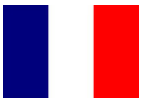


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International Visit to Erlangen May 17 - 20 2012



2012



(Thanks to Robin Rich for providing this report)

A party of twelve from York, including six York Rotarians lead by the Club's President David Jesper, joined the annual gathering of Members of the three Rotary Clubs – Aubusson, Erlangen and York – and their partners in Erlangen, in the Bavarian District of central Germany, on 17th of May 2012

(also a "side-trip" to our other Partner Club, **Gorinchem, Netherlands** - see feature at bottom of page)

This visit by six York Rotarians and partners proved to be a well organised and thoroughly enjoyable couple of days. The Erlangen Club had organised an exciting two day programme of visits and hospitality, with the benefit of wall to wall sunshine throughout.

Thursday May 17th

The Thursday evening saw us greeting old friends and making new ones over a barbecue at the Arvena Hotel in Erlangen, on what proved to be the start of a gastronomically taxing few days. President Norbert Geithner of Erlangen Club welcomed everyone, including the six who had travelled from Aubusson.



"Now are you SURE you know the way?...."



The Group at Erlangen

Friday May 18th

Friday saw a prompt start at Erlangen's Civic Offices – a modern multi storey office block with excellent views over the City from the 14th floor - where we were welcomed by the Lord Mayor Siegfried Ballais, who referred to three important dates in Erlangen's history – 1686 when the City benefitted from the craftsmen's skills of the many Huguenots who arrived after fleeing from France, 1743 when the City's University was established and 1946 when Siemens moved their HQ from Berlin to Erlangen – a business which has dominated and brought enormous prosperity to the City ever since.

This was followed by a guided walk around the City Centre. With the expert help of the guide, we saw the impressive 18th century 'new town' – the town layout and buildings designed and built in the classical Baroque style. This beautifully preserved town is now older than the 'old town' which had been destroyed by fire! After some free time to enjoy the ambience of the City, a Franconian lunch was taken at the restaurant attached to the famous Kitzmann Brewery – now celebrating its 300th Anniversary - where we were welcomed by Rotarian Peter Kitzmann, the 5th generation of the brewing family - then shown around by the youthful looking 27 year old head brewer.

After a short walk we reached the Huguenot Church where we were treated to an enthralling 20 minute organ recital. The day was completed with Dinner at the atmospheric Gasthaus Zum Grunen Baum, an old farmhouse complete with the vaulted cellars making an ideal setting for a jovial evening.



Saturday May 19th

The following morning, after a short bus ride to Nuremberg, we visited the scene of the Nuremberg Trials, including the extremely professional exhibition covering this truly horrifying chapter in Germany's history, but portrayed in the exhibition in an entirely factual manner. It concluded with a sobering visit to Courtroom 600 where the trials were actually held in 1945/6.

Again we were treated to a guided tour, this time of Nuremberg itself, a beautiful City, visiting some wonderful streets of timber framed medieval buildings and the castle at the top of a very steep hill!

The meeting concluded on the Saturday evening with a superb Dinner for 50 at the Atzelsberg Castle, a beautiful 18th century building overlooking the wide River Regnitz Valley. The evening was a splendid occasion of great fun and fellowship with each of the three Presidents – the third being Nicole Goguet of the Aubusson Club - making light hearted and entertaining speeches.



Erlangen



Summary

All in all, the visit was a tremendous success; the visiting Clubs could not have asked for a warmer or more genuine welcome and it was clear that the friendships which had developed over the years between the three Clubs were as strong and lively as ever.



Nuremberg, and final dinner at Atzelsberg Castle



Gorinchem, Netherlands



Homeward bound from the trip to Erlangen, a small group of Rotarians and their wives took the opportunity to visit our Dutch twin Club in Gorinchem. The prime purpose was to keep alive the contact between our two Clubs and to have an informal lunch with their President and a small group of members.

Robin Rich, Ron Robb and Adrian Radford, along with ex Rotarian Bobby Hughes, Catherine and Josie, were hosted to a very enjoyable light lunch by their President Paul. He was accompanied by his IPP and VP and our old friends Leen and Betsy Hoogee.

It was a brief visit but it enabled us to make contact and to see if the interest in overseas visits was still a low priority for the Gorinchem Rotarians. We rather got the impression that it was, but the visit was received in the best of Rotary traditions and we all agreed that we should keep in touch as the Club was always changing and there was hope of a future gathering.



General views of Gorinchem

