

## ECTN INTERREG IIC Project

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## Case study

<b>Organisation (English)</b>	Loimaa Regional Development Centre
Organisation (in original language)	Loimaan Seutukunnan Kehittämiskeskus
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Web page address	<a href="http://www.harkatie.net">http://www.harkatie.net</a>
Legal Status of organisation	
Title of the Institution / Project in English	Ox Road of Häme – History comes alive
Title of the Institution / Project in Original Language	Hämeen Härkätien historia eläväksi
Summary of Case study/project	The Ox Road of Häme going from Turku to Hämeenlinna is the most significant road in early Finnish history. This road starting from the river landscapes of West Finland and running to the forest terrain of Häme has been used by merchants, soldiers, pilgrims as well as kings - and even by Vikings more than a thousand years ago. During last six year the travel tourism has been developed with help of EU-projects.
Organisations Concerned	
Case study/Project detailed description	<b>The history</b>  The birth of the Ox Road is closely connected to

Birka, a former Viking town on an island of Lake Mälaren, Sweden, and its days of glory, which lasted till the late 900's. Birka merchants and coastal Finns living on the other side of the Gulf of Bothnia used to barter. Finns acquired valuable furs for Birka people from the wide wilderness in the interior of their country and received weapons, jewellery, metal and salt in exchange.

**Merchants, soldiers and pilgrims**

In Finland trade was first concentrated in the sea-facing end of the Ox Road, where the trading place of Koroinen was born in the late 1200's. Later on this trading place grew into the town of Turku and became Finland's gateway to Central and Southern Europe. The trading place in the interior of the country was situated somewhere round about the present day town of Hämeenlinna, where the Swedes spreading Christianity started to build a fortress in the 1250's. It was with crusades that Finland was made part of the Kingdom of Sweden.

In the Middle Ages the Ox Road joined two important castles in the eastern province of Sweden-Finland: the castles of Turku and Häme. So wars and manoeuvres of troops are a living part of Ox Road history. More than four hundred years ago the Ox Road was the battle scene of the Cudgel War involving the Nordic Countries and Poland. In the 1600's a great number of men from the parishes along the Ox Road left for Central Europe to fight in the Thirty Years' War. And Reds and Whites alike moved along the road in 1918, at the time of the Finnish Civil War.

Alongside the soldiers and government officials also churchmen and pilgrims moved along the route, because the Ox Road joined Turku Cathedral to Saint James's Church in Renko, known as a place of pilgrimage. In conjunction with great church festivals fairs or masses were held near the churches and they attracted both merchants and common people. The Ox Road was also the northernmost point of the Pilgrimage route to the shrine of James the Great in Santiago de Compostela in Spain. In this way the Ox Road was important in the European aspect as early as the Middle Ages.

<p>Case study/Project detailed description cont....</p>	<p>During the last six years has the travel- and tourism business on the Ox Road of Häme been developed by exploiting the versatile and interesting history of its. Excellent examples of this activity are the medieval events in both cities, Turku and Hämeenlinna, and the Theater of Ox Road which has already on last three summers made three-part-entities of shows of the life on the Ox Road on medieval – and all this done almost only by volunteers!</p> <p>By the developing projects has also been made the web-sites “www.harkatie.net” where all the information of the services for tourist are found. You can also find there the map of the Ox Road of Häme and the maps and schedules of (tourism) happenings in the municipalities by the Ox Road.</p> <p>The Ox Road of Häme – Magazine has been produced on last six years. It has been full on information of the interesting history of the road, and of course, about the travel services.</p> <p>By the co-operation all even the smallest companies on the branch has become part of co-operation and has get their business known among all the other employees on the branch, and of course among the tourists. And because the Ox Road of Häme goes between two provinces, the provincial travel companies has started the co-operation too.</p> <p>The most important thing made by the co-operation is certainly the message of the Ox Road of Häme as tourism produce – place to go, services to have and the history to see, feel and live!</p>
<p>Outputs</p>	