



'The fruits of slave labour' (Photo: Gilly Carr)

**The Heritage of the Atlantic Wall: Seeking a common
European response
Workshop, University of Cambridge, 3-5 August 2011**

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This small workshop comprising invited speakers is being convened to discuss the future of the Atlantic Wall, a common heritage for the parts of Europe that suffered German occupation during WWII. The aim of the workshop is to brainstorm with potential partners to find a research proposal for EU funding for this notoriously difficult aspect of dark heritage

Programme 4th August:

Please note that each speaker will have 20 minutes to deliver their paper plus an extra 10 minutes afterwards for specific questions from the audience.

9.30: Coffee

10am: Introduction and welcome

10.05-10.25: *Why have bunkers become sites of selective amnesia? German fortifications in the Channel Islands* (Gilly Carr)

10.35-10.55: *The Past is History? The Archaeology of Occupation and Persecution in Alderney* (Caroline Sturdy Colls)

11.05 – 11.15: Brief pause to refill coffee cups / toilet break

11.15-11.35: *WWII and the Atlantic Wall in Norway: Landscapes of Supremacy and Slave Labour* (Marek Jasinski)

11.45-12.05: *Traces of Collective Amnesia: Confronting Hitler's Atlantic Wall* (Rose Tzalmou).

12.15 – 12.30: Brief discussion to note the key themes so far

12.30 – 1.30: **LUNCH (cafeteria lunch available at St Catharine's College from 12-1.30; there are also many sandwich shops / cafes within a few minutes' walk of the conference venue).**

1.30 – 1.50: *The most desirable legacy: bunkers and politics in Europe* (Niko Rollmann)

2.00 – 2.20: *The Atlantic Wall as Megastructure* (Koos Bosma)

2.30 – 2.50: *Working on the Atlantic Wall* (Gennaro Postiglione)

3.00 – 3.20: Coffee

3.20 – 5pm: Discussion

The cafeteria at St Catharine's College is open for dinner between 6 – 6.30pm only. Otherwise we will find a restaurant in town.

5th August

The aim for 4th August is to discuss:

- The key themes which links our research and which we wish to pursue;
- Research funding schemes;
- Potential additional partners;
- The potential role for each member of the group;
- A research proposal;
- A timetable for the proposal.

The timings of discussion will be informal and fluid on 5th August but a proposed timetable is as follows:

10.30: Arrival at the McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research Seminar room.

10.30 – 11.30: Discussion of key themes and the direction of our research

11.30 – 12.30: Research funding schemes: which one?

12.30-2.00: lunch

2.00 – 2.30: Potential additional partners and role of group members

2.30-4.30: Research proposal

4.30-5.00: Timetable for proposal

Abstracts

Dr Gilly Carr (Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Cambridge)

Why have bunkers become sites of selective amnesia? German fortifications in the Channel Islands

This paper will provide a chronological overview of the way that German bunkers have been treated in the Channel Islands between the liberation in 1945 and the present day. It will examine the changing way that these structures have been perceived through time as they have transitioned from being seen as scars on the landscape to respected historic monuments. The history that they tell, however, is a partial one. Since the 1970s, bunkers have been restored and turned into museums or heritage sites, but only the story of the occupier is told; the experiences of the slave and forced labourers who built the bunkers is almost entirely absent.

This paper will suggest that, only by understanding and respecting the historically and culturally specific reasons and modes of bunker restoration by amateur enthusiasts can heritage professionals hope to intervene and start a dialogue with these interest groups to move towards future change. What may be ‘obvious’, ‘disrespectful’, ‘dissonant’ or ‘unethical’ to heritage professionals is not perceived that way by those who restore bunkers.

Caroline Sturdy Colls, Lecturer in Forensic Investigation

The Past is History? The Archaeology of Occupation and Persecution in Alderney

The island of Alderney in the Channel Islands has been described as having been transformed into a so-called ‘battleship of concrete and steel anchored in front of the Atlantic Wall’ in accordance with Hitler’s order on the 20th October 1941 to fortify the Channel Islands and make them an ‘impregnable fortress’ (Forty 1999:234; Carel 1967:53; Packe and Dreyfus 1990:37-39). Due to its location, only sixty miles from the English coast and eight miles from France, the island was of great tactical value to the Nazis and was deemed to be ‘the last stepping stone before the conquest of mainland Britain’ (Bonnard 1991). During the four years of the Occupation (1941-45), thousands of workers were sent to the island from across Europe and housed in a network of labour camps and the only SS camp on British soil, Lager Sylt. Having been tasked with the construction of heavy coastal and anti-aircraft batteries, tunnels, bunkers and earthworks, these workers were subject to often fatal living conditions, whilst incidents of shooting, hanging and torture have been reported. Despite the significance of these sites in the history of World War II, the construction of the Atlantic Wall and the Nazi slave labour programme, the majority remain dilapidated and unrecorded. This paper will outline a programme of non-invasive archaeological research which has sought to rectify this situation. In particular, the scale and diversity of sites located will be highlighted, whilst the various social and political issues that have impacted upon fieldwork will be discussed.

Professor Dr. Marek E. Jasinski, Professor in Archaeology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

WWII and the Atlantic Wall in Norway: Landscapes of Supremacy and Slave Labour.

During the Second World War, Norway was accorded a special status within Nazi Germany’s war strategy. According to Hitler himself, Norway was the “area of destiny” for determining

the outcome of the war. As a consequence, enormous numbers of Nazi troops, weapons, navy ships and other military resources were deployed in Norway during the period from 1940 to 1945. The construction of *Festung Norwegen*, with the *Atlantervollen (Atlantic Wall)* and other giant German investments in occupied Norway such as the Arctic Railway and main North-South motorway, demanded a massive and constant supply of manpower. More than 150,000 prisoners of war and slave labourers from at least 15 European nations (both from Eastern and Western Europe) were transported to Norway. The largest groups by nationality came from the Soviet Union, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Germany. As a result, a network of approximately 500 Nazi camps for prisoners of war, slave labourers, political and criminal prisoners and Norwegian Jews was established. Approximately 20,000 of these prisoners died before Norway was liberated in 1945.

Today the giant Atlantic Wall fortifications still dominate, in many ways, particular local landscapes of Norway while very few physical traces of Nazi POW camps and slave labour camps are preserved and both the knowledge and awareness of these sites are scarce among the general public in Norway. Archaeological field works of the *Painful Heritage* project focus at present, among other aspects, on studies and documentation of the Atlantic Wall fortifications and POW Camps at the coast of Central Norway.

Rose Tzalmona, Registered Architect and Doctoral Candidate (completion year: 2012) at VU University Amsterdam (Architecture History)/ Technical University Delft (Landscape Architecture and Urbanism); and Independent Freelance Architect.

Traces of Collective Amnesia: Confronting Hitler's Atlantic Wall

Rose Tzalmona's dissertation comprises historical research which traces the complex processes behind the design, construction and subsequent demolition of the Atlantic Wall on the Western European coastline. As a defensive line it was by its very nature a political act that represented cultural, social and ideological sets of values. The Atlantic Wall would prove no exception to this notion as an act of *defending Third Reich ideology* that was founded upon racial and theories and which manifested itself physically in 'Lebensraum'. Subsequently, these structures not only legitimised an ideology that stood in sharp contrast to modern western democratic values, but whose erection gave way to *war crimes* committed in its name (i.e. employing slave labourers ranging from Russian POWs to recruiting prisoners from the French colonies). Examined here is the subsequent impact of this defensive-line on coastal landscapes and urban fabrics and its ramifications on civilian populations from the wartime period to this present-day. Unravelling the Atlantic Wall's lost narratives, as a built project and as a deliberate architectural intervention constructed in the public realm, would ultimately reveal both its significance to the history of modern architecture as well as the potential significance of the forgotten legacy left behind upon these sites of 'Collective Amnesia'. These archaeological remains, the bunkers of the Atlantic Wall, form the basis for creating a design strategy by which those the (in)visible scars left behind will serve as catalysts for renewal and as instruments in transforming these sites of neglected public spaces to new viable public spaces as places of collective remembrance for future generations.

Niko Rollmann (BA, Magister Artium). Programme Manager, Robert-Tillmanns-Haus, Berlin; freelance lecturer (Arbeit und Leben e.V.).

The most desirable legacy: bunkers and politics in Europe

What political implications / meanings / relevance do bunker have nowadays? While the sites of Nazi terror have become part of our memory culture all over Europe, the bunkers are still a "blind spot" in Europe's memory of Nazi repression. This has allowed the bunker kissers and politically suspect touristic operators to slip in. Instead, bunkers should serve as places of "shared European history lessons", bringing young people from many European countries together. Europe is still too much a project for the elites and we have to involve younger people. So: new friendships in old bunkers!

Professor Dr Koos Bosma (VU University Amsterdam, chair in the History of Architecture and Heritage Studies)

The Atlantic Wall as a Megastructure

1. Definition and consequences
2. The megastructural space encapsulated in the urban fabric (example, The Hague)
3. The Atlantic Wall and its audience ('contested heritage'): a website
4. The Atlantic Wall: gathering knowledge and making it accessible by digital means.

Dr Gennaro Postiglione (Associate Professor in Interior Architecture)

Working on the Atlantic Wall

- AW Linear Museum: a project for a diffused museum of the Atlantic Wall along the EU west coast: building a network of existing and isolated institutions (first step was a survey identifying items and delivering information) - together with Giulio Padovani. This will lead to a book & website.
- AW bunkers as Modern Architecture > AW bunkers not only as war 'manufacts' but as modern buildings due the construction material, system and techniques > only papers delivered in conferences
- AW as Conflict Archaeological Landscape (together with Michela Bassanelli) > connecting the AW remains to their landscape relationship and to their archaeological dimension without forgetting their socio-historical value/haritage > focus on the possible role of Museography in this concern/perspective > a book is coming

About the group members

Gilly Carr

Since 2007, my interests have focused on POW archaeology and all aspects of POW creativity behind barbed wire. I am also interested in various aspects of Conflict Archaeology and Occupation Archaeology, a term I have pioneered to help explore the archaeology and heritage of military occupation. My fieldwork is based in the Channel Islands, where I examine the legacy of the German occupation of 1940-1945. I am currently writing a book entitled *The Legacies of Occupation: Archaeology and Heritage in the Channel Islands*. This will encompass an overview of the changing heritage in the Islands from 1945 to the present day in the fields of annual commemorations of Liberation Day; the collection of German militaria and the phenomenon of occupation museums; the restoration and treatment of German bunkers; the memorialisation of the occupation years, and the complete neglect of the forced and slave labour camps of the Organisation Todt.

Caroline Sturdy Colls

I am currently a Lecturer in Forensic Investigation at Staffordshire University and my research focuses on the application of interdisciplinary approaches to the investigation of Holocaust landscapes and the need for a sub-discipline of Holocaust Archaeology. I am in the closing stages of a PhD that focuses in particular on the development of a non-invasive methodology which, in light of the various issues involved in the study of the Holocaust, allows the sites to be examined in terms of their scientific and historical significance whilst respecting religious and ethical concerns. As part of this research, I have completed the first surveys of the former extermination camp at Treblinka in Poland and the sites pertaining to the slave labour programme in Alderney, the Channel Islands. I have also been involved with search and recovery at crime scenes alongside several UK police forces over the last six years, most recently as a consultant forensic archaeologist for Manlove Forensics.

Marek Jasinski

Main research interests: Maritime Archaeology; Arctic Archaeology; Archaeology of the Contemporary Past and Modern Conflict; Management of Cultural Heritage.

Currently – Project Leader of an interdisciplinary research project “*Painful Heritage - Cultural landscapes of the Second World War in Norway. Phenomenology, Lessons and Heritage Management Systems*”, run by the NTNU in co-operation with Falstad Centre and financed by the Research Council of Norway.

Rose Tzalmona

Rose Tzalmona is a Canadian architect who has been practicing in The Netherlands since 1999. Her interest in bunkers originated during her thesis project with the design of a memorial park and theatre for the former Western Front landscapes around Ieper, Belgium. After several years of working at various architecture firms she decided to return to her life-long interest in exploring the relationship between contemporary architecture, memorial landscapes, war remnants and recovery. For the past few years she has been working on her project ‘*Traces of Collective Amnesia - Confronting Hitler's Atlantic Wall*’, a historical research and design proposal, for which she designed an exhibition on this topic in The Hague, displayed at the Maranatha Church (Den Haag) and at the Resistance Museum (Gouda).

Rose Tzalmona is currently working on her dissertation, where the central question addresses how the Atlantic Wall, which was conceived as a series of constructed buildings ('the architecture of aggression') situated in the public realm (coastal landscapes and urban environments) can be (re)defined and understood in terms of political (ideological, territorial, military), cultural (iconographic, mythic, symbolic) and collective (social, historical, commemorative) notions of space that are woven together by forgotten narratives.

Niko Rollmann

Niko Rollmann was born in 1971 in Hamburg and grew up in Great Britain. He studied history and politics at London's Queen Mary College (BA) and Berlin's Humboldt University (German MA). After graduating, he first worked as a freelancer in the fields of adult education and tourism. Since 2007, he has been the Program Manager of the Robert-Tillmanns-Haus educational facility in Berlin. His main areas of research are culture of memory, historical subterranean architecture, 20th century German history and the history of Berlin

Koos Bosma

The issues that have focussed my interest over the years are the city planning and reconstruction of European cities after World War II, planning and design of the Dutch polders, heritage topics and infrastructural planning, such as the civil engineering works of the Ministry of Watermanagement, the Channel Tunnel, the High Speed Trains-programs in Europe and the large European airfields.

Relevant books: Koos Bosma and H. Hellinga (eds), *Mastering the City: North-European City Planning 1900-2000*, Rotterdam 1997.

Editor and author: *Housing for the Millions. John Habraken and the SAR (1960-2000)*, Rotterdam 2000 (with D. van Hoogstraten and M. Vos).

Gennaro Postiglione

My research focuses mainly on domestic interiors and on museography which considers preserving and diffusing collective memory and cultural identity (connecting the museographic issues with the domestic ambit). Acting within the domain of architectural design, research interests are finalized in a design practice defined as 'Adaptive Re-use': when an existing structure is transformed (for any reason) and design solutions negotiate between programme and some crucial characters/qualities/identities of the original.

Geert-Jan Mellink (Director, *Geert-Jan Mellink Concepts and Projects*). MA in Slavonic Languages, University of Utrecht).

- Worked from 1988 till 1994 at several PR-agencies. Was information officer, editor and project manager at the Dutch ministries for Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment, and Education, Culture and Science till 2006.
- Project manager Museums and Applications at the Heritage of War Programme of the Dutch ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport from 2006 till 2010. The Heritage of War Programme was intended to preserve important original and secondary World-War-II material, and to stimulate the use of such material as source for information and remembrance.

- Organised in 2010 the international two day conference *Redefining the Atlantic Wall* (in collaboration with the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency, VU Amsterdam, the Province of Zeeland and the agency Lopende Zaken.)
- Currently preparing, with Hans de Haan, a call for proposal (ATLANTIK) to establish a Best Practice Network for the cultural heritage domain under objective 2.2 of the ICT Policy Support Programme under the European Commission's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme. The aim of the ATLANTIK project is to create a working public content delivery and presentation model which will be able to create, to connect and present a variety of historical and heritage material through Europeana, using the Atlantic Wall as the backbone.

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