

Einladung für November 2013

The Archive question — an open invitation

For some time now we have been looking towards a new step in the development of the Karl König Archive. We need to distinguish our task from that of a general Camphill Archive, which nevertheless is an important task in its own rights. Of course Karl König was the founder of the Camphill Movement and therefore Camphill belongs in a sense to the ‘works’ of Karl König. BUT: Of course there is a long history of Camphill in many countries right up to the present with many facets that need documenting. Besides which König had many friends and pupils and was followed in Camphill by many people who have also published things, done significant research and art work. At the moment the work with this specific area has no ‘home’ of its own, although we have an awareness of it through our activities. For the future we will not be able to do justice to both tasks at once. There is certainly interest for this in the wider public—and the Karl König Institute is already in its concept and organisational form an organ of outreach—but initially it is surely a concern for the Camphill Movement itself. For this reason we put an Open Letter into the last issue of Camphill Correspondence. May we remind you of some of the points belonging to this process, particularly for those who do not receive Camphill Correspondence? Back in 2010 we (the Trustees of the Karl König Archive) published an appeal in Correspondence entitled ‘A Camphill Archive?’ asking for ideas about this question. In 2011 we wrote about the progress with conversations and published an open letter to the Scottish Region asking for help finding an appropriate room, preferably close to the room of the Karl König Archive, where we could soon get going with sorting what we already have and collecting up what we know to be waiting in various places around the Movement. In May of this year Dag Balavoine wrote about the intention of the Norwegian Camphill centres to collaborate in the setting up of a Camphill Archive.

Where do we stand now? We have already taken a number of steps towards building up a Camphill Archive—work has indeed started! Within the rooms of the Karl König Archive we already have three cases full of diaries and notebooks from Irmgard Lazarus (who was a faithful writer and exact observer through many stages of Camphill history!), dozens of photo-albums from various times and places, more than 100 photographs of Camphill coworkers who have passed the threshold over the years, many publications about Camphill and by Camphillers, including the ‘complete collection’ of Jonathan Stedall’s documentaries; there are paintings that came from the internment camp in 1940/41—many of them by Peter Roth (there will be something about that in our next Newsletter!); and then there is a box of lectures and plays by Carlo Pietzner, Hans van der Stok and Thomas Weihs, notebooks and all sorts from Hans Heinrich Engel—amongst his library we recently found some original work of Karl König’s, by the way...

Well I think this list could be continued indefinitely, but I will leave it as it is for now and hope that we can soon start with professional archive listing. We do have experience with that now and have expert help from Dr. Anne Weise, who does travel to Scotland once a year but through our networking can actually do the archiving from her home in Pennsylvania. And many of you have benefited from the state of our archive after seeking information, texts and photographs from the archive, and—believe me—that has become a regular job because requests do not just come from Camphill people but from university students in various countries, from anthroposophical work groups, doctors, therapists, Waldorf schools, publishers and all sorts of people who find an interest in König’s work. We even had a request from Geocaching recently. Can the present crew take on the extra task? The simple answer is No! The Karl König Archive is stretched to capacity with only me working full time, Anne only 50% (for funding reasons) and everyone else helping out next to dozens of other Camphill tasks—especially Christoph Hanni, who at least really manages to be in the physical Archive rooms one afternoon a

week, where there are still piles of König's papers and lecture manuscripts and essays that have not even been scanned yet, yet alone indexed and archived. After I have sent him various tasks during the week, he has little time for anything else, so we don't get down our work-pile so quickly! We can, however, offer our experience in the meantime, our infrastructure, the hard and software. The extra work belonging to Camphill rather than specifically Karl König and the historic beginnings of the movement will need more hands and a clear organisational and spatial division. We are after all the legal Trustees of the Literary Estate of Karl König, and that is already a big task.

Who can take this on?

We have luckily already found a sufficient group of capable and experienced Camphill co-workers with diverse skills such as complement each other for this task. Let me name them: Richard Keys is a teacher with a long Camphill history in Scotland; John Byrde has over the years done a lot of work editing, translating and guiding students through their various projects; and last but not least Cherry How, who has a special eye for the Community development and history. They fit in well, can do the work within our structural set-up without the need to do too much travel and see the task as fitting for their respective biographical situation.

Is it only an online job?

Yes and no! We do not need to create a museum! Most of the documents can be digitalised and very few originals need to be kept. A shelf of publications will be needed and a storage space for things needing sorting and scanning—if work is done regularly this should not need to be a large space—the quicker we can get moving the better, as the backlog is rather large at the moment. And a space to meet and work in would be great so that it can be independent of the existing Archive rooms.

Where could a suitable place be found?

This is the question we put to the Scottish Camphill region. They did not come up with the obvious answer, but had a question of their own: What will happen to the Camphill Chapel now that it is no longer much used as such? And we immediately saw the possibility to combine both questions (two minusses making one plus maybe?) The Chapel would need some maintenance and renovation anyway, which it would hardly get if there were no more use for it; but for many reasons we cannot destroy this essential part of Camphill's legacy which has been a space for spiritual and religious substance from the very beginning. Perhaps it can be saved in a similar way that Karl König's rooms have been saved through usage by the Archive. What better usage for this wellspring of Camphill spirituality than a centre of care for that heritage? Well—that is as far as we have got. Apart from what needs doing to the Chapel anyway, we really only need a shelf and a cupboard under the stairs as soon as we clear fire regulations. Basically the Chapel could stay as it is and be used—as now is the case—for the occasional christening and for Class Lessons. Perhaps even more could take place there if the necessary work was done to it, so that for instance the heating did not leave the room before warming the feet of those present...and that in summer as well as winter! No, the computer would not have to be in the Chapel—those of you who know the building will know also that there is a space in the corridor outside where a desk could be.

Yes, work is going on already and also linking up to those interested in the various regions. Yes, you can hope that all those documents and photographs can be sent to the Camphill Archive soon. And yes, we did create our own legal body, as suggested by the Association of Camphill Communities—that is the Karl König Institute which could now provide the legal roof for the Camphill Archive. It has also already become quite an organ of 'outreach' and PR.

Now we need your inner support and backing. And financing? Apart from the Chapel necessities there would be very little need for more financing than is now anyway needed for the Karl König Archive. If we could only rely on regular contributions from each region—which unfortunately has not really functioned up to now—then it would work well.

We will continue to do our fund-raising outside of Camphill (in the past 3 years this has covered over 50% of our budget!) and to ask for remuneration for services rendered (seminars, exhibitions and lectures— there were 87 such items in our diary for 2012!). We consider ourselves to be an initiative of the Camphill Movement— The question remains to be answered: Will you back us still on a regular basis, regions of the Camphill Movement? The last few years have been encouraging but always with an open end. Any advice, assistance or offers of regular co-work in fund-raising we would be glad to hear of!

Finally: may I encourage anyone who has relevant material—lectures, notes, letters, photographs, diaries—to send it to us (preferably to Richard Keys, c/o Camphill School Office, Murtle Estate, Bielside, Aberdeen AB15 9EP, but if you have questions about this, do please turn to those mentioned), we will sort everything and ensure that nothing of interest and value will get lost, and will respect confidentiality where appropriate and wished for. You know how important it is to look after Camphill's heritage and not to make it into a museum, but to move it into the future. I live in Berlin and so I study people like Alexander von Humboldt—a very wise person who founded the university here. He once said: People who do not care about their past do not deserve a future! In a more positive way one of Karl König's favourite composers, Gustav Mahler said basically the same, and I think this could almost be a motto for 21st Century Camphill: Tradition is caring for the fire, and not worship of the ashes.

The Invitation:

We want to get into conversation with YOU! We have already had one very interesting meeting in April in the American region; now we look to Great Britain: The Archive group is planning an inaugural work retreat in Autumn 2013 in Scotland, inviting anyone interested, hoping to find representatives of other regions also. Camphill in Norway is already on board. We would like to talk about the task of archiving out of experience and in the context of Camphill in its contemporary setting, look at some of the material in question, discuss budget and funding ideas, formulate purpose and objectives, sketching a strategy and an action plan and—sharing out tasks! Do let us know if you are interested!

For the Trustees, Richard Steel