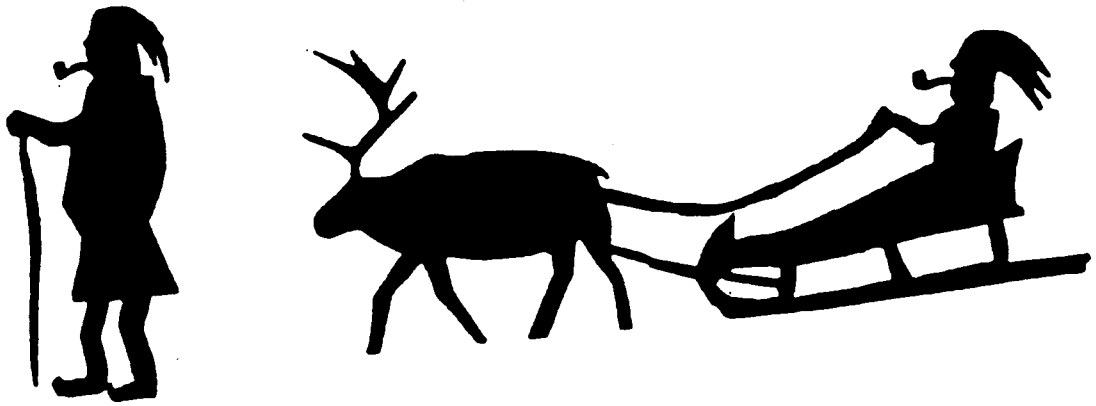
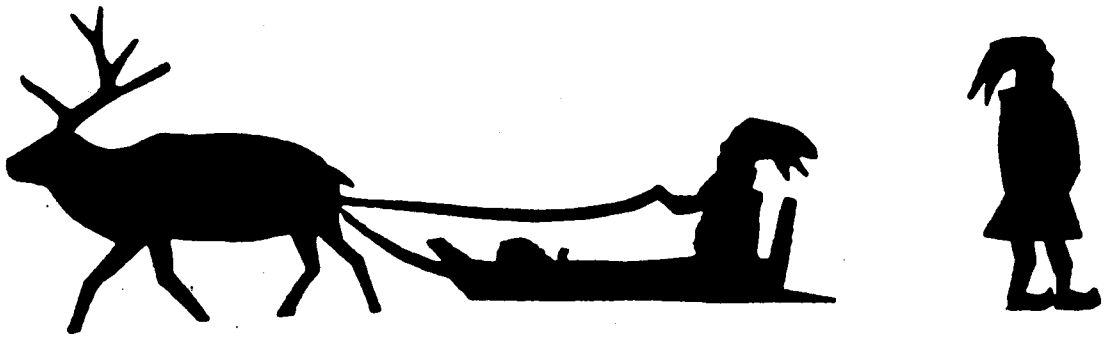


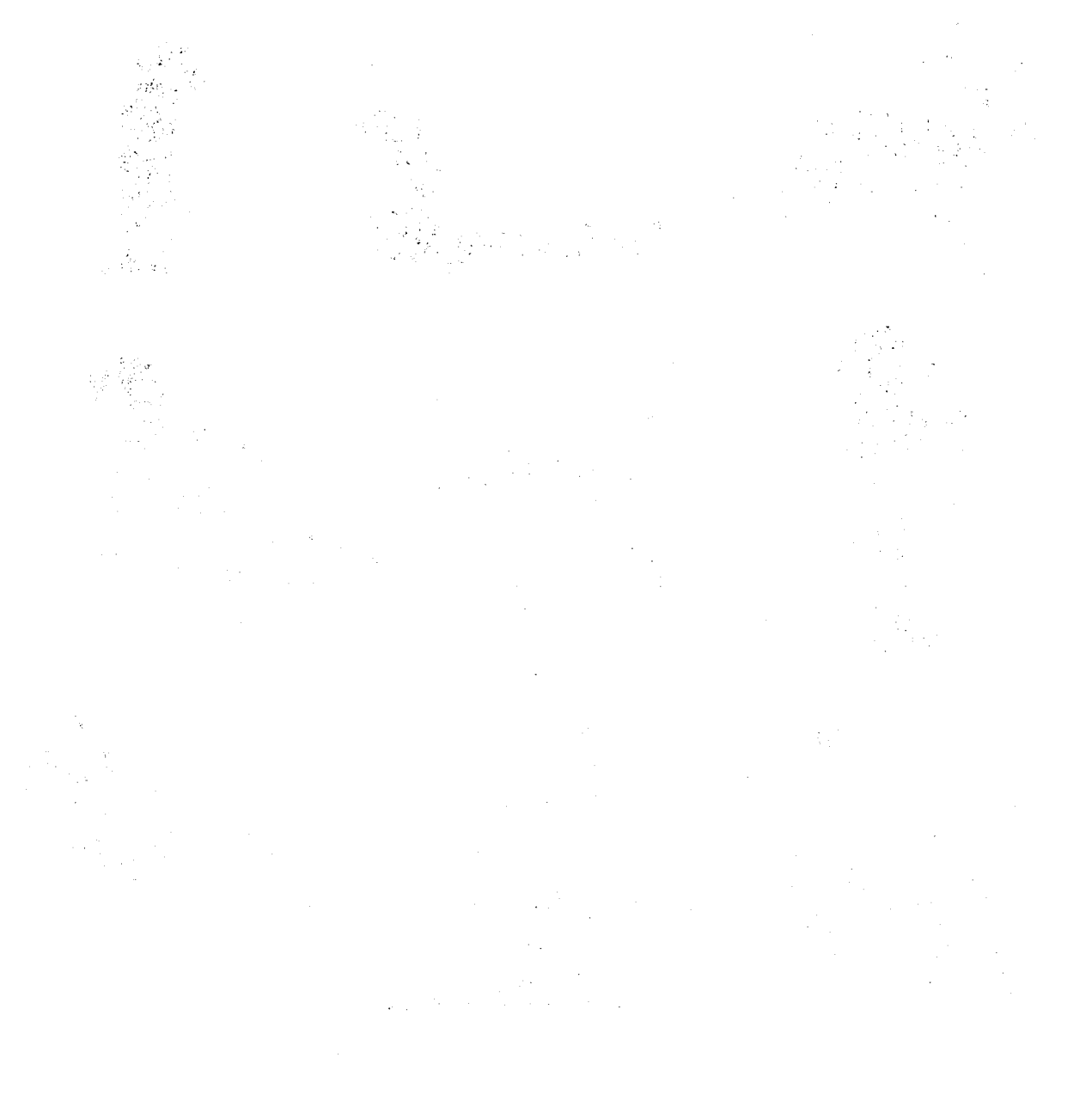
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**ICME News**  
**No 20**  
**Spring 1993**



**Cover:**

**Winterscenes of the Saami (Lapps)  
papercut**



## A word from the editor

By tradition, the secretary of ICME is also the editor of ICME-News. An honorable task indeed, but not always that easy, even if support is given by enthusiastic members like Lydia Bushell from Australia. During ICME's last business meeting in Quebec, Canada, she kindly offered to be a regular correspondent but, like she wrote me, soon found out that "getting copy out of museum anthropologists is somewhat similar to drawing teeth". Judging from what she sent me, she must be an excellent museum dentist. Fortunately, others have contributed too, enabling me to present you another issue of ICME News with lots of information on past and future events.

Naturally some space has been reserved to report on ICME's activities during the last General Conference in Quebec, Canada. Although most of ICME's meetings were held in the "redoute Dauphin", a spot which proved to be hard to find, even for anthropologists/ethnologists used to 'working in the field', the attendance rate was high as was the quality of the contributions. One of these, a paper presented by Christina Kreps, which forms a good link between the discussions held during our Munich meeting and current ICME issues, has been included in this issue.

Successful too during the General Conference was ICME's special excursion to the Abenake reserve at Odanak, organised with the help of Dr. Andrea Hauenschild from Montréal. Although our group was larger than expected, as all seats on the bus were sold out, we all were given a fascinating tour after very personal words of welcome, drinks and a rich choice of biscuits by Esther Wawanolett from the Abenake Museum. Preceding all this was ICME's pre-conference tour to a number of Indian reserves and cultural centers around Lake Huron. David Boston wrote a detailed report on this trip. A summarized version can be found elsewhere in this magazine.

General Conferences not only offer a good occasion to meet old friends and pick up new ideas. They also offer the opportunity to vote for new boardmembers. For ICME this has resulted in the good news that we have a chairman again, in the person of Per Kåks, director of the Folkensmuseum (National

Museum of Ethnography) in Stockholm, Sweden.

You can find his words of greetings further on in this issue. The other members of the executive are David Boston, Térésa Battesti and Peter Bettenhausen, who were re-elected for a second term. Newly elected as boardmembers were: Joyce Herold, Sujit Som, Thorben Lundback, Per Rekdal and Christina Kreps, while Suwati Kartima, Pascal Makimbala, Ralf Çeplak, Wolfgang Mey and Lothar Stein were re-elected. Their addresses are given on the backcover.

Last February, following the European Conference of Ethnological and Social History Museums, which was held in Paris, ICME's new board met for the first time after meeting in Canada, to discuss proposals for future meetings, excursions and activities. As already decided in Canada ICME's triennial programme will focus on the general theme: Museums and society, the special role of ethnographical museums. Concrete issues within this framework are for instance the restitution problem, development issues, relations with indigenous people and xenophobia. This last subject will be the topic of our 1994 annual meeting in Leipzig; while this summer, at our annual meeting in Sweden, which will partly be held in the Saami-Museum in Northern Sweden, the focus will be on indigenous peoples. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find the provisional programmes and exact dates as well as a reply form for those interested to participate. Apart from these meetings proposals have been made for 2 regional meetings to be held in 1994, one in Malaysia on museums and tourism, the other in Tulsa, USA on development issues. The board of ICME is now awaiting confirmation of these last meetings.

Quite another chapter is the wish from certain members to join efforts in setting up a much needed simple directory of world collections. It would be great if ICME could manage to come with concrete results before the 1995 General Conference in Stavanger, Norway. As Soroi Eoe informed us, this work has already been done for the Pacific, but what about other parts of the world? Thorben Lundback showed much enthusiasm for such a project, which

could be realized in cooperation with the ICOM-documentation centre and with the support of UNESCO. Those of you who share his enthusiasm are welcome to contact him. And as usual I would like to add to this, that anyone of you willing to share ideas, knowledge and views both on theoretical and practical museum matters with others is most welcome

to use ICME-news for this purpose. After all, that is one of the main functions of our newsletter. You need not wait until someone passes by to 'draw your teeth'. To just grab your pen will do.

Peter Bettenhausen.

Dear friends and colleagues,

Thank you for the confidence you have shown me by entrusting me with the chairmanship of ICME the coming three years. I hope I will be able to promote our committee and the role of the ethnographic/anthropological museums.

Who am I? Since May 1991, I am the director for the National Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, Sweden. The Swedish name of the museum is Folkens Museum Etnografiska. I have worked as museum director in two Swedish regional museums and have had the possibility of participating in the creation of two new museums. My academical background is Scandinavian archaeology, Ethnography, Fine art and later Interior architecture and design. For six years I was chairman of ICAMT, ICOM's international committee for museum architecture and techniques and I have worked for UNESCO as museum consultant in Africa and Asia and I have travelled quite a lot.

In our changing world our kind of museums have become more and more important. In our collections, archives, libraries and staff so much human knowledge and experience is stored and ready to be used. Xenophobia, racism, religious fanaticism feed on ignorance, intolerance and disrespect for man. What can be more important for us than to fight these things with our weapons of knowledge, understanding and respect.

I am convinced that our museums, big or small, will play a very important role in the future. I believe that the small local museum in particular can have a great effect on local development on strengthening cultural consciousness and increase the respect for the cultural heritage and last but not least, be of great use for schools in the education about local history and culture. The museum is one of many factors that can help humanity to create a better world for everybody. Let us therefore do what we can, within the ICOM family, to support each other, to encourage each other and to share our different but altogether valuable experiences with each other in this work.

Sincerely yours,

Per Kåks.

## ICME IN QUEBEC- a nutshell report

ICME's program during the last General Conference was, to be honest, a bit overloaded, at least during the first days. After the opening sessions of the conference on Sunday morning, followed in the afternoon by plenary sessions on "cultural diversity and museums" and on "museums and the environment" (with a heartwarming contribution by Tom Hill, director of the Woodland Indian Cultural Centre, whom some of us had already met during ICME's pre-conference tour), the "real" work for ICME started on Monday. The meetings at that day, chaired by Andrea Laforet, were devoted to the theme "traditional and contemporary museum representation in North America". After words of welcome to some 60 participants by David Boston, ICME's vice-chairman, a total of 8 stimulating papers were presented (see underneath), interchanged with lively discussions. Besides we were honoured by the presence of Gloria Webster, who gave a very personal contribution. The following day we happily continued, this time in a slightly better equipped conference room. Outside it poured with rain, no Indian Summer to be seen. Inside the atmosphere was much better. This time, a total of ten ICME members from all over the world presented papers, on a wide range of subjects, but all linked to the theme "Museums for all" (see underneath). Besides 3 members, Pascal Makimbala from Congo, Soroi Eoe from Papua-New Guinea and Guillaume Sequira from Paraguay, got the opportunity to address the audience. However, this was not just a meeting full of words. There were slides and video-presentations too, visualizing ideas and practice. The short business meeting we held the following day was mainly devoted to the elections. The results can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Thursday was an excursion day according to the official program. ICME had managed to organize a non-official excursion, that took us by coach to the charming Abenaki Museum at Odanak, a small Indian reserve half way between Quebec and Montreal. We were welcomed by Esther Wawanotett who lectured enthusiastically on past and present life of the Abenaki and joined us for lunch at the local "calumet" restaurant. Our last session took place on Friday, when the new board met for the first time to discuss

a wide variety of topics, ranging from forthcoming meetings to the problems of non-working working groups:

- It was felt that there was a need for more temporary working groups, or even for working persons, willing to pick up topics directly related to ICME's forthcoming (annual) meetings.
- Strengthening ICME-News was also high on the agenda.

Three members, Lydia Bushell (Australia), Helga Seeden (Lebanon) and Beth Carter (Canada) kindly offered to become regular correspondents, for their parts of the world. We hope that you all will assist them as much as possible.

- George MacDonald (Canada) drew the attention to the importance of the Art Planète Project for exchange of exhibitions and promised to come with a proposal on this matter.

- To improve the functioning of ICME, a working group on procedures, statutes and nominations was established. Annette Fromm, Joyce Herold and Thomas Kehoe will present their preliminary report before the next annual meeting in Sweden.

- Also discussed was the need for a membership drive, inviting non-voting members to become real ICME members. With more members ICME will receive more financial support from ICOM.

This will facilitate regular publication of ICME-News both in English and French, (an activity that is getting too costly) as well as other ICME-projects. Naturally our non-voting members do not have to wait for special pleas, you are most welcome to really join ICME from now on, by informing the ICOM-secretariat in Paris!!!

- Lively discussions were further held on subjects ICME should focus on, subjects that are all related to the (special) role of ethnological museums for society. They ranged from hot issues like restitution, repatriation and illegitimate traffic to twinning programs and support for indigenous people.

- Joyce Herold and Christina Kreps offered to form a small working group on "museums and first nations", to keep the present contacts alive.

- Lothar Stein and Joyce Herold further promised to forward proposals on the issue of current ethnical problems.

■ All present felt the need for more contacts with other international committees. Members willing to act as observers are herewith invited to contact ICME's new chairman Per Kaks.

Finally it was decided to start in our next issue

a special section on "Museums in action", which we hope will stimulate the exchange of information on (present and future) exhibition programmes and special projects.

Peter Bettenhausen.



ICME excursion to Odanak: ready to enjoy a real Indian lunch

#### Papers presented at ICME's meetings during the General Conference:

##### ■ First meeting:

Phillips, R.: "How Museums Marginalise: The Problematics of Museum Structure and Ethnographic Representation"  
King, J.: "ESQUIMAUX VILLAGES, Death Display and The Stereotyping of Canadian Inuit at United States Exposition 1893 - 1909"  
Laforet, A.: "Issues in Representation"  
McMaster G.: "INDIGENA: A Native Curators's Perspective"  
Kehoe, Thomas: "American Anthropological Museums: New museum concepts, policies, problems and practice"  
Nicks, T.: "The Legacy of Oronhyatekha"  
Kaks, Peer: "Issues of Repatriation"  
Roubitaille, M.P.: "Partnership and Diffusion, Amerindian collections"

##### ■ Second meeting:

Kreps, Christina: "The Eurocentric Museum Model in the non-Museum World"  
Stein, Lothar: "Museums and Xenophobia"  
Bettenhausen, Peter: "The Strong Sex"  
Boston, David: "Africa in a London Museum"  
Battesti, Térésa: "Renovation du musée de l'homme: Programme Scientifique"  
Jaoul, Martine: "Du musée national des arts et traditions populaires à un musée des cultures en France"  
Munjeri, Dawson: "Mobilising for advancement of the underprivileged"  
Rosing, Emil: "Museum Co-operation between Greenland and Danmark"  
Shikla Kundu Podder: "Visual Anthropology: a tool for better understanding the Indian Cultural Heritage"  
Som, Sujit: "Open Air Museums: Aspects of salvaging heritage and Boundaries reconsiderations"

## David Boston:

### In search of the first nations: Impressions of ICME's pre-conference tour

This article is a slightly altered version of a longer report by David Boston on ICME's Canadian pre-conference tour (12-18 September 1992) to museums and cultural centres of the First Nations at a.o. Brantford and Manitoulin Island. The programme for this excellent tour (only the number of participants - 7 - was rather disappointing) was devised by Prof. Helmuth Fuchs of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The tour started on Saturday 12th in Toronto, with visits to the Royal Ontario Museum and the Ontario Science Centre. On Sunday followed trips to the McMichael Canadian Collection at Kleinburg and to the natural wonders of the Niagara Peninsula. Then, on Monday, the 'real' tour began.

#### Woodland Cultural Centre

We left Toronto on a time-consuming journey to reach the Six Nations Reserve in Brantford to visit the Woodland Cultural Centre which preserves and promotes the cultural heritage of the Algonkian and Iroquoian Nations of the Eastern Woodland area. We arrived rather behind schedule but the Museum Director of the Centre, Tom Hill, was still able to take us on a briefing tour which was a model of clarity. In taking us round the galleries (skilfully and economically fitted into the former school hall which nevertheless imposed constraints), he showed us how the community had created the exhibits "to tell the story as seen from our own standpoint, using what archaeology, ethnology etc can provide as evidence". A particularly effective exhibit portrayed the first European arrival in the area, in part reconstructed from the writings of the Franciscan missionary, Father Daillon: alongside was a simulated archaeological excavation area where school children can rediscover further evidence by unearthing 'fabulous fakes'.

Our attention was drawn to the return by the Museum of the American Indian of the treaty belt (the GUS-WEN-TAH) that recorded the agreement with the British (superseding the earlier Iroquois - Dutch agreement) and to the exhibit on the Constitution of the League of 5 Nations. Besides reconstructions of traditional life, we were shown the documentation of events from the time of Joseph Brant; through

the period of the Iroquoian Council dating from 1870 with both traditional and Christian peoples exercising authority for internal affairs until its abolition in 1924, when it 'went underground' to be replaced by an Elected Council; to recent moves towards rapprochement with the Traditional Council. The overall impression of the museum displays was of an objective approach. In the final section, Tom Hill underlined the vital role of the museum in exhibiting contemporary arts and aspects of life including features of 'Pan-Indianism' such as the Pow-wow which has brought Indian peoples together with an interchange of motifs (eg. the squash-blossom from the Southwest now found as decorative feature in the Northeast).

After thanking Tom Hill and his staff, we reluctantly left a well-stocked and displayed Museum shop to fit in a visit to the 18th Century Royal Chapel of the Mohawks and some traditional refreshment nearby before driving through the Reserve to see the location of one of the Long-Houses, now built in modern style.

There ensued the long drive across the fertile farm lands of South West Ontario through a succession of townships to the spectacular Tobermory Peninsula where we stayed overnight in readiness for an early morning ferry departure to Manitoulin Island.

#### Ojibwe Cultural Foundation

A voyage of nearly two hours across the Lake Huron prepared us for the scale of Manitoulin Island, regarded as the largest fresh-water island in the world, with a population of some 12,000 of whom about 4,000 belong to the First Nations. Mainly of Ojibway, Odawa and Potawatomi extraction, they occupy five reservations and call themselves Aishnawbek. (The island had been finally opened to white settlement in 1866).

After landing at South Bay, we wound our way between some of the 100 inland lakes to the reservation at West Bay and reached the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation (O.C.F.) which had been founded in the 1970's by Mary Lou Fox Radulovich, a school teacher from the reserve. We were welcomed by Ernestine Buswa who

had been involved with the Foundation's work from its early days. Its original emphasis (in contrast to some other Cultural Centres) had been on the development of arts and crafts, support of individual artists and educational work among the young. It was explained how the 19th Century had seen a Government attempt to introduce the indigenous population to European-type agriculture (The 'Manitowaning Experiment'). While this experiment was a dismal failure within 20 years, the Ojibwe Cultural Centre had found it necessary a century later to reintroduce traditional arts and crafts from northern areas on the mainland where culture, customs, rituals and religion had been sustained more effectively. The role of the OCF was also to make Canada's white communities, the "Founding Peoples", conscious of Ojibwe values and achievements.

Development of the OCF had occurred during the widespread cultural revival, to be seen in the visual arts represented in the Indians of Canada Pavilion at EXPO '67. There had been an upsurge of contemporary art on Manitoulin Island which was featured at the Royal Ontario Museum in 1978 under the title "Contemporary Native Art - Manitoulin Island". I found that the Introduction to the exhibition catalogue had been written by Tom Hill who described how Norval Morrisseau's style in the 1960's had been seminal in the way that Manitoulin artists had turned to their past "presenting us with new ways of looking at their traditional Ojibwe culture".

Ernestine Buswa showed us a new series of posters by Leland Bell, an Ojibwe-Odawa artist born in 1953 at Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island. These were currently being produced to show traditional values (Bravery, Wisdom, Love, Truth, Respect and Humility) for distribution to schools. With a slide-tape programme she also brought out the religious significance of Manitoulin Island, its name derived from Manitowaning or 'home of the Manitou' - i.e. Spirit (Algonkian).

The OCF did not seek to establish any form of 'art monopoly' and directly opposite the Foundation's building in West Bay we were able to visit the art gallery of Blake Debassige (b.1956) and his wife, Shirley Chechoo; their work had been shown like Leland Bell's, at the R.O.M. Blake Debassige told me that he had completed a painting for the crypt in the Shrine that we would see at Sainte Marie among the

Hurons. He had also worked as a designer for the celebrated traditional theatre group in Wikwemikong, the only unceded reserve in Canada, in the extreme west of the island; this facilitated a visit planned for the following day after further telephone calls.

#### **Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island**

Before our departure for Wikwemikong, Ernestine Buswa had established that we could visit a local school, Lakeview School. En route we broke our journey at two Canadian local community museums, one (Assiginack) at Manitowaning. Then in Wikwemikong, we detoured in the reserve along the coastal road to see the Mishibinijima Studio of James Simon (b.1954) a self-taught artist. He showed us large (and very expensive) canvases of landscapes, 'places of power', inspired by dreams, legends and teachings from the elders. His work had been exhibited at the McMichael, National Museum of Man and in European tours.

In the expanding administrative centre of Wikwemikong, we found the theatre group, 'The Story Tellers' (De-ba-jeh-mu-jig) preparing material for future productions. We were taken by Audrey Debassige to see young actors rehearsing and I heard about the group's contacts with the South Bank Centre where they hoped to appear on a return visit to the U.K.

We were also taken to see a number of strikingly beautiful modern buildings with traditional inspiration. Besides the Hub Centre (with day care and nursery school housing one of the most imaginative toy libraries that could be found in any community), there is an adjoining 'Amik-ook Gahmic' (senior citizens house) and the Band's administrative offices (Education, CCTV, Tribal Police). But the eye is drawn irresistibly to the Wikwemikong Health Centre, its ground plan in the shape of an eagle with a Medicine Lodge in conical form surrounded by 13 poles that symbolise the lunar year. Its architecture shows how the Health Centre combines traditional and modern methods of medicine.

#### **Huronion**

Leaving the island at the northern-most point, an early departure allowed time to travel south along the shores of Georgian Bay for a preliminary visit to the Martyrs' Shrine at Midland where we located the work of the artist from Manitoulin Island in the crypt's



historical displays about the Jesuit Missions. From the lookout built at the top of the hill, there was a fine vantage point that explained the location of the Sainte Marie-aux-Hurons to be seen below in its stockaded position by the waterway leading to the lake.

On this return to the reconstructed mission-fort of Sainte Marie, I felt admiration for the way the visitor is provided with sufficient orientation in the audio-visual presentation before the tour (organised for us by the Public Relations Officer, Helina Dukette) of the Huron longhouse and Algonkin Wig-wam beyond the wooden buildings where craftsmen-demonstrators were at work. Our guide confirmed that there had been some re-interpretation: the dramatised introduction had been altered to add a more balanced view of the impact of European arrival as seen through Huron Indian eyes. The interpretive museum effectively filled out the story from original evidence.

Our final stopping-point on the tour was the Midland Indian Village where Prof. Fuchs had made arrangements for our reception through Ms. Natalie Quealey. An examination of the local museum collections was preceded by an introduction to the changes in the reconstructed Huron Indian Village. The ground plan was based on the University of Western Ontario's excavations of a palisaded early Huron site some seven miles south of Midland by Dr. Wilfrid Jury, Curator of the University's Museum of Indian Archaeology. One of the longhouses has recently been rebuilt to a much greater height on the basis of early European documentary evidence. Apart from the obvious educational potential of the whole village, the practical scientific value of such experimental archaeological reconstructions is clear in testing theoretical work.

After this last stop we drove slightly exhausted back to Toronto. Our pre-conference tour had come to its end, another conference was awaiting us.

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### Miscellaneous

From Wolfgang Mey we received the good news that off-prints are now available of the proceedings of ICME's Munich meeting. Unfortunately, the number has been limited to a total of 38 copies. Those who attended the Munich meetings and are interested in these proceedings, please contact ICME's secretariat.

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### Museums in action A new column for ICME News

In the next issue ICME News hopes to start a new column with practical information on exhibitions and activities in the ethnological museum world. You are kindly invited to contribute by sending to ICME's Secretariat short information on your present and future exhibition programme, activities and special projects. Please use the following check-list:

■ Exhibitions  
title/ short description of content/ approximate size in square metres/ total number of objects/

number of loans if any/ publications available including prices/ suitable for exhibition exchange; estimated costs/ contact person

■ Special activities  
symposia/ workshops/ festivals

■ Special products  
educational programmes/ new audio-visuals/ inventories/ catalogues, etc.

## Christine Kreps: The Eurocentric Museum Model in the Non-European World.

This presentation entitled "The Eurocentric Museum Model in the Non-European World" is a response to or follow up on Martin Prössler's article "Museums and Development - A Call for Reflection", published in the July 1991 issue of ICME News. I first read Martin's provocative paper while in Indonesia conducting field research for my doctoral dissertation in anthropology. Coincidentally, my research was on the role of the museum in Indonesian cultural and national development and many of the questions Mr. Prössler raised were the same as those I had incorporated into my research design and was encountering in my own fieldwork experience.

Mr. Prössler's paper challenged us to critically examine the implications of 'museums and development' and the possible consequences of museum development for the preservation of so-called cultural 'traditions' and cultural 'identity'. If I understood his argument, Mr. Prössler's main concern was how the museum model and museological methods are agents in the globalization process. He reminds us that the museum is a cultural expression in itself. Museums not only preserve and present culture, but through museological means also transform culture. Mr. Prössler draws our attention to the ambivalent position of museums as being both agents of preservation as well as transformation. He therefore asserts, the claim that museums preserve tradition is a myth.<sup>1</sup>

My paper echoes many of Mr. Prössler's arguments. I too have been concerned with the spread of the Western museum model and how museum development can inadvertently undermine the museum's implicit goal of preserving cultural diversity. I attempt to show how cultural heritage preservation in a museum does not necessarily imply or lead to the preservation of cultural diversity, which I assume, is one of the guiding principals behind our work. I also attempt to show how the museum becomes an arena for the mediation of different cultural interests, such as those of the museum profession, the state, and local culture.

My paper is based on research conducted on Indonesian provincial museums from January 1991 to August 1992. I was specifically concerned with the development of the

Provincial Museum of Central Kalimantan, known as Museum Belanga.

### The Eurocentric museum model and methods

When I first visited some provincial museums in Indonesia in 1989 I was struck by how much they resembled American and European museums. I later learned that the explanation for this is rather straightforward. First, Indonesians inherited the 'museum idea' from their colonial past as several museums were established by the Dutch during the colonial era.<sup>2</sup> Another factor is, most leading Indonesian museum professionals responsible for planning and developing museums have received much of their training in Western countries and from Western museum specialists. Furthermore, Indonesians have adopted the standard definition of a museum set forth by the International Council of Museums and follow standard methods and practices developed by the international museum profession. Consequently, Indonesian museum workers participate in a 'shared reality' regarding what a museum is supposed to be and how it is supposed to function. Indonesians also receive considerable input from international organizations like UNESCO, and help from foreign individuals and institutions in the form of technical and financial assistance.

The Provincial Museum of Central Kalimantan, or Museum Belanga, is a general museum with collections pertaining to the natural and cultural history of the province. It is for the most part an ethnographic museum since the ethnographic collection is the largest and displays are primarily devoted to representing various aspects of Dayak culture. The word 'Dayak' is used to collectively refer to the indigenous people of Indonesian Borneo, although a number of different Dayak peoples live in Central Kalimantan with their own names, languages, and variations of cultural traditions.

The Museum Belanga is located in the provincial capital of Palangkaraya. The town is relatively new, founded in 1957, and now has a population of a little over 100,000. Although various Dayak groups still constitute the majority of Central Kalimantan's population,

the province is a mix of people from throughout Indonesia. Rich in natural resources the province is eyed by the central government for its potential earnings from export commodities such as timber and gold. In terms of 'development' the province is one of the fastest growing in Indonesia.

According to one of the past directors of the Directorate of Museums, the primary agency responsible for the development of museums based in Jakarta, provincial museums are supposed to play a role in overall national development. Museums are seen as tools in the process of helping society make the transition from traditional to modern life. In this respect, the museum itself is a symbol of modernity and development.

One of the aims of my research in Indonesia was to explore how the Western museum concept 'translates' cross-culturally, or rather, how the museum idea does or does not 'fit' the local cultural context. A main concern was how the museum is perceived by the community and its role in the people's lives. It did not take long to discover that the museum is a rather foreign institution in the eyes of the local people. Outside of occasional tourists, visiting government officials, and school groups brought to the museum on yearly excursions, few people visit the museum on a regular basis. I was surprised to learn that many local people did not know the museum existed. For some it was just another government building and its purpose and function were unclear. The museum was not comprehensible to much of the community. The museum was not only something foreign to community members, but also to many of the individuals who work at the museum. Much of the staff had no firm understanding of the museum's purpose or function. For most staff members, their job was just that, a job. None of the staff had had any prior museological training or even a desire to do museum work since before entering the museum, they had no idea what a museum was.

Although this lack of awareness about museum work, or lack of professionalism, was detrimental to museum operations, the situation gave me the opportunity to observe how people work in a museum who are not yet part of the museum profession or in their own words, 'museum-minded'.

As we know, the museum is very much a product of Western culture.<sup>3</sup> It embodies and reflects Western ideas, customs, values, and traditions, especially those related to Western

ideas of 'culture' and in particular, 'material culture'.<sup>4</sup> Since the museum is a cultural expression or product, a 'museum culture' is constituted around it - a culture with its own set of standards, practices, methods, and a value system regarding the collection, use, and meaning of objects. From this perspective, it was interesting to observe how the staff of the Museum Belanga carried out its tasks in comparison to Western museum work. I was particularly intrigued by their perception, use, and treatment of objects and how these behaviours might reflect more 'traditional' or indigenous values on cultural material.

As stated earlier, most of Museum Belanga's collection is composed of ethnographic objects representing various aspects of Dayak culture. Many of the objects in the collection and on display can still be seen in people's homes, in the market, or in villages. Thus, many of the objects are common or not seen as particularly 'special' by the staff. This attitude was reflected in the way some of the staff treated and handled the objects which in the eyes of a museum professional would be considered careless and improper.

In general, little information on or interpretation of the collection was provided on display labels. Conspicuously absent (from my perspective), were dates or any kind of time orientation. For a foreign visitor like myself, this was a compelling omission since museums epitomize Western time consciousness. But in the Museum Belanga there seemed to be no temporal separation or discontinuity between the past and the present. Much of the past was part of the present.

Within the value system of the museum culture, once an object enters the museum it takes on a new 'life'<sup>5</sup> and becomes 'special' based on criteria established by 'specialists' such as anthropologists, art historians, scientists, or collectors. It is the task of the museum to safeguard objects so their 'value' is preserved. Once an object is accessioned it generally does not leave the museum but only for a few purposes deemed acceptable by the curators. Rarely are objects used for the same purposes they were originally made for.

But in the Museum Belanga, objects such as gongs, drums, masks, and ritual paraphenelia are borrowed by local people for use in ceremonies, performances, and community events. From one perspective, we can say such practices are not professional in terms of preserving the object's 'museum value'. But from another viewpoint, by allowing the public

to use objects, the museum is helping perpetuate rituals and ceremonies that play a significant role in living culture.

The Directorate of Museums is encouraging greater professionalism in provincial museums by sponsoring training programs, workshops, seminars, etc. Greater knowledge and professionalism can help museum staff make informed decisions regarding the use of the collection and improve operations in general. But we might also consider the cultural impact of professionalism, especially the promotion of methods which impose generalizations and standardization.

For example, we can look at standard museum registration and documentation methods.

Although these procedures enable museum staff to work with and care for a collection more efficiently and are considered the foundation of museum tasks, standard registration and documentation methods are based on classification systems developed in Western sciences. Objects are often classified in broad categories and described in general terms. By using such systems, we may overlook, cover up, or omit local, indigenous or 'emic' categories and names of objects. Standard museum registration and documentation methods also entail very specific ways of looking at and describing objects based on their intrinsic and objective properties. Because objects' non-objective qualities such as spiritual, religious, or magical properties are not easily detected or described, they can be difficult to classify. Thus, for this reason and many others, museum registration and documentation methods generally classify and describe objects according to their material, functional, and/or technological aspects.<sup>6</sup>

Much of the collection at the Museum Belanga contains objects used in rituals and ceremonies central to traditional Dayak religion for example, wooden carvings created for elaborate secondary burial ceremonies or to guard villages, houses, or graves. Each carving is a unique creation made by ritual specialists and is invested with a spirit and carries its own meaning and powers. Although most of the carvings in the collection were produced many years ago, they still evoke strong emotions for some people, especially those who still practice the traditional religion officially recognized by the Indonesian government as Hindu Kaharingan. Because such objects are spiritually significant, emotionally charged, and have specific

meanings, the museum staff is often reluctant to standardize information about them on display labels or in documentation files. Not being ritual specialists themselves or authorities on Kaharingan, they fear they will make a mistake and offend those for whom they still live.

Although we recognize the benefits of greater professionalism and standardization, we should ask ourselves what kinds of information get misinterpreted, diminished, or lost in the musealization process? Furthermore, what kinds and whose cultural values are being preserved when objects are made to conform to standard methods and practices? The so called preservation of objects in museums does not necessarily imply or mean the preservation of cultural values, beliefs, and behaviours associated with those objects.<sup>7</sup> Museological methods should be made appropriate to the local cultural context, or better yet, grow out of the community itself. One of the ways museum workers can do this is by seeking analogies to the museum and its methods in indigenous institutions and practices.<sup>8</sup> This requires indepth knowledge of the local culture and participation by the community in the museum's planning and development. But community participation and 'bottom up' development is a problem I now turn to in my conclusion.

## Conclusion

Although Indonesian provincial museums are heavily influenced by external forces such as the international professional museum community, they will ultimately be unique products of their own sociocultural, economic, and political environment, as well as historical experience. With this in mind, we need to consider forces which may pose threats to the preservation of diversity greater than the imposition of Western museological practices. I referred earlier to the Indonesian government's use of museums as tools in the modernization process. We all know that modernization and so-called development means culture change. We also know that some forms of change are beneficial and desirable. But what changes and how always comes down to who makes those decisions. In the Indonesian context, development planning is highly centralized and for the most part, 'top down' from decision makers in Jakarta. Local people's interests and choices are generally subsumed under national interests.

Since the 1970s, the Directorate of Museums has been developing a museum 'infrastructure'. Provincial museums have been established in each of the country's twenty-seven provinces. All provincial museums conform to a standard organizational structure and follow museum methods that are disseminated from the center, or Jakarta. Thus, standardization is a part of the national museum program and in visiting museums throughout the country one sees very little variation in the way local culture is interpreted and presented. The Republic of Indonesia is a country of great cultural diversity with over 360 distinct ethnic groups. One of the great challenges to and aims of the post-colonial government has been to create unity out of this diversity.<sup>9</sup> Provincial museums are supposed to promote this process of national integration. They are designed to present the ethnography of each province and demonstrate its cultural uniqueness, but are also mandated to show how local culture blends in with and contributes to a 'national culture' and one Republic. Again, local cultural interests are submerged under those of the State. On yet another level, one can see how the homogenization of provincial culture is also taking place. For example, in the four provinces of Kalimantan there is great diversity among

Dayak peoples. But in recent years, there has been a movement to create a 'generic' Dayak image through the standardization of costumes, performing arts, and rituals so their culture can be 'packaged' for tourists or more efficiently represent Kalimantan in national cultural events.

What does all this mean for 'museum and development', the development of museums, and the preservation of cultural diversity? Certainly, museums operate in a 'global/local nexus', to borrow Mr. Prössler's phrase. And in analyzing the museum's role in society we must look at all the contexts in which they function, i.e., international, national, regional, local, and then of course, the context of the particular museum itself. Although the Western museum model has become the standard, we must acknowledge all the forces at play and ask whose interests are being served? There is more than one 'center' in the globalization and homogenization process. The degree to which museums are capable of serving the cultural needs of their communities, becoming unique cultural expressions in themselves, and preserving the diversity they are supposed to represent, depends on their success in mediating all the various interests embodied in the museum.<sup>10</sup>

#### Notes

1) M. Prössler, 'Museums and Development - A Call for Reflection', in ICME News, nr. 18 (July 1991) distributed by ICME Secretariat P. Bettenhausen, Den Haag, The Netherlands.

2) On the history of the development of Western museums see: G. Bazin, 'The Museum Age', translated by J. van Nuis Cahill, First American Edition, (New York: Universe Books, 1979).

3) A. Sutaarga, 'Introduction to Museums in Indonesia', Special Issue Multiplied by ICOM Indonesia, Jakarta (1987).

4) For discussions on the history of museums, collecting, and collections see: G. Stocking, ed., 'Objects and Others; Essays on Museums and Material Culture', (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). Also J. Clifford, 'The Predicament of Culture', (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

5) A. Appadurai, 'The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective', (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

6) For discussions on how objects or material culture has historically played a role in the development of anthropology and the way objects were classified and used to substantiate anthropological theories see: C. Tschopik and D. Collier, 'The Role of Museums in

American Anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 56 (1957). Also J. Fabian, 'Time and the Other; How Anthropology Makes It's Objects' (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

7) On the preservation of values see: P. van Mensch, 'Object-Museum-Museology: The Eternal Triangle', (Leiden: The Reinwardt Academy, 1984).

8) See S. Mead, 'Indigenous Models of Museums in Oceania', *Museum*, vol. 35, no. 2, (1983), 98-101.

9) See Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 'Cultural policy in Indonesia', (Paris: UNESCO, 1973).

10) For interesting discussions on many of the issues raised in this paper, such as the politics of culture, museums and nationalism, and museums in service to their communities see: I. Karp and S. Levine, eds., 'Exhibiting Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Museums Display', (Washington, DC, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) and I. Karp, S. Levine and C. Mullen-Kreamer, eds., 'Museums and Communities; Debating Public Culture', (Washington, DC, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

**From Lydia Bushell, our Australian correspondent:  
News of New South Wales indigenous people's year, 1993**

- World Indigenous People's Conference: Education from Dec 12-17, 1993. Wollongong University, NSW.
- Martung Upah Indigenous Conference convened by the Aboriginal and Islander Commission of the Australian Council of Churches, Dec 6-11, 1993. The conference will bring together church and Aboriginal leaders, academics etc and will aim to come to a 'just and proper settlement' between churches and Australia's indigenous people. Committee member: Anne Pattel-Gray (02)2992215.
- The National Trust will hold an exhibition of art by Central Australian Warburton community artists at the S H Ervin Gallery, Observatory Hill Sydney, NSW 2000.
- The Art Gallery of NSW will launch one of the most comprehensive books on Aboriginal Bark Painting and hopes to stage other events around the launch. The Gallery will rehang its Aboriginal works and develop a schools program for the Year. Contact: Belinda Hanrahan, Marketing Manager, Art Gallery of NSW, The Domain, Sydney, NSW 2000.
- The Historic Houses Trust of NSW will hold an exhibition of Aboriginal breastplates and photographs at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum from May 25 to July 4, 1993. The breastplates were worn by Koori leaders last

century, often according to the priorities of white authorities. The exhibition will have a written Koori interpretation of this history and hopefully, a small group of Koori guides to give this interpretation to visitors. Contact: Paul Jones, Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. (02)2238922.

**ICOM ASPAC Regional Meeting, Sydney 1993**

The Australian proposal to hold a Regional Assembly in Sydney on 25-28 September, 1993, was accepted by ICOM ASPAC at their meeting in Quebec. It will be held between the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane and the combined Museums Education Associations of Australia and New Zealand Conference in Melbourne. The conference will focus on the role which museums can play in cross cultural understanding, drawing on the diversity of cultures in the region and the trading and tourism relationships which are more and more, exposing peoples to each other. Museums have an important part to play in facilitating this contact. Contact: Louise Reid, Westpac Museum, 6-8 Playfair Street, The Rocks, Sydney, NSW 2000. (02)2511419 or Fax (02)2523196.

**The Australian Museum**

**6-8 College Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, Telephone: 3398111, Cable: MUSEUM**

**Contact: Ms Sascha Lynch**

**1993: International year for the world's indigenous people**

Following the conference on *The Future of Australia's Dreaming*, it was decided that the museum should focus on public awareness and understanding of indigenous peoples and their cultures, with an underlining objective of enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects affecting them. Following discussions between Education and Anthropology, it was proposed that the

Museum would host a series of activities to mark this year:

1. Special activities in the contemporary section of the Aboriginal Australia Gallery.
2. Commissioning of an Aboriginal dance/performance group to produce a work especially for the Museum to mark the year. This would be linked to NAIDOC (National & Islander Day Observance Committee) Week in July.

3. An indigenous people's performance during the July school holiday period, drawing upon the many groups of indigenous people who have now made Australia their home, as well as Aboriginal groups.
4. A series of activities, to be defined by indigenous groups themselves, promoting issues or aspects of their cultures.
5. Further development of the Museum's involvement in the Aboriginal Studies Program, including the greater involvement of Aboriginal people in various visitor programs and special in-service courses for teachers.
6. Activities designed to increase Aboriginal access to the Museum's Australian collections and their associated information. This would include catalogues in various forms.

It is proposed that this activities program will be people oriented without the development of special exhibitions.

#### Publications and fieldwork

"Catalogue of Roth Artifacts held in the Australian Museum Roth Collection", Vol. 1, by Kate Kahn. The total collection should be published in 2-4 further volumes within the next three years.

Publication (in press, untitled) in The Australian Museum Records, 1992, of papers in a volume honouring Dr Fred McCarthy, ed. Jim Specht. Dr McCarthy was a former curator of Anthropology at the Australian Museum and was first Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. He is now 86 years old. Dr Jim Specht, with Drs Robin Torrence and Richard Fullager has been working on a joint project with the Dept of Archaeology, Latrobe University, Melbourne (Dr Chris Godsen). The project, in west New Britain, Papua New Guinea, has been examining the history of settlement, use of natural resources and interaction with the landscape.

Dr Val Attenbrow has been excavating an Aboriginal shell midden at Balmoral Beach, Sydney Harbour, for resource management and archaeological research. The site has well stratified deposits two metres down, rich with a wide range of material including various shellfish, fish, terrestrial animals and stone artifacts. Occupation began 4000 years BP.

#### Publications

- 1991 Attenbrow, V. "The Port Jackson Archaeology Project: a study of the prehistory of the Port Jackson Catchment in NSW. Stage I - Site Recording and Site Assessment". Aust. Abor. Studies 2: 40-55.
- 1992 Attenbrow, V. "Shell bed or Shell midden". Australian Archaeology, Vol 34: 3-21.

Dr Paul S.C. Tacon

#### Publications

- 1992a "If you miss all this story, well bad luck: rock art and the validity of ethnographic interpretation in western Arnhem Land, Australia". In Rock art and ethnography. Occasional AURA Publication No. 5. M.J. Morwood and D.R. Hobbs, eds. Melbourne: Archaeological Publications. pp. 11-18.
- 1992b "Somewhere over the rainbow: an ethnographic and archaeological analysis of recent rock paintings of western Arnhem Land, Australia". In State of the art: regional rock art studies in Australia and Melanesia. Occasional AURA Publication No. 6. J. McDonald and I.P. Haskovec, eds. Melbourne: Archaeological Publications. pp. 202-15.
- 1992c "The last rock painters of Kakadu". Australian Natural History 23 (11): 866-73.

#### Field research

Fieldwork was conducted recording the older rock and art styles of western Arnhem Land, Northern Territory in 1991 and 1992 with Dr Christopher Chippindale (Cambridge University). This is part of a six year research project titled "Early expressions of cognition, communication and culture contact in the oldest rock art of Arnhem Land, N.T.". Over two dozen previously unknown sites rediscovered on the plateau. Rock art made from beeswax was sampled for dating. Aboriginal elders were consulted about the old art's contemporary significance. Aboriginal field assistants participated on all aspects of the program.

## ICME meeting in Sweden

Invitation to the ICME meeting in Sweden  
August 14-21, 1993 on the theme "Modern  
indigenous peoples in a modern world and their  
relation to the ethnographical museum"

The meeting will take place in Stockholm and  
in Jokkmokk with the National Museum of  
Ethnography (Folkens Museum-etnografiska) in  
Stockholm and Ajtte Saami and Mountain  
Museum in Jokkmokk as hosts.

Saturday, August 14 we assemble in  
Stockholm. The official programme will start  
on Sunday 15.

We have arranged accomodation on preliminary  
booking at a good hikers' hostel in Stockholm  
(hotel standard) at the Saami School in  
Jokkmokk and at the alpine station in  
Saltoluokta. We have tried to find places with  
decent standard and decent prices. As you  
know, the value of the Swedish currency, the  
crown, is now rather low. You will have to pay  
all expenses, rooms, travels and meals. We  
will, however, try to find sponsors for as many  
things as possible. You will be informed of that  
when you arrive, but be prepared for the total  
cost.

We are also working on finding subsidies for  
those coming from countries far away and with  
economical problems. Those of you who may  
need economical support, please inform us as

soon as possible about costs etc. We have to  
apply for the money on an individual basis in  
relation to country, institution etc.

You may also inform me if you need a written  
personal invitation in order to be able to  
participate. If you want to give a paper on a  
topic related to the subject for the meeting,  
please send us in advance a short summary in  
English.

We have to ask you to pay a conference fee in  
order to cover some of the expenses for the  
arrangements, USD 60.00. As this invitation is  
sent to you with very short notice, I hope that  
you will help me by sending your preliminary  
registration as soon as possible, before May 1.  
The fee can be paid to our postal cheque  
account No. 7611 415-9.

In August the Swedish weather is usually  
good. In Stockholm you can wear normal city  
clothes and in Jokkmokk sports wear is more  
appropriate.

Stockholm, 1993-03-10

Yours sincerely,

Per Kåks  
Museum Director  
President of ICME



'key-note  
speaker  
heading for  
Jokkmokk'



**Preliminary programme for the ICME annual meeting and visit to Luleå and Jokkmokk August 1993**

■ **Saturday 14/8**  
Arrival Stockholm  
Welcome dinner at the National Museum of Ethnography

■ **Sunday 15/8**  
The National Museum of Ethnography  
The Nordic Museum  
The East Asian Museum

■ **Monday 16/8**  
Skansen open air museum  
Vasa museum

Departure to Luleå  
by night train 17.40 PM

■ **Tuesday 17/8**  
Arrival Luleå 08.16 AM  
The Regional Museum in Luleå  
Bus to Jokkmokk  
On the way visit to the Archaeological Site Museum in Vuollerim

■ **Wednesday 18/8**  
Committee meeting with presentation of papers in the Ajtte Saami Museum

■ **Thursday 19/9**  
Excursion to Saltoluokta  
Visit to Saami settlement  
Spending the night in Saltoluokta

■ **Friday 20/8**  
Return to Stockholm  
by night train 19.40 PM

■ **Saturday 21/8**  
Arrival Stockholm 10.45 AM

Lodging in Stockholm August 14 and 15 at Långholmen hikers' hostel at about SEK 230/night including breakfast.

Lodging in Jokkmokk at the Saami Education Centre at SEK 350/night including breakfast and at Saltoluokta alpine station at SEK 500 (including dinner Thursday 19 and breakfast Friday 20).

SEK 1,100 for the night train Stockholm - Luleå - Stockholm.

Conference fee USD 60.00

**ICME meeting in Leipzig**

Proposed Program of the ICME-Conference on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Museum of Ethnography in Leipzig, Germany (22nd to 27th November 1994).

■ **Tuesday, 22nd November, 1994**  
arrival in Leipzig, registration and informal meeting of participants in the Museum's coffee-shop.

■ **Wednesday, 23rd November**  
9.30 Opening of the ICME-Conference on "Museums and Xenophobia"  
12.30 Lunch-Break  
14.00 Conference continues  
17.00 Conclusion of the conference  
18.00 ICME-Board Meeting (location: Director's office)

■ **Thursday, 24th November**  
Festivity in honour of the 125th anniversary of the Museum of Ethnography in Leipzig.

11.00 Opening ceremony, words of welcome and gratulation.  
Official speaker: Professor Zwerneemann, Hamburg,  
Music on historical instruments: Capella Fidicina,  
Opening of a special exhibition.

18.30 Reception hosted by the Saxonian State Ministry of Science and Arts.

■ **Friday, 25th and Saturday 26th November**  
Excursions to Dresden, Radebeul and Herrnhut (two days) or Halle-Wittenberg (one day only).

■ **Sunday, 27th November**  
Departure.

Detailed information on Hotels and Excursions will follow soon. Papers for the conference on "Museums and Xenophobia" should be announced before the end of December, 1993. Members interested in participating but not able to find sufficient funds are requested to contact Dr. Lothar Stein by the end of August. Address of convenor:

Dr. Lothar Stein  
Museum für Völkerkunde  
P.O.Box 969, 0-7010 Leipzig, Germany  
phone (0341) 2142 216  
fax (0341) 2142 262

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ICME - International Committee for Museums of Ethnology

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Registering form

Annual meeting ICME, Sweden  
August 14-21 1993

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Name .....

Address .....

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Institution .....

Phone .....

Fax .....

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- Interested in attending ICME's Annual Meeting in Sweden
  - Interested but will need an invitation to get funds
  - Would like to present a paper on one of the themes of the meeting:
    - modern indigenous people and the role of museums
    - eco tourism
- 

Signature,

.....

Please return this form before the end of April to:

Per Kåks, Director Folkens Museum  
National Museum of Ethnography, Box 27140, S-10252 Stockholm, Sweden

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Director National Museum of Ethnology  
Box 27140, S-10252  
Stockholm, Sweden

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