

ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee Meeting and AGM Portugal, June 2010

Report by Lyn Leader-Elliott, Committee member

The 2010 meeting of the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism (ICTC) was held in Porto and the Douro Valley from 17 – 21 June.

The first day of the gathering was a special World Heritage Sites conference on ‘Opportunities for Economic Gain for Tourism Destinations’. Held in the historic centre of Porto, this conference featured speakers from UNESCO, National Geographic’s tourism program, Portuguese national agencies and representatives from several organisations concerned with planning for the World Heritage listed cultural landscape of the Alto Douro Valley. This conference gave us some broad background on issues facing the Alto Douro as a complex cultural landscape for which authorities are juggling agendas of landscape management, heritage character, and economic development. President of the ICTC, Australian Graham Brooks, was an invited speaker at this conference.

On Day 2, we travelled into the Douro Valley, led by the very capable and generous Luisa Ambrósio of ICOMOS Portugal, who had organised the program for the committee. Over the next 2-3 days we met local government officials, tourism directors, heritage managers, people who ran wineries (quintas), museums and restaurants (fantastic food). This was exhilarating and demanding. It wasn’t just fun – we were being briefed for the committee’s intensive workshop to produce recommendations for a regional plan for the Douro Valley. These were presented to Ricardo Magalhães, Project Manager of the Douro Mission Structure, on 20 June (Day 4). Recommendations were made under these headings:

- Community-centred dispersed model for sustainable tourism
- Communicating local heritage
- Diversify Economic Development
- Improve branding and broaden product base
- Understanding of heritage capital
- Capacity building
- Planning and regulation
- Integrated public transportation system.

AGM

The AGM was held in Lamego, Douro Valley on 20 June 2010.

PRESENT: Graham Brooks (President), Sue Millar (Vice-President), Murray Brown (Membership Secretary), Aylin Orbasli, Ahmed Al-Jowder, Günther Stanzl, Jaturong Pokharatsiri, Wolfgang Koellisch, Erzsébet Kovacs, Michèle Prats, Paul Dignam, Lyn Leader-Elliott, Esa Ollikainen, Randall Durband, Sondre Svalastog, Anne de San, Ivan Henares, Luisa Silva Ferreira Ambrosio.

OBSERVER: Dorothea Otremba

APOLOGIES: Diane Douglas, Gordon Grimwade, Ian Kelly, Augusto Villalon, Chaozhi Zhang, Benedict Goes, Agnieszka Kiera, Flemming Aalund, Lars & Nanna Cnattingius, Katerina Kremezi, Hilary du Cros.

The President reported that new World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Initiative Principles would be endorsed at the meeting of the World Heritage Committee to be held in Brasilia in July 2010. This would mean that tourism planning would need to be integrated into future World Heritage nominations, and that the ICTC would have a role in both advising on the nominations briefing document and in potentially monitoring the implementation of World Heritage tourism programs. This would have significant implications for the work of the Committee.

In accordance with the principles of the ISC Eger-Xi'an principles, Graham Brooks will stand down as President at the 2011 annual general meeting. Current Vice-President, Sue Millar (UK) is prepared to stand for the position, and Murray Brown will continue in the role of Membership Secretary.

The international membership drive headed by Murray Brown has built committee membership to a total of 81. The AGM endorsed three new expert members endorsed by their National Committees, 12 new Self-nominated expert members and 6 associate members.

The Committee's website is woefully out of date, (it relies on volunteer input) and the AGM agreed that the site should be rebuilt as a matter of urgency. Ivan Anthony Henares from the Philippines is working on the technical side, and Lyn Leader-Elliott was asked to be the site content manager.

Other matters discussed were:

- A new organisational structure for the enlarged committee, based on working groups
- Compliance with the 2009 Malta guidelines for ISCs
- Sustainability of Cultural Heritage Tourism
- Relations with ICOMOS, other ISCs and organisations such as IUCN, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, UN World Tourism Organisation and the Getty Conservation Institute.

Date of next meeting will be set to coincide with the ICOMOS General Assembly in Paris in 2011 (25 November – 2 December).

Business dealt with outside the AGM.

The committee discussed the structure and content of a handbook on interpreting and communicating heritage being prepared by Graham Brooks for the UN WTO.

30 August 2010

