



EU Project 2012 – 2014: “EUROPE for its CITIZENS”  
 CONFERENCE – RECKLINGHAUSEN in Germany  
 THURSDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MARCH UNTIL SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup> MARCH  
 2014

Subject: **NETWORKING BETWEEN TWIN TOWNS**

## *Itinerary Preston delegation*

Travelling days: Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2014

Day /Date	Time	Action	Notes
<b>WED</b> <b>26.03.14</b>	<b>12:10</b>	Leave Preston to drive to Manchester Ringway Airport. Vehicles: Joan E6 JMB with Aasma & Fayyaz, Jürgen PN51 ZTJ with Julie, Paul & Tessa <b>Park at Meet &amp; Greet @ T1</b>	<b>Booking confirmations:</b>  <b>JOAN MW1G2833496</b> <b>JOHV MW1G2833505</b>

Tess & Paul turned up at the appointed time, parked Paul’s car in our drive and we set off, with plenty of time in reserve, to Manchester airport along the M6 and M56. Joan, Aasma & Fayyaz went separately in Joan’s car and we all met up at the Checking-in desk inside Terminal 1. The Meet & Greet car park is right in front of Terminal 1. Tess’ idea to park there was a good one. We just stepped across the road to get to the desk.

**13:10** Check-in time at **Terminal 1**  
for Flight: **LH3433 (Eurowings)**

**Reservation Codes:**  
Fayyaz, Joan, Julie & Jürgen  
**29TVKR**  
Aasma, Tessa & Paul  
**29PT8S**

Passport control and security ‘frisking’ was done quickly and, this time, pleasantly by the staff and hence I did not feel that my dignity was ‘compromised’ as can happen. We all got together and had a leisurely drink before it was time to board the plane.

**15:10** **DEPART** from Ringway

Duration: 1hr 25 mins

### Bombardier CRJ700 series

Aircraft Line

The Bombardier CRJ700, CRJ900, and CRJ1000 are regional airliners based on the Bombardier CRJ200. Final assembly of the aircraft is at Montréal-Mirabel International Airport in Mirabel, Quebec, outside Montreal, Canada. [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombardier_CRJ)

**Range:** 2,656 km

**Wingspan:** 23 m

**Length:** 33 m

**Cruise speed:** 829 km/h

**Top speed:** 876 km/h

**Unit cost:** 24,000,000–39,700,000 USD (2006)

**Engine type:** General Electric CF34



The plane (a Bombardier CRJ-900) was very comfortable and had plenty of leg-room. We did not feel that we were travelling economy class. We even got a sandwich and a drink .. whatever we wanted and the staff were courteous and professional. Very soon we were descending towards Düsseldorf, crossing the Rhine river and quickly dropping down onto the runway. By the time we got through passport control and found our way to the baggage carousel, our luggage was already on its way to us.

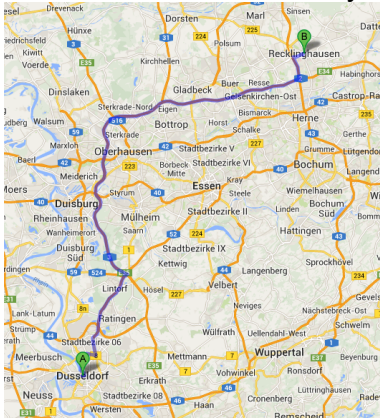
**17:35** **ARRIVE** Düsseldorf International Airport  
 Pick-up by Scholz Reisen 0049 2361 33883 or  
 0049 179 10 180 33 & taken

(1 hr ahead of GMT)  
**TRANSPORT**

We only had a very short moment of 'where is he' anxiety, when our driver approached us and smiling with some relief that I could speak to him in German. We then had a very long walk to where his mini bus was parked. On the way there he told me, that the airport authorities charge Taxi drivers an extraordinary amount of money just for the privilege of being allowed to pick up fares from the place. Our driver too had not much time to get us to his vehicle before his parking charge started to mount up. The weather was very pleasant .. No wind and no rain, just sunshine and moderately warm. Soon we were on the Autobahn going East

Interesting features:

Noise and pollution barriers along the Motorway to protect residents from excessive noise and dust. We should have those!



After about 50 minutes, we arrived in the centre of Recklinghausen (the medieval walled city is still recognizable by the ringroad that used to be the moat). The last 100 yards we had to lump our luggage through a building site, because the huge shopping centre going up in the centre of the city is nearing completion and the roadworks are now in progress around this huge complex. The locals are complaining that it is totally out of scale for the size of the city. The hotel reception was friendly and since we were pre-booked and they had our passport details, we were given our key cards and we all dispersed to our accommodation.

Arrive in the Hotel approx. at:

**19:00**

to the **Barbarossa Hotel @ Löhrhof 8**  
[info@barbarossa-city-hotel.de](mailto:info@barbarossa-city-hotel.de)  
[www.barbarossa-city-hotel.de](http://www.barbarossa-city-hotel.de)

Phone: 0049 2361 30650

Fax:  
0049 2361 30665100

Himmelullah (Himmet) waited for us in reception to escort us to the Brücke for our evening meal. On the way there we met up in the dark with Karl-Heinz Broß and Gerd Böttcher, a former Navy comrade whom I met previously last July when I escorted a group of under 11 year olds to the 3<sup>rd</sup> SG Hillen Football tournament. Well, that was a surprise. He and Karl-Heinz played football together years ago and so I was pleased that they had met and Gerd, who brought his photographic equipment, tagged along with us into the Brücke where we were received with great cordiality by Carmen Greine, the Director of this unique Institution, Cllr Ulrich Hempel and a young intern, called Lea. To our great surprise, the delegation from Baia Mare in Romania was also there, and since we had met previously, we were indeed pleased to meet up again with Gabriela Hofer, Rodica Boros, Bogdan Gavra and Dan Carpov.

A very tasty buffet was served and we all talked long into the night,

**20:00** Evening Meal at the **Brücke** building (we can walk N°1 Willy Brandt Park there)

**Mobile Emergency number:**  
**0049 151 61 33 60 89**



Animated conversations



Carmen Greine, the hostess



My smartly turned out Navy buddy Gerd





Aasma in conversation with Alex, James and Dan ...



Fayyaz talking with Julie, Joan and Himmetullah



Tess and Paul are befriended by Gerd



Joan, Julie, Lea, Fayyaz & Himmetullah



Paul, Ulrich Hempel, Gerd, J & Karl-Heinz Broß



Carmen & her Romanian Delegation

**THU 27.03.14 Free morning Breakfast and getting to know the place ... Aasma's contacts .. still to be decided ...**

The breakfast room is right on top of the building, the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. There was plenty of variety and the service was pleasant and without fuss. As I mentioned before, the front of the hotel is taken up by a building site, i.e. they were installing the infrastructure, e.g. sewers, drains and utility services. I was fascinated by the entire goings on and was amazed by the colour of the sand which seems bright yellow in this region. Julie & I waited for Kristina (a reporter of the local paper, the Recklinghäuser Zeitung) to arrive so that we could acquaint her with Aasma. She duly turned up at 10:00 o'clock and we walked into town where we found a very nice café. Aasma and Kristina got on extremely well and soon they were in professional mode, interviewing each other, or so it seemed. Kristina brought a copy of her newspaper that was of great interest to Aasma. Carmen turned up in due course and soon it was time for lunch at the Maroush Restaurant next door to the hotel, actually.



A grandstand view over the building site from our balcony ...



Excavating a manhole position with a grab ...



It did not take long before the trench protection could be installed ..



Kristina & Aasma in interview mode ...



Kristina explains the layout of her paper



The tea comes with an egg-timer ...



**13:00** Meeting for lunch at the **Maroush** Lebanese Restaurant

next door to the hotel

The food was truly delicious and there was plenty of it. I think the Preston delegation liked it ...



The lady on the left is from Douai (F)

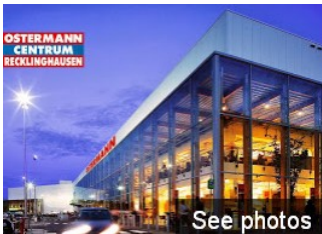


Fayyas is speaking to the Romanian delegation ...



Karl-Heinz Broß works for die Brücke ...

**15:15** Depart to visit the **Ostermann Furniture Emporium** (the **Brücke bus** is attached to the **Brücke** office and dedicated to our transport needs)



See photos



This gentleman took us on a tour of the store that took two hours and people got very tired at the end. The choice, number and items available is staggering and the business acumen of the owners does deserve respect.

This is a family enterprise (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation) and employs over 1700 people in a number of branches. 95% of available items are in stock!



... a captive audience



Anything to take the weight off ones feet ...



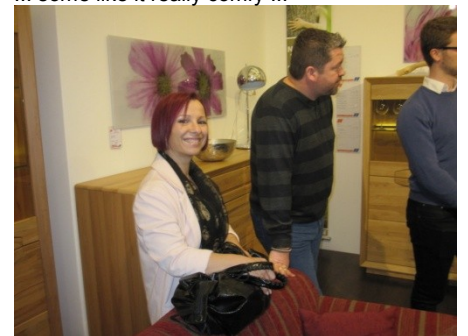
... some like it really comfy ...



... Fayyaz is only testing ..



... just having a short rest



.. Tess is still smiling



**16:00** Conducted tour of the Ostermann Furniture Emporium

A bright and airy building with everything you need for Kitchen, Bathroom, Bedroom and Living room distributed over 3 huge floor areas. The items were arranged according to price. So, you started at the bargain offers and slowly graduated to the bespoke installations .. I recall the 'a man's idea of a kitchen' everything opened by waving your hand in front of e.g. a cupboard ... and 'open sesame' the same would glide open smoothly and without a sound ... but that came at a price. After the conclusion of the tour, the Owner and his daughter spoke to us and answered any questions we had. One should have the highest regard for these two for their enterprise and sheer guts of taking these enormous risk when ordering a new line, or just running a business with over 1700 employees ... the human cost on both of them must be a real burden on their shoulders and one could see that our time with us was measured in minutes.

**18:00** Evening Meal at Ostermann's

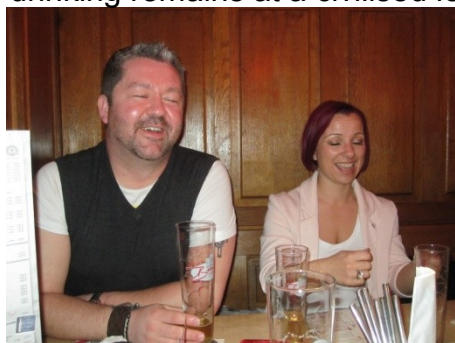
After our chat with the owners, we were invited to have our evening meal in their restaurant. That was most generous of them and appreciated by the delegates, because, I think, nobody could walk another yard.

**19:00** Return to the Town Centre with the **Brücke bus**

After our return to the hotel, most of us decided to call it a day and rest. But three of us, plus Alex and James, walked to Bönthe's and, I think, did not regret it. We were accompanied by the Polish delegation from Bytom.

from **20:00** Informal get-together in the Bönthe Brewery  
(quite lively pub ... most enjoyable if you like that sort of thing)

I introduced Tess and Paul to Schnaps ... I am not quite sure if they liked it, but at least they had a second one afterwards (at least I think so). The good thing about drinking good beer and the odd clear shot is the fact that there is no hangover the next day ... well, of course, only if the drinking remains at a civilised level



Paul & Tess having a good time ..



This is Jean-Yves Dousset, a silhouette and caricature artist from France, specially hired by the Brücke to entertain the delegates.



here is a sample of his art, a scissor cut of Tess .. he did that in a few short minutes .. amazing ...



.. here is a caricature of Alex and James .. they were quite amused ..



Here is the one he did of me ... maybe when I am aged 100 I will look like that.

The artist was telling us that he shows ladies in a favourable light .. usually scissor cuts, but when it comes to men, he drops all pretences and gives his imagination free reign.

At least it made Julie laugh after I had enough and decided to walk to the hotel by myself. Also, Paul/Fayyaz had found and given me Julie's lipstick she had lost (in the hotel reception) . She was really pleased about that.



**FRI**  
**28.03.14**

**Up to**  
**10:00**  
**12:30**

**Breakfast at the Barbarossa Hotel**  
**and free TIME until 12:30 hrs**

**Pick-up by *Brücke bus* @ the Viehtor Bus Stop**

**Viehtor (ancient animal gate)**



Joan, James, Alex & Aasma in front of the Bürgerhaus ..



Paul, Tess, Joan & Aasma finding their seats



the stage is set .. pl. note the Union Jack in splendid isolation ..



and on the other side of the stage are the flags of the other participating nations ...



we are having lunch with the Romanian delegation ... I like the picture in the background, showing the work of the miners, whose social club this building is ...



Carmen making the announcements ..

A very large number of people turned up for this event .. including the choirs from all twin-towns bar Preston .. I just could not motivate any Preston musical society to send a choir to Recklinghausen ... I was told that for a 15 minutes appearance, the price was too high, and anyway, they all needed at least a year's notice to organise everything properly.

**13:00 – 14:30**      **Arrival of guests and LUNCH @ the Bürgerhaus Körnerstraße 2**

Lunch was served before proceedings started. Unusual, but nobody was complaining....



Look who is here .. Jean-Yves Dousset .. here to entertain the 'masses' ..



.. a demonstration of his amazing skills with a pair of scissors ... doing a silhouette of Joan's



I think Joan is verily pleased with it ..



Fayyaz and Lea having a chat about the simultaneous translation devices ...



Robert from Bytom with his colourfully attired singers .. (they were as good as they looked)

**14:30 – 15:30** Presentation by Dr Kordes on “The 1914 Centennial” and the remembrance culture in Germany and France ... a plea for a common European way of commemorating those events in 2014

Dr Kordes touched on the causes of WWI, the suffering of the ordinary soldiers and civilians alike. The futility of it all and urged all nations to remember the sacrifices of the ‘fallen’ of all nations in a dignified manner ... ‘lest we forget’. It is not always easy to expect from the younger generations who, thanks to the combined efforts of the European nations, have never experienced the terror and deprivations of war, to understand the trauma war can inflict on people.

In Britain, war memorials are being spruced up, exhibitions are mounted and museums are exhibiting artefacts from that period that people can handle and, of course, taped witness reports and diaries. Battlefield tours to ‘Flanders fields’ are being organised so that relatives of the fallen can at least visit the graves or see the name of their kin engraved on the numerous monuments which dot the Flanders countryside. However, It is important to keep this ‘low key’ and make sure the ‘communal grief’ does not degenerate into and be exploited by a media circus. Since I am a guide of the Duke of Lancaster’s Infantry Museum and actively involved to commemorate the Centenary of WW1, I left Dr Kordes my contact details, just in case he wants to find out what we are doing in Preston.

From  
approx.  
**15:30**

*Kaffee trinken ..* Coffee and Cake ...

Afternoon Tea  
equivalent

This is a time-honoured tradition in Germany ... to have coffee and cake in the afternoon and a good old ‘chinwag’ (gossip) as well. To provide the coffee and cake for the multitudes looked like a logistical nightmare, but the two ladies in charge were proper troopers and never lost their cool and their coffee tasted like my mother used to make it ... only the cake ran out in the end and I had to share a piece with a young lady who generously offered me her plate and let me have the first bite, the ‘entendre cordial’ at its best.

**16:00** Welcome by Herr Wolfgang Pantförder, the Mayor of Recklinghausen



I forgot to mention that because no official from Preston City attended this event, I, suppose because of my grey hair, was deemed the leader of the Preston delegation and hence I had a place reserved in the first row, together with the Mayors and officials of Recklinghausen and all the other twin towns. The place besides me was reserved for the Mayor of Recklinghausen, but he did not turn up and in the end, the Deputy Mayor, Herr Zerbst, stepped up on to the stage and proceeded to welcome all and sundry. He introduced all the delegation leaders .. we all had to stand up and wave and smile and he explained the history of our twinning links. Preston is Recklinghausen’s first twin town and we will celebrate 60 years of twinning in 2016. If that is not a reason for a celebration, what is? Herr Zerbst extolled the virtues of Recklinghausen’s twinning links and the benefit it brought to the town in terms of cultural exchanges, in short: a window to the world. Herr Zerbst then introduced two young musicians who would play for us.

**16:15** musical interlude ... Piano

The first musician was, in fact, a young teenage lady with a violin. She was obviously rather shy and we all willed her to be calm and collected. The moment she lifted that bow to her violin and started playing (it sounded like Mozart, but I am not quite sure) she had us all spellbound in admiration and truly captivated by her mastery of her instrument. Alas, I totally forgot to take a picture or tape her performance .. you’ll have to take my word for it. The audience showed their appreciation by applauding this young talent with great affection. The next musician was Anna (I remembered her from last year when she gave a brilliant recital in the Ruhrfestspielhalle), so I already expected great thing from her ... and she did not disappoint me or anybody else. Watching that slight little girl’s fingers hitting the keys of the grand piano with an almost demonic virtuosity was magical to watch and listen to. After she had finished, she was persuaded by the Deputy Mayor to play an encore .. that was equally fascinating to experience.



People broke into well-deserved rapturous applause at the end of Anna's brilliant renditions.

**17:00** "Why EU and how does the EU function?" presentation by Dr Renate Sommer, MEP

Dr Sommer MEP did not mince her words when she said that the EU, wonderful it is, needs reforming in order to stop unscrupulous entrepreneurs taking advantage of the perceived generosity of the system. I suppose, the EU mandarins think that everyman is imbued with high morals and a sense of justice and fairness. Alas, life is not like that and past experience has left the community paying out for scams or just treating the EU as a 'Milchkuh' (a cow you can milk with impunity) and getting upset when the I.O.U's (see Greece) are called in. The benefits of having a united Europe are manifold ... the peace and security we all have enjoyed for almost 70 years, the cultural exchanges to bring us closer together on a human level, commercial and political co-operation, the list is extensive. The EU tries to create laws that concern all of us ... e.g. the preservation of fish-stocks, the carbon emission control, fighting international criminals across national boundaries, etc. Only by mutual consent can new laws become part of legislation. Nobody, but nobody wants to change any countries cultural heritage or way of life. It is inevitable that, because of the increased use of English as the 'lingua franca' we will all become more aware of each other and probably adopt and integrate certain habits or practices into our everyday life (like using a lot of English words ... much to the chagrin of language purists) but legislating national practices away is not the avowed intention of the EU Parliament. There are still some issues the Parliamentarians have with the Commissioners (appointees), hence the call for radical reforms. She touched on people like UKIP in Britain who somehow got a mandate to represent their party at Brussels, but, despite drawing a salary and generous expenses, are hell bent to destroy the European Union from within.

After Dr Sommer finished her speech, I asked her if she knew our North West Regional MEP, Chris Davies who just won the EU Parliamentarian of the Year Award. Her eyes lit up, 'of course I know Chris', and she beamed a pleasant smile. Nice to know that, despite the awful anti EU propaganda in the UK, our own representative has left his mark in a very positive and commendable way.



The most colourful choir from Bytom in Poland

**17:30 - 19:30**

A concert by Choirs from 5 twin towns Order of appearance: Dordrecht, Schmalkalden, Douai, Bytom & Recklinghausen



The Firemen from Dordrecht.. (NI)



the Foresters from Schmalkalden .. (D)



the Gentlemen from Douai (F)





here is Robert Jastrzebski, the organiser of the Bytom choir .. and very good they were too ...



The Concordia Choir from Recklinghausen got off to a bad start .. the man on the keyboard started it off too loud and got everybody quite confused ....



.. despite stopping and starting again, the impetus was lost and the conductor was brilliant in shrugging off his disappointment (I bet he was seething inside)  
Commiserations ... sh\*\* happens at unexpected times ..

All in all, our delegation enjoyed the musical treat very much and appreciated all the efforts the singers had to go through to perform in Recklinghausen. The Polish choir took 18 hours for the journey from Bytom to Recklinghausen and they only stayed one night before they had to track back. It's still a shame that we did not manage to contribute to the proceeding with a choir of our own. Maybe next time ... if there is a choir competition on the horizon in any of our twins.

**19:30** Departure to the Vest Arena with the *Brücke bus* Hellbachstraße 105

**20:00** Greetings messages from the Mayors (representatives) of the twin towns, exchange of gifts and presentation of gifts by Herr Wolfgang Pantförder, Mayor of Recklinghausen

We were all 'bussed' to a new venue, i.e. the Vest Arena .. a huge social club with a high capacity. Once we had settled down near the stage, we ordered a few drinks and enjoyed to see so many people having fun. The singers from the various choirs were challenging each other in a good-hearted way and soon the hall was filled with song and laughter. To our delight, Gerd Böttcher, my navy buddy (we both served in the German Navy ... that was over 50 years ago) turned up with his fine camera and proceeded to take some decent photos. We were also pleased to see that Kristina, who had been so kind and helpful to Aasma, was also on the guest list. Suddenly, the Mayor of Recklinghausen, Wolfgang Pantförder, turned up with the right side of his forehead covered by a huge white sticky-plaster. He would not be drawn as to how this had happened, but he must have spent some time in Casualty, because he was dressed rather casually and probably had no time to go home and change. I certainly was very pleased to see him, since our acquaintance goes back a large number of years. I remember taking him to Blackpool when he was last in Preston.



Jürgen, Gerd & Julie



Tess & Paul showing the flag ...



the Preston and Baia Mare delegations ...



Joan enjoying a glass of wine



Fayyaz & Jamie ...



The Mayor is giving just praise to the Brücke team



greetings from the Dutch delegation ...



greetings from the Schmalkalden delegation



greetings from the Douai delegation ...



Greetings from the Polish delegation ...



... the assembled masses are talking, singing and shouting whilst their Mayor is trying to introduce his guests .. I tried to reason with them, alas, to no avail .. they would not shut up ...



.. we are just ignoring them and carry on with the welcoming .. wich was as cordial as ever .. I brought greetings from Chairman and Committee of the Preston Twinning Partnerships and, of course from the Mayor, whose letter to the Mayor I read out (in German)



The Deputy Mayor of Baia Mare, Romania



Carmen is translating Gabriela's speech ..



75% of the Romanian Delegation ...



The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Preston  
Councillor Veronica Afrin

Mayoresses Mrs Colette Miller & Joanne Afrin-Black  
Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Preston. PR1 2RL  
Telephone: (01772) 906113

19<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Dear Mr Pantförder,

Thank you for the wonderful invitation to attend the networking conferences and I am sorry that I could not be there in person to pass on my good wishes. I am grateful for the kind and generous welcome that the Preston delegates have received from all concerned. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the usefulness of events such as these and I hope that the Preston delegates, along with everyone else attending, have felt it worthwhile in making contact with like-minded people from throughout Europe. I would also like to express my hope that the links forged through this process will be maintained for years to come.

Yours sincerely

The Mayor of Preston  
Councillor Veronica Afrin



The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Preston  
Councillor Veronica Afrin

Mayoresses Mrs Colette Miller & Joanne Afrin-Black  
Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Preston. PR1 2RL  
Telephone: (01772) 906113

19. März 2014

Sehr geehrter Herr Pantförder,

Für Ihre großartige Einladung, an allen von der 'Brücke' organisierten Vernetzungskonferenzen teilzunehmen, bedanke ich mich recht herzlich. Es tut mir leid, daß ich nicht persönlich anwesend sein kann um ihnen meine besten Wünsche zu übermitteln. Für das freundliche und großzügige Willkommen das der Prestoner Delegation von allen Beteiligten entgegengebracht wurde, bin ich ebenfalls sehr dankbar

Ich möchte bei dieser Gelegenheit die Nützlichkei dieser Konferenzen betonen und hoffen, daß die Prestoner Delegation, zusammen mit allen anderen hier Anwesenden, die Meinung gebildet haben, daß es sich lohnt Kontakte mit europäischen Gleichgesinnten aufzunehmen und zu pflegen.

Außerdem möchte ich meiner Hoffnung Ausdruck geben, daß die durch diese Konferenzen entstandenen Verbindungen über kommende Jahre hinaus noch lange bestehen bleiben.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

The Mayor of Preston  
Councillor Veronica Afrin





## 20:30 Official Farewell Dinner

The official greetings and exchanges of presents over, we all joined a long queue for a sumptuous hot and/or cold buffet. After that, everybody had a good time networking or just being relaxed and friendly. Choirs started tuning up and Jean-Yves Dousset was back to caricature people and make paper silhouettes for ladies ... this time he was dressed as a French Policeman. I still can't fathom out what the significance of this 'dressup' was, but he was liked by everybody and he spread a lot of mirth and laughter about.

From 21:30 onwards Musical entertainment



The French and the Polish delegations..



Our table listening to an impromptu rendition



French and German singers hard at it ...



Kristina, Dan and Aasma queuing up for their silhouette ..



Aasma has to stand very still for Jean-Yves to do his amazing scissor cut ...



the finished product .. Aasma is happy with it



... our Gerd



Carmen is interviewed by Aasma ..



Fayyaz, Himmetullah & Jürgen

## 24:00 End of the event and return to the hotel with the **Brücke bus**

The transport back to the various hotels was a logistical masterpiece. Considering it was rather dark, everyone found their 'carriage' eventually and very soon we were safely conveyed to our accommodation at the Barbarossa Hotel. I slept very well that night ☺.

That is now the end of the official part of our visit.

<b>SAT</b> <b>29.03.14</b>	<b>09:00</b>	Breakfast at the hotel	I can arrange a day-trip to Münster for whoever wishes to go (€13.30 per person) A 45 minutes journey by train ... dep. Recklinghausen @ 10:05 and return from Münster @ 18:00 hrs
	<b>Rest of day</b> <b>14:00</b>	Programme according to arrangements Alex and James depart for Düsseldorf airport, transfer by Herr Klaus Beuck ... departure @ 17:00 hrs	

Just before we returned to the hotel, Himmet sprang a pleasant surprise on us. He offered to take us all to Münster, a mediaeval city, approx.. 30 Miles NNE from Recklinghausen as the Crow flies. Julie, Joan & I took up the kind offer, whereas Tess & Paul decided to stay back and



see off Alex and James who were returning to München in the afternoon. Aasma was going to be taken around Recklinghausen by Kristina at a more leisurely pace. Fayyaz was going to the Mosque to see Mehmed. So, everybody was engaged in accordance with their wishes. After breakfast, we met with the Romanian delegation in the hotel reception and altogether walked to Recklinghausen Hbf (Hauptbahnhof) the main railway station. The train was very comfortable, clean and quiet. We reached Münster after about 50 minutes and were surprised how many people were milling about the road leading from the station into the town proper. The city is indeed a very popular tourist attraction.



... here we are on the platform ... waiting for the train to Münster .. with us is the Romanian delegation ... Himmet took the picture ...



... the first thing you notice in Münster .. the bicycles are parked everywhere you go ...



.. the reason why everything looks so pristine and new .. the town was very badly bombed in WW2 and was painstakingly rebuilt over the following decades .. and they did a great job ...

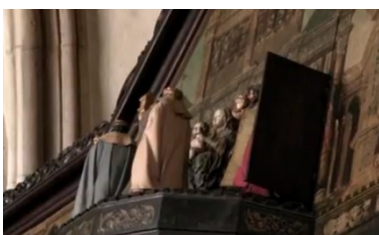


.. this is "Der Dom zu Münster" (Münster Cathedral)

## St. Paul's Cathedral

### Astronomical clock

The cathedral in its present state is essentially a creation of the 13th century. Of particular note is the astronomical clock, a marvel of the late Middle Ages the calendar, which reaches into the year 2071



... we were fortunate to arrive just before mid-day in order to witness the clock striking, playing well known hymns and setting off a procession of figures (magi) around the upper quarter of the clock. Each figure would bow to Maria and the God-child and then come around again for a number of times. It was fascinating to experience the 'hush' suddenly descending upon a noisy audience and the moment the performance had finished the 'hubbub' would start again with renewed vigour and at the appropriate decibels level ...







Here are three pictures of the Cathedral's interior ...



life goes on below the tragedy ...



.. view towards the St. Lamberti church

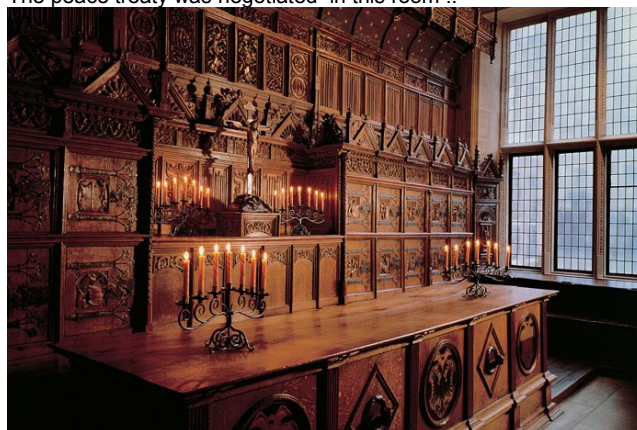
This is the steeple of St.Lamberti. Building of this church begun 1000 years ago. The three cages hanging off the steeple used to contain the remains of the three Anabaptist leaders who were done cruelly to death and their remain displayed for years in those cages



**The Westphalia area of north-western Germany gave its name to the treaty that ended the Thirty Years War, one of the most destructive conflicts in the history of Europe.**

**The treaty was negotiated in this building in October 1648 ...**

The peace treaty was negotiated in this room ..







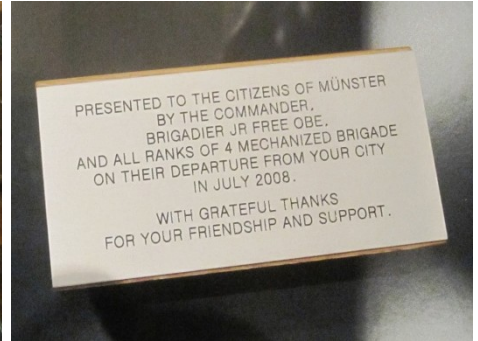
A masterpiece of ter Borch's early years, this painting is also one of exceptional historical interest. It records the treaty, ratified at Münster in Westphalia in 1648, that ended in Holland's favour its eighty-year struggle with Spain. Executed on copper, the painting shows the 'Ratskamer' (council chamber) of the Town Hall of Münster and includes portraits of seventy-seven men. The action is presented with unusual clarity, showing six Dutch delegates behind the table in the centre with two Spanish delegates to the right, ratifying the treaty simultaneously, though in fact the Spanish were the first to take the oath. Franciscan stands behind the Spaniards on the extreme right, while on the far left are a self-portrait of the painter.



This is a power supply bollard on the open Market place .. it sinks into the ground when not in use .. brilliant idea



these swords were presented to the City of Münster by the British Army's Mechanised Brigade when parting from Münster for good (after 63 years!)



.. the dedication of Brigadier Free to the City



The people of Münster certainly know how to take it easy ..



... temporary Café on the open market ..



.. conducted tours are also available .. this vehicle is battery powered ...

We really enjoyed our day out in Münster. People were friendly and we could have spent much more to explore the town. But we wanted to see the shops as well .. and they were fabulous. Alas, the shop that sells Loden coat has gone out of business .. much to Julie's disappointment. We went into a very 'posh' shoe shop. It was heaving with people, but the service was superb. The children's shoes department was in the basement, but in order to get there, a slide was installed that children could use instead on walking down 'boring' stairs .. good customer relations move ..

At about 4 pm, we had to consider, rather reluctantly, walking back to the station for the journey home. We met up again with the Romanian delegation and Himmet .. and soon we were on our way.



.. I like this display .. it gives all the relevant data of the journey and hence there is no fear of missing the often garbled messages the train manager gives out to his passengers



We arrived back at our hotel in good spirit and all decided to go out for a pizza to celebrate the fact that everything went according to plan and that we all got on so well. Alas, Himmetullah, who really put himself out magnificently to look after all of us, asked to be excused, because he was totally 'bushed' and needed a rest. Of course, we must not forget Carmen Greine, Karl-Heinz Broß, Petra Goller and Lea who must have felt similarly challenged. We were pleased that Dan Carpov, from the Romanian delegation, came with us as well. Also, Kristina Schröder, who looked after Aasma all day, was welcomed as our guest.



happy faces ...

We had a pleasant meal and enjoyed each other's company.

**SUN**  
**30.03.14**

**Breakfast at the hotel**  
**Programme according to arrangements**

Before he went home last night, Himmetullah had arranged a visit to the famous Icon Museum in Recklinghausen. Aasma, Julie, Joan and I decided to take up this kind offer. To our delight and pleasant surprise, my former Navy comrade Gerd Böttcher turned up with his trusted camera and escorted us to the Museum which is straight across from St. Peter, the town's main church. Before we got there, he took a number of photographs of our little group on the market place, in front of a gable end wall decorated with Recklinghausen buildings and later on in front of the famous sculpture at the Town Hall.



the City Council is trying hard to keep this medieval part of town neat and tidy. To prevent graffiti, they have had gable end walls painted in cheerful scenes and it seemed to have worked, because we saw only a few 'daubings' in the centre of the City.



The Icon Museum is unique; because it is the only museum outside the orthodox church area of influence, say Serbia, Ukraine, Russia, and ect ... that has this valuable and precious collection of icons. This time we were allowed to take photographs, but we were asked to refrain from using the flash .. of course, that made perfect sense as light of such intensity will cause damage to the painted surfaces over a period of time. The museum's staff even provided us with an introduction DVD show in English .. So we knew what we were dealing with.



we are all listening to the introduction. The screens are fine wood carvings and so is the 'candelabra'...



This is a Calendar, a Saint for Every day ...



St. Nicholas with scenes from his life story surrounding the central part...





Mother of God of Vladimir 17<sup>th</sup> Century



St. Nicholas, recent buy...



travelling altar



A map is always handy to explain matters



more recent icons painted on glass ...



the art of the coptic Christians in Egypt ..



I have visited the Icon Museum on a number of occasions, but have always found a new fascination with the way people of old expressed their veneration in this way and still do to this day. After this most interesting visit, we walked to the Town Hall and for the 'obligatory' photo call in front of the sculpture, called: "The Citizens carrying their City". Then it was time to part from Gerd who had another appointment. This seems corny, but we came to attention, saluted, embraced in a 'bear hug', he did an 'about turn' and then he was gone, my comrade from the yesteryears, just giving a last wave before turning the corner. A strangely reassuring thing is comradeship, difficult to explain, it's not at all sentimental but there is a strong mutual feeling of reliance upon each other; in German it is called: "Rückendeckung" (protection of one's vulnerable side).

We walked to that lovely café we came to on our first day and had a pleasant light lunch. Then it was time to go back to the hotel, fetch our things and be ready to be driven to Düsseldorf Airport.



This is the entrance to our hotel, at present in a building site...

**16:00** Departure to Düsseldorf airport, transfer by Scholz Reisen

Heinz, our driver, turned up in good time and since it was Sunday, the traffic was light and there were no holdups on the way. Soon the huge airport complex loomed ahead and I was glad Heinz was driving us through the confusing maze of roads and huge multi-storey car parks. As always, the check-in with Lufthansa went without a hitch and only the security check caught me out with my camera still around my neck. Ha.





**18:55** Departure from Terminal A 78 Flight N° 3434 (Eurowings)  
**19:25** Arrival Manchester T1  
**20:45** e.t.a. Preston

The plane took off more or less on time and the flight itself was comfortable and swift. We even got a snack and a drink. At Manchester airport we had to walk endless corridors to get to the passport desk and then on to the baggage carousel. Within minutes, the baggage was there and we arrived at the Park & Meet Office just by crossing the street from Terminal 1 where our cars were already waiting for us. Tess & Paul came with Julie and I and Aasma and Fayyaz joined Joan for the journey home. The traffic was light, the driving conditions perfect and hence we arrived at our house 5 minutes earlier (20:40 hrs) as predicted ... that meant we could have our much wanted cup of tea 5 minutes earlier.

## List of Preston Delegates

Home addresses and telephone numbers have been removed

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Rowell, James

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**Emergency mobile number: 0049 151 61 33 60 89**

Picture sources: Kristina Schröder, Gerd Böttcher & JOH Voges

**Please don't forget:**

**PASSPORT**

**TRAVEL INSURANCE**

**EUROS €**

**MEDICATION**

**The Weather in Recklinghausen: was dry, sunny and just right for us.**

## Conclusion:

Those of us who were privileged to attend more than one of the 6 conferences are sad that these marvellous gatherings in various countries have now had to come to an end and those of us who came for the first time got a taste of what it is like to meet and communicate with people from various European nations. We might not see our new-found friends again, but we have come away knowing that we have established a real bond with our European partners. Of course, that work started more than 60 years ago by generations who had to overcome the trauma of a terrible war that involved soldiers and civilians alike over the whole of Europe. It was not easy in the beginning, but gradually people realised that working together economically would also prevent armed conflict. So, over the years and a number of generations, we have grown together without giving up our national cultural heritage. In order to achieve this goal, there are institutions like "Die Brücke" who, with the efforts of a very dedicated staff, are working tirelessly in keeping these bonds, once established, alive and expanding. It is to the Brücke I extend all our thanks for this extraordinary experience of genuine international cordiality and conclude with the sincerest wish that the work of the Brücke will retain the active support of the City of Recklinghausen's representatives and citizens.

Personally, I also like to say a big 'thank you' to my fellow delegates who were a joy to be with and who represented their City and Country with a natural grace and openness that was much appreciated by our hosts and their other guests.

