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Lifeworld Ship - The New Nautical Exhibition in the German Museum of Technology Berlin

The inauguration of the museum's new extension on 14 December 2003 coincides with the opening of its Nautical Collection. This collection, which occupies some 6,600 square metres within the new building, will make Berlin home to a world class exhibition of nautical history.

The exhibition is divided into several parts. The ground floor deals with inland navigation in the region and sport and recreational boating in Berlin. The first floor continues to explore the topic of boats for sport and leisure in Berlin, as well as the themes of model ships and basic nautical theory. The second floor is dedicated to seafaring. This is the first time that these diverse aspects of waterborne travel have been combined in one single museum. The sections are further subdivided – in particular on the second floor – into exhibition modules that link up chronologically or thematically.

The close ties between cultural history and nautical history, between people and technology is the guiding idea behind the exhibition, as is reflected by its title *Lifeworld Ship*. In keeping with the museum's guiding principles, the exhibition employs demonstrations and experiments in order to promote an interactive environment for visitors. The exhibition was conceived by Professor Dirk Böndel, the foundation's acting director and head of the Nautical Department, and by Claudia Schuster, M.A, the head of the Navigation Department and deputy head of the Nautical Department.

Inland Navigation – Hydraulic Engineering – Sport

Two real vessels form the centrepiece of the inland waterways section. These are a Prussian towboat called the *Kurt Heinz*, which dates from 1901, and a barge dating from 1840 that was found near Berlin. These two major exhibits exemplify the contrasts between wooden and iron boat building methods and between wind and steam propulsion. The thirty-three-metre barge is displayed in a particularly impressive manner. Its hull rests in a hollow set approximately 1.5 metres into the floor, while openings in the upper floors make way for its towering twenty-metre mast and sail. Pieces of old equipment convey a sense of what it was like to live on board a boat plying the inland waterways.

The cultural and historical aspects of inland navigation in Berlin and Brandenburg and working demonstrations of various types of ship machinery also form an important part of this section. Visitors can walk in and take a look around the engine room of the tug *Jean Cousin*. You can also watch the working horizontal steam engine of the *Luitpold* and the oscillating engine of the *Marie*.

The hydraulic engineering section focuses chiefly on different ways of overcoming the problem of moving from one level to another by means of locks, lifting gear and inclined planes, as well as the subject of canal building. Working models from the former Museum of Transport and Construction are part of the display.

Germany's oldest women's rowing club and the Potsdam Yacht Club, the successor to Berlin's oldest sailing club, are featured in "Sport and Recreation on Berlin's Waterways", which continues on the first floor.

One element of the exhibition is dedicated to our institutional forerunners and contains exhibits from the

collection of Berlin's former Museum of Oceanography, Germany's major nautical museum from 1900 to 1946.

Sport – Models – Theory

"Sport and Recreation on Berlin's Waterways" continues on the first floor gallery, four metres above the ground floor. It includes a hands-on area where visitors can find out what it's like to run up a sail, try their hand at tying different types of knots or have a go at docking a ship.

This section also focuses on model boat building in all its diversity. For more than six thousand years people have been building model ships from materials as diverse as wood, sheet metal, silver, gold, amber and glass. Model boats, as we show, have also been put to a plethora of uses. The boats themselves also come in many different shapes and forms, including static models, working models, half-scale models and design models. The collection of model boats carved from bone by prisoners of war during the Napoleonic era is one highlight of the section.

"The Theory of the Ship" is dedicated to the field of shipbuilding and the associated scientific principles, for example from the fields of hydrostatics and hydrodynamics. It explores such questions as: "How can a boat sail into the wind?", "What conditions can cause a ship to capsize?" and "Which is the best means of propulsion: the propeller or the wheel?".

Marine Shipping

The marine shipping section on the second floor consists of a total of twenty-three exhibition modules. The development of international deep-sea shipping and shipbuilding over a time span of some ten thousand years is its guiding organizational principle. More than fifty models illuminate the history of the ship from its beginnings right up to the present day – from the Stone Age coracle to the modern-day aircraft carrier. To allow visitors to compare the relative sizes of the craft, all models have been constructed to the same scale (1:50). The smallest model measures less than 10 cm, while the biggest is almost 7 metres in length.

Some modules, such as the sixteenth-century voyages of discovery, the sinking of the Chinese junk *Tek Sing* and the history of whaling, form offshoots off this central historical axis. A separate chronology sets out the history of German shipping – proceeding from the early days of the Prussian navy via shipping under Kaiser Wilhelm II, to the deployment of German submarines in the Second World War. A display reconstructing the inhuman slave trade in sixteenth-century Brandenburg is one unit that examines this history in greater depth. The development of navigation from the compass to modern satellite navigation systems is illustrated by navigational instruments and a range of smaller interactive exhibits that allow visitors to try their hand at the art of marine navigation. A Jacob's staff (cross staff) and a Huelva astrolabium dating from around 1600, which is one of an estimated sixty or so astrolabia left in existence in the world, are among the most valuable exhibits in the navigation section.