

Monday 6 May home to London GNH

Hellene gives me lift to Amersham and then it's the Met to KX. I can't get into the hotel immediately as there is a fire practice and the station concourse is cold. After a few minutes I'm in with a drinks voucher and a good room on the fourth floor overlooking St Pancras.

A little unpacking and then out to Tottenham Court Road to exchange a cable that isn't working. Supper at Ravi Shankar - a decent Dosa but poor service.

Back for a bath and an early night which is reasonable.

Tuesday 7 GNH to Lemgo Stadtpalais

Podcastse and a bath at 5.45. Coffee and banana, check out at 7.40 and an easy check in for Eurostar, at the office as German barcode won't scan.

The train leaves a couple of minutes early, and stops at Ebbsfleet, Calais and Lille and gets in spot on time. No trouble in getting the tight, 20 mins, connection. The ICE is as comfortable as ever, and the at service is attentive; I have a quarter of Riesling. We are a quarter of an hour late at Köln but that's no problem as it isn't a tight connection and I'm on another ICE to Bielefeld, changing seats to get a window without the carriage side. Bielefeld is on time, but things slow down with three quarters of an hour wait for the train to Ehlenbruch and then a replacement bus to Lemgo. It's easy to find my way to the hotel and I'm soon settled into a comfortable modern 'Queen room'.

Then it's out again to Kampstrasse with the goodies, to see Sabine before she disappears to a meeting and then supper cooked by Martin of chicken curry and rice and Rote Gruetze and custard. Also plenty of wine and digestif followed by a somewhat unsteady walk back to the hotel with Martin and Sam the dog.

Wednesday 8 Lemgo Stadtpalais

A reasonable night and leisurely start with breakfast at 7.45, decent but nothing special.

Out at nine to a sunny but cool morning for a walk around the well known sights - along the wall and back through the market square where there are plenty of stalls for the Wednesday morning market. And then to Kampstrasse for eleven where Martin's student is just leaving. We have coffee and biscuits and leave about an hour later.

We're supposed to get a bus to Luerdissen, but there is confusion over the times and we elect to walk there. I wish I had my printed map as Google maps isn't really good enough. The cafe is closed. When we are waiting for the bus back a driver stops to ask about the cafe, and then offers us a lift back to Lemgo. To the Cafe Weber for Hot Chocolate and cake.

I walk back to the hotel via bus stops to check timings for tomorrow and Friday. Back at the hotel is the detail of the bus to the museum and its opening time.

After a shower it's downstairs for supper with Martin and Sam in the dining room - Spagelzeit. Marion joins us at nine after her political meeting for a bottle of wine.

Thursday 9 Lemgo Stadtpalais, Bad Pyrmont

Reasonable night, shower and a leisurely breakfast.

Walk to the station to meet Martin. There's bright sunshine and so photos are in order. At the station there is no sign of the 958 to Detmold; not on the ground nor on the electronic display even though the paper timetable displays it. Eventually we get the bus to Bad Pyrmont by a roundabout and scenic route via Bloomberg and Schieder.

On arrival there is some confusion over the way to the Kurpark but eventually it's found and we refresh with cake and coffee. We get into the park for the price of one ticket. The beds, including rhododendrons are in fine form, with some planting for summer and robotic mowers. After exploring and sitting we leave and visit the Schloß on its island.

More cake and the direct bus back to Lemgo. Martin fetches food for Sam and then we have our Abendbrot in Sabine's workshop followed by a visit to the Kneipe and the walk back to the hotel. It's too late, 1015, to order breakfast.

Friday 10 Lemgo Stadtpalais, Minden

Martin joins me for breakfast at eight on a rather damp morning. We walk to the station and wait in the waiting room for the bus to Bad Salzuflen. It's only a few minutes late and makes good progress through the damp and misty landscape. Then it's an easy connection for the train to Herford and then onwards to Minden.

The weather is beginning to look a little brighter and we find a café for coffee and cakes. Sightseeing in the old town follows with a break for lunch at the Indian nrestaurant the Maharajah, which is an old style curry house but with reasonable food. The old town has lots of half timbered houses and plenty of pictures of cats.

From there it is along the road and via an icecream restaurant to the canal and itsbridge over the river Weser, which is apparently the only one in Germany. Back along the streets to the station and a retracing of the outward journey, followed by a glass of wine and the hotel.

Saturday 11 Lemgo Stadtpalais

Breakfast, leisurely at eight, two walks around to see the market, Marienkirche, post cards and get more.

Martin calls at 1230 and we walk to Schloß Brake and towards Voßheide, stopping at the Cafe Walkenmühle for a lunch of Flammkuchen and red wine. Then continuing the walk with Sam and back to Brake and Lemgo for cake and HC at the Cafe Vielfalt. Martin goes home and I have a quiet evening.

Sunday 12 Lemgo Stadtpalais Detmold

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Leisurely start with a large breakfast at eight. Martin and Sabine pick me up at ten for the short drive to the Freilichtmuseum at Detmold. The weather has some good sunny periods but it's still cold. The place is much as before but several new buildings. Sabine goes walking with Sam, and we meet up for coffee and cake.

Back to the hotel for a couple of hours. Then to Kampstrasse for sherry, asparagus with schinken and butter, pudding, wine and digestif.

Back to hotel

Monday 13 Lemgo SP

Restful morning, cash, postcards, photos, buying Hexentrunk for me and Martin. Kampstrasse for a lunch of egg curry. Walking north and through woods to Cafe for tea and cake, and back to hotel.

Tuesday 14 Lemgo to Soest Pilgrimhaus Hotel

Packing and walk to Hinter dem Friedhof for breakfast with Marion, Rolf and Judith. Walk around Schloß Brake. Lunch of bread and soup in the garden. Marion takes me to the station and to Soest via Bielefeld and Hamm.

Walk to the hotel along the Wall. A smallish room at the top of the old hotel. Rest followed by a walk around the town.

Wednesday 15 Soest

A night of two parts, with podcasts around three am. A decent breakfast at eightieth scrambled egg, but no fish.

It's a very fine morning with a clear blue sky, with a layer of frost at first. The morning is spent walking the walls, except for a section that is being refurbished. Some shopping at the station, coffee and back to the hotel for a lunch of ricotta and spinach Nocken with a wheat beer.

Then it's the walk to Delecke: almost due south through the suburbs and the gently rising fields to the Bismarkturm which is closed. The last two kilometres are down a lane to the lake, where there is 45 mins before the bus back to Soest. A short walk gets me back to the hotel for a rest and a shower.

A quiet evening, mixed night.

Thursday 16th Soest

Another good and relaxed breakfast.

Out at nine to a grey and cool morning. The streets are quiet as I make my way to the market, just setting up, and St Petri and the catholic cathedral. They are also quiet until someone starts practising the organ which gives a magnificent sound. After taking photos around the Großer Teich, I head westwards along the Soestbach out of town and along the roads through the fields of barley and rape to the village of Hattrop.

Back along another road/track. Lunch at the Zwiebel Brauhaus - onion soup, bratwurst with fried potatoes and a couple of glasses of white wine.

Quiet afternoon with another walk and bill paying.

Friday 17th Soest to home

Breakfast at seven, packing and walk to the station. Cool and grey again. I get the 8.26, half an hour before the recommended train to Hamm to make sure I have plenty of time to catch the ICE to Köln and then to Brussels. This time there's plenty of time with efficient check in and customs. The train is on time and I get my quiche, quinoa, chocolate pudding and some red.

The usual met to Amersham and bus home.