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Third newsletter for members of the Ring

This is the third newsletter of the Ring of European Cities of Iron Works. Here you will find the latest news and activities from the various member cities. You will also find information about our annual meeting in Donetsk in September this year. We talked together about various topics during the meeting. The organization of the meeting and the various excursions by the blacksmith family Burduk was excellent, and the meeting with the mayor of Donetsk, Alexander Lukyanchenko, was very special. You can put your events for 2013 on our website. For the next newsletter we would like to receive information from you. The next newsletter will be published in the spring of 2013.

Kind regards, Hans Alberse, president.

General assembly in Donetsk

DONETSK - On the 21st and 22nd of September 2012, our association had its annual meeting in the member city Donetsk in Ukraine. It was a good meeting where several issues were discussed such as the preparation for the foundation of an Iron Academy in Europe, a design "Ring Sculpture" for each member city, supporting blacksmiths events in the context of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi (Russia) and the presentations of two new members. These municipalities, Ulyanovsk in Russia and Campdevanol from Spain are heartedly welcomed as new members of the Ring. A new method in this meeting was to discuss topics under the Open Space method, where each member could decide what topics they wanted to talk about (see next page). Important during our general assembly are meeting each other, inspiration and exchanging knowledge.



How is Thomas Hochstädt doing?

YBBSITZ - Looking for local traditions, the blacksmith Thomas Hochstadt from Ybbsitz broke his arm in a game of arm wrestling during his stay in Donetsk. That meant an arm in a plaster and back home in Austria he went to the hospital for further treatment. Early October, Thomas had surgery and he is doing well. The doctor has indicated that everything can become just fine, but that will take time. Thomas is not allowed to use his arm for any heavy work for three months, and that will be heavy for him. You can send him an uplifting message at thomas.hochstaedt@gmx.at



An Iron Academy in Europe

DONETSK - During the annual meeting in Donetsk we discussed about an Iron Academy in Europe. The competent council of blacksmiths will take this theme under her wings. The intention is that there will be an international vocational training in Europe for students who want to become a blacksmith or it is designed for students who wish to study a follow up on their study for blacksmith. In the professional studies in Europe it is possible to do a follow-up in craft occupations, except in the area of forging and metalworking. And we must do something about that, so the competent council of blacksmiths says.

There is a working group that will make a grant application to the EU. This grant is needed to create a plan for the establishment of an Iron Academy in Europe. There are six partners which will be registered. These partners are found in Mynämäki, Oude IJsselstreek, Stia, Lipnik nad Bécvou, Kolbermoor and Ybbsitz. The grant application must be submitted by 21.02.2013 for all partners in their own national agency. At 14.12 and 15.12.2012, December 14th and 15th the working group members will gather Oude IJsselstreek to discuss the application with the plan for the next two years.



Open Space sessions

A new working method at the annual meeting was poured into Open Space sessions. André Oosterink (Oude IJsselstreek) explained how an open space session works. The intention was to get the interview that normally takes place in the hall at the coffee machine, within the meeting. The open space procedure facilitates people to talk about topics they are really interested in. This creates discussion with only enthusiastic and committed participants and talking about topics that really live by the participants. The topics discussed, can be pre-inserted, but also later for example after a 1st round of open space sessions. Each topic has an owner. This person leads the discussion group and also ensures that keywords, conclusions and recommendations are written down. The topic owner also takes care of a plenary feedback of these results to the other participants of the conference. Thus a number of results are fixed in a deal.





StartLab starts in Oude IJsselstreek

OUDE IJSELSTREEK - After only 10 weeks of preparation the fablab, called Startlab Afbramerij, opened in DRU Industrial Park in Ulft on 3rd of November 2012. Startlab is an initiative of a number of schools in the region, entrepreneurs, artists and Dutch Museum of Iron. They work together on a much broader initiative in the Afbramerij (an historic building on the DRU Industrial Park in Ulft which still has to be restored) which will be the base for a variety of innovative and inspiring activities and exhibitions from mid-2013. The Startlab is an introduction to one of the activities.



Startlab Afbramerij is a FabLab, which stands for Fabrication Laboratory. Loosely translated, it is a personal and digitally controlled 'factory' where all your ideas and designs can be achieved. In Startlab Afbramerij you can start working with two different 3D printers, a vinyl cutter, laser cutting machine, a milling machine and various small tools and gadgets. There are manuals available, so you can quickly get started. And of course, the present volunteers help you on your way if needed. It's nice to have a look with your family. This time the grandchildren can explain their grandfather how modern equipment works. Because the building itself is not yet available, the temporary location of the Startlab is in DRU Culture Factory, also on the DRU Industrial Park in Ulft.

Christmas forging

Every year, in the month of December, the traditional Christmas forging will take place in various member cities of our association. In Stolberg (D) a Copper Town Christmas will be celebrated on the 8th and 9th of December. And in Ybbsitz (A) will be a forged Christmas on the 15th of December. If you have similar events in your city, please put them in the events calendar on our website.

Olympic Wintergames 2014

Alexander Romanov from Ulyanovsk is the leader of the working group that engages forging events in the context of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. The Olympic Comity will send him a message in December or January whether the project can continue. He will then let the workgroup know about the plans.

Sculpture

Friesoythe has proposed to post a sculpture of the Ring in all member cities. There is a discussion about what the design should look like. Everyone has their own ideas. How clear should the sculpture be? Will the images be a copy or does every municipality have complete freedom in their discretion to make a sculpture? It was decided that the competent council of blacksmiths create a proposal for a draft and compose frameworks that are submitted to the Board.



General assembly 2014 in Øvre Eiker

DONETSK - At the end of the annual meeting in Donetsk, Mrs. Lidia Myhre has, on behalf of Øvre Eiker, invited the members of the Ring to the annual meeting 2014 in Norway. Øvre Eiker is a member of our association since 2011 and we find it very positive that they so quickly would like to organize the annual meeting. Briefly Lidia told something about the history, cultural traditions and the iron and paper industry. Øvre Eiker is a city where the old and the new come together, inspired by the history of the iron.



This edition is initiated by the association Ring of the European Cities of Iron Works with the next members: Mynämäki (FI), Øvre Eiker (N), Gniew (P), Friesoythe (D), Oude IJsselstreek (NL), Stolberg (D), Olbernhau (D), Kolbermoor (D), Lipnik nad Bécvou (CZ), Ivano Frankivsk (UK), Donezk (UK), Bad Hall (A), Ybbsitz (A), Arles-sur-Tech (F), Bienno (I), Stia (I), Acireale (I), Campdevànol (ESP) and Ulyanovsk (RUS)
Website information www.ironcities.net

Meeting with councillors was succesful

DONETSK - Again councillors from Oude IJsselstreek have organized a meeting between councillors from the member cities of the Ring, parallel to the annual meeting of the Ring in Donetsk in September. This year only the municipalities of Donetsk and Oude IJsselstreek participated. There are many topics discussed and mutual experiences exchanged. All participants can benefit from it. It is amazing to see that the problems of both municipalities are similar, despite the difference in size and the location in Europe. Both municipalities have to deal with declining population which has consequences for schools and other facilities. There has been talk about different ways and experiences to anticipate this development. Outside the program the councillors also met participants of the annual meeting of the Ring.

The meeting between councillors from different countries is a very positive experience. Oude IJsselstreek invites all member cities to participate in this council exchange next year in Bienno (I).

