Baltic Seascapes

Activities of Working Group
on Coastal Culture and Maritime Heritage
of the Baltic Sea States

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The Working Group on Coastal Culture and Maritime Heritage
& The National Maritime Museum, Gdańsk
Gdańsk 2016

Front cover
M/T „Gamle Oksøy".
Photo by Jan Robert Jore

ISBN 978-83-64150-17-3

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Acknowledgements:
Estonian Maritime Museum
Flensburg Maritime Museum – Germany
Jurmala City Museum – Latvia
Museum Vest – Norway
Lindesnes Lighthouse Museum – Norway
Lithuanian Department of Cultural Heritage Protection
National Board of Antiquities – Finland
National Maritime Museum, Gdańsk – Poland
Swedish National Maritime Museum

http://mg.kpd.lt

Foreword

The regional heritage cooperation was initiated by the Ministers of Culture of the Baltic Sea Sates in 1997 in Lübeck, where the Ministers agreed that special attention should be given to cultural heritage regarded as an important part of the environment and an important factor for economic and social development.

At the invitation of the Ministers, a special group of senior heritage experts called the Monitoring Group on cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea States (MG) was established. Each member of the MG represents national organizations in charge of sustainable management of cultural heritage resources. Since 2011, the MG has acted as an Intergovernmental Working-group of the Council of the Baltic Sea States implementing its long-term priorities on cultural heritage.

To carry out the mandate given by the Ministers, the MG decided to establish four Working Groups (WG) of experts in various fields. The Working Group on Coastal Culture and Maritime Heritage (WGCCMH) was established in 2000. From that time work of this Group was coordinated by Norway and Randi Ertesvåg was its chairman. Harald Hamre from Norway leaded the Group between 2004-2007. After him as a chairman Robert Domżał from National Maritime Museum in Gdansk was appointed. From 2015 a chairperson is Hannu Matikka from Finland. The WGCCMH initiated the 1st Cultural Heritage Forum in Gdansk in 2003. For this occasion, the WGCCMH produced poster exhibition "Baltic Lights – a Guarantee of Safe Passage", which was distributed in many copies to the participating countries. As a result of this success the same Group launched another poster exhibition called "Historic Harbours: Gateway to the Future" during the 3rd BSR Cultural Heritage Forum in Vilnius in 2007. The exhibition presents the history of harbour development, expansion, efficiency, and diversity. The poster set, again consisting of 12 individual posters, was dispatched to museums, cultural institutions, schools and libraries around the Baltic Sea region. The following exhibition, introduced at Heritage Forum in Riga in 2010, called "Baltic Ships – Contemporary Challenge" raised the awareness and promoted the preservation of historic ships under the threat. For the time being the latest poster exhibition "Herring, a Shared Heritage" was released at the 5th Heritage Forum in Tallinn in 2013.

Today the coastal heritage is threatened, not only by the crisis in the traditional coastal industries, but also by the pressure of recreational activity. The coastal areas are probably the most rapidly changing environments today, but it still seems to be a neglected topic, both in national preservation policies and in national and international coastal and sectoral policies. The members of the WGCCMH finds it essential that coastal heritage will be made more visible, and it will be further protected and developed in all of its diversity by identifying and describing the common assets, problems and potentials. The Group also stresses the importance of the long term heritage protection and of strategic co-operation between authorities and others in order to facilitate a sustainable use of the region, including a diversified economy and partly traditional trades. This work can also generate economic contributions through cultural tourism and foster a responsible approach to development and necessary changes.

This booklet is not a comprehensive survey of all cultural features found at the coast, but rather a selection of Seascapes of those topics the WGCCMH has presented and highlighted so far from various different angles. The intention is to increase the knowledge and interest in Maritime and Coastal Heritage and to promote the valuable work of the MG as an Intergovernmental Working-group of the Council of the Baltic Sea States CBSS.

The editorial group would like to thank all members of WGCCMH who had made their contribution to this publication.

Special acknowledgements to Nordic Cultural Fund, which financed this publication.

Introduction

There´s always a powerful sense of a place at the seaside. What, You might ask, do we mean by the word "Seascape"? How, in the Baltic Sea context, should the term "Seascape" be defined?

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors". The Convention also recognizes landscapes "as an essential component of people surroundings, an expression of their shared cultural and natural heritage, a foundation of their identity".

"Seascape" is surely a development of the concept of landscape. Dictionaries often defines "Seascape" simply as a 'picture or a view to the sea'. We want to broaden this concept and present the definition to include not only views from land to sea, but also views from sea to land as well as views along the coastline.

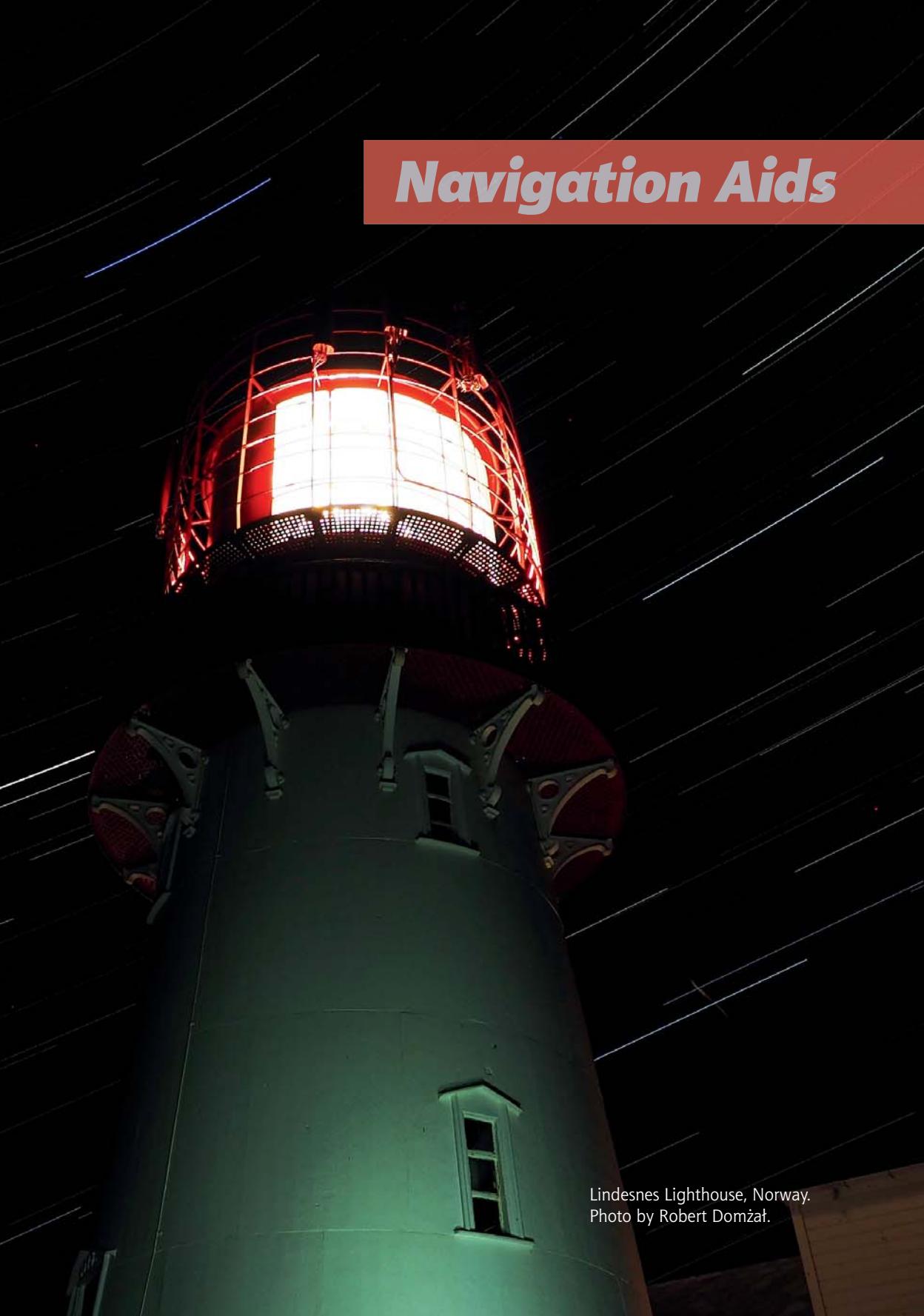
"Seascape" is often related to the definition of Maritime cultural landscape, which is a holistic vision combining human activities that affect the environment in coastal areas. In this sense "Seascape" can be also defined as the network of ports and waterways along the coast, as well as all related structures and remains associated with human actions, both underwater and terrestrial. A surprising amount of Baltic Sea coastline is still in natural state. You can easily find places where to walk for kilometers without seeing anyone. For many just this is the main attraction of the coast.

Every landscape provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. This vision leads us to the conclusion that "Seascape", like maritime cultural landscape, actually mirrors the entire range of maritime landscape, economies and topography of the whole waterfront area. In geographical sense it also relates to the utilization of space in marine environment. In broad sense "Seascape" is hence both natural seascape and the seascape as altered by human activity. "Seascape" does not end at visual objects but it also includes traces of intangible heritage, traditions and living expressions inherited from ancestors.

Among most typical features of the "Seascape" can be mentioned harbours, ports, ship- and boatyards, navigational aids, fishing villages, remains of all type of fishing or seafaring constructions, industrial remains and, naturally, ships and boats of all types. People who live in the coastal zone are familiar with all these features whether they are submerged, in the water, buried or located on land, still in use or disused.

By the term "coastal zone" we do not mean just special or designated region, but an area of the sea affected by the land, and an area of land affected by the sea. In other words the total assemblage of things that human beings have done to alter the interface and relationship between land and sea.

Navigation Aids



Lindesnes Lighthouse, Norway.
Photo by Robert Domżał.

Lighthouses are some of the best known aids to navigation and have marked the main highways along our coasts for centuries. In addition there are navigation marks of all types which has been used hundreds of years to guide vessels safely to harbours. Throughout history navigation has benefited from the development of new technology and increasingly automated equipment. Today for instance the majority of lighthouses world-wide are automatically operated and no longer require personnel. Many have been decommissioned from service, some have been listed as protected heritage sites. Continual exposure to the harsh maritime environment and no regular maintenance means these buildings rapidly deteriorate. It is this threat which many Baltic Lights now face.

Lindesnes Lighthouse, Norway.
Photo by Thor Ivar Hansen.

A replica lever beacon, at Finland's Maritime Museum.
Photo by Markku Heinonen.

The earliest Baltic lights were simple fires placed along the coastlines to warn and guide sailors. Lever beacons were developed to hoist up metal baskets filled with lit coal to improve light intensity and this type of beacon was used at Falsterbo, Sweden from 1229. Some of the earliest recorded beacons are illustrated by Olaus Magnus on his map of the "Nordic Countries" 1539. One of these, Kõpu in Estonia, is one of the oldest lights found in the Baltic area. It was built by the Hanseatic League of Merchants between 1527 and 1531 and is still in use today Larger and more permanent structures continued to be built in the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1753 the first Finnish lighthouse was built on the island of Utö. Denmark received its first proper lighthouse at Skagen in 1757.

Kõpu built in 1531 on the Estonian island of Hiiumaa (Dagö) is one of the oldest Baltic lighthouses still in use. Photo by Danckert Monrad-Krohn.

Coast seen from Rozewie Lighthouse, Northern Poland. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Harmaja lighthouse and pilot station off Helsinki, Gulf of Finland. Photo by Maija Matikka 2012.

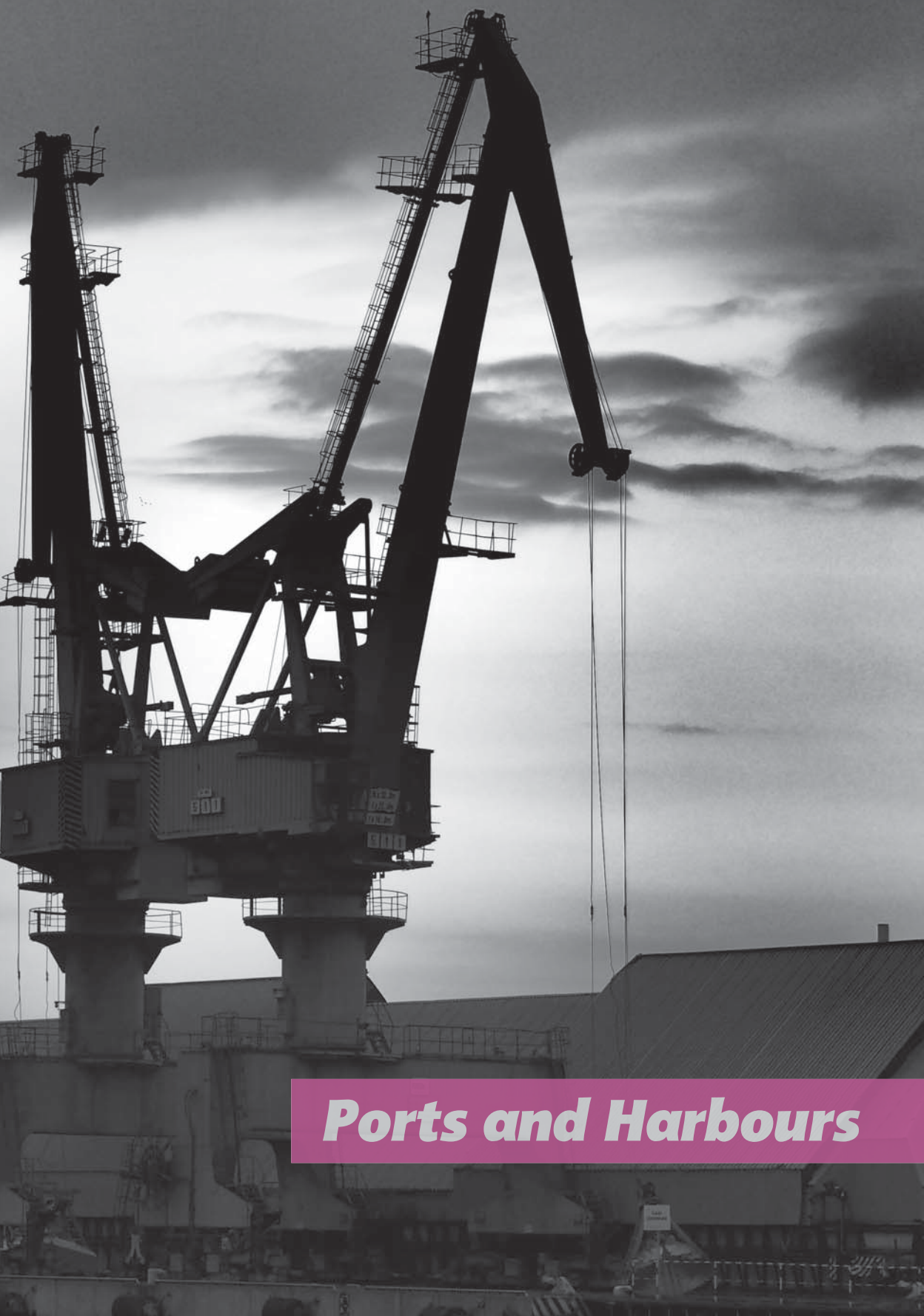
Polish Lighthouse in Port Północny, Gdańsk.
Photo by Robert Domżał.

Pater Noster, Sweden.
Photo by Dan Thunman.

Until recently it was the keeper's duty to keep watch and ensure that the lighthouse remained alight from dusk until dawn. In addition he played an active role in the daily maintenance of the lamp, its equipment, and the buildings. The introduction of fully automated lights has lead to a rapid decline in the number of manned lighthouses. In the 21st century the majority have been fully automated. Lights are also threatened by satellite based navigation, which could eventually replace lighthouses and lights as primary navigation aids. The lack of regular maintenance at decommissioned and demanned lighthouse stations leads to many of them becoming seriously neglected.

There are a lot of possibilities to develop lighthouses, beacons and other navigational aids as tourist destinations, which can preserve them to future. Today many of the lighthouse stations that are no longer operational or have been automated are used as accommodation for walkers, museums, restaurants and cafes, conference centers, guest and pleasure boat harbours, nature centers and bird observation stations. The adoption of new uses can also contribute revenue towards the ongoing maintenance costs of the buildings.

Cranes in Gdansk harbour.
Photo by Robert Domżał.



Ports and Harbours

Photo by Anneli Karlsson.

The majority of ports in the Baltic Sea area originated as natural harbours giving shelter from the wind and weather that permitted cargo handling without too much trouble. The industrialization and introduction of new technology with steam ships and railways in the 1800s meant that harbors built for sailing vessels were transformed into industrial ports. Protective piers, bigger harbor basins, increased quayside areas and factories were introduced in the harbor areas.

Photo by unknown photographer, National Maritime Museums of Sweden.

Natural harbours in Sweden.

By the Viking period the natural harbours were improved with simple constructions, but actual harbour building first arose with the larger ships in the Middle Ages. Deepening of harbour basins, plus wharfs, cranes and warehouses were among the many elements introduced in the increasingly more developed harbours.

Harbour in Klaipeda. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Keeping history afloat: The fleet of traditional sailing working vessels at the Flensburg Museum Port. Photo by Flensburg Maritime Museum.

Passenger ferry ship in harbour of Gdańsk. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Container terminal, Gdynia, Poland, 2005. Photo by Tadeusz Urbaniak, Zarząd Morskiego Portu Gdynia S.A.

The industrialisation and introduction of new technology with steam ships and railways in the 1800s meant that harbours built for sailing vessels were transformed into industrial ports. Whilst poor road systems restricted the harbours' hinterland, there was a need for many harbours. With the railways and especially the introduction of lorries, the harbours' landward hinterland grew. The consequence was increased competition for goods, both between harbours and between sea and overland transport. This development increased particularly from the 1960s and gradually made a number of smaller harbours superfluous.

The rapid change of shipping, fishing and other maritime industries leads to a complete change of core areas in our towns. Harbour activities are being moved out of city centers. Redundant harbours have become attractive areas in the competition for access to the waterfronts. Buildings, quays, cranes and other structures are demolished and disappear. The need to document these losses is an urgent topic for international cooperation in the Baltic Sea area. This is not only about monuments, but also traditions and identity. Most of our cities have developed because of and beside the harbour.

What is left of historic identity when the harbour disappears? How can heritage be integrated in development? How can heritage be a resource for the new use of historic harbours?

Ships and Boats

Rum-Regatta on the Flensburg Fjord, Germany.
Photo by V. Gries.

Bohuslän passenger steamer built in Sweden 1913–14.
Photo by Bill Östring 1992, SMM (National Maritime Museums of Sweden).

A ship has always been a common feature of the "Seascape".
A historic ship is a one, which has survived its purpose.

Nearly all ships ever built have been destroyed, either by nature or by man. Only a few have survived. Some of them might be wrecks; others are preserved more or less in their original condition.

Historic ships are unique monuments of cultural heritage. You find them in the open sea, in harbours, on lakes or in rivers. But as they have always been moveable, these monuments have often been regarded as less valuable than buildings ashore. There is no reason for that.

Ships have connected people; they have brought us our food, carried our goods and given incomes to most societies. Seafarers shipped cultural influences across the seas. The maritime cultures and traditions united people living far away from each other.

Originally it was much easier to travel or to carry goods in a vessel on the water rather than trying to do the same thing via land. Roads were either nonexistent or in poor condition. Thus early human settlements tended to be located beside water – by the sea, a river, a stream or a lake. It was this water that connected man to the world around him – and the ship was his tool for trade, travel and warfare.

Pommern, the only four-masted merchant sailing ship in the world (1903) still in its original state. Mariehamn, Aland Islands. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Kuronian fishing vessels moored at Klaipėda, 2009. Photo by Laisvunas Kavaliauskas, Department of Heritage Protection, Klaipėda District, Lithuania.

One of World most biggest Maersk container vessels in Gdańsk harbour. Photo by Robert Domżał.

GTS *Finnjet*, being scrapped at Alang, India September 2009. Photo by Dhiraj Shing, MV Photos.

Destroyer *Błyskawica* built in England 1937. The vessel served in the Polish navy during World War Two and is now preserved as a museum ship in Gdynia. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Over time human society developed and became still more diversified and specialized. So did the ship. Slowly but surely distinct differences developed between ships with different purposes: the merchant vessel, the passenger ship, fishing boat and the Man of War. There is a direct line between the vessels of the Vikings and the container vessels or the giant ferries crossing the Baltic today. Despite an enormous variety in construction, design and basic technique the purpose of modern vessels is exactly the same as it has always been.

The diversity of vessels from around the Baltic Sea region comes from the extreme and variable environmental conditions. For instance on the southern coastline ice is quite a rare phenomenon whereas further north in the Gulf of Bothnia the sea may be covered by ice for almost six months of the year. Whenever or wherever a ship or a boat was built the intention was to produce a vessel to suit local conditions. Was it the open sea with prevailing winds and wave conditions, or an estuary, lagoon, river, fjord or a lake? And what was the specific purpose for which the vessel was built – for trade or for war, or perhaps for fishing along different coastlines? The availability of local building resources, the supply and type of materials and technology also determined the physical character of the vessel. Shipbuilding techniques and traditions have existed simultaneously and there are often different building traditions within one region. In the Baltic Sea region, there are still those who build their vessels as they were built a thousand years ago.

Fisherman, working with nets.
Photo cortesy of Norwegian
Fisheries Museum, Bergen.

Fishing

Fish storage houses in Bergen, Norway. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Traditional fishing boats in Jurmala, Latvia, 1920s. © Jurmala City Museum.

Festivals and fish markets maintain the tradition of herring bringing people together. The Helsinki herring fair has been held since the 18th century. Photo by Volker von Bonin. National Board of Antiquities.

Fishing has been important in Northern Europe for over thousand years. Intensive period in fishing and trade has been the Hanseatic time, from the 14th to the 16th centuries. In the 19th century, cheaper salt prices allowed fishing and trade to increase. Fisheries expanded westwards, as far as Iceland. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the purpose of for example herring fishing changed: more than half of the catch was processed into fishmeal, used in animal fodder. The 20th century brought technological developments in vessel and net sizes, and herring locating methods. Fishing intensified enormously, finally leading to overfishing and the collapse of some fish stocks in the 1960s.

These days there are strict national and international regulations for sustainable fishing.

Seine-drying buildings such as this were once a common sight along the coast of Norway. Very few now remain, preserved as heritage sites. Photo by Arve Kjersheim. Riksantikvaren.

Neptun herring plant is a fine representative of Norwegian fisheries industry, and is one of the selected industrial facilities that receives support from the Cultural Heritage of the state budget for maintenance and repairs. Photo by Neptun herring oil factory, Museum Nord.

Fish is a limited resource. The natural fluctuation of stocks can be different from one year to another, independent of human impact. The most serious threat is overfishing, especially when stocks are going down naturally. For instance in the 1970s herring fishing had to be stopped entirely. Fishing was allowed again in 1972, but regulated with quotas. Global fishing quotas are set by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Nations then negotiate over how this quota is divided. Within the EU, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) regulates fishing quotas and methods.

Each country also has its own fishing policy, and these can vary enormously.

Even with regulation, it took 20 years for herring stocks to recover from overfishing. Many other fish stocks, for example cod and tuna, are struggling. It is possible they may never recover.

A man from Øygarden is rowing a tradinitonal boat called „Færing". The Picture shows the contrast between the old fishinglife and the Oil Industry today. Photo by Bjorg Christophersen.

Small fishing boats in the midle of Stockholm city, Sweden. Photo by Robert Domżał.

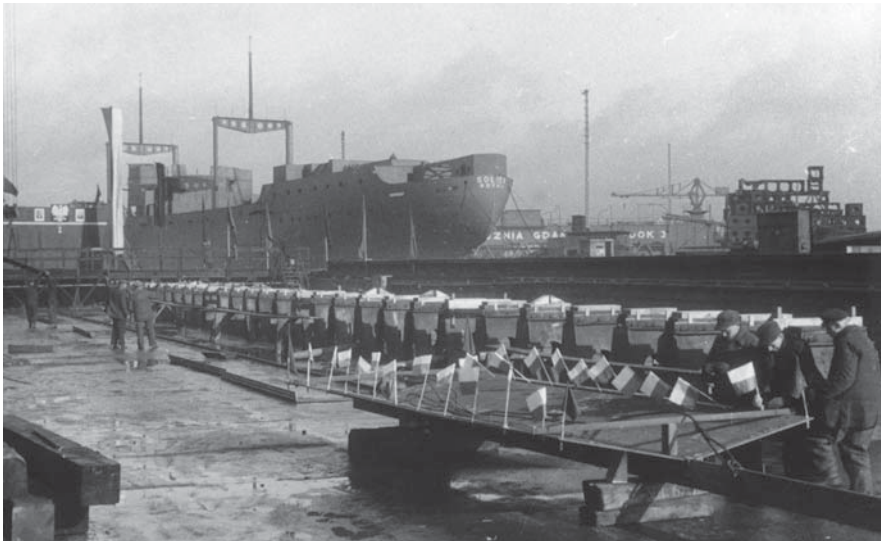
Polish fishermen catching herring on a small fishing vessel near Rewal.
They use an electric winch to pull in the net. Photo by Maciej Krzeptowski.

In Poland some fishermen are still using the traditional method of fishing
herring with nets attached to wooden poles. Photo by Robert Domżał.

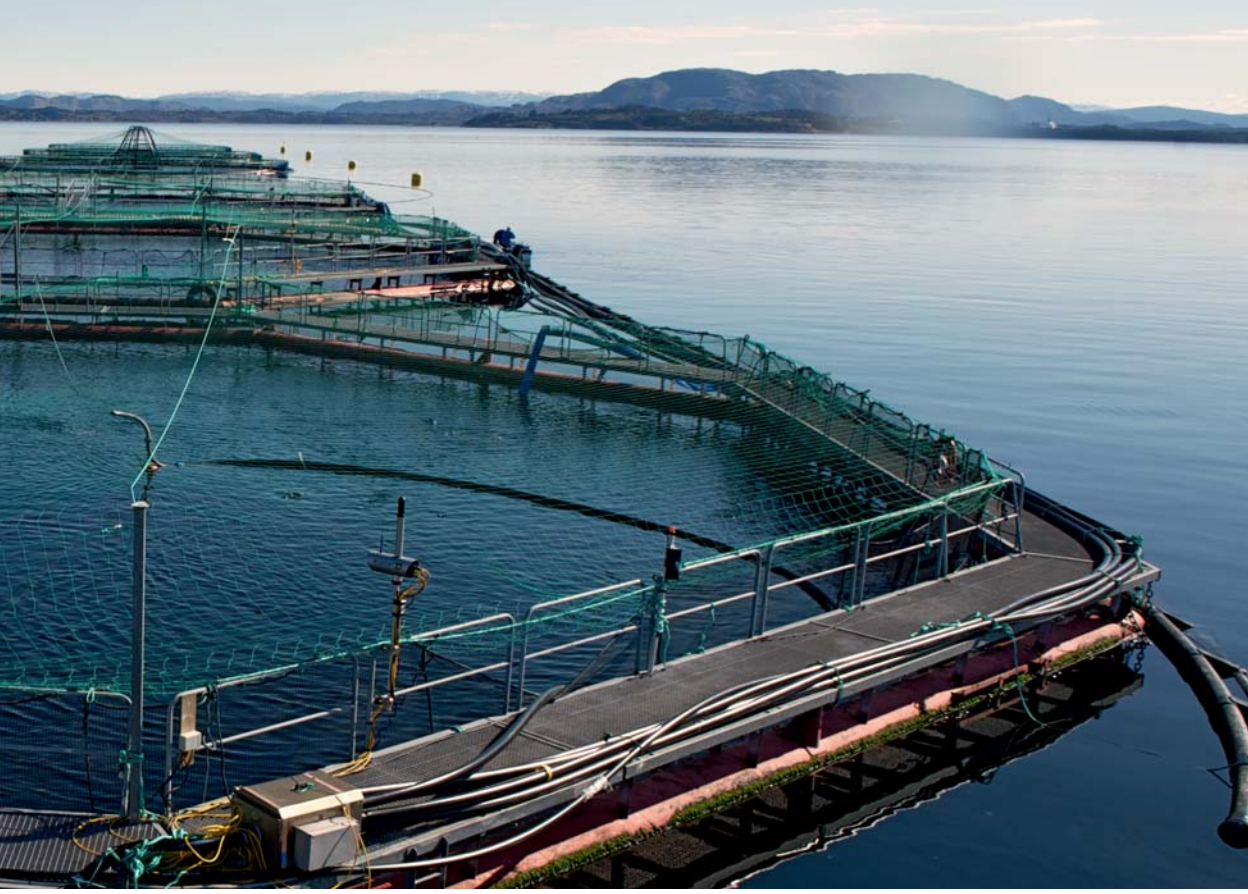
The platform "Troll" situated west of Bergen about 67 km offshore. Photo by Helge Hansen/Statoil.

Industry

The fish farm owned by Blom Laks close to Øygarden Visningsanlegg. Photo by M. Wanvik.



Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, steamer "Sołdek" in background (Archive of NMM in Gdańsk).



Industrial Seascapes exist throughout the Baltic Sea region in a wide variety of forms. Each industry depending upon its purpose, date of construction, size, level of production and geographic location has a distinctive historic appearance. Industrial complexes are made up of a variety of special purpose buildings and constructions. Over the centuries the sea, rivers and lakes were used as waterways for the transportation of people and goods. Industrialisation required the transportation of large quantities of raw materials and finished goods. The sea and rivers provided the main economical means of transporting large quantities of goods for any significant distance before the creation of road and railway system. Not only the fairways but also a great number of rivers were dredged from the post medieval period onwards to allow transport to major trading ports and, later, industrial centers.

Wind farms at sea close to Oresund bridge, Sweden. Photo by J.R. Jore.

Oil terminal at the north harbour of Gdańsk, Poland. Photo by courtesy of Zarząd Morskiego Portu Gdańsk SA.

Oil rigs (platforms) close to Bergen, Norway. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Among the old industries like fishing and shipbuilding there is a growing number of new kind of industrial activities in the coastal zone: extractive, processing and energy Industry, the development of new energy supply systems, aquaculture, oil and gas pipelines, off-shore wind parks, raw material exploitation, installation of electric cables and for instance construction of pipelines for the transportation of hydrocarbons.

We do not know yet how the new industries will effect our seascape in near future. To avoid problems, each country has to implement their own Maritime Spatial Plan to answer the question how to manage different interest parties and to take care of coastal heritage.

German torpedo test platform from WW2 located near Gdynia, Poland.
Photo by Robert Domżał.

Military Areas

Wisłujście stronghold in Gdańsk, Poland. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Military Seascapes relates to defensive areas in coastal locations designed to deter or prevent attack from seaward. Military coastal defences and fortifications can be found all around the Baltic Sea. They form a diverse group of objects having cultural historic value, including both prehistoric and medieval forts and defences as well as modern forts and batteries. In general, older military coastal defences are located on higher grounds overlooking the coast, or strategically important crossings of waterways. Nowadays one can pop up into a security zone for instance for shooting practice, naval training area, secret fairways and devices for safety and signal reconnaissance systems all along the Baltic Sea coastline.

Fortifications and defence sites of different periods tend to generate differing perceptions. The old forts and defences, nowadays found often in the rural areas, are reasonably protected and preserved. Some of them are even listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for their outstanding value. In the case of more recent concrete-built naval and military works the situation is different. Many modern military fairways, constructions and training areas, which used to be secret areas, are out-of-date and either have been or will be closed in near future. In these cases of these typically concrete-built military works the opinion has little by little turning against the idea, that these buildings and installations are an eyesore in the seascape.

Fragment of defence structure around Gdańsk city, built in 17th century, Poland. Photo by Wiesław Stępień.

The hydroplane hangar in Tallinn built 1916–1917 and last used by the Estonian navy in 1940. Photo by courtesy of Estonian Maritime Museum.

Military area from post-Soviet time in Tallin, Estonia. Photo by Robert Domżał.

Coalbridge at powerstation of the former V2-rocket army testing site in Peenemünde, Usedom (Germany). Photo by Hans-Peter Balfanz.

On the contrary they tend to be seen as part of the overall historic legacy of the seascape, especially those linked to First or Second World War. They are becoming perceived as part of the overall historic legacy of the coastal landscape. In the eastern part the Baltic coast, though, there still is a lot of Soviet-era military sites and installations – will that kind of a hateful Soviet legacy wiped out or can these sites be preserved or perhaps reused as they are now? There are clear signs that attitudes are changing: the raising understanding and awareness will make them more sustainable as a resource and even some of the installations will be preserved as monument for future generations.

During the past 300 years The Baltic Sea Region has witnessed many naval battles. There are several good reasons to state that these underwater battlefields too have their own relevance as a part of the military seascape.

Recreation

Kieler Woche, Kiel, Germany, 1914
© Arthur Renard, Archiv Renard, Germany.

See Resort Jurmala, Latvia, 1930s. © Jurmala City Museum.

Beach crowded by people, Kąty Rybackie, Poland. Photo by Robert Domżał.

See Resort Jurmala, Latvia, 1930s. © Jurmala City Museum.

Recreation refers here to coastal regions whose primary purpose relates to leisure and pleasure. Recreational use of coast closely depends on the combination of physical, biological, cultural and social prerequisites of the area.

The sea and coast has always been a recreational environment. Originally the attraction of the coast was for swimming and bathing. The first seaside resorts opened in the early 19th century, although such recreation was a long a luxury only for the wealthy, who began to spent time at seaside in fashionable spa towns.

Leisure sailing begun with the formation of the Yacht Clubs in 19th century. During the last few decades leisure sailing has developed from an exclusive activity into one that most people can experience. Guest harbours and marinas bring new life to old ports of which some have succeed to retain the character of their fishing village origins.

Today popular water sport activities involves also surfing, diving, angling, and water and jet-skiing. However, the recreational use of coastal areas includes areas dominated by less directly commercial aspects such as wildlife and bird watching, walking, hiking and climbing.

Tourism is today an important source of income and employment for the coastal regions. Recreation as a form of land use is of increasing importance in the Baltic Sea Region. Rapid change of the coastal areas which are transformed into tourist resorts should go parallel with respect to nature and maritime heritage landscape.

Villa in Sea Resort Jurmala, Latvia. Photo by Gundars Ukis, 2015. Jurmala City Council.

Booming development in the post-1989 „turning point"-years in traditional East German seaside resort Zingst. Photo by Alexander Marg.

Baltic resort Sopot, in the off-season. Photo by Robert Domżał.

The old formerly state-owned „Kurhaus" (built 1970) in Ahrenshoop, Eastern Germany, just before its demolishment in 2008. Photo by Hyby.

Egelskär, ship bell on the sea bottom, Finland. Photo by Kaj Enholm.

Underwater landscape

Gulf of Finland, 18th century wreck Raasepori Jussarö.
Photo by Minna Koivikko 2015.

Gulf of Finland a wreck near the Hanko Hauensuoli harbour site. Photo by Eveliina Salo 2012.

Gulf of Finland stock anchor near the Hanko Hauensuoli harbour site. Photo by Eveliina Salo 2012.

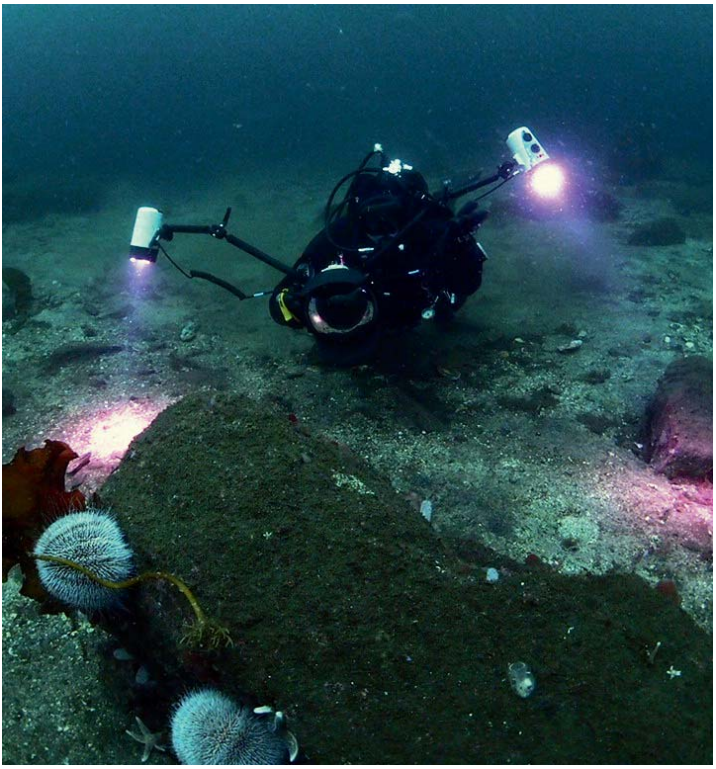
Diver on the wreck "Bryza" (small navy vessel) close to Hel fishing village, Poland. Photo by Robert Domżał.

"Underwater cultural heritage" means all cultural, historical and/or archaeological traces of human existence which have been under water for at least 100 years, or which otherwise are regarded as historically significant or protected by heritage legislation. The Baltic Sea is very special environment that holds a unique cultural resource underwater, waiting to be revealed to larger audience. For instance, the estimated number of wrecks is around 100 000, not to mention all other submerged figured and figurative objects in interaction with environmental, social and economic issues. But what about "underwater landscape", or soundscape? What are they like? What can you see or hear? What colours are there? Who has seen these landscapes? Those who have seen them, divers, what can they tell us? What kind of experiences have they had?

Answering these questions isn't without its challenges. The observation of landscape is associated with sight. It's usually difficult to orient yourself underwater, as fixed points are difficult to locate in poor visibility and your sense of direction is easily lost. It's also true that, in the normal visibility conditions in the Baltic Sea, no one will be able to see underwater landscape in its entirety. Poor visibility can make it impossible to take in even a wreck at a glance. But when realizing the size and structure of a wreck, one can't help thinking about terrestrial ruins, as a wreck is, in a way, a large ruined structure, albeit one that was originally built to be mobile rather than permanent.

St. Mikael wreck from 1747 in Finnish archipelago. Photo by Stig Gustavsson.

The water's surface is commonly held as a landscape boundary. There´s no need for that because we do know, that slopes, valleys, ravines and ancient relics – familiar elements of terrestrial landscapes – are also found underwater. The underwater landscape contains plants, animals and other organisms too. And the underwater landscape has dimensions of space and place: for instance any wreck has a concrete location, points of arrival and departure, paths and intermediate waters.



Diver documenting underwater site. Photo by Robert Domżał.

The Earth seen from space has become familiar to all of us, thus only a few people have even witnessed this global landscape from space. This comparison with the globe does, however, indicate that a landscape can become familiar and widely known even though the majority do not have any personal experience of it. We can therefore assume that a variety of underwater landscapes may also become familiar, even though they cannot be visited or because they cannot be directly experienced with the senses. This would, however, rely on there being visual representations – or other descriptions – available to a sufficiently wide range of people. We will have to wait and see if underwater landscapes will appear in our landscape catalogue, or if they will remain beneath the surface, merely to "shimmer" and "inspire awe".

Underwater Cultural Heritage cooperation in the Baltic Sea States is coordinated by Working Group on Underwater Cultural Heritage http://mg.kpd.lt/LT/1/UNDERWATER-HERITAGE.htm

Sonwik-project at the former naval wharf,
Flensburg, Germany, 2006.
Photo by Arne Biederbeck, www.alpha-f.de.

New Uses

Opera House, Gothenburg, Sweden, 2006.
Photo by Kersti Berggren, The Swedish National Heritage Board.

Reuse and reviving

From the point of view of building protection and the cherishing of the maritime heritage reuse or reviving is never without problems. There are demands on the planner and the builder, on the other hand to create new from the old but also when necessary to make compromises. Succeeding in the reuse of a site or a building always means rebuilding, alongside the object itself, something of its former intellectual, social and economic importance. This approach is thus situated at the crossroads of history, present and future.

When referring to re-use building or site the knowledge should not be limited to materials, forms or construction techniques but also the history of previous uses. Understanding what makes the building or site significant is the key to unlock strategies for re-using. Very often one single course of action to reuse or revive is not optimum choice, there has to be also ideas of an integration of uses – a site with a mixed strategy so to say.

It is difficult to give any final conclusions on reuse or reviving, because in many cases there can only be a fine balance between maximizing the heritage value, facilitating new uses or even reviving the original uses. Also because the perspectives have changed and will change in time and place. But it seems that all efforts to preserve maritime heritage and coastal culture through reuse is based on knowledge. When referring to reuse or revival, the knowledge of the object shouldn´t be limited to architectural art history only but also a history of previous uses should be an integral part of the research. The necessity of long-term planning is obvious. What is clearly needed is a long-term sustained planning. The legislative protection is an outstanding tool, but does not solve all problems. Opportunities in terms of mobilizing local interest and reusing existing maritime infrastructure is vital and perhaps the most important factor. More often proper reuse or reviving can be much appropriate way to preserve the object than the legal protection.

One of the greatest potentials for the long term preservation and reuse is formed by the residents of the buildings, sites, towns and cities having a strong awareness of and responsibility for their maritime and coastal cultural assets.

Helsingor new maritime museum located in old dock area, Denmark. Photo by Iwan Bann.

Maritme Station in Gdynia, converted into the Emigration Museum, Poland. Photo by Robert Domżał.

The old dockyard hall and rope factory in Turku was converted into spaces for the Turku Arts Academy in 1996. Photo by Hannu Matikka.

Seaplane hangars in Tallin converted into modern maritime museum. Photo by Robert Domżał.

THE BALTIC VOYAGE 2016

In a time of increasing tension between East and West in Europe it is more important than ever to communicate and promote the cultural and historical ties between the Nordic countries and the countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

In June 2016 M/S Gamle Oksøy starts her voyage and travelling exhibition from Bergen, Norway, to visit ports and meet the public in nine countries around the Baltic Sea. On board there were exhibitions and film screenings focusing on maritime heritage and coastal culture.

The initiative behind the voyage comes from the "Working Group on Coastal Culture and Maritime Heritage" within the Baltic Sea Heritage Cooperation, consisting of maritime museums and cultural heritage authorities from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Germany and Norway.

An important goal of the voyage is to inspire the development of partnership between museums, cultural heritage institutions and NGOs in the participating countries, and to show the historical relations between the people of the region. The films and stories from the travelling exhibition will be presented at "The Sixth Baltic Sea Heritage Forum" in Kiel in September 2016. All films will also be available on the service: www.coastlight.net.

Exhibition "The Baltic Sea: A common heritage – a common future" on board of ship "Gamle Oksøy".

The countries surrounding the Baltic Sea have been connected by waterways throughout history. The Baltic Sea water basin composes a cultural region where we share similar maritime heritage and coastal traditions, essential for understanding our common identity and history.

However, the coastal culture is threatened in our region, not only by the crisis in the traditional coastal industries, but also by the pressure of recreational activity. The coastal areas are probably the most rapidly changing environments today. Still the cultural aspects of our coastal environment is a neglected topic, both in national preservation policies and in national and international coastal planning policies.

A special problem exists in the coastal areas of the former Soviet Republic. Traditional trades like fishing and shipping were for different reasons restricted and the cultural continuity was broken. It is vital that intense attempts are made to bridge this 50-year break by actions documenting the tangible and intangible heritage still existing in the area.

The care of buildings, boats, artefacts and landscapes largely depend on the existence of a resident population. As the traditional trades lose their importance, new economic strategies is called for to build a sustainable use of our coastal resources. Often tourism is pointed to as the future survival strategy for coastal communities. But tourist development must be treated with caution in order not to threaten the natural and cultural values that it benefits from.

It is important to understand that heritage specialists alone cannot preserve our coastal culture. A positive development is dependent on an active co-operation between different governmental authorities, institutions and nongovernmental organizations on both a local, regional, national and international level.

Project co-financed by Arts Council Norway
http://www.kulturradet.no/english

M/S "Gamle Oksøy"
Homeport: Kristiansand, Norway
Year built: 1962
Length: 41.42 meters
Width: 7.42 meters
Tonnage: 330 BR1
Main engine: Bergen diesel. 495 HK
Maximum Speed: 11 knots
Call sign: 3YYN
Certificate: 60 passengers on day trip
11 cabins, mess, galley,

Status as listed ships since 1996

The lighthouse tender "Gamle Oksøy": From supply ship to museum ship

M/T "Oksøy" was built in 1962 at "Brødrene Lothe" in Haugesund on behalf of the Norwegian Coastal Administration.

The boat was used as a lighthouse supply vessel and in the maintenance of lights, lanterns and beacons along the Norwegian coast. The ship was originally registered as a tanker to carry paraffin and gas to the many lanterns along the fairway. When most of the lanterns were converted to solar operation and the lighthouses were automated, the ship was decommissioned in the autumn of 1996.

The ship represents a type of specialized vessels related to a specific era in Norwegian lighthouse history, when lighthouses were still manned and most lighthouses needed regular supply of paraffin or acetylene. Therefore an initiative was taken to preserve the vessel as a floating cultural heritage monument in connection with the celebration of the National Heritage Year in 1997. As a result, the vessel was donated from the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs to the preservation centre for historic ships at Bredalsholmen in Kristiansand. The cultural heritage authorities granted the ship status as a listed vessel, and the name was changed to M/S "Gamle Oksøy" (Old Oksøy).

This was the first time a ship was given protected status, while it was still in its original, complete and operable condition – and very little has been changed on board since then.

In 2008 a new national network of museums was established under the name of Kystverkmusea, commissioned to document and disseminate the history of the Norwegian Coastal Administration. The network is a cooperation between five museums: Lindesnes lighthouse museum, Jærmuseet, Sunnmøre Museum, Museum Nord and the Museum for reconstruction and coastal heritage in Finnmark.

When Bredalsholmen decided to sell "Gamle Oksøy" in 2014, it was natural to transfer the responsibility for preservation and continued operation of the vessel to Lindesnes lighthouse museum / Kystverkmusea. "Gamle Oksøy" is used for both for day trips and longer voyages.

Gdańsk Bay Tour of "Gamle Oksøy" with members of the Society of Friends of the National Maritime Museum, Gdańsk and staff of the NMM. Photo by Robert Domżał.