



Demeures historiques-musées  
Historic House Museums  
Residencias históricas-museos

## **Annual Report of the Chair**

**November 2015 – June 2016**

This report covers the period between the annual conference in Mexico City in October 2015 to the ICOM Triennial in Milan at the beginning of July 2016, a period of 8 months.

### **1. Conferences**

Mexico City, Mexico, 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> October 2015 – *The Legacy of House Museums: Promoting Dialogue across Generations*

Organised by the Mexican Group of DEMHIST, this conference looked at the role that house museums play as connectors to history and places where the roots of communities are revealed. It asked 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

Keynote lectures were provided by:

- Luis Rius Caso
- Rosanna Pavoni
- José Luis Pérez Arredondo
- Cándida Fernández Baños

17 papers were presented: 13 of which were from international speakers and 4 from Mexican nationals.

During the three-day conference there were visits to:

Museo Dolores Olmeda  
Casa Frida Kahlo  
Casa de Carranza  
Casa del Poeta  
Casa Recinto Homenaje a Benito Juarez  
Museo de Historia Castillo de Chapultepec  
Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo  
Casa Luis Barragán  
Casa de la Bola

In addition, there was an optional day of visits post conference.

Milan, Italy, 4<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016 – *Historic Houses and the Interpretation of the Cultural, Social and Urban Landscape*

The 24th General Conference of ICOM is being held in Milan 3<sup>rd</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> July 2016, examining the relationship between museums and cultural landscapes.

The DEMHIST conference is focussing on the potential of historic house museums to describe 'human' landscapes. Historic houses can illustrate cultural and economic change, showing how developments in society contributed to creating and modelling the environment as we perceive it. Milan has been a major centre for the booming development of Italian industry and provides an excellent environment for the study of historic houses as a means of reading urban change, of exploring modernity together with the sense of the past, forged in the changes in industry, commerce, and society. We hope to hear insights into the central role that historic house museums play as witnesses to all this.

The conference is being organised by Board member Gianluca Kannes, with Rosanna Pavoni and the Italian National Group. Fondazione Pini is our key partner organisation in Milan and many institutions are opening their doors to provide the programme of visits.

#### Annual conference 2017

The 2017 conference will return to the theme of how to engage the public with house museums to foster enjoyment, discovery and learning. It 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. Last year we reported that we were exploring whether this would take place in Helsinki, Finland but, unfortunately, this has not proved possible. The DEMHIST

Board will discuss options prior to the conference in Milan and I will update the General Assembly verbally.

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**

### Next training course in Mexico, 2017

DEMHIST held its first ever training course for professional in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in September 2015. 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. It was a great success and we learned much that will assist us in future courses.

Our colleagues in Mexico, who organised such a successful conference last October, have offered to run DEMHIST's second training course in 2017. We will update the General Assembly verbally.

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 in a future year.

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**

A key part of the DEMHIST strategy is to encourage and support national groups in order to provide more easily accessible activities that are relevant to members in those locations, and to increase membership. Our **National Groups** continue to grow in strength and, last year, we saw the creation of a new group in Turkey. Activities included:

## Italy

The Italian National Group organised a conference at the Fondazione Adolfo Pini in Milan on 16th October on the subject of museological strategies for presenting historic kitchens. It was well attended by 60-70 delegates from key institutions from around Italy.

Representatives attended the ICOM Triennial planning meeting in Brescia 27th-29th November.

The Group also met twice in Florence during the year to discuss matters of general interest to members.

The National Group is also supporting the conference in Milan as part of the ICOM Triennial 2016.

## Portugal

The Portuguese National Group had its 7th meeting on 19th February 2016 in Évora at Eugénio de Almeida Foundation to discuss the theme "Tourism, Inclusion, Information". 54 people attended the meeting, included some students from Évora University. There was a high quality of speakers and finished with a guided tour of São Miguel Palace that was opened to the public two years ago. On the 20th February an optional tour was provided to Vila Viçosa Palace, attended by 25 people led by the Director Maria de Jesus Monge, and previous DEMHIST Board member.

## Brazil

The Group played a key role in designing and organising the training course for historic house museums in Brazil in September.

## Mexico

The Mexican National Group organised the DEMHIST annual conference in Mexico City in October.

## Turkey

A Turkish National Group was established at a symposium on 26th June in Ankara, at the Erimtan Museum, led by DEMHIST Board Member Aysen Savas.

The Group held its second symposium on 7th December 2015 at the Istanbul Research Institute/Pera Museum, with a growing membership. Among other things, they discussed bringing the Turkish experience to the Triennial conferences in Milan in 2016.

The third symposium was on 7th June 2016 at Sait Faik Abasıyanık Museum, in Istanbul, where there was a presentation about the ICOM Triennial in Milan and a discussion about holding a future DEMHIST board meeting in Turkey. Also on the agenda was:

- creating an extended contact list for Authors Home Museum movement.
- inviting Museology Master and PhD students and teachers to participate
- arranging a symposium of Author's Houses Museum 23th of June, 2017.
- creating a mailing list
- holding the next meeting in Bursa City Museum in November 2016

#### 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 DEMHIST 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 Jeanne Watson bursary for young professionals**

I am delighted to tell you that Bill Watson has made a generous donation of 6,513.24 Euros to DEMHIST for a bursary for young professionals in the name of his wife, Jeanne Watson, who died last year. For the past twenty years Jeanne Watson was a well-known personality within the ICOM Community. She was one of the driving forces in advocating a separate international committee for historic house museums (DEMHIST). She was active in the campaign which led to the recognition of DEMHIST as a full ICOM International Committee. In 1999, she became a founding Councillor of the Executive Board of DEMHIST. From that time to 2012, Jeanne has been indefatigable in promoting the growth of DEMHIST and the success of its annual conferences. She capped her extensive service to DEMHIST by serving two terms as the Committee's Vice-Chair.

The DEMHIST Board will discuss the purpose and criteria for the bursary at its meeting leading up to the Triennial and we will update the General Assembly verbally.

#### **5. The General Assembly 2015**

DEMHIST held its General Assembly at Museo Casa de la Bola in Mexico City on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

The meeting discussed the reports of the Chair and the Secretary-Treasurer and approved the budget for 2016. It also discussed the 1<sup>st</sup> training course for professional that had just been held in Sao Paulo, the conference that had just completed in Mexico, the theme for the conference in Milan 2016 and reports from the national groups. During the General Assembly a project was proposed to create a lexicon of house museum practice in the three languages of ICOM.

## **6. DEMHIST Board**

The Board has met in Paris in April 2016 and before the ICOM Triennial in Milan in July 2016.

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 Milan 2016 and the conference in 2017.

The training programme in Mexico in 2017.

Publications of conference proceedings Compiegne 2014 and Mexico 2015.

National Groups in Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Mexico and Turkey.

Communications with members and creating a new website.

## **7. Website**

We apologise that the long-awaited new website has not yet launched. It is now set up and requires populating with up-to-date information. We are currently surveying members about their preferences for social media and other communications, which will become incorporated into the website.

## **8. 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

June 2016