



**AIMA 2021**  
**19th CONGRESS**  
**OF THE INTERNATIONAL**  
**ASSOCIATION**  
**OF AGRICULTURAL**  
**MUSEUMS**

**PAST AND FUTURE**  
**AGRICULTURES**

Join the conversation @MuseumsAIMA

#AIMA2021 #PastFutureAg

## DAY 1 – Thursday 22 July

**Welcome** **Ollie Douglas**, President of the AIMA / Curator of MERL Collections, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)  
**12.45-13.00**

**Isabel Hughes**, Vice-President of the AIMA / Associate Director + Head of Curatorial and Public Engagement, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

**Kate Arnold-Forster**, Director of The MERL + Director of [University Museums and Special Collections Service](#), [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

**Session 1** **ORDINARY SESSION: New Approaches to Museums of Farming**

**13.00-14.00** **Chair: Pete Watson**, Director, [Howell Living History Farm](#)

*This session will comprise a series of short, pre-recorded papers, followed by livestream panel discussion, reflections, and Q&A. Our panel of experts share insights and ideas relating to new museologies in our shared field of agricultural heritage.*

**60 minutes** **Winani Thebele**, Chief Curator and Head of Ethnology, Botswana National Museum  
**The Bonnington Colonial Legacy: Conserving and Restoring Farming Heritage**

This project depicts the history of early colonial farming in Botswana's capital, Gaborone. Key exhibits include the farmhouse, grain silos, ox wagons, feeding troughs, and farm implements. Artists were invited to paint murals of farm activities on the silo walls. Botswana was a British Protectorate until 1966 when it gained independence. Exploring the traces of this colonial history, this paper offers critical analysis of colonial farming in Botswana, of its impact on local communities, of how it might have informed the current agricultural practices of the local populace, and of how sustainable this legacy has been.

**Elsa Hietala**, Curator, [Sarka Finnish Museum of Agriculture](#)

**Creating New Approaches at the Finnish Museum of Agriculture**

Sarka's latest displays present the salvaged eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collections of Helsinki University Agriculture Museum. These are designed to be accessible to all. The Museum is currently developing the national Food Museum, using events, exhibitions, tours, workshops, and online content to explore food from many perspectives. Current global challenges in climate, food production, and consumption increase the need for us to present the impact of the food choices we make. Sarka wants to bring historical perspective to this conversation.

**Bob Clark**, Director, [Auchindrain Township](#)

**Best Practice in the Thorny Field: Recent Approaches at Auchindrain**

Director of a regional museum with a site-specific agricultural history and former Chair of the UK's Rural Museums Network (RMN), Bob Clark, introduces us to the approaches his institution favours and why they make sense there but perhaps not everywhere.

**Benjamin Chiu-hang Sin**, Senior Social Work Supervisor, Caritas-Hong Kong

**A Community-Driven Movement on Revitalising the Old Hong Kong Dairy Farm Heritage Site**

The Hong Kong Dairy Farm Company, now a multinational corporation, was founded in 1886 to bring hygienic, nutritious and affordable milk to the community. The dairy farm closed in

1985 but was rediscovered by neighbouring villagers. Supported by a local charity and the Dairy Farm Company this work led to public tours and workshops, the listing of historic buildings, and formation of the largest built-heritage cluster in the City. The team also turned the Old Farm Manager's House into a museum of sustainable rural development.

**15 minute break**

In this break we intend to share a short presentation for those who wish to watch it.

**Ollie Douglas**, President of the AIMA / Curator of MERL Collections, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

**Introduction to The MERL: Welcome Case** (2:50 minutes – from YouTube)

**Session 2**

**ROUNDTABLE SESSION: Climate, Environment, and Sustainability**

**14.15-15.00**

**Chair: Surajit Sarkar**, Coordinator, [Centre For Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University](#)

*This session will comprise a series of short, pre-recorded papers, followed by livestream panel discussion, reflections, and Q&A. Together the panel will explore and share insights and ideas relating to the role and place of environmental history in museums of farming.*

**45 minutes**

**Cameron Archer**, Agricultural and Environmental Historian, [Publications Webpage](#)

**Debra Reid**, Curator of Agriculture and the Environment, [The Henry Ford](#)

**David M. Simmons**, Executive Director, [Billings Farm and Museum](#)

**15 minute break**

In this break we intend to share a short presentation for those who wish to watch it.

**Madeleine Ding**, Collections Officer, [The MERL, University of Reading](#) + [Reading Museum](#)  
**Short Tour of The MERL Open Access Stores** (3:49 minutes)

**Multiple contributors at The MERL**

**Other Voices: Creativity and Community** (1:08 minutes)

**Session 3**

**KEYNOTE SESSION: Art and Agriculture**

**15.15-16.00**

**Chair: Isabel Hughes**, Vice-President of the AIMA / Associate Director + Head of Curatorial and Public Engagement, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

*This session will comprise a 30-minute-long pre-recorded keynote paper, followed by livestream discussion, reflections, and Q&A.*

**45 minutes**

**Speaker: Adam Sutherland**, Director, [Grizedale Arts](#)  
**Connecting Resources - Cultivating Communities**

Adam Sutherland will discuss the reinvention and evolution of Lawson Park, a long derelict Cumbrian hill farm that is now the hub of a complex programme of collaborations between farming communities from Yamaguchi to Southside Chicago.

## DAY 2 – Friday 23 July

### Session 4 **ORDINARY SESSION: Working With Agricultural Films**

**13.00-14.00** **Chair: Caroline Gould**, Principal Archivist, [The MERL](#)

*This session will include a short introductory talk, followed by short, pre-recorded contributions, all followed by livestream panel discussion, reflections, and Q&A. Together the panel will explore and share insights and ideas relating to the role and importance of rural film collections.*

**60 minutes** **Peter Moser**, Director, [Archives of Rural History, Bern](#)  
**Introducing the [European Rural History Film Association \(ERHFA\)](#)**

A short introduction to this important project and its various member organisations, explaining why this timely scheme is relevant to the work of agricultural museums and other key partners. Followed by short films and discussion involving the following panellists:

**Caroline Gould**, Principal Archivist, [The MERL](#)

**Importance of sustainable conservation of film (case-study: The MERL)**

**Sven Lefevre + Yves Segers**, [Centre for Agrarian History, KU Leuven7](#)

**Making Films Digital Available: How to Deal with Copyright Issues (case-study: the Cinema Rural project)**

**Syds Wiersma**, Archivist, [Friesian Film Archive, The Netherlands](#), + **Henk Dijkstra**, Director, [Fries Landbouwmuseum](#)

**Implementing Films in a Museum Context: Advantages for Public History and Collaboration**

**15 minute break** In this break we intend to share two short presentations for those who wish to watch them.

**Adam Lines + Caroline Gould (compilers)**, [University Museums and Special Collections Service, The MERL, University of Reading](#)

**Preview of The MAFF Film Collections at The MERL** (2:33 minutes – from YouTube)

### Session 5 **ROUNDTABLE SESSION: Working With Agricultural Tools**

**14.15-15.00** **Chair: Ollie Douglas**, President of the AIMA / Curator of MERL Collections, [The MERL, University of Reading](#) [standing in for **Lisa Harris**, [Museum of East Anglian Life](#)]

*This session will comprise a series of short, pre-recorded papers, followed by livestream panel discussion, reflections, and Q&A. Our panel of experts share insights and ideas relating to agricultural tools and material culture in the museum setting and more broadly, centred on their own careers and material culture interests.*

**45 mins** **Hugh Cheape**, Professor, [National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture](#)

**Kerry-Leigh Burchill**, Director General, [Canada Agriculture and Food Museum](#)

**Bob Powell**, Working Horse and Farming Historian, Independent Scholar

**15 minute break** In this break we intend to share a short presentation for those who wish to watch it.

**Museum of East Anglian Life**

**Search for the Stars: The MEAL's Digitisation Project** (4:05 minutes)

**Session 6 KEYNOTE SESSION: Agriculture and the Digital Museum**

**15.15-16.00** **Chair: Guy Baxter**, Associate Director + Head of Archive Services, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

*This session will comprise a 30-minute-long pre-recorded keynote paper, followed by livestream discussion, reflections, and Q&A.*

**45 minutes** **Speaker: Adam Koszary**, former Digital Lead, [The MERL, University of Reading](#), former Social Media and Content Editor, [Royal Academy of Arts](#)

**From Farm Museum to Absolute Unit**

In April 2018 the Museum of English Rural Life (The MERL) achieved viral internet fame when it tweeted a photograph of an Exmoor Horn Aged Ram, archived as part of holdings related to the journal Farmer and Stockbreeder. In this keynote Adam Koszary, former Programme Manager and Digital Lead at The MERL, explores how the event affected the Museum and the wider sector, the potential for agricultural museums for using social media in advancing their missions, and what is holding them back.

**DAY 3 – Saturday 24 July**

**Session 7 KEYNOTE SESSION: Agriculture Museums and the Intangible**

**13.00-13.45** **Chair: Ollie Douglas**, President of the AIMA / Curator of MERL Collections, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

*This session will comprise a short live introduction to Indian agriculture, followed by a 30-minute-long pre-recorded keynote paper, followed by livestream discussion, reflections, and Q&A.*

**45 minutes** **Speaker: Nerupama Y. Modwel**, Director of Intangible Cultural Heritage Division, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

Following a short live description of Indian agriculture and the rapid changes and complexities of that sector, Nerupama Modwel's presentation will introduce to the work of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, with a particular focus on their conceptualisation of agricultural practices and traditions as forms of intangible heritage in need of safeguarding and recording.

**15 minute break** In this break we intend to share a short presentation for those who wish to watch it.

**Claire Clough + Adam Lines**, [University Museums and Special Collections Service, The MERL, University of Reading](#)

**Spotlight on History: The MERL & University of Reading Special Collections** (3:14 minutes – from YouTube)

**Session 8**      **ORDINARY SESSION: Bringing the Past to Life**

**14.00-15.00**      **Chair: Debra Reid**, Curator of Agriculture and the Environment, [The Henry Ford](#)

*This session will comprise a series of short, pre-recorded papers, followed by livestream panel discussion, reflections, and Q&A. Our panel of experts share insights and ideas relating to living history, live animals, and other relevant work.*

**60 minutes**      **Claus Kropp**, Director, [Lauresham Open-Air Laboratory](#)  
**Medieval Agriculture In Experiment**

The drought of 2018 caused massive problems in agriculture. This paper asks how medieval farmers might have coped with situations like this. Did medieval subsistence strategies result in advantages which could be of use for modern agriculture? The Lauresham Open Air Laboratory for Experimental Archaeology at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lorsch Abbey delivers valuable insights into the value of medieval subsistence strategies for 21<sup>st</sup> century agriculture.

**Cozette Griffin-Kremer**, Associate Researcher, CRBC Brest  
**Engaging with Living Heritage: Local Breeds at Work in the Museum**

This paper explores museum presentation of small-scale alternative approaches to agricultural production. Taking the local breeds work of the Alsace Open Air Museum (Écomusée d'Alsace) as its case study, the talk will examine how such scales are an essential component of food production in today's world. They capture both the upstream and downstream aspects of our food sources and reveal field to plate processes in a comprehensible sweep easily utilized by any museum with adequate land and facilities.

**Pierre Del Porto**, President, Fédération des Musées d'Agriculture et du Patrimoine Rural  
**Journees de Patrimoines de Pays et des Moulins: An AFMA Partnership Project on Mills and Rural Heritage**

Seven national federations in France involved in cultural, rural, and agricultural heritage have since 2002 organised two specific open days. These are designed to connect with and inform urban audiences and families about aspects of rural, countryside, and village life. This lighttouch and simple model is shared as an example of how other countries or European neighbours might approach comparable programming activity.

***THE FOLLOWING PRE-RECORDED PRESENTATION MAY BE SHARED AT THE END OF THIS SESSION. IT'S AUTHOR IS UNABLE TO JOIN US FOR Q&A AND DISCUSSION. APOLOGIES FOR CHANGES TO THE ADVERTISED PROGRAMME.***

**Chantal Bisschop**, [Centre for Agrarian History, KU Leuven](#)  
**Draft Horse Techniques In The Picture: Audio-Visual Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in a Participatory Way**

In 2018-2019 several draft horse organizations, the province of Flemish Brabant and the Centre for Agrarian History (CAG) worked together on the project 'Belgian draft horse, together we give heritage a future'. After the loss of the economic and agricultural function of the draft horse, this rural development project was looking for new uses to safeguard this heritage in the long term. Several future-oriented techniques were defined, documented, communicated and educated to new users. The participatory documentary videos can be watched on <https://www.brabantstrekpaard.be/informatie/projectinformatie> and <https://cagnet.be/page/participatief-documenteren-documentaires-handleidingen>.

**15 minute  
break**

In this break we intend to share a short presentation for those who wish to watch it.

**Ollie Douglas**, President of the AIMA / Curator of MERL Collections, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

**From chalk to cheese: Discover The MERL's latest wall-hanging** (5:59 minutes)

**Session 9**

**ROUNDTABLE SESSION: Using Collections to Inspire 'Farming Futures'**

**15.15-16.00**

**Chair: Ollie Douglas**, President of the AIMA / Curator of MERL Collections, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

*This session will comprise brief reflections from each panel member, followed by further livestream panel discussion, reflections, and Q&A. It will explore how museums, agricultural heritage, and 'living history', might play a role in addressing food security, locally and globally, past and present. Tillers International have used collections to inspire animal-powered road-grading equipment in Nicaragua, farm equipment in Mozambique, Madagascar and Burkina Faso, and technology for community-supported agriculture schemes. Howell Farm's operations and public programming provide internships in sustainable agriculture. In other contexts, decolonial approaches to development and to the history of agricultural extension raise serious questions about the relationship between Global South and Global North, past and present.*

**45 minutes**

**Dick Roosenberg**, Founder, [Tillers International](#)

**Paul Starkey**, Consultant in Integrated Transport and Transport Services + Visiting Senior Research Fellow, [The MERL, University of Reading](#)

**Atenchong Talleh Nkobou**, PhD Candidate, University of Reading

**Winani Thebele**, Chief Curator and Head of Ethnology, Botswana National Museum

**Pete Watson**, Director, [Howell Living History Farm](#)

## **DAY 4 – Sunday 25 July**

**17.30-18.15**

INFORMAL SOCIAL EVENT: Introducing 'The Commons'

Hosts: **Ollie Douglas**, President of the AIMA / Curator of MERL Collections, [The MERL, University of Reading](#); **Amanda Couch**, Artist + Senior Lecturer, [University of the Creative Arts](#)

**45 minutes**

*This event will include Ollie delivering livestream tours direct from The MERL galleries, and offers a chance to experience virtually a series of newly installed art interventions developed by Amanda and her fellow 'Commons' artists. We also hope to offer the chance to meet and chat with other delegates and speaker-participants in some informal break-out sessions.*

## DAY 5 – Monday 26 July

### Session 10 **ORDINARY SESSION: Understanding museums, objects, and sites**

**13.00-14.00** **Chair: Kerry-Leigh Burchill**, Director General, [Canada Agriculture and Food Museum](#)

*This session will comprise a series of short, pre-recorded papers, followed by livestream panel discussion, reflections, and Q&A. Our panel of experts share insights and ideas relating to living history, live animals, and other relevant work.*

**60 minutes** **Joao P. R. Joaquim**, University of Cambridge, [Collection to Cultivation Project](#)  
**The Association Internationale de Musees d'Agriculture: A Transnational History of Agriculture and Museums in C20th Europe**

**Marie-Christine Aubin**, Independent Researcher  
**The Advertising Arsenal of the Chilean "Salitre" (Saltpeter)**

**Anne Jorunn Froyen**, Curator of History, Jærmuseet  
**Insects and Pesticides: A Norwegian Case Study**

**Abel Vergneaux**, Deputy General Secretary, Museum of Agricultural Machinery and Rurality  
**Conserving and Restoring Heritage and Agricultural Machinery**

### **15 minute break**

In this break we intend to share a presentation for those who wish to watch it.

**Chris Green**, Independent Researcher [this has been recorded by **Isabel Hughes**]  
**An Historical Dictionary of Agricultural Handtools** (circa 10 minutes)

**Session 11** **The AIMA GENERAL ASSEMBLY. Key questions have been precirculated for consideration by the membership and for online voting.**  
**14.15-15.00**

PLEASE NOTE: An additional presentation was produced as bonus content but is too long to play in a comfort breaks. A link to access this additional content will be shared during the congress. Presentation details for this talk are as follows:

**Anna Barłóg-Mitmańska**, Curator, [National Museum of Agriculture in Szreniawa](#)  
**Memories of Polish Agricultural Workers From 1900 to 1945: A Topic From Rural Social History**

**END OF CORE CONGRESS CONTENT**

**PLEASE NOTE THE ADDITIONAL RELATED PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITY BELOW**



Friday 30 July

**PUBLIC** 'Launching the Commons': A Virtual Gathering with The MERL

**EVENT**

**18.00-19.45**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU WILL NEED TO BE REGISTERED SEPARATELY AND REQUIRE A SPECIFIC LINK TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS EVENT.**

This free event will introduce the project themes and ideas of The Commons: Re-Enchanting the World through live talks, pre-recorded videos, and performances. There will also be live walk-throughs in the galleries by Ollie Douglas to showcase the work installed in the museum. The event will include opportunities to participate in a virtual Commons Feast. Participants are encouraged to prepare food and drink in advance of the event to eat and 'share'.

If you registered for AIMA 2021 via Eventbrite, you will already have been given the option to book a place at this event. If you did not use this route to book (or have since decided you are keen to attend), please register here <https://merl.reading.ac.uk/event/commons-feast/>.



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