

## With gratitude: An affectionate, personal review of (almost) 20 years unbroken CHNT participation

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**Authors note:** This is not a scientific paper. It is a reminiscence of two decades of CHNT – a personal collection of impressions, recollections, people and project spin offs from the CHNT. The text is largely a one-to-one transcription of the talk given at CHNT 25 in Vienna 2020. The style is accordingly conversational, illustrated by “snapshots”.

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In 2001, my love affair with Vienna and the CHNT began. It didn’t start in Vienna. It started much earlier in Bermuda at the then Bermuda Maritime Museum on the recommendation of its Director Dr. Edward Harris, the inventor of the Harris Matrix. After creating the Harris Matrix Edward Harris turned his attention to transforming Bermuda’s Maritime Museum into Bermuda’s National Museum include all dockyard fortifications and now covering an area of for total of 16 acres.



*National Museum of Bermuda (nmb.bm)*

When Edward Harris introduced his Matrix in the UK in the mid-1970s he initially caused quite a stir and even outright opposition from some archaeologists unable to understand its meaning and the revolutionary advance in stratigraphic theory it postulated. This we tend to forget. One of the few scientists who actually understood the significance and scope of the Harris Matrix and stood by and supported Edward Harris throughout those early years was Frances Lynch-Llewellyn at the then

Colleg yr Bryfisgoll Gollgeth Cymru – The University College of North Wales in Bangor. Later, Frances would become my archaeology Professor, for which I am eternally grateful, but that's another story...

When I met Edward Harris in the mid-1980s there was no need to break any ice at all. When he heard I had been student of Frances Lynch his attitude – in his typical, buccaneering manner was. "Any friend of Frances' is friend of mine..." My personal and scientific relationship with Edward Harris has been very rewarding over decades and I was lucky enough to be invited to contribute both to the second edition of "Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy" as well as to the companion volume "Practices of Archaeological Stratigraphy".

Stratigraphic theory was the overarching theme of the 2001 Workshop "Archäologie und Computer" in Vienna, as the CHNT was then called. Wolfgang Börner, then and still heart and soul of the CHNT, invited Edward Harris. Edward Harris, in turn, suggested to Wolfgang Börner, that he should invite me. For this invitation I am eternally grateful to both Wolfgang Börner and Edward Harris. It was that invitation that literally "changed my life". A statement not meant as possible "tear jerker". It is simply a statement of fact. That invitation sowed the seed for a "proper" scientific career in European archaeology rather than possibly remaining just another British journeyman on the German excavation circuit.

In 2001 I talked about software integration of the Harris Matrix into archaeological data bases and CAD – reporting on work which was then part of a very successful cooperation with the Martin Schaich's Arctron Company (Start – ArcTron) I take this late opportunity to sincerely thank Martin and his team.

In 2001 Harris was already discussing the connection between stratigraphy and GIS. It was the first time I'd heard about GIS in connection with Archaeology. Then it was still very new, at least to me. But, that's the fascination of the Vienna event, is it not? The CHNT is always been up to speed. Even ahead of its time, having a nose for innovation, an inkling for the next important up and coming thing. All its participants profit from that "drive". It was at the Vienna Workshop that I first saw a Laser Scanner – also in 2001. Archaeological-technical pioneer Martin Schaich had one of the first ones – a RIEGL Z 210. In the following years the same went for SFM, UAVs and the general concept of 3D and virtual and augmented reality in archaeology.

Another fundamental, important and recurring theme of the CHNT is the spin offs it creates. Like the trunk of a tree, every year the CHNT grows from strength to strength, always developing new branches, creating opportunities for other projects which probably would not have happened without the catalyst that is the CHNT Vienna.

I re-met Irmela Herzog in Vienna in 2001, German Archaeology Prize winner and well known to anyone into stratigraphy and archaeological computing.

She introduced her new program Stratify to replace her original program Harris.

It was also in my first year, 2001, that I met Benjamin Ducke. Then still a student. Now head of archaeological computing at the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin and an internationally respected expert in the field of archaeological information technology. That fortuitous meeting led to fruitful ongoing co-operations between Baden-Württemberg and Berlin, lasting over two decades and ultimately resulting in the development of the (now standard) Survey2GIS software for easily

transferring survey data to fully attributed GIS-projects. Survey2GIS was neither born in Vienna or conceived there. But Vienna is where the original matchmaking was done. The “baby”, Survey2GIS, is open source and freely available to anyone who wants to use it: About | Survey2Gis (survey-tools.org). Survey2GIS has one more Vienna connection, even inspiration – a lecture held in Vienna by Karen Lund and Hakan Thoren from the Swedish National Heritage Board on their excellent (but expensive) ESRI-based Intrasis GIS-System. That inspired me to try something similar, but on an open source basis and in cooperation with Benjamin Ducke, without whose programming expertise the development would not have been possible.

Back to the first day of my first conference, the tale of which still remains unfinished. In the evening there was some fine entertainment in the “Centimeter” Pub

in the Josefstadt near the Rathaus. Edward Harris, yes, that Edward Harris



and Dominic Powslesand, yes that Dominic Powsland (with Keith May to his right),

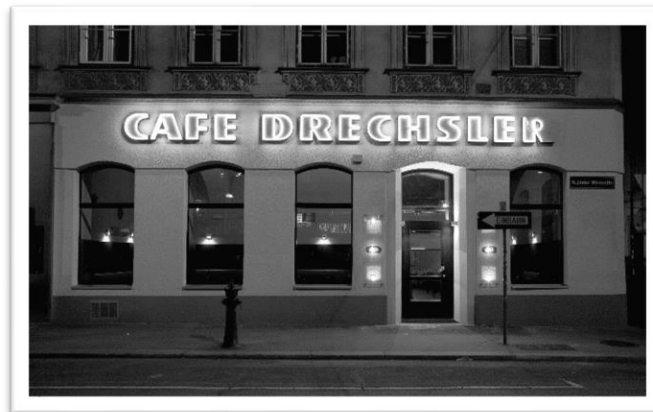


dancing on the tables at a late hour celebrating their reunion three decades after they had been digging companions in Winchester... Dominic Powslesand was in Vienna under the chaparoneship of Keith May (Keith really did try his best!) to present stratigraphic aspects of his long-term project in Hesleton Parish project in Yorkshire. There are unfortunately no surviving Photos of the dancing – or at least I haven't been able to find any. Or nobody is willing to let me use them. Edward Harris

even denies that it happened. But believe me, it did. It happened! This Photo is from the beginning of the evening. Things were heating up already!



Ever since I had been a student, Domenic Powslesand, innovator and infant terrible of British Archaeology and one of the first computer archaeologists in the UK had been an idol for me. How appropriate I should meet him for the first time in Vienna – and, thankfully, he was still an infant terrible! Fast forward to (much) later: to sitting together with Dominik and Keith. Hungry, 3:30 in the morning of the following day in the legendary Café Drexler on Wiener Zeile next to the Naschmarkt.



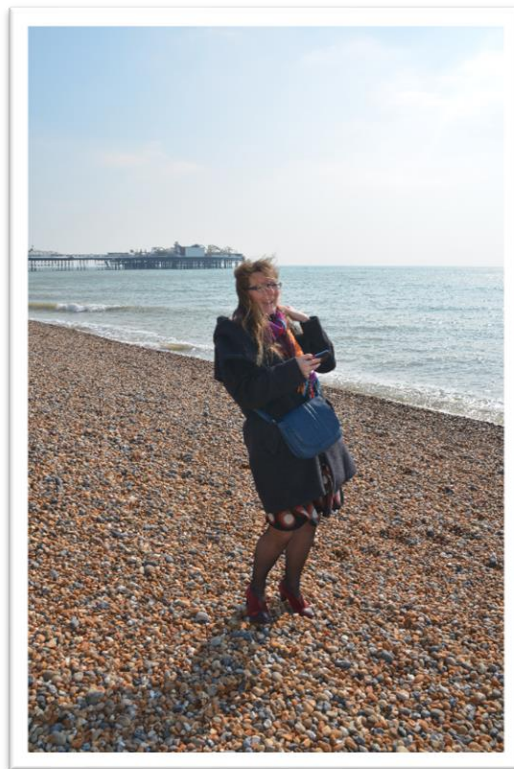
We all thought we were going to stay hungry. When asked by Herr Drexler what he could offer us for breakfast, Herr Drexler replied “ha mi nix”. Blessed or blighted with speaking both German and English I interpreted that as his special Viennese German way of saying “wir haben nichts”, meaning “we have nothing” or “we can offer you nothing” – “Ha mir nix”. In reality in his special Viennese English he was offering us ham and eggs! What a wonderful introduction to Vienna and its culinary delights! Satisfiedly full of eggs and rashers the day ended in the twilight of the next morning and if the truth were to be known a little later than originally planned the day before in the Wappensaal at the conference!

Medium-fast forward. This time to 2005 when Ann Degrave from Brussels, answering an invitation to join the session I was chairing, first took part in the (then still) “Workshop”. Ann has since become a mainstay of the Vienna meeting and an established CHNT committee member. As city archaeologist of Brussels she gave a first talk entitled “Inventorying the archaeological record: the example of

the Brussels Capital Region, Belgium”. In a second talk she described “14 years of archaeological recording in the Brussels Capital Region, Belgium: past, present and future”.



*Ann Degraeve, Vienna, Wappensaal, 2005*

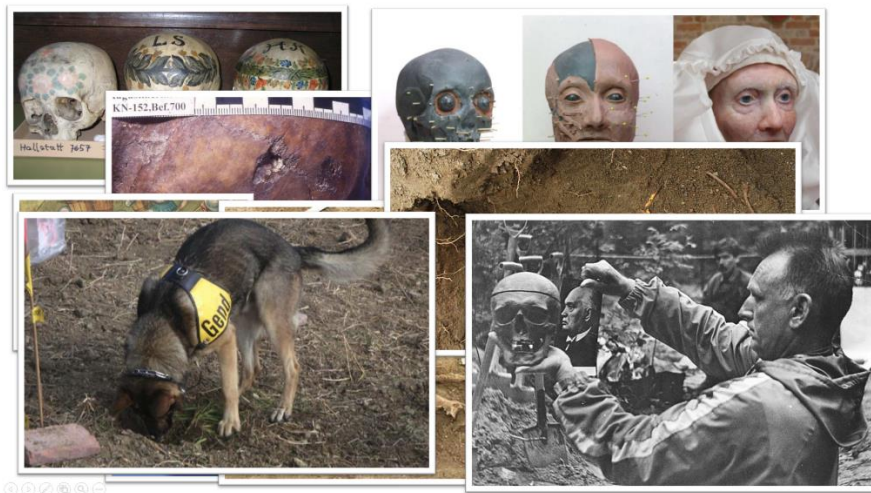


*Ann Degraeve, Brighton Beach, UK, 2016*

Meeting Ann was another life-changing event for me – once again made possible by Vienna – resulting in not just a fruitful scientific cooperation in Vienna and beyond but also a life-long friendship. In Vienna we jointly chaired a number of sessions – most notably perhaps the long running “mini-series” or “mini conference within the conference”, “The Dead” (apologies to James Joyce) which we invented 2012 perfectly in tune with both the CHNT and Vienna’s immortal bond to morbidity...



In later years, “The Dead” received reinforcement from Karin Wiltche-Schrote from the Vienna Natural History Museum and human anthropologist Raphael Panhusen from the Free University in Amsterdam. It ran for 4 years from 2012 to 2016 and we had some memorable contributions:

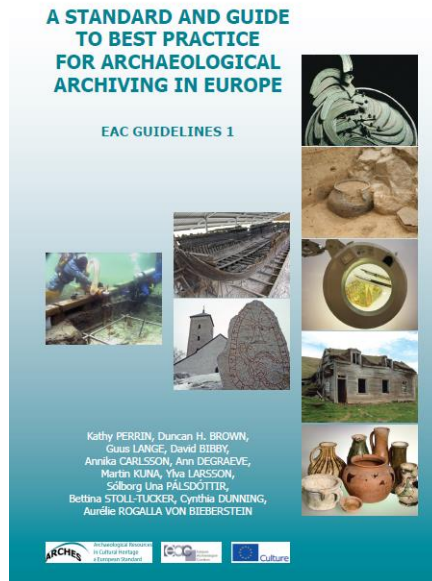


- Skulls from Hallstatt in the national History Museum by Karen Schrote Wiltche
- Traumatic violent death of a fighting knight from Konstanz in the Appenzel wars by Joachiom Wahl, Hildegard Bibby and David Bibby
- Facial Reconstructions by Maja D'Hollsby from the university of Amsterdam
- Bizarre Circus Horse and Snake burials in Turku, Frinland by Lisa Steppänen from the university there
- The Austrian Cadaver Dog Core sniffing out second world war corpses by Thomas Potoschnig, Austrian Association of Forensic Archaeology
- And the moving story of the search for .... The first Estonian president Konstantin Päts by Peep Pillak of the Estonian Heritage Society

... to mention just a few. All accessible and very readable and in the proceedings of the CHNT.

I've already compared the CHNT to the trunk of a tree, with branches, creating opportunities for more project. And so it was with Ann Degraeve and myself. Vienna had a direct influence the EAC – the Europae Aechaäologie Consilium (European Archaeological Council) of which I was already a member when Ann and I first met. Ann came on board and we shared the chairmanship of the EAC working party on archaeological archives. The ultimate result being the EU-co-financed ARCHES

Project and the production of EAC Guidelines 1 The “Standard and Guide to Best Practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe”, downloadable in nine languages:



*EAC Guidelines | European Archaeological Council (EAC) ([europae-archaeologiae-consilium.org](http://europae-archaeologiae-consilium.org))*

In fact, the road to ARCHES and the resulting EAC Guidelines has its origins in Vienna. It is a little-known fact that the final decision of the EAC-Archaeological Archives Working Group to actually go ahead and apply for the EU-grant which made ARCHES possible was made at a Working Group meeting during the 2009 CHNT, in a meeting-room kindly made available by Vienna City Archaeology in their offices in the Obere Augartenstraße.

Now back to 2004, another important year for new acquaintances. 2004 was Reiner Goldner’s first year in Vienna.



*Reiner Göldner CHNT 18, 2013*

Another lucky professional acquaintance for me and personal friend made in Vienna, leading to working productively together in Germany in the grand-sounding “Commission Archaeology and Information System of the Association of German State Archaeologists” – of which Reiner holds the chair. In 2004, standing next to me, our very dear departed friend Willem Beex spotted Reiner new

and alone (as we all were once) after the last afternoon talk. Willem suggested we introduce ourselves and ultimately, the three of us spent a fine evening together. Anybody who knew Willem Beex will not be surprised at this kindness and friendliness. Please allow me to shed tear for him. I know you who knew who knew him will join me.



*Willem Beex, 1962 – 2019*

But that is also what the CHNT is about. Friendships made and friendships kept. Even if you don't see each other from one year to the next you just come back to Vienna in November and as you climb the Rathaus stairs and approach the reception desk...





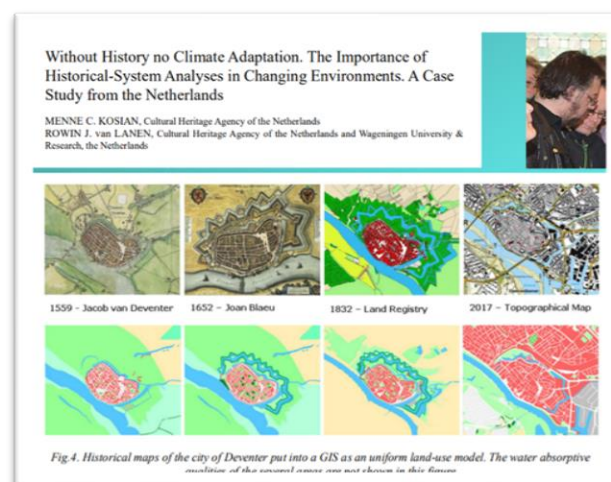


... and book table (some things never change!) you just know you've "come home" and will be able to take up the conversation just as you had left it and the previous twelve months simply dissolve in the dust of time. That is what it used to be like in pre-covid epoch. Hopefully it will still be the same, when it is possible to gather again easily and in person without "virtuals" and "hybrids".

Willem Beex was one of the first and one of the most active members of an ever-growing Dutch contingent with their base year for year at "Bendl" just to the North of the Rathaus on the Landesgerichtsstraße...



... an establishment upon which opinions differ. Whatever your opinion, the big Dutch contingent, with their beautifully prepared talks ranging from Menne Kosian (and friends') on urban GIS



to Benno Ridderhofs unforgettable ride on the range with Colonel Custer...



give the CHNT as special gôut! And with the Dutch team you can always hard talk if you want to – though always good naturedly...

Every year Professore Giorgio VERDIANI car-convoys a lively group of Italians cis-alpino. I love them for their wonderful 3D architecture talks, humour, their never ending joyous mood, not to mention their singing!



Tempus fugit, and I've only just started scratching the surface! So allow me conclude by mentioning a few more of my personal CHNT and Vienna favourites....



It is impossible to pick out any more talks and lectures as better, or worse. There is no point in trying. Let's just all agree we have all profited immensely from all of them and turn to other highlights – happy and interesting memories and a reminder of what we will hopefully experience again in better times to come...

The coffee breaks and all the wheeling dealing done and the fun had there!



The events at the Planungsamt:



The Lords Mayor's reception:



With such highlights as the wonderful Viennese music of Cornelia Maier...



And where else in the world do you get to hold seminars in somewhere like the Ahnensaal – the ancestral chamber in the Viennese Hofburg.



All these factors help to digest the new scientific knowledge and inspiration gained during the three days in November in Vienna. And that consistently over a quarter of a century!

For all these reasons and many more, the CHNT is important. It is where one first experiences the newest innovations in our discipline and Vienna's special position in south-central Europe makes it perfect as a melting pot for scientists from the north, the south, the east and the west.

Now some thank yous. I thank Karin Aussere Fischer for her support and the participation of the City Archaeology in the CHNT up to and including 2020. I particularly thank Susanne Uhlirz for "German efficiency" and organisation talent and last but certainly not least and from the very bottom of my heart I thank Wolfgang Börner.



Wolfgang is "Mr. CHNT". Without him, the CHNT would, at the very least, be a quite different event. With the CHNT Wolfgang Börner has created a special atmosphere, a unique atmosphere. And in doing so he has always been able to count on top class special support of his family: So....

... a huge

THANK YOU TO THE WHOLE BÖRNER FAMILY!



And thank you to everybody I have met in Vienna and spent worthwhile and enriching time with. And, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues thank you to you too for taking the time to listen to/read this "... affectionate, personal review of just on 20 years CHNT participation". It has been a nostalgic pleasure to put it together.