

Notes from the Conference Organizer: Making the 2024 ICHC Happen

“Maybe you can organise a conference next year. You have a good cycling community in Saxony,” Jan Králík suggested to me at the 32nd ICHC in Cremona, Italy. I rose to the challenge and found that it is quite hard to organise such an event in such a short time in bureaucratic Germany, especially when my initial idea was to work with a state run museum.

After coming home, I was sitting with Dirk Großer drinking wine in the evening and was talking about my task and the difficulty of bringing the ICHC to the Verkehrsmuseum Dresden (VMD) or the university. He asked, “why don’t you bring the ICHC to Torhaus Wehlen.”

So with these three options, I made the proposals to the committee of the ICHC and a decision was made. A logo was made by Michel Magyar. [Figure 1] Frank Papperitz, the president of our local club (Fahrrad-Veteranen-Freunde Dresden 1990 e.V./FVFD) supported the idea and provided the motto: “For cycling friends by cycling friends.” He also provided vintage bicycles from his collection for daily use by the participants. All the technical equipment was already on the spot except the sound system, which was provided by Kai Hoffmann. Some friends, Peggy and Andre, volunteered to assist with preparation of the food and some vegetables were planted on a befriended farm.

My idea was to have vegetarian food based on our local cuisine around the theme of potatoes. While Stadt Wehlen is a small tourist town in the Saxon Switzerland National Park, there would be no problem getting a room. For those who liked it simple, there was the possibility of sleeping in Torhaus Wehlen on donation basis, (free for students and participants with low income).

On arrival it was possible to be picked up by foot at the train station and brought to the ferry (500 m), crossing the Elbe, then walking up to the main square anchored by the Radfahrerkerche (cyclists’ church) to Torhaus Wehlen (400 m). Some people had a mis-booking with their accommodation, but were able to stay in Torhaus as well, until their issue was resolved.



Figure 1. Logo developed by Michael Magyar for the 33rd International Cycling History Conference, held 17–22 May, 2024, at Torhaus Wehlen, Stadt Wehlen, Germany.

On day 1 we started after lunch (potatoes and vegetable quark) with the presentation of papers and some snacks in the evening.

Day 2 started with papers before lunch (marinated eggs in mustard sauce with cooked potatoes) followed by a cycling trip to Frank Papperitz, where he presented his papers in his garden and provided a vegetarian BBQ and a tour through his house and garden to see his collection of bicycles, which he made available for us to ride. [Figures 2 and 3]

Day 3 brought us paper presentations interrupted by lunch (root mash and apple onion vegetables), coffee break with potato cake and finally a presentation of French bicycle songs (1869 to 1960) by Pierre Bernier. [Figure 4]

Pentecost Monday, the next day, was a day off, which participants used to have a bicycle ride to Bad Schandau¹ and an evening walk into the National Park, where the first outside photograph ever was taken in nature on Bastei bridge.

¹ “Bad” in German means “spa.”



Figure 2. Conference attendees chow down at the BBQ provided by Frank Papperitz at his house in Pirna, Germany. The day offered some rain, fortunately while we were eating or listening to Frank's lectures and not on the bike ride over from Stadt Wehlen or while people were trying out Frank's bikes. Photo by Thomas Beutlich.



Figure 3. Jergen (left) and Heinrich Bultemann-Hagedorn (right) maneuver around on two of Frank's bikes. Photo by Thomas Beutlich.



Figure 4. After a day of papers, conference goers were entertained with renditions of early French bicycle songs sung by Peirre Bernier. Photo by Florian Freund.



Figure 5. In the VMD, interspersed among the automobiles, were bicycles, including this example of a high wheel, that Julian Andres Alfonso Sanchez, Colombia, a conference participant, had to try out. Photo by Florian Freund.

Day 5 brought the participants to Dresden by public transport to have a short walk to see some of the famous monuments and visit Mathematisch-Physikalischer Salon, with its collection of mechanical instruments of the Saxon Kings and Electors from before Drais' time. The day ended with a visit to VMD, the Traffic Museum Dresden [Figure 5] and a Gala dinner in a nearby restaurant.

Day 6 had the participants viewing the exhibition of bicycles, with a focus on the local production, at Velocium Weinböhla. [Figure 6]

Day 1 after the conference, the remaining participants cycled to the Radrennbahn Heidenau (Velodrome); some went on afterwards to cycle to the IVCA Rally, which was held in this year in Ostrava, Czechia.



Figure 6. At the Velocium Weinböhla, in animated discussion with Steffen Stiller, proprietor of the museum, featuring largely local bicycles. Photo by Florian Freund.

By Robert Johannes Hummel
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