

.....followed by ice-cream and hot cherry sauce .

03 00 hours and the front-doorbell was ringing. This could only be Worshipful Brother Ian Gibson and his wife Liz, who had driven up from Salisbury to join Ann and myself in our dash through the early morning countryside to join Worshipful Brother Jim's annual charabanc trip to Dusseldorf. Apart from two senior moments, one of which entailed a three-point turn in the roadwork's on the A3 and the other a circuit of the Petworth Car Park, we arrived at Worshipful Brother Jim's home in time to park the car and transfer our luggage onto the coach.

The drive along the south coast to Haywards Heath was uneventful and twentyseven bleary eyed travellers were at the appointed pickup points and on time. Sitting highup in a coach and watching the Commuters speeding past on their way to work helping to fund my pension with their Income Tax gave me a very warm feeling soon to be deflated on our arrival at Dover

If the Good Lord had intended Worshipful Brother J.J. Clark's annual charabanc trip to Lodge Niederrhein's Installation to cross the Channel by ferry he would not have allowed the French fishermen to get in a strop about fuel prices and blockade the port of Calais, thus causing us to travel on the Troglodyte Express commonly known as Euro Tunnel causing a three hour delay. The delay however enabled some of us to have the Full English Heart-attack breakfast before joining the aforementioned Troglodyte Express. The trip through the Tunnel was uneventful, no leaks were noticed. There was no sensation of speed, just a slight rocking from side-to-side at times, accompanied by announcements we couldnot hear.

The journey from Calais to Dusseldorf was uneventful and apart from stops for fuel, for coach and passengers, there were no hold- ups. We even negotiated the Antwerp Ringroad without mishap or wrong turning. We arrived at the Terminus Hotel at 8o'clock and never were a group of travellers more pleased to see a terminus than us. Brad and Uschi were there to meet us with happy, smiling faces and a big hugs which were a tonic to us all. The Coach Driver who was using a Sat-nav was able to inform those who felt "A Beer Coming On" to ring ahead so that the Beers were on the bar when we arrived. Sat-navs have their uses after all. After a quick wash-and-brush-up we were off across the road to the Frankenheim (remembering that the natives drive on the wrong side of the road) for schnilzels and pommefrites, followed by icecream and hot cherry sauce.

Suitably fortified by a of full Continental Heartattack breakfast i.e. rolls, the crust of which lacerated the gums and a wide selection of colestral inducing cheeses and meats for which the Terminus is renowned and armed with travel passes Thursday morning saw us off to a museum to see an exhibition of glassware and associated artwork. From a personal point of view, having served an apprenticeship in a glass bottle factory in the North West of England I found this exhibition most interesting. In the afternoon we relaxed on a boat trip on the river with a stop-off for those who felt A Beer Coming On and those in need of strawberries and icecream.

Friday we were off to Cochem a wine producing centre where the vintage could be tasted and purchased, which by the sound of the clinking of glass on the return trip, went off well. The weather was kind to us and some of us spent a relaxing time people watching and watching the passing scene on the river after a nice lunch followed by

Saturday was the day of the main event the Installation of Ronaldo the 45th Worshipful Master of Lodge Niederrhein at The Holiday Inn, Dusseldorf Airport, Rattigen. We were greeted on our arrival by the usual chaos that precedes Installation meetings, meeting and greeting old friends and being introduced to new ones, paying for the Festive Board and the all important signing the Register. Order was restored by Worshipful Brother Glyn, assisted by Worshipful Brother Dad, or should that be the other way round?

There were in excess of a hundred Members of the Craft in the Lodge from the Grand Master of British Freemasons in Germany down to the Entered Apprentices. Forty eight years in the Craft had not prepared me for what was to follow. The Grand Master was piped into the Temple by his Piper and the Officers of the Lodge were piped in by our own Piper. From then on the meeting became ALIVE, the atmosphere became electric and from the energy with which the Opening Ode was sung, it was obvious that we were to witness a momentous occasion, Worshipful Brother Glyn deserves the highest praise for the way he controlled the meeting as do the Officers and those who took part in the ceremony. It was obvious when it came to giving greetings that Brethren had travelled from all over Europe and the United Kingdom. I am sure that the full list when Worshipful Brother Jim, our Secretary, prints it with the Minutes, will show just how far and wide the Brethren came to see Worshipful Brother Ronaldo installed. Cosmopolitan is the word that I was looking for.

After the Installation Ceremony itself the Grand Master made numerous well deserved presentations,. The one that pleased me most was the presentation of the Order of Service to Masonary to Very Worshipful Brother Paul Medhurst PSGW by the Grand Master A well-deserved award to a very worthy Brother (Paul Installed me into the Chair).

Over eighty Brethren sat down to the Festive Board and once again the two world-class Pipers gave us a demonstration of their considerable world-class talent. The meal was excellent, but I have a request for the Junior Warden when he is ordering the meal for next year's Installation. Could we at least have one portion of ice cream and hot cherry sauce???? For guess who?????

This was indeed a Installation to remember. One Installation followed by three Festive Boards one in The Holiday Inn, one in the Frankenheim and another in The Brauerei Zur Uel in the Altstadt Dusseldorf. No doubt the latter two venues were dispensing Singing Beer and many lamps were swung and promises made to meet-up next year.

Sunday morning after a very subdued breakfast we climbed aboard our charabanc for the return trip to the U.K. It being Sunday the French fishermen were having the day off so there was no problem crossing the Channel and as we travelled towards Worthing we met up with the glorious English Summer RAIN!!! With a swift transfer of cases from coach to car Worshipful

Brother Ian, his wife Liz my wife Ann and myself, drove through the dusk back to Fleet. There were no Senior Moments on the return trip After tea and biscuits, Ian and Liz travelled on to Salisbury.

All-in-all a most memorable five day excursion and one that will remain in Ann and my minds for many reasons for a very, very long time, and we are looking forward to next year's trip. We can thoroughly recommend this excursion to Dusseldorf, especially to those Brethren and their wives who live within easy reach of the South Coast.

The DVD that Brad gave us will be a permanent reminder of our five day stay in Dusseldorf. Once again, we could not have had such an enjoyable time in if it had not been for the hard work of Brad and Uschi . Thank you very much Brad and Uschi, not forgetting Worshipful Brother Jim Clark who organised the U.K. end . Thank you very much Jim. No doubt you feel several Beers Coming On, you have earned them.

Note. I would like to make it quite plain that I was not being arrested by the Policeman in the navy-blue overalls and the red beret. He was on that occasion my personal escort to the Gents Toilet at the entrance to which he gave me a most marvellous flourish. Honest Guv.