

Celebration of the 120th Anniversary of Musikzug Grafelde – April 2017

The band was delighted and privileged to be invited to Grafelde for the celebration of this amazing milestone. We travelled by coach leaving Durrington at 2.30am on Wednesday morning and arriving at Grafelde at 6.45pm the same day. Having been warned that there was snow in the area earlier in the day, we found ourselves warmly greeted by a section of MZG playing Bohemian Dream, one of the very well-known polkas from the repertoires of all German Bands, but the snow had, fortunately, disappeared. After going to our hosts for a much needed evening meal we gathered at the Community Room in the Fire Station (built in 2007 by members and friends of MZG) for a session of drinks and getting acquainted, many for the first time, with members of the German band.



The village of Grafelde has less than 250 inhabitants and nestles in a dip in the hills around. There is a great community spirit with the Voluntary Fire Brigade and its band very much at the heart of it. In the year 2007 they submitted a proposal to build a proper fire station to house the Fire Engine and saw the possibility of including a much needed community room within the design.

The official response to that was that the money would be provided but only for the materials and so local craftsmen and willing helpers set to and built the new station themselves.



They found that the roof would offer the possibility of creating a practice room within it if the design was slightly altered and so, today, they have the perfect solution to all the local needs: a Community Room, a fully equipped garage for the Fire Tender which they have recently replaced with a new one after more than 20 years, and a perfect headquarters for the band. The next morning all available musicians from both bands gathered for a rehearsal in the practice room. We quickly found that, as on many previous occasions, the two bands fell into step with each other and we had a very enjoyable rehearsal.



In the afternoon a walk had been organised through the local forest which provides picturesque views over the local countryside. MZG never miss the opportunity to be hospitable and the younger players seized on the opportunity to save their legs as the trailer with refreshments passed slowly by and they climbed on board!



After a pause to enjoy the refreshment, the older generation continued their walk, only to find themselves passed again by the trailer, still full of young people. Obviously age is no longer a cause for respect!

That evening a BBQ was prepared and cooked by MZG players at the Fire Station and was the centre of yet more socialising in the Community Room. What a great idea it was to include such a room in the design of the new facilities.

On Friday a day's outing was organised for the Durrington Guests and Players to the Tree Top Walk at Bad Harzburg and, later, to the mediaeval town of Goslar.



After the Tree Top section on the raised walk-ways, the walk in the forest continued on tracks which led to the summit where there was a very well appointed café and a station for taking a much needed cable car back to the entrance. The walk was enjoyed by young and old alike and, in most cases, was enhanced by a well-earned break for lunch at the hill top café.



Our coach then took us to Goslar to see the beautiful mediaeval town with its famous glockenspiel. This is situated in the centre of the town and the automation demonstrates the mining history for which the town first became known in the 16th century. The mines were water powered from the rivers and lakes in the mountains above and can still be visited today showing the various stages of the process of extracting the minerals, one of which was silver, found in the hills.



The glockenspiel is mounted in the front wall of the Town Hall and plays local tunes every three hours. We arranged to be there for the 3 o'clock playing and found that there is a very convenient ice cream café in the square where one can sit and enjoy their fare whilst awaiting the performance!



After a meal with our hosts, Friday evening was fully occupied with a full rehearsal for the concert planned for the following day, Saturday, in the parish church of St Nicholas in the neighbouring town of Alfeld. There is no building large enough in Grafelde or its close neighbours.

This was MZG's conductor, Detlef Ladwig's first full, bi-lingual rehearsal and he had no trouble in achieving the results he wanted. He is a very experienced musician having had a career with a German military band before settling into civilian life

The Anniversary Concert in Alfeld was a great success. The church was almost full with a very appreciative audience. The concert was compered by Thomas Stephan and featured our newly formed chamber group Die Kleine Kapelle which played four pieces from the Capriol Suite, composed by the English composer Peter Warlock.



Peter Eve, standing in for our Director of Music, Roger Allsopp, opened the concert with our National Anthem which was rapidly followed by the German National Hymn. We also celebrated the 500th anniversary of the formation of Protestantism in Germany by Martin Luther with the playing of his

hymn, A safe stronghold our God is still. The mood then moved into the world of German traditional marches and polkas mixed with popular renditions from the shows and films including Mary Poppins and Queen's greatest hits.

A special feature of the concert was the playing of Gabriel's Oboe, from the film, The Mission, which was beautifully played by 21 yr old, Charlotte Ewins, one of the earliest members of our band.

The concert concluded with Land of hope and glory conducted by Peter and then Auld Lang Syne conducted by Detlef.



To mark the 120th Anniversary of Musikzug der Freiwillige Feuerwehr Grafelde our Chairman, David Gartside, presented MZG with a full set of music for the British march Crown Imperial, composed by Sir William Walton for the Coronation of Edward VIII, but which did not take place due to the abdication and which was finally used at the coronation of King George VI. In making the presentation we said that we hoped to be able to play the march together when we next meet.

And that was very much the tone of the departure of our coach on Sunday morning at 8am. Everyone looked forward to seeing our friends in Durrington which we hoped would not be in the too distant future.

