



Friendship Force National Capital Area Journey to Hamburg Germany

May 16-26, 2019

Journey Itinerary



May 19: Arrival and evening with hosts

May 20: Bus tour of Hamburg, Boat ride on Inner and Outer Alster Lakes, Welcome Party

May 21: St. Nikolai Tower and Museum, St. Michaelis Church and Concert

May 22: Lubeck City

May 23: Bergdorf Castle, St. Johannis of Curlack, and Reick Haus

May 24: Warehouse District, Hamburg Port, *Epiphilharmonie*

May 25: *Rathaus* (City Hall) and Farewell Dinner at the Bringezu Castle

Monday May 20: Bus tour of Hamburg, Boat ride on Inner and Outer Alster Lakes, and Welcome Party

Helen Cassidy



First full day of our week in Hamburg. By now, Duncan and I were comfortably settled in Doris's house in the Niendorfmarkt area of Hamburg. They drove to Heidi's home in where David and Mari were staying and enjoyed a delicious German brunch of smoked salmon, smoked meats, wonderful breads, and spreads as well as yogurt, fruit, and granola which was going to keep us going until early evening.

After brunch, we all walked to the *Untergrundbahn* where we took the train to the harbor on the river Elbe where we boarded a double decker bus with our fellow Friendship Force members for our first event of the day which was a city sightseeing tour. One of our Hamburg hosts gave me a piece of his snack – a *Franzbrötchen* – (literally, a French roll). This came into being during Napoleon's troops' occupation of Hamburg. This occurred shortly after his return from Moscow. *The Franzbrötchen's* distinctive taste is from its chestnut filling!

Our driver took us by some famous churches which we visited in the next few days – in particular, St. Michael's. The sailors always knew they were home when they could see its spire on the horizon – and also the St. Nikolai Memorial and St. Markus Square with its statue of Heinrich Heine, the poet. We learned that the Vikings founded the city in 840 AD and St. Angar was sent to convert them to Christianity. He also pointed out buildings designed to look like boats. We were joined by some young, friendly Vietnamese exchange students.





After the bus tour, we visited the old Elbetunnel, built for workers to cross under the river; today it is reserved for walkers and cyclists. It was built in 1907 -1911 and is the shortest direct connection between St. Pauli and Steinwerder. It was built at a depth of 23.5 meters and is impressive to look at. Tiles on the walls feature sea creatures and posters tell the history. Hamburg was an important

member of the Hanseatic League founded in 1358 when the merchants from the Italian states, Holland, Britain and Scandinavian ports traded their goods and is still an important trading center. Its tax-free zone made it a wealthy city which was apparent during the tour as we drove past the beautiful houses owned by wealthy merchants and the *Speicherstadt* – the old warehouse districts in the tax-free zone. The importance of Hamburg as a port changed after the advent of container shipping. The container ships were too large to anchor in the old port. However, that led to the building of a splendid new harbor modeled on London's Dockland.



Our next event was a cruise on the *Innen* and *Aussen* Alster – the two man-made lakes in the city of Hamburg. The huge square from where we boarded our boat is named the *Jungfernstieg*- this was traditionally where mothers had escorted their daughter to meet young men at one time. Nowadays, it's a lively spot where people wait for their boat trips but is also an area with cafés, restaurants and music

without chaperones! While we waited for the boat, Doris took us up to the top floor of an elegant department store for a wonderful view of the river and the fountains in it.

We were fortunate to have lovely sunny weather to enjoy being on the water and seeing beautiful homes surrounded by lots of flowers and shrubs, sail boats, and plenty of people out enjoying the sunshine.



After several stops, we arrived at Bobby Reich's which is a restaurant going back several generations where we had our welcome dinner with a choice of white asparagus (*spargel*) and thinly sliced ham - a seasonal speciality -- or fish *Pfannkartoffeln*. Helen had originally thought that Bobby was a civic-minded member of Hamburg's Friendship Force who had kindly invited us to dinner!

Chuck Goldfarb – our own member of the Friendship Force International Board was introduced and spoke as well as our president, Mari Clark. The Hamburg Friendship Force showed a short film about their activities from the last forty years since their club was founded.

Tuesday May 21: St. Nicholai Tower and Museum, St. Michaelis Church

Mary Tobin and Chuck Goldfarb

Mary: I woke up at 7 AM on May 21, 2019 and prepared for the day. My accommodations were upstairs and quite spacious. The bathroom was across the hall from the bedroom. My hosts Susanne and Ernst Hoops were the only other occupants of the house and made use of the main floor. Their lovely home where I stayed is shown below.



That morning as usual we had breakfast in their well-lit and pleasant family dining area. Breakfast consisted of coffee, bread and cheese, a variety of fruit jams, and fresh fruit. Susanne Hoops made delicious homemade bread to solve her allergy problems.



My hosts lived in a small town Seevetal, Southwest of Hamburg. It was a short pleasant walk over to the S-Bahn train and on May 21 we did the usual train ride into Hamburg *Hauptbahnhof*. Shown is a photo of myself with Hans and Barbara Hoops at the Hamburg *Hauptbahnhof*.

Chuck: This day, like each of the others during the week, began with two delightful routines. First, I joined my hosts, Sabine and Klaus Herberg, at their dining room table for a wonderful breakfast of breads, cheeses, cold cuts, liverwurst, butter, jams, and coffee. Each of us had our own cutting board to use as we chose what to slather on the bread. Then, we had our daily 8-minute walk from their home to the S-bahn station, passing neighbors, the leafy village square, and the Herberg pharmacy (now run by one of their sons) along the way. On the *S-bahn*, a group of school boys, about age 12, competed to answer most quickly the multiple-choice questions on the television monitors in the train. (Their teacher had instructed two of them to give up their seats for Klaus and me.) One of the boys had the exact same strawberry blond hair that I had as a child and I was tempted to take a photo to show Bo, as mine had already turned white by the time we met.



Mary: That morning we did a pleasant walk to the Town Hall where we met the Friendship Force group. We originally were scheduled to do a tour of the Town Hall but that was cancelled because of a meeting of foreign dignitaries. Note the beautiful red carpet which was posed for rollout was not for us, despite our joking that they were all ready for

us!

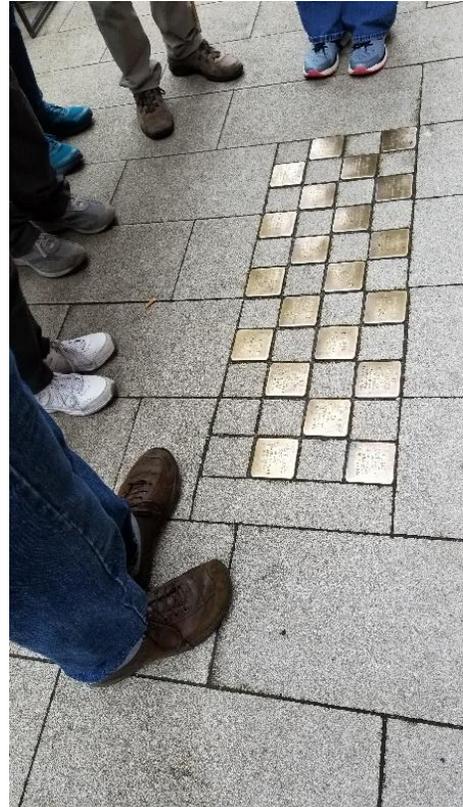
The town hall nonetheless was a convenient place to meet. We took off on foot as an alternative to visit the ruins of St. Nikolai Cathedral, which was one of the main Lutheran churches in the city of Hamburg prior to the bombing of World War 2. The main bulk of the church was destroyed, leaving little but its crypt and the tall spired tower, largely hollow except for a set of bells. The remains on site serve as a memorial. An elevator took us up to a 75.3 meters high enclosed platform where we could get a good view of the surroundings. We visited the Crypt which has become a museum showing the horrors of war.

Chuck: At the *Rathaus*. meeting point we learned that the red carpet was not meant for us and that our tour had been cancelled, but our hosts quickly recovered and led us to the ruins of St. Nikolai Church, which had been bombed during World War II – though the allies purposely spared the tower so their bomber pilots could use it to help navigate. The underground museum showed what life was like for a city under attack. (And later that day my hosts shared with me their experiences as small children during the war.) Sadly, we did not have enough time to fully explore the museum, but the experience triggered many thoughts, most notably how uniquely lucky we Americans are that we have not experienced the devastation of on-going warfare in our homeland since the Civil War. With the exception of the 9/11 attacks, our fights have been overseas, where our proud armed forces are at risk but our civilian population remains safe. Perhaps this is why, as a country, we seem to lack empathy for war refugees.





Mary: We gathered up the Ambassadors who were somewhat reluctant to leave the museum with its many exhibits, but we had to move on to St. Michaelis Church, which is the most famous church of Hamburg. We entered the church to sit down and enjoy the organ concert. Afterwards we visited the courtyard and looked for the plaques denoting the Friendship Force Contributions



Following the visit to Michaelis, we proceeded to the Polaner Pub for lunch. My hosts met me afterwards and we proceeded home for a quiet afternoon to rest up for our group dinner that evening.

Chuck: With these thoughts still percolating, we went to St. Michaelis church for the noon-time organ concert. Appropriate music was played for three different organs, a fairly small organ, a medium sized organ, and a large organ with a deep sound that reverberated throughout the church. The minister welcomed Friendship Force and thanked us for our contribution to the Church fund.

Here my thoughts turned in another direction. We had been informed the day before that Hamburg has five major churches, all Lutheran. How different from DC, where many denominations (and not only Christian) have splendid places of worship. Asking our hosts a few questions, I learned that historically in most of Europe the ruler determined the religion for all of the subjects, so there was no choice. The freedom of religion that Americans take for granted – and for which many of the earliest European settlers came to what is now the US – was allowed in most of Europe only after centuries of established religions created localities' major landmarks. Of course, restrictive covenants in the US (and notably in northern Virginia) that limited where Jews (and others) could live were not removed until the 1960s or even later.



After the concert we had a pleasant lunch at a nearby Pauliner Pub and I was directed to an *S-bahn* stop



for my solo ride back to my hosts. We had a quiet afternoon – with a short nap – before heading out for an hour drive in the rain to our dinner hosts for the evening, Hannelor and Claus Harm. Barbara and Tom Williams and their hosts joined us, so there were nine for a wonderful dinner and lively conversation. The beautiful dinner table was dressed in a tablecloth that was completely white except for a myriad of signatures and dates. Our hosts invited all visitors to sign and date the tablecloth in pencil and then the hostess embroiders the signatures, creating a permanent record of all their

dinner guests. What a wonderful, Friendship Force-like touch!

Wednesday 22 May: Lubeck City

Carol Alim and Barbara Williams



Today most of the group boarded the train from Hamburg *Hauptbahnhof* to travel to Lubeck. Since Barbara and Tom Williams' hosts home was in a town north of Hamburg, they drove and took county roads to get to Lubeck, meeting others at the train station. Their host, Renate, was the day leader, so she was responsible for getting everyone together at the train station. After this rather difficult task was completed, we walked toward the old city. It was very chilly and windy. Luckily, Barbara had decided to bring an extra layer or two and a wool hat and gloves. Others were not so fortunate.



Lubeck is one of the founding cities of the Hanseatic League, a commercial and defensive confederation of merchant guilds and market towns. After the introduction by our guide, we walked toward the Holsten Gate, built in 1464. The guide noted that the walls appear to sag. The walls were built on an improper foundation and after a few centuries, they began to sag. The tour guide mentioned that the Nazis, who had

made the old city their headquarters, were responsible for propping up the foundation in the 1930's. The guide added that this is the only good thing the Nazis did. As we passed through the gate, we began to see the charm of the Altstadt, the walks along the water, the medieval brick building, the narrow streets.

Lübeck is a northern German city distinguished by Brick Gothic architecture, which dates to its time as the medieval capital of the Hanseatic League, a powerful trading confederation. The Hanseatic City of [Lübeck](#) (*Hansestadt Lübeck*) is the largest [German](#) port on the [Baltic Sea](#) and the second-largest city in [Schleswig-Holstein](#), situated on the Wakenitz and Trave rivers (hence the name of its port suburb [Travemünde](#)) about 9 miles from the Baltic Sea. The city has been an important port since the 12th century and, together with nearby [Hamburg](#), has founded what became the powerful [Hanseatic League](#) of ports and trading towns. Unlike fellow Hanseatic Cities of Hamburg and [Bremen](#), it has lost its "Free" (*Freie Stadt*) status and has been incorporated into the surrounding federal land, but history also has a sweeter side for Lübeck - it is globally known for the finest marzipan.



The old town (*Altstadt*) of Lübeck, was considerably damaged during the Second World War, however, it



has survived from medieval times in a pretty much unchanged or truthfully rebuilt form. It is now listed as a [UNESCO World Heritage site](#). The city center's medieval skyline is mainly composed of seven Gothic-style church towers, still intact. Lübeck is surrounded by parts of the old city walls with two of the original four city gates remaining. Most notable is the Holsten Gate (*Holstentor*) which was the motif on the German banknote of 50 Deutsche Mark prior to reunification, when the bills were redesigned. After walking through the arches, we viewed a building where salt used to be stored. Residents of Lübeck got salt from a mine

about 30 km away and brought it to Lübeck via the canal boats, which was much more efficient than transporting it by horse pulled wagons. Salt was very valuable at the time and the salt trade was a major reason for the wealth of Lübeck and its power. It was also very important for preserving cod and herring which were plentiful in the nearby waters.

Afterwards, we walked toward some of the remaining old small houses. There are 70 to 80 of them and about 900 people still live there. The guide said that they were initially offered to the residents of Lubeck at a very low price. However, because of strict standards of UNESCO, most people were not able to make the needed repairs. Consequently, people with more money bought them and restored them. According to the UNESCO agreement, the owners must allow people to tour the courtyards. One of the standards imposed was that the arched doorway at the exit from the courtyards must be wide enough so that 2 people could take a dead man out. She also noted that once an American woman on a tour was too large to get out of the exit doorway so she had to retrace her steps.



We then went to the *Rathaus*, or City Hall. The interior was black tile. The guide pointed out the difference in the tiles, saying that some of the older ones used animal blood in the construction and the new ones used chemicals. We then went into a room with beautiful chandeliers and Italian paintings. She said that during the Napoleonic period around 1800 painters had been brought in from Italy to complete the paintings. One of the paintings was a portrait of Napoleon's wife Josephine.

After that we went to lunch in a big room decorated with model ships and the shields of the various members of the Hanseatic League. Lunch was a wonderful potato soup with garnishes of sour cream, sliced sausages and parsley -- a perfect lunch for a cold day. Dessert was a delicious red berry dessert served in individual dessert cups. After lunch we continued our walk going on our own, or with our hosts, to see sites of interest to us.





We were shown the location of Niedregger, the most famous marzipan house in Lubeck. There are many marzipan makers in Lubeck. The recipe came from Venice as a result of trade with the Hanseatic League in the 1400's. Only 25% of the mixture is sugar and the remainder is almonds. Many of us made purchases for gifts and for our own pleasure. Niedregger also has a café and a very interesting museum.

Several of us visited *Marienkirche* (St. Mary's Church) which was built between 1250 and 1350. It has always been a symbol of the power and prosperity of the old Hanseatic city, and is situated at the highest point of the island that forms the old town of Lübeck. Rebuilt following WW II, the *Marienkirche* is a 13th–14th-century landmark that widely influenced Northern European church design. It is the tallest church in Lubeck and offers spectacular views from the steeple.



The inside of the Church is beautiful, and one could spend hours looking around. During the bombing, the church bells fell from nearly 400 feet and crashed into the floor. Today they remain exactly as they fell. The bells are in a shattered heap, partially melted into the ground beneath the vault, providing a stark contrast to the polish and grandeur of the rest of the church. The damaged sight serves as a peace memorial and is visible behind an iron gate.



Lubeck is certainly worth another visit!

Carol: My host took me to Travemunde, Lubeck's suburban port. It was very cold and windy, but I enjoyed the visit to the Baltic seaside.



Hot chocolate to warm up, something to eat – Travemunde specialty (I believe it is raw herring) and some entertainment.

Thursday May 23: Bergedorf Castle, St. Johannis of Curlack, and Reick Haus

Karla Timmons

We started our day a bit later than usual, but goodness, the breakfast that Ralph serves us gets bigger each day! Ralph is still not feeling well because of his terrible cough, and has wisely decided to not join us for today's activities. However, he did accompany us to the bus depot in Bergedorf, where, after a short walk through the town of Bergedorf, we arrived at the Museum für Bergedorf und die Vierlande (the Bergedorf castle/fortress). Our tour guide arrived late, having been stuck in traffic in Hamburg, and we waited for her in the courtyard. As luck would have it, the castle is often used for filming commercials, and there was a film crew there the day we were, adding a bit of glamor to our visit. With our tour guide's arrival, we began our tour. The Bergedorf Castle or the "Museum for Mountain Villages" is the only remaining castle in Hamburg. It is on a small island with a moat and charming grounds. The area landscape is very flat, and one can travel from Bergedorf to Hamburg via the water.



This is an oven fired by the back – no smoke or open fire on front. Tiles were made in Netherlands, depicting the Hamburg area.

The castle is not typical of other German castles. It small and consists of only two floors and does not have the towers characteristically seen in other castles. Portions of the castle had been redone through the years. During the tour, we learned Hamburg details not shared before, e.g. Hamburg was the first city that had an insurance policy for shipping merchants that had been kidnapped by pirates. The insurance money was collected at church. Upstairs we saw exhibits that provide a glimpse into castle living and the cultural history including clothing, furniture, and tools used by the people of the surrounding *Vierelande* farming community, including local baptismal lines, and school memorabilia (the "museum" artifacts were collected beginning in the 1950s), but not directly related to the castle.

After our tour of the castle, we had lunch a the *La Famiglia* Ristorante. The restaurant was quite loud...and since we seemed to have a terrible time not only remembering what we ordered, but what the dish was that was being served, the waitress announced the chicken choice with "cluck, cluck, cluck." It was hilarious. And then, suddenly, it became deathly quiet as everyone had their meal.

We then meandered back to the bus depot, where we waited for the bus to Krauel. Somehow, our bus number disappeared (aliens?), and as we were hatching a plan to hijack another bus, ours appeared (escaped being taken to the pokey, again!).



Once off the bus, we walked a cobblestone path to a church – St. Johannis of Curslack. The oldest mention of the village is 1217, and it is assumed there was a church as part of the community, although this church was first mentioned in 1306. Originally a Catholic church, it became Lutheran during the Reformation. The parish contains two cemeteries; one is more than 700 years old. The cemetery reflects the flower tradition and the families in Curslack. Many of the 2700 Curslackers still grow flowers that they sell at the central market in Hamburg.

The alter is stunning. It was carved in 1688 for the Trinity church in Hamburg-Harburg. The church was completely destroyed during WWII, but the altar was transferred to Curslack.





Leaving the church, we carpoled to Das Rieck Haus, showing how farming and peasant life played out in past centuries. Burt practiced milking a cow. Then we all enjoyed tea and pastries in the yard outside the barn.



Friday May 24, Warehouse District, Hamburg Port, *Epiphilharmonie*

Yarka Bloomberg and Beverly Jones

Yarka: On Friday May 24, 2019 our group had a wonderful plan. It included *Speicherstadt*, an old warehouse district located in the port of Hamburg. This part of Hamburg has charming old warehouses with the red bricks facades. Houses are built cohesively next to each other and connected with slim bridges over the exceptionally clean canals. They were well reconstructed after the extensive WWII damage. It was a lovely view and one would almost sit down and read Heinrich Heine poems to enhance this romantic experience of old, picturesque merchant district.



The Port of Hamburg is a large industrial area which has other places which brings us into the dark past of Jewish Holocaust.

Starting in Hafen City, we walked to the Holocaust monument in the a former train station, an open, industrial area with old weedy train tracks that led to the death camps. The monument is architecturally simple, lots of tables with names of people who were transported to death camps, their personal data and a specific destination. I really appreciated the research, accuracy of the names and personal data and the willingness of the Hamburg's Friendship force group to show us that city cares what happened in the past. Hamburg had a big Jewish population and the great emigration enterprise in the city before WWI was run by the Jewish man Albert Ballin who was born in Hamburg. I do suggest to everybody to see the *Ballinstadt* Emigration Museum. It is an interesting piece of Hamburg history. Albert Ballin would be astonished about what happened to Jews who didn't depart on time. The Holocaust monument was unveiled about 2017. In the afternoon we went to see the architectural jewel of Hamburg: *Elbphilharmonie*. I loved this piece of imaginative architecture, but I will leave the description to Beverly.





Beverly: The walking tour of Hafen City and the visit to the incredible model plan of the city was followed by lunch. We had reservations at Carl's Bistro located in the busy port area and across from the Elbphilharmonie. Luckily, we arrived too early for our reservations, so we had time to explore the area. The area is a marvel of urban renewal and beautifully displays the Elba River with its docks, piers, and ships. A little rain did not diminish from the beauty of the setting.



Carl's Bistro was a large restaurant brimming with customers. Some of our group were lucky enough to sit at a table that allowed more good views of the area. A large ship passed by while we were dining. After lunch the weather turned lovely and we had additional time to grab a coffee or do more exploring of the area.



Our timed tickets allowed us to visit a high point of the day. The Elbphilharmonie is housed in a building that looks like a ship. It shares the building with a hotel, apartments, restaurants, and shops. After entering the building, we got onto the Tube, a slightly curved escalator leading to panoramic windows with a view of the docks. What a view! After seeing a smaller concert hall, we visited the 2,100 seat Grand Hall. The Grand Hall is a masterpiece of design and acoustic perfection. The Hall is simply

beautiful. A walk near the organ was also impressive. After soaking up the beauty of the building we went out to the Plaza to enjoy the spectacular views of the harbor and the city.



Thursday May 25, *Rathaus* (City Hall) and Farewell Dinner at the Bringezu Castle

Mari Clarke



Our visit to the *Rathaus* was rescheduled to our last day due to a VIP visit earlier in the week when, alas, the red carpet was not rolled out for us. David and I arrived early, strolled around the *Rathaus*, square, and had coffee in an elegant café. People were feeding swans in the canal and beyond that the colonnade was reminiscent of Venice. A mime in a suit sprayed in silver posed with tourists, David included, and an artist fashioned a dog out of sand on the pavement.



Hamburg Town Hall burned to the ground in 1842. The current Town Hall was inaugurated in 1897. It has 647 rooms, stands on over 4,000 oak piles and has an elaborately decorated façade flanked by 20 statues of emperors.





The ornate wrought iron gate of the main entrance door leads into the entrance hall which is supported by 16 sandstone pillars painted with 68 portraits of worthy Hamburg citizens. The staircase was made from Sardinian marble and shows the course of human life. We waited in the entrance hall for our guide, enjoying an exhibit on local architecture, talking, and taking photos.

On the tour, we looked down the red carpeted stairs where dignitaries climb to meet the Mayor. Our knowledgeable guide led us through room after room, each opulently furnished and decorated with murals, carved wood, gold, and marble.



The *Kaisersaal* (imperial hall) - named because of the visit by Kaiser Wilhelm II at the opening of the North Sea-Baltic Canal - has a striking ceiling painting that symbolizes merchant shipping under the German flag. The walls are decorated with wall coverings made of pressed leather. The Mayor's Hall has an enormous fireplace. A painting hangs there depicting the inauguration of the Town Hall in 1897.

In the Senate chamber, the only light comes from its large glass roof, symbolizing the ancient Germanic custom of council meetings held in the open air. The Grand Ballroom is 46 meters long, 18 meters wide and 15 meters high. Five huge paintings depict the history of Hamburg from 800 to 1900 and 62 city coats of arms of the old Hanseatic League decorate the walls. The three chandeliers with 278 lights each weigh 1,500 kilograms!



One of the many ceiling murals depicted the stages of a good man's life from childhood to old age.



After touring the various chambers and hallways, most of our Ambassadors returned to their hosts' homes to change for the farewell party. In the evening our Host Heidi's son Martin drove us and neighbor Ina, who was our day host several times, to Bringezu castle for our farewell dinner during the Hamburg Club's 40th anniversary celebration. People were milling around and talking outside the castle as we slowly filed in. We were joined by Friendship Force leaders from nearby cities who had attended a regional meeting during the day. All the ladies received red roses as they entered the castle. We were seated at long tables in the wooden-beamed dining hall.



A member of parliament gave what appeared to be a rousing speech in German and club officials spoke as well as our journey coordinator Barbara Macken, who presented our club gift to the Hamburg Club. We enjoyed a buffet of salmon, ham, chicken, vegetables, potatoes, and salads. Later, baked Alaska appeared on each table crowned with sparklers. The Shanty Choir, directed by a woman, regaled us with rousing sailor's working songs. People held hands and swayed back and forth in their seats to the rhythm of the music. It was wonderful way to bid our new German friends *Auf Wiedersehen* before our club members headed in different directions to explore other parts of Germany.



Heidi & son Martin

Granddaughter Lena, & twins Emma & Sophie Heidi & grandson Max