

HORSES — & — HERITAGE

Activities 2019

During the first three months of the year I was occupied with leading the Welcome Centre for international guest researchers at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, but from April on I had more time for Horses&Heritage activities.

April

The hippological year began with a **journey to Portugal**. Since long time a visit was due at the **National Stud Alter do Chão** and the carriage museum of Lisbon had been recommended by experts as the best of its kind. One can discuss the quality of the monumental modern building, for which obviously an old city quarter had to vanish, but the effort undertaken to display historic carriages is impressive. Not to mention the highlights of the collection. Some special carriages are still presented in the elaborate historic riding hall of the neighbouring National Palace. Not far from there we also visited the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art.

Accompanied by my horses and heritage enthusiastic mother I travelled one week across the country and everywhere witnesses of the important role horses played in the past could be found, be it in form of stables at country estates, monasteries or palaces, in the typical tile-decorations or as horse troughs at roads, in villages and towns.

Highlight of our journey was the day at the National Stud. The employees presented the stud and its horses as comprehensive as possible and we were excited about the horse-shaped cultural landscape with historic and skilfully added modern buildings, the quality of horse-keeping and riding, and last but not least by the marvellous Alter Real Lusitanos.

Once on tour on the Iberian Peninsula, a trip to Jerez de la Frontera, the Andalusian horse capital, was unavoidable. The local Carthusian monastery is known as the cradle of the most noble and pure-bred horses of Spain, which had a great impact on horse breeding in other countries. The ancient blood-lines are still preserved in the National Stud **Jerez de la Frontera** and presented to the public in weekly show programmes on Saturdays.



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Back in Germany a project started, that continues until today. Commissioned by the Berlin planning company Topos I'm consulting as horse and heritage specialist on the development of a conservation management plan for the Olympic park of Berlin. Besides different other sport venues the huge site is home to two riding clubs, which use the surprisingly well preserved riding stadium of 1936.

May

In May I had an appointment with the director of the **Garden Kingdom Dessau-Wörlitz**, my favourite World Heritage site in Germany. As at many places, the hippological heritage, that was formative for the way-of-life and the cultural achievements of former ages, has not thoroughly been studied, documented and interpreted yet. There could be many points of contact.

Later this month I spent 10 days in **Cambridge, Wales and Devon**, the latter with friends of the Attingham Trust continuing our "The Horse and the Country House" expeditions, which had started with the so-named Study Programme of the Trust in 2018. Again, it was a wonderful time with much inspiration and interesting encounters.



June

On the way back from England, I stopped at **Valkenswaard** in the Netherlands, where champion Boyd Exell hosted his annual driving event. Sometimes timing is just perfect!

I arrived back home at Wiesbaden just in time for the Whitsun week. For the first time, the **International Wiesbaden PfingstTurnier** (one of the most important equestrian tournaments of Germany) was sponsored by the Swiss watchmaking company Longines. Accordingly, the



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prize-giving team, that had been dressed in red for many years, appeared in blue. Already for the 83rd time, the stars on four and on two legs made magic moments in jumping, dressage, eventing and voltiging in the beautiful atmosphere of the Biebrich palace grounds next to the river Rhine. To present prize-ribbons and silver plates here is a pleasure and a privilege.

During the midsummer-weekend many **manors and country houses of Mecklenburg-Pomerania** opened their doors to the public. It was a good occasion to discover places that were internationally famed for their horse breeding in earlier times, such as Broock oder Ivenack. But it was also a great disappointment to see those formerly glorious estates in poor condition after decades of neglect. In the new concepts, that are supposed to ensure the survival of the sites, there is no space for horses. Their stables are re-used in different ways. I hope that at least some of the horse-history will be documented and shown, to keep the awareness for this once so important aspect of those glorious places alive.

July

For two reasons July was dedicated to the Czech National Stud Kladruby nad Labem and its horses. At the beginning of the month the UNESCO World Heritage Committee approved the **nomination of the “Cultural Landscape for breeding and training of ceremonial carriage horses at Kladruby nad Labem” for inscription on the World Heritage list.** How often have I been there during the last 10 years, how often did I pet the roman nose of a curious foal, a patient brood mare or a noble sire? How often have I been taken through the wonderful stud landscape by carriage or on horseback? With how many stones of the ancient buildings have I whispered, how many old trees have I hugged and how much time did I spend observing the horses on their pastures? How often did I accompany the Kladrubians to competitions, how many events did we celebrate together, how many presentations did I give, how many pages have I written and how many people did I show the stud? No doubt: this is a big moment. I sincerely hope, that the recognition of the Czech National Stud will have positive impact not only on the site, but also on other significant places of equine heritage and that the implementation of the UNESCO spirit will succeed.

Later in July I had for the second time after 2017 the pleasure, to support the team of the National Stud at the **CHIO Aachen**, the World Equestrian Festival, as Chef d’Equipe. The young team achieved respectable ranks in the middle field of the four-in-hand competitions, regarding beauty and elegance they were unbeatable. During the traditional Farewell of Nations the cheering of the enchanted audience in the large stadium was theirs for the taking.



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August

August continued with carriage-driving. The **four-in-hand European Championships** took place on the grounds of the Fürstenberg family at Donaueschingen.

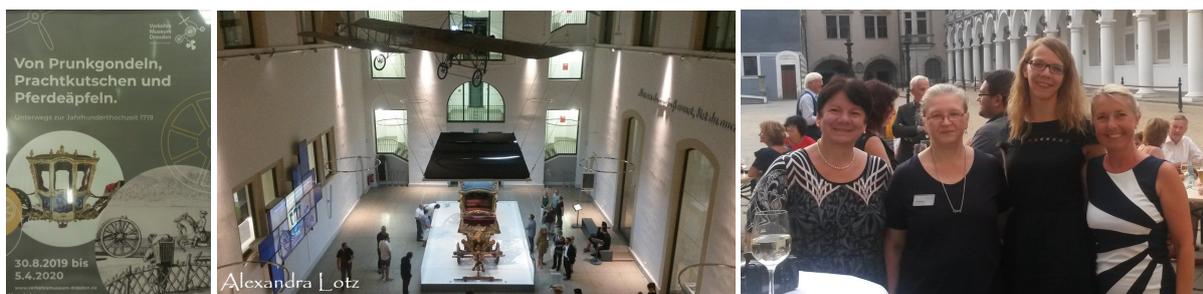
Before getting there, I paid a visit to my former home at **Marbach State Stud** on the Swabian Alps. There is always something going on and being up to date is quite a task.

More than 40 teams had gathered next to the well of the Donau river at the foot of the Black Forest Mountains. The surprise of the event was team Germany winning gold, followed by Belgium and France. One of my favourites, French driver Benjamin Aillaud with his stunning Frisians, became well-deserved vice-champion.



The closest state studs to my residential home at Cottbus are Graditz and Moritzburg in Saxony. When I feel the need to breathe some stud-air, I go there. When cycling along the river Elbe on a hot summer weekend I just came right for the **Trakehner foal show at Graditz**. Noble horses in historic environment are something wonderful!

At the end of August I was invited to the **opening of the exhibition about horse-powered mobility during the 18th century at the Museum of Transport in Dresden**. A good occasion to meet old friends who in one or another way also deal with horses in history. The famous stable court of Dresden palace provided the ideal setting for good conversations.



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September

One more exhibition opening, this time at Magdeburg. During September an **exhibition at the parliament of Saxony-Anhalt informed about Blesern**, a secret treasure for lovers of horses, history and architecture. The former courtly stud of the Electors of Saxony is not only a significant site of horse breeding, but also a monument of baroque time, a place of reformation history and a location of important characters, such as Moritz of Saxony, Emperor Karl V. and August the Strong. The exhibition illustrated the significance of Blesern and gave insight in the work of its support club, that since 2010 campaigns for the preservation and public use of the impressive stud premises.

Since 2013 I organise and guide the programme of the annual excursions of the Wiesbaden Riding- and Driving- Club. In 2019 the event took place with the slogan **“Horses and Palaces of Saxony”**. The programme included visits of Graditz stud, the neighbouring renaissance and reformation town Torgau on the Elbe with Hartenfels palace, a hippological city tour at Dresden with visits at the Museum of Transport, the armoury collection of the Rüstkammer and the Turkish Camber, Pillnitz palace and the Wackerbarth vinery. Highlight was our stay at Moritzburg with the impressive hunting palace and the surrounding cultural landscape, as well as the parades of the local stallion depot. On departure day, Heidecksburg castle at Rudolstadt welcomed the travellers with special features. In the monumental premises the renaissance riding house, stables, stairs suitable for horses and terraces where once the classical art of riding was celebrated bear witness to the horse-passion of the Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt family. A great end of a great journey that 30 years after German reunification invited people to (re-)discover places that were considered to be lost or forgotten.



Later in September the **World Championships of pairs** took place at Drebkau in Brandenburg and thus only 20km from my door. It was a thrilling driving weekend with 86 pairs from 24 nations and Petrus treated us with best Indian summer weather. The two gold medals for team and individual ranking went well-deserved to Hungary.

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October

On October 5th, the Czech National Stud Kladruby nad Labem officially celebrated the inscription of its cultural landscape in the World Heritage List. Officials from all around the world gathered and the employees had given their best to polish the horses, harnesses and carriages for a show programme trained especially for this unique event. Only Petrus weather god did not cooperate and sent the rain desperately needed since months all on this very day. Perhaps he had a baptism in mind – who knows? The performances on the large square of the stud turned into a mixture of water ballet and synchronized swimming with horses. Of course, a true Kladruber stands above such circumstances and fulfils his task in grace. Those horses would make the apocalypse shine.

On Sunday the sun was shining as if nothing had happened....



Later in October the **Foundation of Palaces and Gardens of Thuringia** invited to its annual symposium at Sondershausen palace, this time with the theme “höfische Festkultur” (courtly celebration culture). Short before, the yearbook of 2018 had appeared, to which I have contributed with two articles. Thus, the event provided many opportunities for interesting conversations. Furthermore, I could take a look at the former stables and the carriage house, which are used by a music academy, today.

Already on the way to Sondershausen I had visited **Augustusburg Palace in the Ore Mountains with the carriage collection of the Wettin family**. I can't understand why the museum is known almost exclusively for its motorbike collection.

November

A very interesting symposium took me to Dessau. Representatives of many leading German and international foundations, which were established after the resignation of sovereigns following WWI to manage courtly heritage had gathered in the federal archive to discuss the developments of the past 100 years. A lot of useful information to better understand broader contexts.

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In General, November was dedicated to the **30th jubilee of the fall of the Iron Curtain**. I participated in a number of connected events in Berlin and elsewhere. As cross-border commuter between east and west I am myself directly at the interface of German and European division and perceive the resulting experiences as great enrichment. I don't want to imagine, how we would live today, if people these days had not been that courageous. All my contacts to people, horse-breeding and other institutions that were situated behind the Iron Curtain seen from western perspective would most likely not exist.

That horses can be ambassadors, build bridges and inspire people should be more recognised and used. Therefore, together with the renowned cultural historian Marie-Louise von Plessen I have started an initiative to establish a „**European Cultural Route of Horses and Heritage**“. In November we had the chance to present our project at the responsible institute at Luxembourg and gained much positive feedback. In 2020 we will continue....



December

December is Christmas time and when keeping the eyes open, one can also find places of hippological interest. Thus, I visited the advent market at the former courtly stud **Bleesern** and was happy about the opportunity to drink different sorts of delicious hot fruit wines in the historic stables at the **Christmas market of Wörlitz**.

The fourth advent weekend was traditionally spent at the international "**Festhallenturnier**" at **Frankfurt**, perhaps the most beautiful indoor riding event of Germany, where young dressage horses compete in the finals of two special series before they enter the stage on Grand Prix level.

At the end of the year Jürgen Hagenkötter (curator, author and head of the Draught Horse Museum at Lüttau) and I produced a brochure illustrating our project „**Horse.Culture.Heritage. - Exhibitions on Tour**“. Together we create permanent, changing and travelling exhibitions. From the first idea to content and design, up to logistics, realisation on site and communication design we offer complete service in one hand. We provide different display systems for smaller and larger solutions.

Furthermore, we have a pool of objects to be used depending on the subject. Several themes around horses in history are prepared in German and can be translated to be shown as permanent or temporary exhibition in other countries. The brochure is ready for download on my website:

<https://www.horses-and-heritage.net/english/exhibitions/>

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Publications 2019

Beauty in harness: The imperial coach horses of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, their decline and their renaissance

The World on Wheels - Publication of the Carriage Association of America, No. 7/2019

Von der Gestütere: die Zucht edler Rösser

Yearbook of the Foundation of Palaces and Gardens of Thuringia (Germany), Issue 22

Parks und Kulturlandschaften für Pferde

Yearbook of the Foundation of Palaces and Gardens of Thuringia (Germany), Issue 22

Kladruby frisch geadelt. Das tschechische Nationalgestüt gilt neu als UNESCO Welterbe

Magazine Cavallo (Switzerland), Issue 8/2019

Hochadel aus dem Kartäusergestüt. Besuch im spanischen Nationalgestüt Yeguada de la Cartuja

Magazine Cavallo (Switzerland), Issue 11/2019

Outlook on 2020

24. January: Presentation at the Museum of Transport Dresden, Germany
„Prachtkerle für Prachtkutschen: vom Wagenpferd zum Welterbe“

26. - 29. May: Cultural Routes Training Academy at Fontainebleau, France

29. May – 01. June: 84. Longines PfingstTurnier Wiesbaden, German

6. – 11. July: **Horses & Heritage Study Programme in Saxony**
Symposium and excursions for English speaking audience

Info and application: **<https://www.horses-and-heritage.net/english/study-programme/>**

13. – 20. September: Excursion of the Wiesbaden riding and driving club „Vive le Cheval“ to France

See you!



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