



Demeures historiques-musées
Historic House Museums
Residencias históricas-museos

Annual Report of the Chair

October 2014 – September 2015

This report covers the period between the annual conference in Compiègne, France in October 2014 to the annual conference in Mexico City in October 2015.

1. Conferences

Compiègne, France, 7th-11th October 2014 – *Authenticity in Conservation, in historic house museums and palace-museums*

The conference contributed to the debate on authenticity in the conservation of historic house museums and palaces, discussing how the idea has changed over time and disseminating this through publishing the papers. It was organised jointly by DEMHIST, the Association of European Royal Residences (ARRE) and the Palais de Compiègne.

The programme lasted five days: two conference days at the Palace of Compiègne on 7th and 9th October and three days visiting some of the most emblematic residences of the Ile-de-France region on 8th, 10th and 11th October. Speakers at the conference were international specialists, researchers, practitioners and professionals in the field. Four workshops provided a forum for discussion on specific subjects.

The exclusive visits included the former royal residences of Fontainebleau and Versailles; the Duke of Aumale's castle in Chantilly and the Cahen d'Anvers castle in Champs-sur-Marne; the Château de Pierrefonds (restored by Viollet-Le-Duc for Napoleon III) and the privately-owned château du Fayel.

Mexico City, Mexico, 19th-21st October 2015 – *The Legacy of House Museums: Prompting Dialogue across Generations*

Organised by the Mexican Group of DEMHIST, this conference looks at the role that house museums play as connectors to history and places where the roots of communities

are revealed. It asks the questions about how these legacies are encouraged, organised and used to the benefit of society, through four themes:

- Why leave a legacy? What motivates a person, social group or an institution to bequeath their estate?
- What are the different forms of legal structure that give rise to the legacies of house museums?
- Benefits that legacies bring to society and their appropriation by the community.
- Challenges to the significance of legacies to future generations.

Mexican institutions will be visited as part of the programme and there will be a day of optional tours after the conference.

The organising committee comprises:

Lourdes Monges (Fundación Cultural Antonio Hagenbeck y de la Lama), Catalina Corcuera (Casa Luís Barragán), Lucía Sáenz (Centro Cultural Isidro Fabela. Museo Casa del Risco), Luis Rius Caso (Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo), Ma. Carmen Férrez (Museo Casa del Poeta), Carlos Phillips Olmedo (Museo Dolores Olmedo), Hilda Trujillo (Museo Frida Kahlo), Lorenza del Río (Museo Casa de Carranza), Hist. Salvador Rueda (Museo Nacional de Historia. Castillo de Chapultepec), Arq. José Ramón San Cristóbal Larrea (Dirección General de Promoción Cultural, Obra Pública y Acervo Patrimonial, SHCP)

In addition there is a logistics group and an academic panel.

Milan, Italy, 2016

24th General Conference of ICOM will be held in Milan 3rd -9th July 2016, examining the relationship between museums and cultural landscapes. This theme will be explored through two questions:

1. To what extent should museums, especially those whose collections are linked to their locations, take the role of interpretation centres for the place and the community they belong to?
2. How can museums disseminate the knowledge of the cultural heritage conserved both inside and outside their walls?

The DEMHIST conference will explore aspects of this related to house museums and the call for papers will be issued shortly. The conference is being organised by Board member Gian Luca Kannes, with Rosanna Pavoni and the Italian national group.

Annual conference 2017

The 2017 conference will return to the theme of how to interpret house museums and engage visitors, communities and learners with the stories that they tell. We hope that this will be in collaboration with ICOM's Committee for Education and Cultural Action

(CECA), which is one of the oldest International Committees of ICOM with over 1,000 members coming from about 85 countries. Currently we are exploring whether this will take place in Helsinki, Finland.

The DEMHIST Board elections will take place during this conference and I will be interested to hear of any colleagues who may be interested in joining the Board at this time.

2. Training Courses for professionals

Training course in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1st-12th September 2015

DEMHIST held its first ever training course for professional this year, hosted by the State of Sao Paulo, in Brazil and organised by DEMHIST Board vice-Chair Ana Cristina Carvalho. The course aimed to share the knowledge and experience of experts from around the world with new and young Brazilian professionals working in the field of museums about the particular challenges and practices associated with historic house museums. The course covered subjects as diverse as museological concepts, collections management, conservation, presentation and interpretation, visitor audiences, community engagement, education and architecture. We hope that bringing together professionals in this way will help to develop a body of excellence in this field of museum practice and form networks that will create legacies for the future.

Future training courses

We hope to organise further training courses and we are in discussion with ICOM about using the training centre in Beijing during 2017.

We want to encourage other training opportunities for DEMHIST members and welcome proposals from national groups to organise short events or longer courses.

3. National DEMHIST Groups

There are now 5 national groups dedicated to house museums, which are providing important forums for discussion and events for members within their regions.

- The Portuguese National Group met in Tormes on the 23rd March 2015 to discuss Documentation in Historic House Museums.
- The Italian National Group met in Biella, on 7th – 8th November 2014 to discuss the theme for the Milan conference (Cultural Landscapes) and on 16th October 2015 in Milan to discuss House Museums' Kitchens.

- The Brazilian National Group met on the 31st August 2015 in São Paulo.
- A Turkish National Group was established in Ankara 26th June 2015.
- The Mexican National Group has met on numerous occasions to plan the DEMHIST annual conference in Mexico City.

Affiliated events

I would like to remind all members that the annual conferences do not need to be the only events held by DEMHIST. National working groups can propose and organise conferences, seminars and meetings on themes of their choice within their own country or regionally. Such events can cover subjects of particular relevance to a region, and be more practical in terms of travel and cost. The Executive Board has agreed some simple guidance about events that qualify as DEMHIST activities and can therefore be affiliated to the international committee and to ICOM. A small budget is available to support some of these events at the discretion of the Board.

4. The General Assembly 2014

DEMHIST held its General Assembly at the Palais de Compiègne on 9th October 2014.

The meeting discussed the reports of the Chair and the Secretary-Treasurer and approved the budget for 2015. It also discussed the conference being held in Compiègne at the same time, the theme for the conference in Mexico and reports from the national groups. The General Assembly agreed to increase the number of Board members from 9 to 11 with immediate effect.

Board elections were held and the following members were elected for a period of three years: John Barnes, Ann Scheid, Ana Cristina Carvalho, Gianluca Kannes, Carmen Jiménez Sanz, Luc Vanackere, Aysen Savas, Ulla Stromberg, Minerva Keltanen, Lourdes Monges, Elsa Rodrigues.

5. DEMHIST Board

The Board has met three times: in Turin, Italy in November 2014, in Paris, France in June 2015 and before the DEMHIST conference in Mexico city in October 2015

The Board aims to increase the level of activity carried out by DEMHIST and each member will take responsibility for some aspect of the work. Currently this includes:

Conference arrangements for Mexico 2015, Italy 2016 and Finland (tbc) 2017
 Training programmes in Brazil 2015 and China 2017

Publications of conference proceedings Compiegne 2014 and Mexico 2015-10-13
National Groups in Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Mexico and Turkey
Communications with members and creating a new website

6. Website

We had intended to have our new website go 'live' this autumn. However, this has been delayed and we now anticipate it happening by the end of 2015. Once the platform is established we will be looking for colleagues willing to maintain a vibrant messaging area.

7. Secretary Treasurer

The DEMHIST Secretary Treasure, Elsa Rodrigues, has prepared a separate report on her activities. DEMHIST members will know and appreciate the communication that they receive from Elsa and the many individual queries that she answers. This requires a lot of hard work and personal commitment, which we greatly value. Once again, I am very grateful to her for her hard work in administering the International Committee on our behalf.

John Barnes
Chair of DEMHIST
October 2015