



Open-Air Museums in Europe

Jiří Langer

Translated by Vladimír Klíma

This book deals with 636 open-air museums in 31 European countries, and presents various details concerning the evolution of European vernacular architecture and the modern approach to open-air museums reconstructing old ways of living in the countryside. The publication has many illustrations and also contains 2339 black-and-white photos. In addition to scholars and the general reader, the book will also be of interest to open-air museums, as it provides insights into attracting visitors to such institutions.

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An example of a catalog of outdoor museums

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Preface for the first (Czech) edition

Dr Adelhart Zippelius, the founder of the German Rhine (Kommern) open-air museum, published his handbook of European open-air museums in 1974. It contains a complete list of the then existing European open-air museums, totalling 167. Dr Jerzy Czajkowski, for many years the head of the Sanok Museum in southeastern Poland, wrote the following book adding many more museums. More than 20 years have passed and in the meantime naturally, some museums have grown and more new museums were set up. Our colleagues from the European museums have discussed the need for a new survey. But none of these plans have so far been carried out. Now we cheerfully welcome Dr Jiří Langer's work. His book fills up the gap for those who take an interest in the history of culture; this will primarily serve our colleagues in Europe

Jiří Langer knows European open-air museums very well. He gathered information partly during his research and numerous consultations with his colleagues, and partly thanks to his activities with the Association of European Open-Air Museums. He has kept personal contacts, contributing to the heart-felt atmosphere surrounding our colleagues in various European countries. One often feels that the same problems face museums in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Northern Ireland or Sweden. Their common solutions increase mutual understanding and friendly inter-relations, which all of us appreciate.

In September 1990, Jaroslav Štika and Jiří Langer hosted a big conference attended by nearly 100 participants from European open-air museums. The beautiful and well-kept Wallachian Open-air Museum received, delighted and impressed us. Museums throughout Europe are pleased to co-operate with Czech colleagues from Rožnov pod Radhoštěm.

The Skansen in Stockholm, the oldest open-air museum in Europe was founded and opened to the public by Artur Hazelius in 1891. The new improvements meant that the buildings were not moved for protection and preservation but chiefly in order to be shown to the public for instructive purposes, if I am to use the words of the former director of the Skansen, Gösta Berg. Hazelius understood that industrialisation would strongly transform life in the countryside as well as in towns. The expression *skansen* is now used synonymously in some languages with open-air museums. *Skans* in Swedish means an old place of defence or a fortress. A fortress such as this stood on the top of the hill where Artur Hazelius established his open-air museum. He intended to preserve the old farming cultural legacy and to open it to visitors. The idea inspired his followers and spread all over the

Preface for the first (Czech) edition

world. Nowadays, the only place this format has not been accepted is South America.

Travelling people can disseminate this idea and the brothers Alois Jaroněk and Bohumír Jaroněk from Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, who visited open-air museums in Århus (Denmark) and Oslo (Norway), started their work to preserve threatened buildings in their region upon their return home.

Many open-air museums attract tourists in their respective countries. Visitors can imagine or dream an illusion of people's past lives. Open-air museums offer a general view and enable the public to understand better the culture and history of a country or a region. Open-air museums have been able to develop their freedom much more easily than more science-based institutions.

Jiří Langer's knowledge and style form the basis of this book that is becoming an extensive and valuable guide for tourists with cultural interests and will assist cooperation between European museums.

*Gunnar Elfström, director of the Swedish
open-air museum Gamla Linköping,
President of the Association of European
open-air museums in 1993–1997.*

In June 2011, Jiří Langer and Karel Kuča were awarded *European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards* in Amsterdam for their book about wooden churches and bell towers in Europe (2009) and in October 2019, they were awarded *the Jože Plečnik Prize* in the Czech Republic for their lifelong conservation activities.

Author's preface

At first, I tried to make drawings of the scenery in order to better recognise villages and their architecture. Then I studied it from the viewpoint of history, sociology and ethnography. In my younger days, I was fond of walking in the mountains, and I drew everything I liked. I became acquainted with villagers. When I started my work in museums, I participated (from 1960) in designing, planning and building open-air museums in the Czech lands and Slovakia. I travelled in order to see them whenever and wherever I could, mostly during my holidays, and observed their relative position among Czech museums. I have seen about 145 open-air museums, many of them several times, surveyed their exhibits and asked my colleagues to inform me about their concept and operation.

As the title suggests, this book deals with the museums in which we move around without having a roof over our heads. Their settings were deliberately reconstructed to demonstrate historical lifestyles which characterised a particular region. Such museums show how people lived, especially their dwellings, what they consumed and longed for, what made them happy or sad and how they transformed the surrounding countryside.

Open-air museums differ from one another as they did not always develop for the same purpose. I cannot classify them by any universal criteria; each country formed its own structure and in some countries, there are not only great national or regional institutions but also small museums, private or village ones, set up by and belonging to local supporters, or major museums established thanks to the donations or associations subsidised by local, district or regional councils but also by the government. Nordic countries especially have many small museums, which are still developing and deteriorating or stagnating. Consequently, data concerning them can be neither complete nor exact. Even addresses of many such museums are almost unknown. But in some cases, they attract more attention than the village itself. Associations set them up not only to present the regional culture and history of past generations of local families but also for one simple reason: their members need a place where they can meet and talk during the long winter nights.

Present guidebooks enable us to trace the cultural relations of Low Germany and the Netherlands, Denmark and the coast of Poland up to the eastern Baltic countries of Norway, Sweden, Finland and northern Russia, as well as countries lying below the Alps and the Carpathians.

Curiously enough, southern Europe has not yet established open-air museums. Why? Probably because the Mediterranean did not develop

Author's Preface

villages and farmsteads similar to ours. The local population perceived culture as one whole that was not divided according to the privileges of social classes or residences. Their village houses can be classified as town ones. Building materials perhaps caused restrictions as masonry houses could not be transferred to other places for example. This method was so difficult that it could be applied only to the buildings that were the culmination of many artistic styles and were transferred only if their existence was seriously threatened at their original site. Even central and north European museums avoided brick-built buildings for a long time as wooden houses were more easily taken to pieces and reassembled elsewhere.

For many years I planned to write a book presenting the most important European museums of this kind. At last, I managed to carry out my long-



Author's Preface

-time intention thanks to the initiative of Věra Kučová and Karel Kuča and the interest of Baset Publishing House – but to a larger extent than I had imagined. The book aims to capture all museums in Europe if possible. It would have been hard to make a list of open-air museums which come close to their complete enumeration (roughly 4000). These museums, like any living organisms, arise, develop or, unfortunately, decay and disappear. Compromising, I used my knowledge, special literature, museum leaflets and consultations with my friends and foreign colleagues. With so many museums, one cannot find out the present-day condition of all museums between Iceland and the Ural, between the Norwegian northern cape and the Balkans. You may, therefore, see much more in some of the museums than this guidebook promises.

New facts kept enriching my text and I found it difficult to finish writing this book. It would never have been complete without the assistance of numerous colleagues. A single man cannot gather so much information from such vast territories. I wish to remember my friends here from distant museums who helped me study the cultures of their own countries, particularly the late Christopher Zeuner and Michael Thomas from England, Eurwyn William from Wales, Alan Gailey from Northern Ireland, Heino Wessel Hansen, Liese Andersen, Finn G. Nielsen and their colleagues from Denmark, Mats Janson, Gunnar Elfström, Kersti Björklef and Lena Larsén from Sweden, Jakob Agotnes, Ase Tömdel and Ola Setter from Norway, Stefan Baumeier, Carl Ingwer Johansen and Konrad Bedal from Germany, Ol'ga Sevan from Russia, Jurij Hoško from Ukraine, Paul Niedermaier and Mihai Dancuș from Romania, Endre Füzes and Miklos Cseri from Hungary and many others.

I wish to thank Karel Kuča for his valuable editorial advice and many photos, Milena Habustová and Luděk Habusta for helping me acquire and elaborate data, Helena Bočková for her comments relating to southeastern Europe and all my friends who offered me minor data (as these informed the whole) and who sent me photos taken during their journeys: Vanda Jiříková, František Ledvinka, Alena Lenoč, Tomáš Lenoč, Bedřich Příkryl, Ol'ga Sevan, Daniel Drápala, Zdeněk Cvikl, Jozef Turzo, Tomáš Vašut, Heinovi Wessel Hansenovi, his wife Liese Andersen, Zuzana Syrová, Jiří Woitsch, Miroslav Sopoliga and Olena Krušyn'ska.

My warmest thanks rightly belong to my wife Jaroslava Langerová, who accompanied me on my travels. I could never have written this book without her understanding.

Jiří Langer

CATALOGUE OF OPEN-AIR MUSEUMS IN EUROPE

AUSTRIA



Aspern an der Zaya (A-1)

*Lower Austria, A-2151, Museum für Urgeschichte des landes
Niederösterreich mit urgeschichtlichem Freilichtmuseum*

The museum was set up in 1963 and covers 1.8 ha in the chateau park. It was opened in 1970. 11 prehistoric buildings were reconstructed on the sightseeing route of the museum. From the yard on our right, we can see an oval mammoth hunters' hut made of a wickerwork construction with two fireplaces [1], a reindeer hunters' tent, a longhouse dating from the Neolithic Age [2], farming buildings from the early bronze period [3], a cremation field and two graves from the mid-bronze period at the back near the fence, a house with a frame construction filled with unhewn boards between the posts standing on two timber grating beams from the Late Neolithic Age [4], dwellings and baking ovens dating from the early iron period [5], a house from the late iron period, a Celtic smithy and a space for temporary exhibits. Buildings were reconstructed according to the documentation from the richest digging sites not only in Austria but also in Bohemia and Germany.

A Neolithic longhouse with a post construction and a ridge purlin support of the truss is interesting. The roof lying on the ridge purlin is also supported by two rows of poles. It rests on low periphery walls whose posts form a frame with hazel wickerwork covered with a thick layer of clay. The interior space (about 6 m by 18 m) is divided into a storeroom, a living room with a fireplace in the middle and a farming area for stabling animals. The house was used by two or three families. A log-built construction characterises

	border-line of museum		water-driven facility
	border-line of its partial area		Dutch-type windmill
	main entrance		ram-type windmill
	water flows and sheets		cock-type windmill
	buildings in museum		recent wind-driven facility
	western-rite church		sweep well
	eastern-rite tserkva	P	parking
	chapel	T	lavatory
	graveyard	B	refreshment
	cross	R	pub
		D	administration (director's office)
		A	amphitheatre
		V	exhibitions
		27	building number (cf. the text)



Celtic dwellings [6] (L).



Early Bronze Age [3] (L).



Early Iron Age [5] (L).



Neolithic long house: cleft post [2] (L).

the early iron period in central Europe [5]. There is a small entrance space added to a large living room with a fireplace that is partly dug out of the earth. The Celtic smithy has a round ground floor plan restricted by stone-built walls but another dwelling from the same period is rectangular and partly earth-dug, with low frame walls built of small sticks, a fireplace in the middle and a baking oven in the corner. Wattle-covered roofs and an entrance with short inside-slanting supports dominate the view from outside [6]. Only reconstructions of prehistoric buildings enable us to check the influence of construction principles and to compare their application both in the geographical and historical occurrence of the remains.

Bad Tatzmannsdorf (A-2)

Burgenland, A-7431, Freilichtmuseum Bad Tatzmannsdorf

The museum originated in 1963 in a sloping orchard and meadow and covers 3 ha. It aims to show the diversity of the regional culture of Burgenland (before 1918 it was a part of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy) with Croatian, Hungarian, Slovenian and Romany minorities. The area was opened in 1972. It contains 24 buildings and a few small outbuildings.

The entrance area is occupied by a three-sided brick-built farmstead with a passage gate between the granary and the gable wall of a house dating from 1810. It has a covered walkway along with the living and farming areas with a crosswise added barn. The house and the yard (with a dovecote) serves guests. A log-built smithy with a horseshoeing cage can be seen on the other side of the road.

Two farmers' houses, a village belfry, a press-house and the wine cellars date from the 18th century. A unique three-unit house (a smoke living room with a smoke baking oven, an entrance space and an additional cowshed) came from Ehrendorf, a village inhabited by the Croatian minority [2]. Its roof is half-hipped and has an advanced wickerwork gable. The other house [1], dated 1784, has a log-built kitchen-entrance space between the two living rooms, supporting a hipped roof. A separate baking oven stands in the yard. Log-built constructions (houses and granaries) have hewn, mostly oakwood, beams that are clay-plastered and painted white. The barn, dating



House – 1784 [1] (KK).



Pantry (KK).



Zuberbach: fruit-drying kiln replica – 1829 (KK).



Allersgraben: village belfry – second half of 18th century [3] (KK).



Unterschützen: granary – 1794 (KK).

from 1829, has a hazel-work frame construction. A framed village belfry dating from the 18th century, with two posts, was also transferred from a village inhabited by the Croats. Separate fruit chambers, cellars, a large grape-press for wine and a beehive characterise the types of local farmers' produce.

Freistadt (A-3)

Upper Austria, A-4240, **Mühlviertel Museumstrasse**, separate buildings operating as museums stand in their original places

Freistadt-Freiwald has a water-driven grain mill, a sawmill, an ironworks' hammer mill and historic workshops making carriages, furniture, linen and

glass. They are mostly brick-built buildings with water-driven wooden mechanisms and a half-hipped roof sheltering the drying spaces and stores.

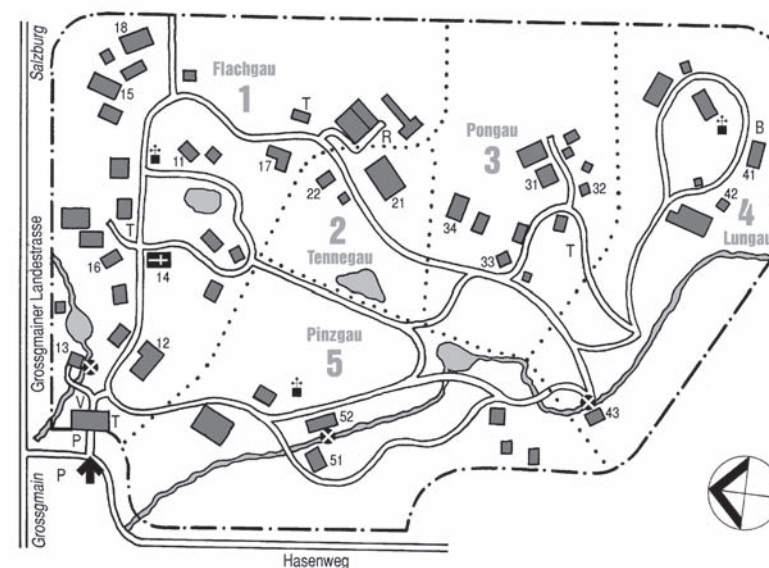
Hellmonsödt-Pelemborg (A-4202), which opened in 1970, has a four-sided brick-built farmstead No. 2 (founded in 1325) with a two-storey granary with facades dating from 1750.

Auberg (A-4170). Farmstead No. 19 (Unterkageler) was founded in 1378 and includes a rare house dating from 1678. Its original smoke living room (with a hole over two small windows under the gable) is next to a living chamber on one side and a lengthways passageway on the other side. The enclosed farmstead includes cowsheds, a barn, a horse-powered mill in a separate building, a drying house, a granary and a servants' dwelling house.

Grossgmain (A-4)

Salzburg, A-5084, **Salzburger Freilichtmuseum, Hasenweg**

The museum was opened in 1974 thanks to the initiative of Kurt Conrad and covers 45 ha on sloping alpine forested foothills (Mount Untersberg is 1853 m above sea level) next to a nature reserve. The concept for the museum is to divide the area by regions as follows: section 1 is a hamlet from the Flachgau northern farming region (around Salzburg) with 30 buildings. The track from this then turns right at its upper end into forest clearings





Dorfbeuern: house – 1836 [16] (SY).

characteristic of Alpine cattle grazing. Section 2 includes a farmstead with four buildings from the Tennegau region (south of Salzburg). Section 3 is behind it on a slope containing 12 buildings from Pongau (at the centre of southern Salzkammer). The more elevated section 4 contains 12 seasonal Alpine buildings from the Lungau region (southeastern Salzkammer). On the way back to the entrance to the museum, section 5 can be seen which has five buildings from Pinzgau (southwestern Salzkammer). The original intention was to transfer just 50 buildings but it was extended: 66 were brought there in 2002.

All buildings are log-built with hewn beams. The living areas are brick-built only in the newer and wealthier farmsteads. This was required by the anti-fire laws in the second half of the 18th century. The first floor had to be brick-built by the 19th century. Most of the buildings have a wide floor plan, an entrance in the gable wall and living rooms around the entrance space that leads to the kitchen space under a wide-open chimney. Northern regions are clearly more farming-orientated and usually have a barn threshing floor and large cowsheds with a hayloft behind the living area. The essential rooms are on the ground floor, whereas the first floor mostly has small living quarters. The more significant rooms are closer to the gable wall. Galleries with cordons are richly decorated with woodcarvings and paintings [16], doubled or tripled arranged and put on top of one another. They have advanced low gabled roofs of an Alpine type construction (shingles loaded



Pongau region: house [31] (L).

with stones). Out of the 21 dwellings, four date from the 16th century, five from the 17th century, [12] [15] [21], seven from the 18th century and five from the 19th century. A rare unity smokehouse constructed in Helming [11] dating from the 16th century (section 1, on the right) has a living (originally smoke living) room where gap holes in the lower row serve instead of windows and have holes for the escaping smoke between them in the upper row. A baking oven was rebuilt in the 17th century. As a result, its mouth is directed to the entrance space with a hearth and over it is a wooden cap with wickerwork and earthwork. In the living room, a prismatic brick-built stove with saucer-shaped tiles was added to the baking oven body. The building is a remarkably high log-built construction with upper storey chambers. At the start of the hamlet, there is an old brick-built house dating from the 19th century which contains an old grocer's [16] (still used for shopping). A small brewery [17] dating from 1889 (with a 12hl batch) stands at the end of the forest near the pub.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 have characteristic complex farmsteads with several buildings used for farming from higher up in the mountains. Section 3 includes such a farmstead in front of a unique house [31] from 1615 (positioned parallel to the cowsheds from 1614, a granary [32] on a yard terrace from 1602, a baking oven and a big, covered tub used for cabbage fermentation). Its two-storeyed log-built construction still has the gap holes that were in the main living rooms that were then enlarged and made into



Lungau region: water-mill [43] (L).

glass windows in the 18th century. A carriage shed has been added on one side with chambers and pantries on the upper storey. A roof-belfry is on the ridge of the roof near the back gable over the living room, opposite the yard. A granary [33] dating from 1585 stands below a farmstead by the road. A two-storeyed house of a tithed farmer is displayed in a nearby forest. The centre of the house was constructed in Buchberg in 1533.

A large chalet house [41] in section 4 (serving refreshments) is a double-pile three-unit with gap holes in its living room, the higher up ones were used for escaping smoke. A gabled board-covered roof is of a log-built construction. A two-storeyed brick-built granary [42] dates from 1687 (the inscription is amidst rich frescos on the facade) and stands on St Michael's farmstead near a tall brick-built house dating from 1702–1816.

The museum also includes a poor cottager's house [51] from 1599 (section 5). A smoke living room, a small entrance passage and a chamber are from the same era. The rear area dates from the 17th century and has a large living room with ventilation for smoke, and sliding shutters. A small kitchen with a fireplace surrounded by stones under a wooden chimney sits behind an entrance space in the middle of the house. Two watermills [13], [43], a sawmill [52], a smithy, a chapel [14], smaller chapels and Christian type crosses near roads or crossroads and a flax-drying building (flax is used for the production of linen canvas) can be seen in addition.

Kramsach (A-5)

Tyrol, A-6233 Kramsach-Moosen, *Museum Tiroler Bauernhöfe*, Angerberg 5a

The museum originated in 1974 thanks to the initiative of Heinz Mantel who transferred 15 farmsteads from the northern, eastern and southern regions. He added a grain mill, a sawmill, a horse-powered mill, a school building, two chapels and buildings to represent farming and social life. A sightseeing route leads us to a rectangular shape of undulating land. Left from the entrance, we can see farmsteads (section 1) from the southern, southeastern and northeastern regions. Section 2 includes farmsteads from the southern, southeastern and northeastern regions and mid-Austrian Tyrol. Section 3 lies on a brook between two ponds with a grain mill [31], a sawmill [32], a stamp mill [33] and a smithy [34] producing nails. In Section 4, a hamlet from the eastern region has not been completed yet.

Thirteen unique, primarily cattle-breeding, unity farmsteads include houses and cowsheds under a common roof and includes many ancient buildings (or their basic parts): four from the 16th century, seven from the 17th century, one from the 19th century and another very old but hitherto undated building. The oldest dating inscriptions are on the ridge purlins of the low trusses (1544) on a two-storeyed granary with a gallery [11] from Söll (in the northeast), a cowshed [12] from Weissach dating from 1560, and a house from Wildschönau [13] dating from 1625.

