

FFI Outbound # 11238
Daily Journals
Kiel, Germany (April 15-22, 2013)
Interim Week (April 22-27, 2013)
Noord, Netherlands (April 27-May 4, 2013)

Kiel, Germany (April 15-22, 2013)

Monday, April 15, 2013
Rendezvous in Kiel



Coincidental Meeting in Hamburg Train

We gathered together in Kiel at various times and places and were taken to our hosts for the rest of the evening.

Tuesday, April 16, 2013
Schleswig-Holstein and Viking Village of Haithabu/Haddeby

Lynne Duigou: Our day host Hans picked us up along with Mary Ann and Ernie Phillips to drive about forty minutes north of Eckernförde to the village of Schleswig. This area has been at times Danish and is currently under German rule. We saw the Castle and the Cathedral (1134 AD) of the Danish kings during their rule.



Fishermen in this area have homes dating to 1380 with wharfs and water access as they are the only people allowed to fish in the Schline which is the fjord off the Baltic Sea which is 15 km. away. Fishing for both salt water and fresh water fish has decline in the past 50 years.



Our tour included a visit to the town square which includes buildings dating back to the 1180. The Basilica of St. Peter was a Roman Catholic Church until the time of the Reformation in 1500's. It has a beautiful altar with a hand carved 1514 Triptych (three part altar piece) which tells the story of Abraham and the Exodus from Egypt, Jesus Christ's Last Supper, Crucifixion and Resurrection from the dead. The beautiful stain glass windows in the church were removed during the war and hidden to protect them from bombs and were returned to the church in 1947.

Diligence

After lunch we visited the nearby Viking Village Hedeby /Haithabu which was inhabited in the 9-11th. Centuries. The archeological museum has recreated the Viking village and has many artifacts which have been found in the area. A royal long ship was discovered preserved in the mud in the harbor. Evidence indicates that this was a major Viking trading centre for several hundred years. It has huge Rune stones showing evidence of noble burials. The remainder of the day was spent visiting and getting to know our hostess Christine Henkel and her dog.

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

Back to School: Gettorf and Osdorf

Jeanne and John Mackenzie: Today was education day. We went to Osdorf to visit 2 kindergartens, one church-run, and one secular. These kindergartens are more like our daycares or preschools, and take children aged 1 to 6 years. We were told that even the 3 year-olds take the school bus on their own. The school feeds them breakfast and lunch, and then the children are free to leave at 12:00, or they can stay as late as 2:00, depending on the choice of the parents. The secular school has 2 groups of 35 children, from ages 1-4 years and 3-6 years. Kindergarten is by parental choice and costs 135€ per month. Each classroom bathroom has age-appropriate fixtures. The school also has a separate sleeping room. The church-run school (Lutheran) is similar to the secular school but has religious instruction and storytelling. Funding is 90% provided by the state and 10% provided by the church. One day each week is Bible day.

Both kindergartens did performances for us. We were really impressed with the kindergarten program, the facilities and the number of staff. The "leaders" have 3 or 4 years of education. After the kindergartens, we went to an elementary school (grades 1 – 4) in Osdorf. At 6 years of

age, children are required to attend elementary school. The Osdorf school has 120 pupils with 40 more in a neighbouring school. There are 10 teachers. They are amalgamating schools in surrounding communities because of low enrolment. English is started in grade 3. We attended an English class with the teacher using props and puppets to elicit participation from the students. We visited art, music, and gymnasium rooms. The school seemed to be very well run. Classes go from 8:00 to 11:45 am. At 12:30, they can go home or buy lunch and stay until later. Vacations are 6 weeks in the summer, 2 weeks in autumn, 2 weeks at Christmas, and 2 weeks in the spring. The school year is 245 days.



Lunch followed at the home of the ED Jens Hanson and Doris, prepared by them and Gisela and Dietrich Werner. It consisted of sausages (wieners), 2 types of potato salad and cake. Then we visited a fairly unique gymnasium or high school. The program was presented by the deputy leader (vice-principal). In the regular gymnasium, one is put in a stream and once there, it is very difficult to change. Here, they are trying to make the system more flexible and allow transferring back or ahead between programs. In the regular school system, students go to school until grade 10 and then, if qualified, can go to the gymnasium and then on to university or vocational route. Here, after 6 months and after discussions with the parents, the student can be moved up or down. This is unique to very few schools. Each state has control of higher education and university fees range from free or, for example, 200€ per month.

Following this, we walked in the town, where we were told the story of the devil statue. It (the devil) threw a large rock at a building, which now leans permanently. The stone supposedly can be seen some distance away. We visited a historical museum in Gettorf with artifacts, flint and stone arrowheads and fossils from Viking times. They re-enact meals and have activities with period costumes. A windmill which was used to grind grain is often used as a venue for meetings and weddings.

It was our evening to take Christine and JB out for dinner. We went to the Barenkrug Restaurant for a wonderful meal. John had deer, and I had halibut, followed by dessert of a crepe with warm cherries, currants and ice cream. The restaurant is owned by a hunter who shoots his own game and prepares it for the restaurant. He has come to northern Canada and Alaska more than once to hunt. He proudly displays a bear skin on the wall of the restaurant, which fits in well with the restaurant's name. Hunting is popular in Germany, as there are apparently many fallow deer. They are very tiny compared to our deer.

We walked home, as the restaurant is in the neighbourhood, and the owner is a friend of JB and Christine.

Dagmar Lietz: On leaving our hosts' home in Kiel-Projensdorf, we drove past fields starting to green. We reached the clean, orderly town of Osdorf, and parked in front of the fire-station, on which one could read the slogan, "Gott to Ehr, den Nachsten to Wehr" – "In order to honor God, we protect our neighbor". Jens told us that Osdorf means "Danish Woods". The first school we were to visit serves 3 communities, with 120 school-age children. We were met by the head of the church-based kindergarten. She told us the school had 62 children, from 1 to 7 years old, and 8 teachers, to whom the trust relationship was very important. She also told us that the cleaner was the most important staff member.

The children are divide into three groups, the sun (the youngest), the rainbow, and the stars (the oldest). The bright colors of the decor and the play equipment provide the setting for the happy children we observed. In the bathroom, sinks and toilets were at the small-child level. The curriculum includes "Bibel Tag", stories about Jesus and God, sports days, and music. All the children were preparing a musical, "Noah and the Ark", to present to the parents. In the classroom for the second-youngest group, some of the children were playing on a climber, after having finished breakfast. They seemed friendly and curious about their visitors. The older children in the next classroom asked us a question about Canada, via their teacher, "Do bears get into our garbage pails?" We had a little less time to visit the public school kindergarten next door. The 4-6 year-olds sang "Old MacDonald" to us in German we responded by singing it in English. This was a larger class of 25 children to one teacher. The classroom for the younger children had a ratio of 2 teachers for 12 children aged 1-6. A couple of little girls met us and proudly held up three fingers to tell us how old they are. At the public school which has 120 children we were met by the director and a teacher. We visited the English as a second language classroom, which was led by an enthusiastic teacher who used various methods to promote oral language learning. The lesson started with the "How are you?" question, to which the students answered, "I am fine". She then used pictures of facial expressions, and asked the students to describe the feelings of the characters. The lesson finished with the students pairing up to mime these expressions, and to ask each other questions about them.

In the music class, the students were practicing for a performance of "Die Zauberflote" ("The Magic Flute"). The music room contained various rhythm and musical instruments. In the art classroom, the walls and shelves were covered with various art supplies and pictures. In the gym class, the students were involved in an active game of floor hockey. Lively music played in the background. The children ceased their activity when the teacher stopped the music and clapped her hands.



A large sports ground outside, on which mainly soccer is played, also provides for physical activity. This field is also used by the local adult sports club. The last class observed was involved in free reading. School hours are from 8am to 12:30 pm, when many of the children go home. However they are allowed to stay for lunch and do homework until 2pm.



We were all treated to lunch at Jens' and Doris' home close by. A tasty meal with two types of potato salad and German "Wurstchen", as well as beverages. We ate on an enclosed balcony overlooking the garden, which showed signs of spring- early flowers and budding shrubs.

Then we went to Gettorf, where we toured a secondary school. Jens introduced us to the director, who explained the system. The "Gymnasium" leads to the university entrance level, and goes to grade 13. The "Real Schule"

leads to school completion after 10 years, or on to further education. In the Hauptschule", children finish their education after 9 or 10 grades. At 2pm, students may return home or chose from several after-school programs, but "Gymnasium" students must stay for further subjects. Students at this school are given an opportunity to change from one stream to another within a 2-year period, with teacher and parent input. We visited several classrooms, but unfortunately, this was after dismissal time, so we were not able to see students at their lessons.



Next on the agenda was a tour of Gettorf. It began in front of the Heimatsmuseum, which is next to a beautifully restored windmill. The groups were divided into two for viewing these places. The mill, dated at 1869, had at one time been used for grinding grain, and was accessible to all farmers in the region. At present, the upper level is sometimes used for marriage ceremonies. The museum next door contained many artifacts from the towns' history. The enthusiastic curator explained the origin of the furniture, special pottery, and other curios. The museum also housed a special exhibition of the Schleswig Holstein kitchen, including a display of old cookbooks dating back to 1891.

After leaving the museum, Jens led us on a short walk past some of the historical landmarks. These included the "Pastorat II" dated 1845, the "Hirsch Apotheke", dated 1836, and the oldest "Fachwerkhaus", an architectural style, dated 1750. We passed several statues, including a Devil Statue next to a big stone. The story is told that the devil threw a stone at the tower of the church nearby, but hit it only part way. That is why the church's tower leans slightly. We also saw a statue of Bismarck, and one of 2 women trying to sell their wares in the marketplace. Obviously, it was a very full day, in which we learned a great deal about the present day school system as well as the town's history.

Mary Ann Phillips: German Educational System

Today, we visited four different schools and learned a great deal about education in Germany. The responsibility for the **German education system** lies primarily with the states. Optional Kindergarten (nursery school) education is provided for all children between two and six years of age, after which school attendance is compulsory. Most children first attend Grundschule from the age of six to ten. Most German children only attend school in the morning. There are usually no provisions for lunch. The amount of extracurricular activity is determined individually by each school and varies greatly.

German secondary education includes five types of school. The Gymnasium is designed to prepare students for university and finishes with the final examination Abitur, after grade 12 or 13. The Realschule has a broader range of emphasis for intermediate pupils and finishes with the final examination Mittlere Reife, after grade 10; the Hauptschule prepares pupils for vocational education and finishes with a final examination. Students may leave school after grade 9.

Many of Germany's institutions of higher learning charge little or no tuition. Students prove through examinations that they are qualified.

Village of Gettorf

The group was divided into two – we went to visit the Windmill first. It was built in 1869 and it had been restored with money from the Iron Curtain. It was used to grind grain into flour and any farmer was able to use it. Today, it is used as a library and is a very popular wedding venue.

The museum holds many historical artifacts. The treasures stored there are very similar to antiques at home. The artifacts were in good condition. The butter churns, meat grinders, stoves, etc. brought back many pleasant memories of growing up in Alberta.

Thursday, April 18, 2013 Agricultural and Art Tours

Dianna and Hugh Steele: On this day our group chose to participate in one of two options. One group would choose to visit agriculture sites in the area while the other group would visit the art gallery and then walk into the city experiencing historical monuments and buildings. The

group that Dianna and I chose was the art group and it turned into an interesting and eclectic adventure.

Our day started with a guided tour of the Kunsthalle, Kiel's art gallery, that displays all types of genres. The variety of art proved that this was to be an interesting adventure. From the Kunsthalle we walked into the centre of the city through a series of beautiful parks adorned with statues and cenotaphs key to the history of Kiel: the largest of these was a huge statue of Otto von Bismarck and a cenotaph to the fallen, German, soldiers in the Franco Prussian War and W.W.1.



Our walk continued into the centre of the city where we had an excellent lunch and then traversed to the largest church in Kiel, the St. Nikolai Kirche where we also saw the famous Geisthampher statue.

Carol Bahry: Agricultural Tour in Schleswig- Holstein

We split into two groups: one agricultural, one art. There were five distinct components of the agricultural tour which we went on:

University farm- experimental organic farm featuring pigs, cattle, and crop rotation; Distillery; Lunch; Plant breeding; Christmas tree farm.

1. Our group met at the Lindhof Farm on the Baltic Sea on a chilly, wind-swept day. The Lindhof Farm is devoted to organic farming and extensive land use systems. It is affiliated with the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences at the University of Kiel. The main income comes from certified organic cereal, potato, Limousine beef, and pork production. Converted to organic farming in 1994, it focuses on crop rotation to maximize grain production.



Here's Mama....where are the piglets?!!

Six per cent of agriculture in Germany is organic. Organic methods produce only one half the yields, so prices must be doubled. The European Union subsidizes organic farming to make it economically profitable. Even cattle and pig feed must be organic. These farm animals must be HAPPY- they must have freedom to wander from pens to open fields all year long.

It appears from observing the fields that the rooting of pigs is more effective than cultivators to plough land. Besides pigs leave organic fertilizer. The most enjoyable sight was Mama Sow and her 12 piglets frolicking in the field.

2. Distillery- an independent distillery for the production of fruit spirits. We sampled malt whiskey and wines made of honey, rose hip, and blackberry. My favorite was the rose hip wine.

3. Lunch – supplied by our hosts at the Gruner Jager (green hunter) Restaurant. My choice was the delicious Wiener schnitzel.

4. Plant breeding at Norddeutsche Pflanzertzucht (NPZ), a medium-sized, privately owned plant-breeding company, which began in 1897. It breeds canola (known as rapeseed in Germany), grain legumes, and forage crops such as grasses and clover. NPZ has branch companies in Ukraine, Great Britain, and Canada- at the Morden Institute in Manitoba. In conjunction, the University of Saskatoon heads up research in canola, potato, red clover, beans, and peas. We heard that it takes 10 to 12 years to develop a new variety.

5. Christmas tree farm. Our last stop was the Orstof Christmas Tree Farm, located on the highest *mountain*, 36 meters in altitude, of the area. Each year, 10,000 three year old spruce trees are planted, and the owner tends them until they reach at least six years of age until they are sold as Christmas trees.

Friday, April 19, 2013 Kiel Rathaus (City Hall)

Lou Duigou: Today we visited the City of Kiel, about 25 km from our homestays in Eckernforde. All the Ambassadors and their Hosts assembled at City Hall at 9:00 am. (Saw two deer on the way, apparently a fair number of them around and they are hunted in season.)

Cathy Kietzer is the president of the local government and she addressed our group on that government's behalf. One thing she said is “ **We see in our world so much strife and hatred. May we continue to extend the hands of friendship and peace to one another here and around the world.**” Well said to an audience of FFI Ambassadors.

A few points on the City of Kiel:

- City Hall built in 1910-11, roof damage in war, Kiel was 82% destroyed in WWII.
- City Hall is seat of local government for Schleswig-Holstein, which includes Kiel.
- There are 59 councillors with a party system, the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party are presently in power.
- Northern Germany, including Kiel and Eckernforde, at times part of Denmark, then back to Germany.
- Kiel has a population of 238,000, including about 35,000 university students. There is a grave shortage of accommodation for students, so single women and widows are encouraged to take in students. Still a lot of industry building locomotives and submarines.
- Because of the fiord on the Baltic Sea, about 135 cruise ships per year come to Kiel.

Following the tour of City Hall, we were invited to go up a tower that overlooks the city 360 degrees. Wow! What a view! And what a wind.....about 60 km/hour.

This tour of City Hall was to be followed by a walking tour, but the wind was so strong and with some rain falling, that was cancelled. People had the rest of the afternoon off to go shopping. Most of the Ambassadors and their Hosts went home at about 3:00 pm for the evening.

A truly FF type of day....learn a lot and get to know more people.

Saturday, April 20, 2013 Kiel Canal and Farewell Party



Bruno Lietz: At 10am, we met on a bridge overlooking the Kiel Canal, which connects the North Sea to the Baltic Sea. It was built in 1886-95, and is 100 km long, and 12m deep. The locks on the west side are necessary because of the tides. On the east side, locks are needed because of winds. Then we drove to a lighthouse, which was opened in 1895, and dedicated to Kaiser Wilhelm II, the last emperor of Germany. On the pier, fishermen were trying to catch herring. We also viewed some sail boats, most of which had been converted from small carriers.

Our next major stop was at the naval memorial, built in 1936 to honor German sailors, but rededicated in 1996 to the memory of all men who had died at sea. In this museum, it was overwhelming to see and read about individual and general battles at sea. The post WWII attempts at recognition and reconciliation of opposing forces was much in evidence. One touching example was the story of Hans Langerdorff, who surrendered the marines of his warship, then destroyed his ship and committed suicide to avoid destroying merchant ships as part of the war effort. Each year, on Dec. 19, his sailors commemorate this sacrificial act.



We also had an opportunity to view and enter a submarine from that era. After this, the group had lunch along the shore. In the afternoon, our hosts took us for a walk through a small forest of tall beech, oak, and spruce trees. We saw wild boars, a variety of deer families, and even a nesting pair of geese resembling Canada geese. The forest was relatively clean of underbrush, and had neat trails. The farewell party started with drinks and mingling. Our hosts had invited a singing group of 4 women, who sang a number of German and old familiar English songs, including our national anthem. The German songs were mostly popular old-time favorites of the

state of Schleswig-Holstein, including the anthem of the state. Following this, our ambassadors gave a presentation about Canada, including a large map, information about the provinces and territories, and songs. When a scaled map of Germany was placed over Alberta, the hosts gasped in surprise. The meal was a delicious hot and cold buffet. The evening concluded with words of thanks and goodbyes, ending with linked hands and the song, “Now is the hour, when we must say goodbye”.

Dianna and Hugh: A beautiful morning with bright sunshine saw our group assemble and drive to the Kiel Canal where we disembarked and walked to the top of a massive bridge over the canal which gave us a tremendous vantage point of the whole area. Upon embarking we drove to the mouth of the canal where we saw an old lighthouse and then we had coffee on the banks of the canal basking in the sunshine.

The group then went to a village called Laboe where they visited a huge cenotaph dedicated to maritime pursuits, particularly the German navy. One could take an elevator ride to the top where one was afforded a tremendous view of the Baltic Ocean as well as the maritime traffic that was passing. An extremely interesting side bar was a visit to a W.W.II submarine which has been turned into a historical exhibit. The visit to the U-Boat only cemented my opinion that I couldn't have sailed on a submarine....the quarters are far too cramped and claustrophobic

Ernie Phillips: Kiel Canal (Nord-Ostsee-Kanal) – built 1886 – 95. The canal links the North Sea to the Baltic Sea. An average of 250 nautical miles is saved by using the Kiel Canal instead of going around the Jutland Peninsula. This not only saves time but also avoids potentially dangerous storm-prone seas. It is the busiest artificial waterway in the world. At the top of the mole there is a lighthouse helping the sea traffic to find the entrance of the canal.

Tour of Submarine – U-995. This sub carried 12 torpedoes. It was difficult to detect for it stayed closer to the surface. It was capable of going to a depth of 300 m. After three days it would have to surface. It took a crew of 46 to 48 to man this submarine. 4 to 6 week stay on the sub was usual, however, food became a concern and it had to head into port.



German Naval Memorial. Originally erected as a memorial for the German sailors killed in WW I, it has changed to an internationally accepted peace monument after WW II. The site provides a superb view to the open sea. The architect's intention was to create a building resembling a rising flame, thus connecting the sea and the land with the sky. The tower rises 85 metres above sea level. There is also a large, underground memorial room and a museum detailing the history of the Germany Navy.

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Sunday, April 21, 2013
Last Day With Hosts

Jeanne and John Mackenzie: Molfsee. This was our last full day in Kiel – a day with no planned group activities. We had a late breakfast/brunch, after which we and our hosts, JB and Christine, walked about an hour and a half through the “old village” of Molfsee. Many of the old farmhouses have been converted into condos, duplexes or homes. The oldest house we saw dates from the 1700's. We walked to Molfsee Lake, with Christine pointing out trees and flowers. For the first time, I saw a corkscrew (twisted) hazelnut bush, and magnolias which were almost ready to bloom. Following our walk, we went to the Open Air Museum of Schleswig-Holstein (Freilichtmuseum) with the Olynys, the Werners, the Hansens, the Bornhofts and their granddaughter Helle and her friend Emilia. (The grandchildren call Christine “Omimi”.) The museum opened in 1965 with 13 buildings. It now consists of 72 buildings and exhibits, dating from the 16th to the 19th centuries, which were moved piece by piece from areas north of Kiel. There are examples of the 3 main house types characteristic of the area. Among the many buildings we viewed were a bakery, a manse, an apiary, several barns, a weaver's shop, a pharmacy and herb garden, a dairy, a blacksmith's shop, two rich people's homes, beautifully furnished, and poor people's homes with animal stalls and little else. There is also an amusement park for children and a windmill which can be moved so that the blades face in the right direction for the wind. Some Canada geese were seen sitting on nests built on the rooftops of some of the buildings.

We went for dinner to the Antik-Hof Bisse restaurant. JB made a point of entering first, as the tradition is that the first person to enter must pay for the meal – which he did! I learned that TTT means “tummy touches table” and refers to the fact that you've eaten very well. The end to a perfect day.

Kevan Hanlen: Trip to Lubeck

Our day started in a small town of Preetz south of Kiel. Today our hosts Meggie and Eckkehard took Carol and me on a trip to the ancient trading city of Lubeck, a few miles south of Kiel.



After a great breakfast of cereal, sliced meats, eggs, fresh bread and jam, we drove to the railway station and caught the train going to Lubeck. We picked up another FF member who was going to share our adventure with us. She lived in a little town south of Preetz. Upon arriving in Lubeck, we walked toward the island city, taking pictures and keeping out of the way of auto traffic. There were two river crossings over the Trave River and the Wakenitz River.

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The old town of Lubeck is a UNESCO site. It was the 3rd largest city of the Roman Empire of the German Nation after the cities of Cologne and Prague.

The symbol of Lubeck was the 'Holstentor'. A picture of the city gate was on the back of the 50 mark bill for many years which gave the city much free advertisement. The Holstentor, built in 1478, leans a little because it was built on swampy land. It formed a towering gate, which everyone was required to pass through to get into the island city.

Lubeck was first built in the year 1143, but burned down in 1457. Heinrich the Lion rebuilt Lubeck in 1159. Soon the town was a bustling trading post with furs, wax, honey, wood, salt, cloth, weapons and stockfish being traded. This brought the countries of Russia, Flanders, Germany and Norway into trade. The salt sheds are still in place where the sailing vessels could unload or load directly from them.

We proceeded into the city going to several churches and buildings. The wind was blowing and it was cold, cold, cold. We soon stopped for the morning coffee and treat. After warming up we continued our visit of the old city, which is still laid out as it was originally built centuries ago. For dinner we visited the Guild House of the Brotherhood of Captains. The land was purchased in 1535. They would meet and discuss business using the same tables and chairs that are still being used to this day. It was converted to a public restaurant in 1868. Boy, was this building neat with the ship models and a huge chandelier with old paintings of ships that would have been plying the waters of Lubeck up to 7 centuries ago. I think one of the reasons I was so interested was it had 2 of my favorite topics, boats and food. :-))

Carol and I treated our hosts to this meal. For this day I think Carol and I got the best treat of the day. The tour of Lubeck was just so unforgettable. We slowly wound our way back to the railway station and boarded the train home. We arrived home to the task of packing and getting ready to leave in the morning.

Meggie and Ekkehard found out they were grandparents one more time. They had gotten a bouncing baby girl. After a toast or maybe 2 to the baby, we were off to bed one more time.

April 22, 2013: Ambassadors leave Kiel

Interim Week (April 22-27, 2013): Ambassadors scatter to the four winds!

Noord, Netherlands (April 27-May 4, 2013)

Saturday, April 27, 2013: Arrival and pickup in Groningen, Netherlands.

Sunday, April 28, 2013
Welcome to the Netherlands

Bruno and Dagmar Lietz and Carol Bahry Kevan Hanlen left us for this next part of our journey. We are joined by Carl and Marj Eckert and Anne Dobko for our sojourn in the Netherlands.

Welcome and afternoon coffee and cake at the home of Bert and Nel Alblas. Daan Hoogerkamp gave an excellent powerpoint presentation about the Netherlands in general and the Noord Region in particular.

Monday, April 29, 2013
The Hanze University in Groningen

Marj Eckert: Bernard's daughter gave a presentation on 'Internationalization at the University'. The Hanze University of Applied Services is a practical university with hands on learning. The other university across the street is the University of Mental Research which is a Theory based U. Hanze U is 200 years old. It has had 50,000 students. The cost for students is 1835€ for European students and 7500€ for non-European students. They can get Bachelor and Master degrees. Hanze is their first University – 1575AD. Now there are 40 universities in the Netherlands.

Things we learned:

Netherlands has 1700 kms of dykes, 2/3 is below sea level, Old windmills used to pump out excess water. New windmills are for electricity. Alaska and Washington, U.S. are possibilities for windmill energy, for recharging electric cars.

The Universities focus on AGING – keeping ahead of the times and making everything more productive and practical.

The European Union gave 100 million€ for renewable energy studies "EnTranCe". It is new and in 10 years will be much larger. They have small pods (like portables) where they can test new products.

Dr. Visscher says that 16 is the legal drinking age for liquor & drugs are not controlled (don't check ages in bars). Marijuana is tolerated but not legal. Some students drink up to 14 beer in one night. Alcohol is more of a problem with students than drugs. Engineering students easily find jobs locally. There is 8% unemployment in Netherlands.

We enjoyed coffee and cake in the morning then lunch in the cafeteria at noon.



IF IT AINT DUTCH, IT AINT MUCH!

Shopping time in Groningen. Helen was the most successful when shopping, but the rest of us (Marj, Lou and Lynne), enjoyed the tour around the shopping center with Betsie and Ank. Groningen has a Cathedral and a Bishop so qualifies as a City. Martini spire (St. Martin's Church) was the first Catholic Church. Aa Church is the first church. There is and Aa museum and Aa Street! We stopped at Feith Huas (fight house) for coffee, mint tea with mint leaves and pastries. On the way home I bought wine in the Co-op store then (under lock and key) I bought Orange Bitters in the liquor room to celebrate King's Day.

Helen and Betsie (Heavens to Betsie) came to Gea & Reint's farm (our hosts) for dinner. Mustard soup is a favorite! In the barn which is attached to the house, the neighbours are making decorations for a festival they will have May 9th. I got to help paint giant cupcakes! Much fun!



Lynne Duigou: Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, Netherlands

We were picked up at 9:15 by our day host Betsie Nijborg and Helen Arnott and drove to Hanze University. We walked in the rain to the Faculty where we had cake and coffee. Meiny Visscher, daughter of the Noord ED, gave an explanation of the size of the University, its many English programs and its 26,000 students. It was the first University in Netherlands in 1575 and has many International Students. The focus of study here is providing theory with a practical approach through case studies and workplace placements. We also heard about a 100 million Euro project sponsored by the European Union into Renewable Energy which looks at sustainable transportation and eco systems and a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. This campus has no student housing but we did have lunch in the Student cafeteria and toured the campus and had a view from the Admin Tower.

Our afternoon was spent exploring the city of Groningen. We caught a bus to the city centre near the main square as parking is difficult and expensive. The city was being decorated for the Installation of the new King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima the following day. They had lots of flags, banners and everything orange. A band shell /stage was being set up in the square for the party. We saw a few historic buildings but the city sustained a great deal of damage during WW11 so many buildings were quickly rebuilt but poor construction means they are now being torn down and replaced. One of the historic buildings we saw was the university where the

first woman was able to be educated about 1894. Our afternoon coffee break was at Feist huis which is an old home now used as a restaurant. We of course had to sample some of the delicious deserts.

We caught the bus back to the cars. Our trip home was beside a large canal about six meters deep which had huge container ships and some ship building in progress. Our hostess has a small hammer in the front seat of her car in case she has an accident and drives into the canal. The hammer will break the car window and allow her and her passengers to escape.

Mary Ann Phillips: Hanze University (This University offers programs that are based on practice rather than theory.)

Highlights of Dr. M. W. Visscher's presentation:

- tallest people in the world
- Nederlands known as Holland, however, Holland is separate from the Nederlands
- 17 000 km of dikes
- 16 million people
- 17 million bikes
- 191 different nationalities
- Rotterdam largest seaport in Europe

Tuesday, April 30, 2013 Queen's Day

Barb Olynyk: Today was a day free from activities because it was the abdication of Queen Beatrix and the inauguration of Prince Willem Alexander as the new king. There were celebrations in all parts of the country, but our hosts chose to watch the events on TV. For us, this was a trip to a neighboring village, Old Pekela, where Derk, our host, has his own beautiful house and yard filled with fruit trees.



To keep with tradition, we all wore something orange. By 10:00 AM we were settled into the living room with tea and orange cakes to watch part one the abdication of the queen and the signing over of the kingdom to her son. His wife, Maxima, who was born in Argentina, would become queen. This took place at the Royal Palace with cabinet ministers present. After a short announcement by the queen, she signed her abdication. Then her son, her

daughter-in-law and all the ministers around the table including the six Caribbean colonies signed the document, which was passed around the table. The royal family then appeared on the balcony to the cheering crowd. Then Beatrix, now princess, left the balcony and the three daughters (princesses) of the king and queen joined their parents. Amelia is now the crown princess at the age of 8.

In the afternoon, at 1300 hrs., would be the ceremony in the church. While we waited for that event, we toasted the new King Willem Alexander and the new Queen Maxima, with orange bitter. Then we had a leisurely walk through the garden and had lunch.

In the afternoon, it was back to the TV to watch the many dignitaries enter the church. For me it was entertaining to see what the ladies were wearing. Their hats and fascinators were fascinating! As it drew nearer to the start time of the ceremony, the more important people arrived, with the princes and princesses arriving last. No kings or queens were invited because the highest official at the church that day should be the new king.

The ceremony was simple with a speech from the new king, followed by other speeches and finally a Pledge of Allegiance from each member of Parliament, which took a long time. The Netherlands national anthem was sung. It has 15 versus each starting with a letter from the name of their king at that time, Willem Van Nassov. Usually only versus one and six are sung.

At the conclusion was the royal walk of the king and queen, which was very stately and pompous. The people cheering the procession were often very emotional and they all sported something orange, which is the customary color to celebrate royal events. The color was chosen years ago when Prince Willem Nassau from Germany who was married to a princess from Netherlands, inherited the kingdom of Orange on France. He then became known as Prince Willem Nassau from Orange and the surname continues today.

The evening concluded with a boat ride for the royal family and more TV for us as they meandered down the canal watching various entertainment on the shoreline and on boats. A lot of TV watching, but an entertaining day. The Dutch love their royal family!

Dianna and Hugh:

Today was considered a free day by our hosts but it proved to be an interesting experience as the whole nation tuned in to their television sets to watch the investiture of their new King. It was extremely interesting from an outsiders perspective to watch the enthusiasm of the Dutch people as they embraced their new King, Wilhelm, his beautiful wife Maxima and their three lovely daughters. It was also interesting from a Canadian perspective to draw corollaries between the House of Windsor and the Dutch Royal House.



Wednesday, May 1, 2013
MAY DAY
Visits to Grain and Dairy Farms

Dianna and Hugh Steele: Our group had the enjoyment of being able to visit two Dutch farms located in the vicinity of the village of Scheemda.

The morning visit took us to a very unique farm dedicated to mixing a variety of seeds for different types of grasses. It was fascinating to see the difference in size and texture of the different seeds dedicated to different tasks: e.g. for golf courses, lawns, soccer fields, meadows and for clover.

After visiting the seed farm we were regaled by a superb lunch at the village house in Scheemda (an adjunct to the church).

The afternoon visit was equally as informative and as interesting as the morning visit. The venue for this visit was a very large dairy farm which we were fortunate to be shown the operation in action by our hosts Peter and Christine. From my point of view the most interesting aspect of this visit was the milking schedule and the automatic milkers. Watching the cattle work their way into the milking area and the machine hooking itself up for the procedure was entertainment in itself....and the cattle were duly rewarded for their part with a biscuit. .

Helen Arnott: Where has Betsie gone?! I had to have breakfast all by myself...Dutch cream cheese with ginger bits, different kinds of bread and crackers, seeded tomatoes, tea, gouda and yes, fresh strawberries...and in pops Betsie with more fresh bread....yummmm! Out the door before 9:00 am. First to arrive at De Oenmoetingen, Schmeeda..... at the Dutch Reformed Church...gorgeous facade, with pipes and pulpit preserved from the old days....1635 AD. Multi-purpose facility, lunch of soup (tomato and spring vegetables) and other good things served by the Church ladies and gents. We were told that “young born people” (ie newborns!) were baptized here. There is keen separation between the Church and the State.

Farm # 1: Heijo and Ina ten Have. 230 hectares, grass seeds such as rapeseed, sugarbeets with high sugar content because of clay soil, alfalfa; ship to Germany for oil production, barley, cattle feed....different variety of grass seeds (rice, oats)...ie bins for English meadows, golf courses, football fields. Huge storage area. No problem with mice because we have cats!

Farm # 2: Peter and Christine, with Son Dirk: dairy farmers. 280 Holstein-Friesen cows, automatic Milking 24 hours per day. Cows are productive for 4.5 years and are milked an average of 2.7 times per day(2-5 times per day). Empty the tanks every 3 days....for 17,000 litres....tank holds 2,000 litres. 28.5 kgs/day is average....younger cow in the beginning, 11 kgs/day. Reduced antibiotics this year. 5.2% deaths, lower than in Netherlands as a whole. I was so utterly fascinated by the automatic milking system, that I completely forgot to take photos!!

Afternoon tea with 3 different kinds of cake. Home to rest!

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Called on Joop, Betsie's brother who is on his way to Antwerp; then to Uniek Restaurant in Haren...with Lynne, Lou, Ank and Betsie. Delicious cod for Ank, Betsie and me; salmon for Lynne; ribs for Lou. Amstel beer and white wine. Home and to bed about 11:30 pm.

Thursday, May 2, 2013 Museum Day: Eelde



Jeanne and John Mackenzie: We visited the Vosbergen music instruments museum in Eelde, the Netherlands. This museum was set up by Dick and Rieteke Verel. Dick took us on the tour. He was a physics teacher with a love of music, which started early in his youth when he got a small harmonica. He has an incredible repertoire of music knowledge and is proficient in playing many instruments. He repairs and builds violins. His museum is a collection of musical instruments from around the world, from ancient drums and flutes to present-day instruments. He has many precious and valuable artifacts, including an exotic collection of instruments from Tibet, Siberia etc. Beyond his incredible collection is an innate ability as an educator and his ability to inform young or mature learners. He demonstrated instruments that can be made out of

materials from around the house, including a simple flute, a garden hose trumpet and a water glass xylophone. This was followed by home hosted lunches, for which we were divided into 2 groups.

After lunch, we then visited the Klompen Museum in Eelde, which is the largest wooden shoe museum in the world. There are only 5 wooden shoe makers left in the Netherlands, and each one has his own design and markings. In 1990, this museum opened with 2500 shoes, volunteers and no sponsors. Poplar and willow wood are used for making shoes because those woods are soft, tough and lightweight. Shoes were originally made by hand, and later by machines that can duplicate a model. We were shown specialty shoes for bow-legged people, for short one-legged people and for smugglers who wanted a shoe made backwards (the heel at the front of the shoe). Before machines, a shoemaker could make 5 pairs of shoes per day. Machines now can make 300-400 pairs per week. It was interesting to see the museum and how shoes were made as well as the collection of wooden shoes from around the world.



As usual, we were offered tea and cake after each one of the tours, after which we went to the train station to purchase a ticket for Schiphol on Saturday. Because we had been given a 2-for-1 coupon by the Kiel club, we needed only one, which cost 24 €.

Anne Dobko. Musical Instruments Museum. Name of the home is Landgold Voshagen. The owner of the museum started being interested at the age of twelve, his first instrument was a harmonica. This led to collecting instruments from around the world and he started a museum after he retired. We were amazed how a piece of garden hose with the mouth piece of a horn or trumpet inserted can produce amazing tones and sounds. A paper organ put together plays beautiful tunes. A keyboard with glasses molded produced music and melodies. It is a huge museum with many antique instruments from all over the world.

Lunch at the home of Merschel Schenkel

Merschel is originally from South Africa. She welcomed us to her beautiful penthouse home in the town of Vries where we were served soup and rolls with cheese, salmon, ham, salad, chocolate Easter eggs, apple juice, mild tea, coffee. It was a short but gracious visit. The wooden shoes beckon us onward.....



Wooden Shoe Museum. Wooden shoes are made from willow or poplar, which make strong and light shoes. We watched a film showing how shoes were made before machines came into use. It took all day, working very hard to produce 6 pairs of shoes in a day. Today they can produce 300 pairs a day. Wooden shoes are used all over the world. Every country makes shoes from different materials that are available to them. This museum has a wonderful collection of different shoes made all over the world.



Ernie Phillips: Visit to the Musical Instruments Museum – owners are Dick and Rieteke Verel. He started collecting at the age of 12. Upon retiring, he bought a house and turned it into a museum. An amazing museum –



with hundreds of different kinds of instruments. Dick told us about the history of the instruments. One example was a lyra that is a thousand years old. It is found in Greece and still used today in Ethiopia.

A piece of garden hose with a mouth piece can be played like a trumpet – very neat!
One Tibetan instrument (drum) was made of human skin, human skulls and bones.

Wooden Shoe Museum. First, we watched a video of a shoe maker at work. Willow and poplar make the lightest and toughest shoes. Each shoe maker has his own design.



There are about 33 shoe makers in northern Holland. Now in Holland there are 13 factories that create shoes. A shoe maker can make about 5 to 6 pairs a day. The first machines made about 400 pairs a week.

Friday, May 3, 2013 Borger

Jeanne and John Mackenzie: Today, we had a day host, Hilda, who stayed with the Wyatts when she visited Edmonton. Our destination was the museum of megalith builders or Hunebedcentrum in Borger (province of Drenthe), about 30 minutes from Kiel. The megaliths are mysterious stone monuments dating back some 5,000 years. The tour started with a film, which took us back in time to 150,000 years ago, beginning in Scandinavia and ending in Drenthe. Our guide, Ben de Boer, told us that during the ice age, the ice in this area was 2.5 km. thick. When the ice retreated, oxen, pigs, bears and humans came on the scene. The first permanent residents were here 6,000 years ago. They built 2 houses, one in which they lived, – made of wattle, daub and thatch - and one for burial. There are over 50 of these graves (“dolmen”) in the Netherlands. Interestingly, no bones or organic matter has ever been found in the graves, because of the acidity of the soil. All that has been recovered is “grave gifts” such as pottery and stone tools and weapons. However, a 5,300 year-old body was discovered buried in ice in the Alps and provides information as to how the people might have lived here. The culture is know as the Funnel Beaker culture, because of the shape of the recovered pottery.



The largest of the megalith dolmen on this site is D26. It is 22 metres long, with the largest stone weighing over 20 tonnes. The entrance is, as always, placed facing the sun at 12:00 noon. There remain none of the smaller moveable stones used in the construction: they were removed and

used to build dikes. D26 has been scanned, and all that is visible are pottery shards.

After tea and cake, we left about noon. The afternoon was spent with hosts, in a variety of activities until 5:00 when we all met for the farewell dinner, held at Kiel Windeweer. We were served buffet-style, a meal of Chinese/Indonesian food. Each one of us was given 3 tickets for 3 free drinks. The Dutch hosts performed several folk dances, and even got us involved. We did our rendition of “This Land is Your Land.” After fond farewells, we headed back to our hosts' home for the last time.

Carl Eckert: Hunebedcentrum (Megalith Centre in Borger)

The megaliths are mysterious stone monuments dating back some 5,000 years. The video took us back some 150,000 years on an icy journey from Scandinavia to Drenthe. It was very well done. These megalith builders were not very tall but were strong enough to move stones weighing around 20 tons. These stones are piled upon one another. The museum is built where the stones were found. The only bones they found were very small and most is speculation on what the people look like.



Today on our drive we saw irrigation spraying the field. Many fields are 8” tall now. Also saw transport trucks and campers. Lunch was with Anita at a hotel restaurant where Down Syndrom people work. We ate croquets – which are ground and mashed meat breaded and deep fried in the shape of a hot dog. It is a popular traditional Dutch dish, but not popular with us.

We toured the church next door to our host home – it is used for weddings and funerals & celebrations, but not regular services. The rectory is now used by a couple for a B & B. The yard is pleasant. The cemetery in the back has huge tombstones. Reint is grounds keeper there. We had grapefruit with Port in our yard with Ron & Barb and their host Derk before going down the road to the Farewell party where they ordered in Chinese food and gave us each 3 tickets for drinks. The flowers on the tables were donated by florists – flowers they couldn’t sell, but were still lovely. Good idea. They had flags of the countries they had hosted all around the room and on tables. We took group photos.

It is hard to believe we are all going our separate ways now.

Saturday, May 4, 2013
Ambassadors Leave the Netherlands with Mixed Feelings



Ambassadors and Hosts Extend Hands of Friendship Around the World

Some of us went on a river cruise; others explored more of Germany, Russia, Ireland, and other places in Europe. Some came home sooner and others later. We have learned much and shared our knowledge of our own country with our Hosts in Germany and the Netherlands.

"Not all who wander are lost." J.R.R. Tolkien



Kiel Ambassadors

Lynne and Lou Duigou
Carol Bahry and Kevan Hanlen
Dagmar and Bruno Lietz
Jeanne and John Mackenzie
Ron and Barb Olynyk
Ernie Phillips
Dianna and Hugh Steele

Noord Ambassadors

Anne Dobko
Lynne and Lou Duigou
Marj and Carl Eckert
John and Jeanne Mackenzie
Barb and Ron Olynyk
Ernie Phillips
Dianna and Hugh Steele

Co-Exchange Directors

Mary Ann Phillips
Helen Arnott

Travel Quotes

Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.

Maya Angelou

Never go on trips with anyone you do not love. Ernest Hemingway

I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move. Robert Louis Stevenson

To travel is to discover that everyone is wrong about other countries. Aldous Huxley

No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home and rests his head on his old, familiar pillow. Lin Yutang

July 25, 2013