentralised ecomuseum
- integration of places and monuments in region wide or nationwide hiking trails
- integration in virtual international thematic heritage routes
- raising individual funds for repairs and restoration
- looking for integration of official money sources such as nature protection and revitalizing of waters, rivers and creeks
- multiply interest in waterway heritage by publications, websites and creative slogans (“Fährienstraße”)
- add other cultural aspects as theatre and literature given at local places (detective stories)
- partly reconstruction (new construction) of historical buildings and sites
- searching nationwide and international publicity with postage stamps
- working together with international projects of same type such as getting on a joint-list to UNESCO world heritage

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