

The Walking Bike of Michael Kassler

... and its constructor – an exposé of the website as a flyer

The English version worked by **MANFRED ARENDT**, retired teacher of English in Hameln/Germany (visit his website www.aren-all.de/fremdsprachen_index.htm) and **PETER KASSLER**, one of Michael Kassler's descendants.

The following two pages of the summary you can print on an A4 sheet (settings landscape, duplex, stapling rand left) and then as shown in the photo on the left to fold flyer. If you need more flyers, you can order free via info@kassler-laufrad.de.



MY DEAR LAD, TIE SOME WHEELS TO YOUR LEGS !
250 YEARS WALKING BIKE OF MICHAEL KASSLER
1761 BRAUNSDORF - BRAUNSBEDRA 2011

Michael Kassler's native region of today:



In the Geiseltal valley originated with the Geiseltalsee the largest lake of Germany caused by human activities



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Das Laufrad des Michael Kaßler -
Michael Kassler's Walking Bike -

eine Pioniertat aus Braunsbedra
an act of pioneering from Braunsbedra
- der Stadt an den Geiseltalseen
- the town on the Lakes Geiseltal



Michael Kassler's Walking Bike from Braunsdorf - today called Braunsbedra

Today bikes are part of our everyday lives. There have been carts and carriages for quite some time but bikes are rather newcomers in our transport system. Today kids start learning the art of biking on walking bikes, also called balance bikes. History followed the same line. First, there were walking bikes. Bikes as we know them today they have invented some time later. Lore in the Geiseltal area tells us that an early walking bike has built in Braunsdorf. Moreover, it still exists.

Michael Kassler (22/9/1733 to 12/2/1772) has been farmer, has learned the handicraft of cooper and was – so the tradition – a very skilful Cartwright too. One day he was late again for work. His 'boss' at Bedra Castle told him off:

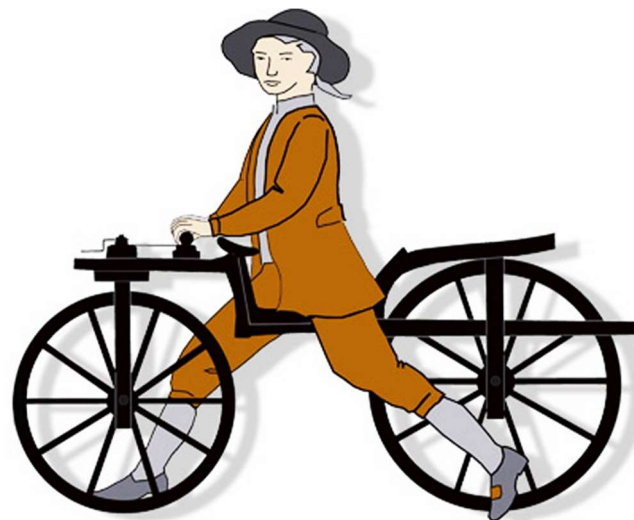
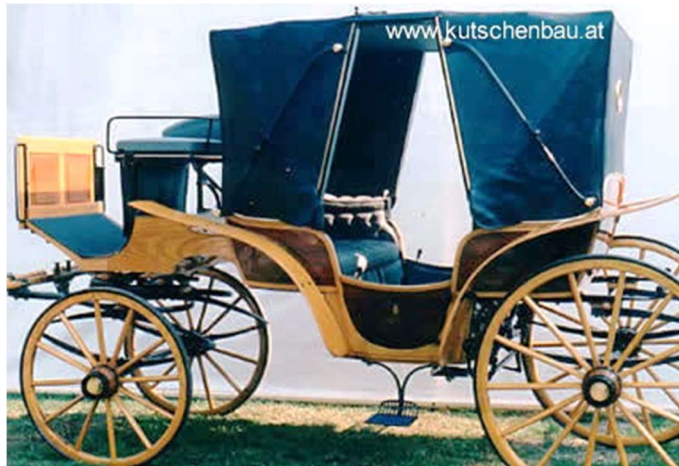
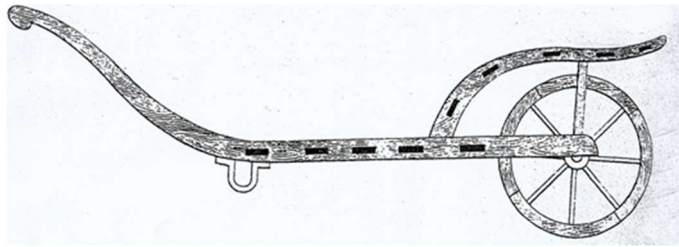
"My dear lad, tie some wheels to your legs and you'll be here in no time whenever I call you!"

Necessity is the mother of invention. So resourceful Michael combined parts he had to deal with every day – perhaps it was a flash of genius – a new kind of vehicle:

The rear was like a cart - the front was like a carriage.

Michael sat down on his new vehicle and moved forwards by pushing it with his legs. As it was equipped with a fork and a handle bar, it could be steered and balanced like modern bikes. In addition, above the rear wheel he could stow his tools.

Compared to other walking bikes Michael's invention has some specific features: Remembering driving on terrible streets, he used rather big wheels. As a result, there was only one seat between the two wheels. This way his feet could reach the ground. There was another problem. He could hardly reach the handle bar. Therefore, he constructed a second one closer to his body. He solved this problem using a rod to connect the two bars. He used a singletree as the second handle bar. This 'trick' shows us where his idea came from: Watching harnessed horse teams you can observe the same kind of movements. When the horses turn right or left, the singletrees slope accordingly.



The operations: Cart, carriage, combined for constructing a walking bike that can be steered.

People say that Michael Kassler used his walking bike in 1761 for the first time to get from Braunsdorf to Bedra Castle. However, a report written at that time has not founded yet. This is a great handicap for Kassler's invention, because later walking machines got a great deal of publicity, thus have been widely documented.

It is pity that Michael Kassler almost died at the age of 39. After his early death, his walking bike they often used as a spearhead of local pageants. However, it stayed a local attraction, did not become generally known.

The situation changed about 1900, when our modern bikes became popular. Michael Kassler's descendants got his old dusty bike down from the attic of his farm. They made public the old story in 1904 in a paper called 'Bike-World' together with memories of old people from Braunsdorf. Since 1907, it is mentioned in books about bicycle history - with the restriction much of it is still uncertain and mountains mystery. In 1905, the descendants gave the bike as a loan to the Germanic National Museum in Nuremberg. In 1924, they sold it to this institution finally. It is still there but is not part of the permanent exhibition (see on the title page picture above).

From 1986 to 2006, Kassler's bike was part of an exhibition of forerunners of the modern bikes at the German Museum in Munich. Because of its specific features, the museum called it 'Unikum'. In 1993 when the town of Braunsbedra celebrated its founding, artisans built a first replica. You can have a look at the replica in Braunsbedra's town hall. Since then a wheel is part of the young town's code of arms symbolising Kassler's act of pioneering.

Today we can clearly understand how Michael Kassler constructed his walking bike. The differences between his bike and other walking bikes tell his invention has not influenced by any other inventors. We can be sure now that the bike – like several other machines - has not invented just once.

If you are interested in more details about this walking bike or more pictures about the original, turn to website www.kassler-lauftrad.de. We are still looking for more documents about the early days of the walking bike. We welcome any support. You can contact us with the help of our website.

Michael Kassler's Walking Bike is more than a legend !

This is our firm belief! So in 2011 we celebrated a great anniversary: '250 years of Michael Kassler's walking bike'. It was a great event in the local history of Geiseltal Valley. His hometown unveiled an artful design on the front of his farmhouse (today Hauptstraße 19) and a new commemorative plaque opposite it (see pictures on the right). This ensemble forms together with the natural monument "Luther Linde" the impressive tourist destination "Michael Kassler Memorial Stone" near the Church of the Redeemer in the historic village Braunsdorf of Braunsbedra.

During the anniversary, Mister Uwe Thiede - a Cartwright from Burgtonna - sponsored another replica of the walking bike (p. down right). With it represents the home club Braunsdorfer Heimatverein (logo l.) the birthplace often across the country,



promotes for visit the Geiseltal and organizes a Michael-Kassler-Cup at home hard each at the end of August. Here everyone can try - as usual in industrial monument central workshop Pfännerhall, Grubenweg 4 (logo r.) - like cycling began 250 years ago, taking photos and view posters and documents of the original bicycle and its history.

2011, Mister Achim Heimbach from Mücheln built a smaller replica 2/3 size, especially children pleased and in amateur dramatics "The Radläufer" participates, which tells the story of the events 250 years ago (s. outside down). You can test the replica in the visitor center Geiseltalsee near the viewpoint Neumark in Braunsbedra, Geiseltalstraße 46a,

In 1943, two villages - Braunsdorf and Bedra - merged and a new borough was born, Braunsbedra. In 1993, this new community became a chartered city. Later, several smaller places became part of the new town. In 993 most of them were first mentioned. The town can proudly say that it is more than 1000 years old. It is located south of Halle/S. in the Geiseltal (valley of Geisel), extending from Merseburg to Mücheln. The lignite mining has dominated it for three centuries, now it transformed into an interesting lakelandscape, which today

already offers many opportunities for leisure and tourism. For more information turn to

www.braunsbedra.de / www.get-geiseltal.de / www.hotel-braunsbedra.de / www.pfaennerhall.de / www.geiseltalsee.de



Michael Kasslers Walking Bike –

an act of pioneering
from Braunsbedra -

the town on the
lakes Geiseltal

