

WFWP Stuttgart, Germany visits the Happy Community in the Black Forest

Ute Lemme
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At our annual WFWP meeting in March on the occasion of the UN International Day of Happiness, we found out that Schömberg had registered as the 'Happy Community in the Black Forest' in 2009—even before the international establishment of this day by the UN in 2012; this was a surprise to us and stimulated our curiosity.

This small community in the northern Black Forest established a happiness partnership with Bhutan in 2010, and it was from Bhutan in 2011 that the impulse came to initiate the UN International Day of Happiness, when mention was made of the community in the Black Forest.

A group of twelve adults and two children met in Stuttgart central station to set off for the excursion to Schömberg. We were very lucky with the weather; on arrival in Schömberg at midday we were greeted by the sun shining in a blue sky.

Schömberg was originally an insignificant little village in the Black Forest which started to flourish as a health resort in 1884 when a wealthy patient's tuberculosis was cured by the good climate and air. Distinguished sanatoriums and famous physicians gave Schömberg the reputation as an important healing climatic health resort and Kneipp hydrotherapy resort. The introduction of antibiotics for tuberculosis in the 1950s signaled the decline of this health resort, and the heyday had passed by 1970. But in the meanwhile, tourists and holiday-makers continue to come to relax and hike in the good air. And for Schömberg's inhabitants there is the happiness principle for which the community is investing itself since 2009.

We took a walk through the health resort park which offers a variety of sports equipment for young and old on which one can rock, climb, and balance. We had a meal in the "Happiness Restaurant " in this park, after which we explored Schömberg by foot, walking past sites of previously famous sanatoriums, along paths bearing the names of well-known physicians, and through the Valley of the Eulenbach with its especially healthy air. A loop path through the forest led us back past the cemetery where we paused

for a moment's reflection at the grave of the only grandchild of Rabindranath Tagore, the famous Indian poet and Nobel prize winner. His grandson died in 1932 in Schömberg, where he had come seeking to cure his lung disease.



Our excursion ended with coffee, cake and ice-cream in a cafe.

We took the opportunity to acquaint ourselves better with the Black Forest from the windows of the bus and train back to Stuttgart, where we arrived back in the evening after a most successful and enjoyable day.

Reported by Ute Lemme
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