



REPORT

OWHC Regional Conference North West European Region

Beemster, Netherlands, 12th – 14th
September 2012



Successful Regional Conference of the OWHC Regional Secretariat North West Europe in Beemster, Netherlands

From the 12th to the 14th of September the OWHC Regional Secretariat North West Europe invited the Region s member cities and other interested experts to the Regional Conference in Beemster, Netherlands.

The Droogmakerij De Beemster (Beemster Polder), dating from the early 17th century, was one of the largest reclaimed landareas in the Netherlands. It has preserved intact its well-ordered landscape of fields, roads, canals, dykes and settlements, laid out in accordance with the principles of classical and Renaissance planning. Beemster was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 1999 and celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2012. In September Beemster was a perfect host for the participants of the Regional Conference.



Impression from the „ppolderplaatje“ in Beemster

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Start of the Conference and some Changes

Beemster s Mayor Harry Brinkman welcomed the participants and gave a short outline about the upcoming schedule. Then the Mayor of Regensburg Hans Schaidinger expressed his thank for the support from Beemster and OWHC over the last months, which made the start of the new Secretariat much easier.

He also introduced the new OWHC exhibition and the brochure to the participants as accomplished parts of the working program. OWHC Secretary General Denis Ricard had the sad duty to tribute Siri Myrvoll, former Regional Coordinator, who passed away last year. He also stressed the important role Siri Myrvoll played by developing and enhancing the influence and structures of OWHC. In the afternoon Beemster itself was introduced to the participants by Han Hefting. He gave a lively and informative lecture about the Beemster Polder and its history as well as about the challenges this Heritage site is facing nowadays.



Welcome addresses by the Mayor of Beemster Harry Brinkman, Mayor of Regensburg Hans Schaidinger and OWHC Secretary General Denis Ricard. © Municipality of Beemster

Delegates Meeting

After this, all member cities in good standing were invited to join the Region's Delegates Meeting. During the meeting Regensburg presented the current status of the working programme, reported the number of cities in good standing and announced that the OWHC exhibition will be available for all member cities, who want to show it. Also Denis Ricard made important announcements referring to the upcoming election of the board and the Conference in Oaxaca in 2013. Some of the participants used the Delegates Meeting for giving a first feedback about the conference, the exhibition and the OWHC brochure.



Key-Note Speaker Birgitta Ringbeck about „Managementplans“ and a lively discussion after the lectures. © Municipality of Beemster

Lectures and Discussions

The main focus of the Regional Conference though was the lectures and the discussions which resulted from the controversial subjects. Key Speaker Birgitta Ringbeck started with an outline of the thesis, that the guidelines for Management plans should be revised to have better instruments dealing with the heritage sites. Tony Crouch from Bath stressed in his lecture the need for consistency in Management Plans and that the background of Management plans should be easier to communicate, which would require also more transparency.

Another issue Ewa Nekanda Trepka from Warsaw brought up: the heritage site must be accessible for interested people and not all facilities of the site can improved at the same time. After this Christine Koretzky from Lübeck provided an important overview and characterization of the legal basis of Management Plans. Also the instruments and local regulations were mentioned. Then the role of advisory bodies was discussed lively.

Urban Landscapes and Outstanding Universal Value

Marie-Noël Tournoux (UNESCO) introduced the thematic field of the case study project and the concept of historical urban landscapes, to ensure identification with and safeguarding of the built heritage. Still, the definitions concerning historic urban landscapes are not quite clear for the local level. The question, how management can be a shared responsibility was discussed as well.

Still there were some comments on the duration of collecting the case studies from the member cities. The longer the collection takes, the less will be the benefit for the cities due to a natural lack of actuality. Will Garrett from Edinburg also had some remarks upon Outstanding Universal Values and the management strategies of a world heritage site. Management plans are key documents of great value, but only if they are clear and easy to implement.



Tony Crouch from Bath and Regina Wiala-Zimm from Vienna performing „Pecha Kucha“
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Special: Heritage Pecha Kucha and excursions

Six of the participating cities decided to take part in the “Heritage Pecha Kucha”. The background of this part of the schedule is a presentation methodology in which 20 PowerPoint slides are shown for 20 seconds each. The presented topic should be related to the topics discussed during the conference. The results were very entertaining and convincing though it was of course an experiment. But it was an experience which was felt to be very relaxing after lots of discussion and lectures.



Impressions from the landscape around Beemster



© Municipality of Beemster

And of course the venue itself contributed a lot to the very good atmosphere of the conference. Two excursions completed the program: a bus guided bus tour through the world heritage site of Beemster and a tour through the Fort bij Spijkerboor.

Get in contact

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