

HORSES & HERITAGE

Activities 2017

February

At the beginning of February I spent some days in Vienna and was very pleased about the invitation of Monica Kurzle-Runtscheiner and Mario Döberl to take a look behind the scenes of the Wagenburg museum, where the 300 years Maria Theresia jubilee exhibition was in preparation.



On February 18th I was invited by the Czech National Stud Kladruby nad Labem to give a presentation about European stud culture as living heritage.

March

In March I participated in the congress „Horse in Sport“ in the wonderful atmosphere of Schloss Hof in Austria, where many friends of driving sports and culture gathered. The National Studs Kladruby nad Labem (Czech Republic), Książ (Poland), Mezöhegyes (Hungary) und Piber (Austria) sent horses and drivers as demonstration objects and none other than multi-champion Boyd Exell was engaged as trainer.



April

As in the previous years it was my pleasure to comment the CAI*** Kladruby nad Labem in English. The event will take its place in history as „winter driving event“. April gave it all, but fully equipped with blankets, gloves, tea and grog the mood was great. Alone the view from the speaker cabin on the stunning stud landscape makes up for everything.

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May

In May I participated with the presentation „Czech National Stud Kladruby nad Labem – Interpreting a Living -Heritage Site“ in the spring event of Interpret Europe, the European association for heritage interpretation, at Prague. On the following weekend I was invited as speaker of the conference *Cultural Landscape Conservation: The Organisation of Cultural Landscapes with Special Regard to Horse Breeding*, which was organised at Kladruby nad Labem in connection with the World Heritage application of the Czech National Stud.



The conference was followed by the Day of the Oldkladruby Horse. Besides the protagonists of the hosting institution, horses, riders and drivers of the Czech stallion depots Písek and Tlumačov, as well as of Redefin State Stud in Mecklenburg-Pomerania (Germany) were part of the show programme. I was especially happy to meet the Redefin crew, because their participation was a return visit after Kladruby had been part of the Redefin stallion parades in 2014 and 2016, which I had accompanied.

June

The international horse show PfingstTurnier in my home town Wiesbaden belongs to the most renowned events of its kind and took place for the 81st time this year. The organising Wiesbadener Reit- und Fahr- Club celebrated its 90th jubilee. As in the previous years I was responsible for the prize-giving ceremonies and coordinated the carriages. Twelve Oldkladruby horses from the Czech National Stud enchanted the Wiesbaden audience at the main prize-giving ceremonies and in the show programme. Especially for the „Ride & Drive“, one of the most popular parts of the event on Sunday afternoon, Bartłomiej Kwiatek came with four Slesian warmblood stallions from the Polish State Stud Książ. Nevertheless, the team of Ingrid Klimke and Jiří Nesvačil won the day.



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July

In 2017 the famous Weil-Marbach Arabians, a heritage of the kings of Wurttemberg which today is part of Marbach State Stud, celebrated its 200th anniversary. I was very pleased about the invitation to the festive event at Scharnhausen park, the birth place of the breed. It was very special to see descendants of the precious sire lines and mare families grazing in front of the palace at this occasion.

The German CHIO Aachen is known as the most prestigious equestrian event in the world. It was a great honour and my pleasure to support Jiří Nesvačil and the team of the Czech National Stud as Chef d'Equipe and as groom. Two third ranks in the cone driving competitions were fantastic results for the young team at its first performance in the impressive setting of Aachen.



August

August was travel time. I took the European Championships in riding and four-in-hand driving at Gothenburg as occasion for a two-week journey to Sweden and Denmark. When all sport decisions had been taken and the press work was done, I had the opportunity to visit the former Swedish National Stud Flyinge, which continues its long horsey tradition as Equestrian Centre of Sweden with a focus on education. Here it was especially interesting to see the relation of historic and modern architecture and the development from traditional to contemporary horse keeping.



A final highlight of the journey was the invitation of the crown equerry of the Danish Court, Niels Randløv, into the royal stables of Christiansborg Palace at Copenhagen. Besides the magnificent architecture and the remarkable carriage collection I was especially happy to see Oldkladruby horses

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on royal duty. The Royal Stables of Denmark are clients of Kladruby nad Labem National Stud, which was founded to breed noble carriage horses for the courts of Prague and Vienna.



September

For a few years I plan and guide excursions for the Wiesbaden Riding and Driving Club. This year the Austrian National Stud Piber, where the Lipizzaners of the famous Spanish Riding School of Vienna are bred, was our destination. Besides an intensive tour at the main stud premises and a rearing farm for the colt foals we visited the autumn-parade, a show programme with horses of the stud and some stallions of the Spanish Riding School. The excursion was added by other activities and a hippological tour through the historic centre of Graz by horseman and author Martin Haller.



From Piber I went directly on to Lipica in Slovenia, where the World Championships of pairs took place. Some years have passed since my last visit in the national stud, the cradle of the Lipizzaner horses, which is looking back on a history full of changes. The World Championships were a good opportunity to inspect the latest developments. Much money was invested in the recent years, mostly with regard to growing visitor numbers. Tourism has a long tradition at Lipica. Authentic stud experiences are long to be looked for. Despite oversized hotels, golf course and animal park atmosphere the former court stud is a distinguished place. Century old horse breeding institutions are patient. In defiance of the built defacements dating from different periods the wide pastures and the tree lined avenues exude imperturbable calmness.

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I was particularly happy about the meeting with Dušan Kramberger, architect, conservator and World Heritage specialist. In Ljubljana he opened doors for me which are normally closed and introduced the works of the Slovenian architects Jože Plečnik and Max Fabiani to me.

On the way back to Wiesbaden I stopped at Munich and spent a wonderful day at park and palace Nymphenburg with the attached carriage museum. During the last two years the exhibition was rearranged and benefits from its new design that was introduced with the help of the knowledgeable Magdalena Bayreuther.



October

In October the horse breeding association of Göppingen had commissioned me to organise and guide their hippological excursion. This year the National Studs of Topol'čianky and Bábolna in Slovakia and Hungary were our destinations. I enjoyed sharing my love for Topol'čianky palace where every stone is breathing history, for the beautiful park and the neighbouring stud with its endless pastures. Also Bábolna, founded as military stud of Austria-Hungary and the cradle of the Shagya Arabian breed, didn't fail to impress the visitors.



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In the second half of October I was invited, to give a presentation on the pre-evening of the annual meeting of the Dessau-Wörlitz commission within the symposium of Anhaltinian History at the state archive Dessau in Germany. The topic „*Hauptgestüt Trakehnen – ein Mythos und seine Wurzeln in Anhalt-Dessau*“ (“*Trakehnen and its roots in Anhalt-Dessau*“) led to a visitor record and vivid discussions, stimulated by the current discussions about the closing of the German State Suds Dillenburg, Prussendorf and Zweibrücken.

Of course I used the opportunity to visit the Bauhaus sites at Dessau and to take long walks in the gardens of Wörlitz, accompanied by Andreas Erb, head of the state archive. On occasion of the Reformation year I also paid a visit to the Luther memorial sites at Wittenberg. What a fascinating region with many different first class heritage sites in such close proximity.

From Dessau I finally made it to the remains of the former court stud Bleesern. A dedicated support club, which I joined on this occasion, is trying to save this significant heritage site. It is astonishing to observe, how horse breeding institutions of long and rich history, largely unnoticed by the heritage scene, fear about their future or increasingly lose their heritage values due to inappropriate developments, while a ruin which didn't house horses since decades is in the focus of conservation interest. I started wondering whether culture has to be dead to be recognised and treated as such. Not to be misunderstood. I absolutely cherish the appreciation of the Bleesern support clubs work, I only wished that other valuable, still intact and working stud premises would be handled with similar respect instead of decaying, being harmed by insensitive developments or being renovated to death.



November

At the beginning of November the diverse, informative and on purpose critical book „*Geliebt und missbraucht. Pferd und Natur im Fokus*“ (“*Loved and Abused. Horse and Nature in Focus*“), edited by Horst Brindel, was published. It was my pleasure to contribute with an article about European stud culture and numerous photos, which also illustrate the articles of other authors.

On the annual meeting of the German Commission of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) I was appointed as personal. A small heritage accolade.

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December

December was already filled with preparations for Christmas and for my move to Cottbus at the end of the year. As alumna of the Building & Conservation and the World Heritage study programmes, as scholar of the graduate school and as member of the Cultural Heritage Centre I am connected to the Brandenburg University of Technology since 15 years and I'm looking forward to be more involved again from January on.

Outlook on 2018

Of course Horses & Heritage will continue. The first activities in 2018 are already in preparation:

In January I'm invited to the International Symposium of the Carriage Association of America at Colonial Williamsburg with the presentation "*Beauty in Harness - The imperial coach horses of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, their decline and their renaissance*"

The board of the Bleesern support club asked me to speak about "*Bleesern und die Welt - europäische Staatsgestüte gestern und heute*" ("*Bleesern and the world – European State Studs yesterday and today*") on February 21st.

In March the symposium *Horses and Courts – The Reins of Power*, organised by the University of Kent's Centre for Studies in the Long Eighteenth Century, the Society for Court Studies and the Wallace Collection will take place in London and I will contribute with a presentation.

Moreover, some publications are in preparation. Portraits about Lipica and Flyinge are waiting to be published in the next issues of the Suisse Kavalle magazine and I hope that the proceedings of the cultural landscape conference at Kladruby nad Labem will take shape in 2018.

For my travelling customers I'm planning excursions to Berlin/Brandenburg and to Slovakia and Hungary.



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