

16 June Dickenschied to Grenderich 22.5km

We walked today on very busy roads with lots of lorries. Our accommodation was a very pleasant woodland retreat center with a big fire pit which our host Thomas, a Buechel activist, had built a large fire in, so our evening was very pleasant sitting around the fire exchanging pleasantries.

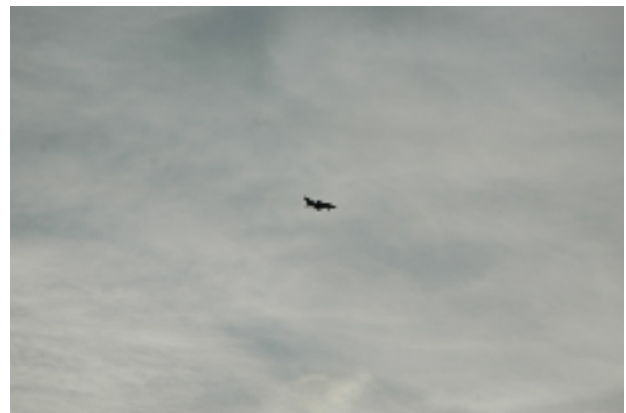
from Dan's notes



17 June Grenderich to **** (via Buchel) 34km



Today's walk was very hot and long with many long uphill stretches. We got slightly lost in the dense woodland, but then opened out onto splendid views over the river Mosel and surrounding vineyards, famous for Riesling wine. Approaching Buchel air base, many soldiers returned our peace signs from their vehicles. As we approached the base we were welcomed by



many local activists who had prepared a reception of cool drinks, music by Jan on the guitar, and a speech by Elke who will be our host. The reception was followed by a silent vigil in front of the gate which we decorated with many peace cranes. Buchel is a NATO base operated by Germany, but is believed to hold US nuclear weapons. There has been a long effort to get the nuclear weapons removed by local activists, including walks around the base and civil disobedience. This year a month-long camp is planned with many activities including street theater, civil disobedience, vigils, etc. After our vigil most of us walked the rest of the way to Elke's house where we enjoyed a delicious barbeque. Jon

18 June **** (near Buchel) – rest day

Jun-san left early morning to attend Peace Pagoda ceremonies in England. Sjors from Amsterdam and Marion from Hamburg (Buchel activist) arrived. After dinner, Marion gave us all Buchel t-shirts, then Jenn left for Hahn airport, accompanied by Jon and Jutta. She will also attend the Peace Pagoda ceremonies in England, then plans to travel around Europe before she returns to the States.

Dan's notes



19 June **** to Kelberg 18km

June and Jill back from their road trip to Budapest (afternoon / evening). Sophie arrived from Normandy (in evening). Staying in big flat in Kelberg, on industrial estate. Nice views of surrounding hills and pine forests. Welcomed by local people, who brought us vegetable soup and other goodies.

Dan's notes



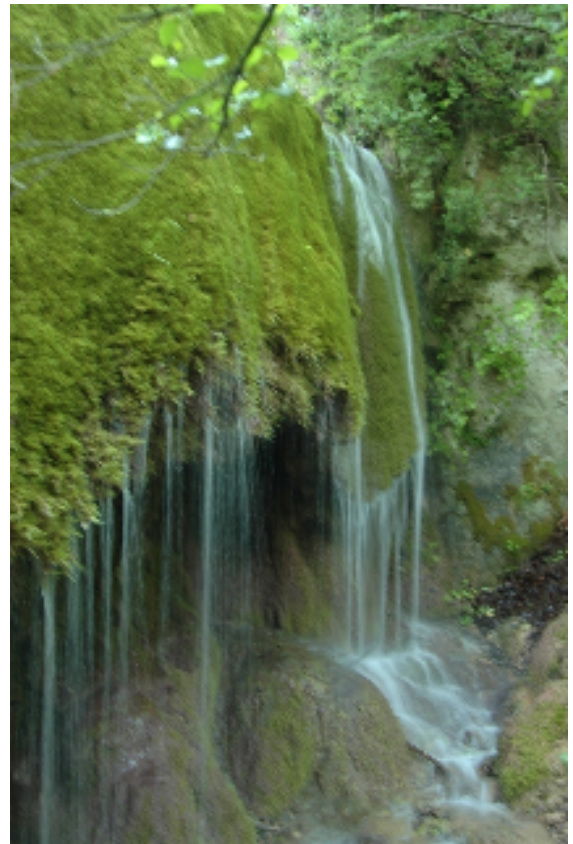
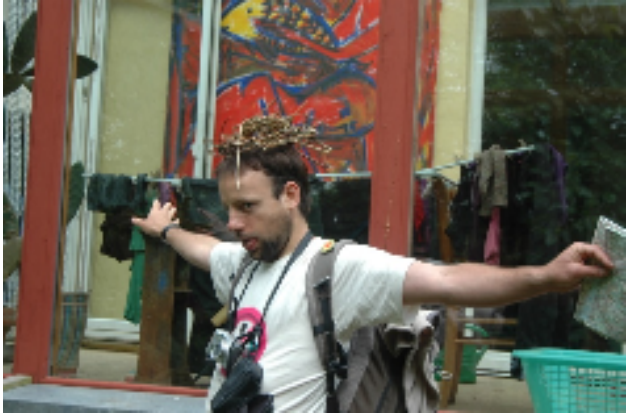


20 June Kelberg to Ahrhutte 28km

Very changeable weather. Local men walked with us. Forest trails. Rusty-brown volcanic spring in forest clearing bubbling up fizzy iron-rich water, which some of us drank. Wet lunchtime picnic in the forest. Visit to waterfall. Staying at dairy farm next to quite busy road. Hosts provided us with lots of takeaway pizza and salad for dinner. Many people crammed into small hut (others slept in tents).

Dan's notes





21 June Ahrhutte to Blankenheim 14.5km

Today's story begins with Stephanie. She is our German contact person who has worked so hard over the last several months to find accommodations for us. It is not possible to express enough gratitude to her for all the work she has done. It is way more than one person should have to do, and she has done this job with grace, good humor, and efficiency; many times sending us multiple versions of information we needed via email, sms, and verbally over the phone. With all of this work there were still



occasional places that no accommodation had been found. Blankenheim was one of those places. Stephanie had made contact with a local activist with the green party, but that connection fell through. So, while we were at the action at Buechel, we asked Jan, our music man, if he knew anyone in Blankenheim we might stay with. He had some old friends he was sure would provide a space, so he assured us he could find accommodation for us. What a relief, and now we could call Stephanie to say her job was finally complete and she could return to her normal pace of life. And so we are walking to Blankenheim and Jan and his friend Bru and our host for the night Regina find us on the trail with another one of those coincidences that happen so frequently on the walk. Jan and Bru had taken the train to a town near Blankenheim and had to walk through Blankenheim to find us. While in Blankenheim they got lost and found themselves on a dead end street in front of a very interesting house, so they decided to knock on the door to ask directions. They explained that they were looking for a peace walk coming to Blankenheim to show them to their accommodation. Amazingly, the woman who answered the door, Regina, happened to be the same woman Stephanie had been in contact with earlier from the Green party who had been willing to host us. Her internet had broken down, so she was



unable to stay in touch with Stephanie, and the connection was lost. She quickly re-arranged her schedule so we could stay with her, and she joined Jan and Bru as they walked to meet us. It was a beautiful house with a large garden and fire circle where we enjoyed a large fire to celebrate the summer solstice. Noe oversaw the preparation of our meal and later some local activists from the green party joined us around the fire. I shared the story of Leonard Peltier because this is the weekend Footprints for Peace does the Run For

Freedom in honor of Leonard and I wanted the walk to remember them as we walked.

Jon

22 June Blankenheim to Schoneseeffen 23km

We walk for a nuclear free future.



23 June Schoneseeffen to Lammersdorf 25km

We had lunch in tourist town of Einruhr, beside the fjordlike river Rur, accompanied by swans and ducks. We met up with Reine from Cologne, who would walk and cycle with us. We managed to lose Mireille for a while. Kath from Scotland rejoined us in Simmerath (along with Mireille), where we were greeted by local activist Martina from the Socialist Party and some colleagues. Martina organized a small rally in the town square. She spoke through a megaphone and played the guitar and sang some peace songs. We then completed the last few kilometres to Martina's quirky weekend house in Lammersdorf, which she had arranged so as to provide beds for everyone. She cooked us fresh vegetables in a white sauce.

Dan's notes



24 June: Lammersdorf to Aachen

After spending the night at Martina's weekend home, which was a mixture of museum, quaint cottage, eco-eccentric dwelling, but welcoming and warm. Martina had gone to so much trouble/work to squeeze in 14 beds, though a few die-hards found a space to put up their tents. On her one hotplate, Martina cooked us a variety of musili for breakfast, some with banana and others with carrots and sweet potato. At the church in the village, Rosemari,



who helped host us on our stay in the Black Forrest, joined us for the day. It was so great to see her again. With Martina leading the way our path took us through the forest, where we were lost for awhile, but managed with the help of local walkers to find our way to the military base just outside of Aachen. Here we were met by three locals who gave us a short talk about the base. We hung our banners, tied peace cranes to the gate and Martina sang resistance songs. We continued on to the Market Square in Aachen where we again spread the banners and handed out pamphlets, and talked with locals. Our rest day accommodation was in a large community building, the Ocologie Zentrum, where we were greeted with a wonderful meal shared with Martina, her partner, and other locals.

June

25 June, rest day in Aachen

Aachen proved to be a wonderful city to spend our rest day. We were only short walk to the city square and most walkers spent many hours soaking up the atmosphere. I was told that the warm sunny day was the reason many families, couples and young people were out until late eating and enjoying themselves.

The cathedral, first built in the 12th century was named afte4r St. Foillan, a martyr from Scotland. In the evening Rainer gave a presentation on uranium processing and it's transportation through Germany and France. Wolf Van Faben talked about renewable energies, especially wind power and also about how climate change rises the levels of the oceans. The evening concluded with much pleasant conversation between walkers and local activists who had come to hear the talks and meet us.



June

26 June Aachen to Gulpen-Wittem (Netherlands) 20km

Hot and sunny. Sjors arrived back from his brief stopover in Amsterdam just in time for the morning circle. Passed across the border from Germany and the Netherlands (Holland) in the morning without even realizing we had done so. Staying at campsite where we were photographed by a local journalist. We were greeted by local Groen-Links (Green-Left) councillors Marion and Frans, who brought us lots of goodies, and Ulrike from the Greenpeace group in Aachen. Marion stayed with us for dinner. Then the weather changed sharply as a storm arrived. From Dan's notes.



27 June Gulpen-Wittem to Maastricht 15km

Very humid and warm. Frans who was with us yesterday evening guided us in the morning. Lunch stop by an old windmill. Arrived in early afternoon at stayplace, a co-operative community connected to the neighbouring Rudolf Steiner free school on the edge of Maastricht. Rain came just after we arrived. Jon's wife Angie arrived from the States just before dinner. Hosts prepared tasty pasta and salad dinner for us, and provided beds for those who needed one. From Dan's notes



28 June: Maastricht to Genk

OK, I must share this story. It is one of those events that fills one with wonder. We had a difficult circle last night with some conflict, and this morning June found one of the walkers in a very distressed state. I had given her one of the river stones John Toren gave me years ago that we carry to absorb our prayers as we walk. I gave it to June earlier on the walk to help her through one of her more difficult times and periodically she would pull it out of her pocket to show me how it was giving her strength. This morning June and I stayed back to drive the van after the walk left, and as we walked towards the van she told me that she had seen the walker in distress this morning. We walked past one of our hosts talking to a beautiful little girl with long blond hair. When June and I got to the van we sat down and she told me she gave the distressed walker her stone to give him strength to carry on. I was so moved by this I nearly broke into tears, but our moment was interrupted by the little blond girl. She walked out in front of us into the gravel parking lot. She looked around for a while, picked something up, then turned and silently approached us. Without speaking she held out her hand and with sparkling eyes offered what she held in her hands to us. June and I each held out our hands, and into each one she dropped a beautiful stone. Not one of the grey pieces of gravel from the driveway, but each one was smooth and beautiful, just like the stones John gave me to distribute. June and I looked at the girl and each other in awe and disbelief. It was like an angel had just appeared in this moment to provide us with just the thing we needed to continue the walk with renewed strength. June and I held each other to let the magnitude of what had just happened sink in. People tell me there are no coincidences. This incident seems to confirm this idea.



Walking into Genk was quite amazing. Our host Wim escorted us through a huge music festival sponsored by the city for its citizens. We passed out many fliers and enjoyed the excellent music coming from various stages around the city center. Later we were hosted by Mayor Jef Gabriels and several members of the town council with a delicious dinner. Genk is a member of Mayors for Peace and was declared a nuclear free city in 1982. After all the ceremonies several walkers joined the music festival for the evening while the rest of us walked to our accommodation, a scout camp on the edge of town where we could still hear the music.

Jon



June 29: Genk to Peer

This morning we said an emotional goodbye to June. It was the hottest day walking yet! It seemed we cared more about finding shade than anything else. The walk was about 25 km, but by the end we felt as if we had walked much more. We no longer wonder if summer will ever arrive. Peer is another pretty Belgian town, though there is much construction/renovation going on. Of course we noticed the ice cream shop we walked by that seemed to serve generous portions, and I paid attention to how much farther the accommodation was. We are staying in the garden (on the grass) of the municipal building which holds the library, coffee shop, theater, and municipal offices. It will be a very pleasant place to spend three nights.

Jon



June 30: rest day in Peer with visit to NATO base in Kleine Brogel



We were served a very pleasant breakfast provided by the city council of Peer. Peer belongs to Mayors for Peace, so they are sympathetic to our goal of a nuclear free future. After words of welcome from a member of the city council and meeting two students from a local school and their teacher, they joined us to walk the 3 km to the NATO base at Kleine Brogel. At the gate we were greeted by the Belgian Deputy Commander of the base. The base is operated by the Belgian military though there are US military personnel stationed there. It is widely believed that nuclear weapons from the US are on the base as well. We began a silent vigil, preceded by ten minutes of Buddhist drumming. The deputy commander invited several of us, including the local students and teacher, onto the base for a formal reception while everyone else continued the vigil.



The reception was pleasant enough, with a welcome from the dep. Com. and a description of our walk and our goals from us. It was clear that the depcom was adept at public relations, though it was easy to notice the contradiction inherent in his desire to convince us that he shared our desire for a reduction of nuclear weapons while at the same time being prepared to annihilate any country that uses military aggression. He also stated NATO's official policy of neither confirming

nor denying the existence of nuclear weapons on the base, hoping this ambiguity would serve as a deterrent to NATO's enemies.

We returned to the sun-baked vigil to find that they had decorated the gate and a peace tree, jointly planted by Peer city officials and leaders of the base, with plenty of colorful peace cranes. It seemed strange to this citizen of the US that the stance of the security forces at the base was one of tolerance and cooperation with our action allowing our vigil of over an hour to block the entrance while they patiently told angry drivers to use a different gate.



We returned to our camp for our weekly business circle. It was refreshing to have the most controversial topic be whether to use some donated money to buy ice cream for the whole walk, in accordance with the wishes of the donor. Jon