



INDUSTRIEMUSEUM KUPFERMÜHLE e.GmbH · Messinghof 3 · D-24955 Harrislee

Maritime Archaeology Collection,
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Loan Agreement concerning Yellow metal sheathing originally made at Kupfermühle, Germany, found at Boesmansriviermond

Dear Mr. Boshoff, esteemed colleague,

from Ms. la Grange of SAHRA, you have learnt about our keen interest in the sheathing made of Muntz metal, also called Yellow Metal, which recently was found lying on the beach near *Boesmansriviermond* by the *Steenbocks*, who kindly donated the sheathing to our museum. From photos they had taken, we were easily able to identify its origin.

Unfortunately, from the beginning neither the finders nor we were aware of any restrictions in South Africa concerning exporting such items, nor were we aware of German and international laws and conventions concerning objects considered as national heritage by foreign states. Everybody acted in good faith and with the best intentions! All present exhibits of our museum were obtained locally or in Denmark without any problems.

However, without the ingenuity of the finders and our comprehensive investigations, our two museums would not have been able to share the sensational story of this sheathing! As it has happened around there in recent years, the finders might have treated it as scrap... We should be thankful that they acted in a responsible way.

This object is of extremely high historic interest and value to our museum and the public in Northern Germany and even neighboring Denmark, as it was manufactured and punched in the old factory halls of our present museum!

Die gemeinnützige Betreibergesellschaft
Industriemuseum Kupfermühle e.GmbH ist für
den Betrieb und die Weiterentwicklung des
Museums verantwortlich
Amtsgericht Flensburg · HRB 7837 FL / Lfde. Nr. 1
Steuernummer 15 290 82080

Gesellschafter,
Gemeinde Harrislee (60 %)
Industriemuseum Kupfermühle e.V. (20 %)
Gisela-und-Bodo-Daetz-Stiftung Kupfermühle (20 %)
Geschäftsführer (Ehrenamt): Svend Lykke-Schmidt
Wissenschaftliche Museumsleitung: Susanne Rudloff

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So far, the existence of original specimens made from yellow metal had not come to our knowledge.

Therefore, you may understand our enthusiasm as we were able, by the well-preserved factory stamp, to identify the origin of the one found at *Boesmansriviermond* as one undoubtedly produced at Kupfermühle.

Until unexpectedly we received the first mail from SAHRA, we were intending to exhibit it in its proper context, displaying it prominently in our permanent exhibition in the old factory halls of the former *Crusauer Kupfer und Messing Fabrik at Kupfermühle*, Germany, where it was originally rolled out and stamped with the factory stamp in 1891.

This hall is now one of the exhibition halls of our certified museum, which presents the history of the factory and the worker's settlement, the production processes, the working and living conditions of the employees, as well as a large exhibition of products made by the old factory, which was established around 1600 by the Danish King and existed until 1962.

For centuries, this copper and brass factory produced, among many other things, sheathings for the protection of hulls of wooden ships. As an expert on wrecks, you certainly know this. Originally these sheets were made from copper. As you know, similar old copper sheets were found in recent years on the same beach and regrettably collected and treated as scrap by locals. It is very fortunate that the *Steenbocks* handled the finding of this sheet in a responsible way.

Presently, this museum is only able to present an even older sheathing out of copper originally produced at Kupfermühle for a famous Danish battleship.

In the second half of the 19th century, most sheathings were made of yellow metal, although copper was still used this purpose, and the *Crusauer Kupfer und Messing Fabrik* developed into a global player as a supplier of yellow metal sheathings.

In the old accounting books of the factory from 1891, we have been able to find entries concerning the delivery of hundreds of yellow metal sheathings and other items for the "Volo", which was built by a shipyard at Arendal (Norway) in that year. We are in good contact with this yard, now a museum.

As the legal circumstances have now been clarified by the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, being in our disfavor, we shall of course cooperate by returning the sheathing.



IMPORTANT: We ask you kindly to inform us which accompanying documents should be included and how to declare the sheathing so that no problems concerning its reentry into South Africa could arise. Any best practice hints would be welcome. Presently, we are waiting for an EU export permit before the object can be sent out of the country.

We should greatly welcome, if our two museums could now cooperate on a loan basis, as the SAHRA has probably informed you.

Due to the circumstances mentioned above, and the fact that it was already in Germany, when we first heard from SAHRA, we were indeed hoping that South African Authorities could find it possible to cooperate in a pragmatic and flexible way, avoiding unnecessarily shipping it back and forth and finally back again to South Africa after a loan period.

Mr. Boshoff, we hope you would support and take an interest in a cooperation between our museums and with you personally. We would greatly appreciate if you would agree upon a long-term loan of the sheathing and formulate a loan agreement to be entered between our two institutions, in order to obtain a proper permit to export it. We are happy that SAHRA has offered their good cooperation in expediting this matter.

In return, we would be happy to send you any documentation about our museum and the old factory you might wish, as well as good photographs of the relevant book entries. We'd also be ready to assist in obtaining any information from Norway that you might need.

Looking forward to your positive response and a mutually beneficial cooperation between our museums in the spirit of German-South African cultural exchange, we remain

Sincerely

Svend Lykke-Schmidt
Managing Director

Susanne Rudloff
Director

Cc:

- Dr. Robert Peters, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany
- Ms. Lesa La Grange, South African Heritage Resources Agency
- The Mayor of the Municipality of Harrislee