

The Grundtvig Echo

Lifestyles goes to Ettelbruck



The weather was quite brisk in January and there was a soft drizzle to remind everyone that you were in a North European country, small in size but great in character. So a crowd of weary Grundtvig participants from far and near flocked to Luxembourg, the Grand Duchy, with its green dales, rolling hills and romantic forests.

Soon they were going to learn something about houses, taverns, bridges, palaces, castles and perhaps lifestyles. Already the hotel itself looked like a fortress with its multiple staircases, corridors and side rooms. That was a damn good start.

Later that evening everybody was taken by dark to an impressive construction erected at the top of a hill which they discovered after a brave ascension of a shiny wet ramp. The Vianden castle stood there like an apparition from another epoch, an almost incredible sight in the night. A jolly joking guide was waiting and he took them through all the rooms and round every corner, telling them all he knew about this marvelous edifice that once was just a feudal ruin and a pile of rubble.

The Grundtvig visitors listened carefully to his stories describing the architectural forms, the transformation of this magnificent residence and the lifestyles of its successive inhabitants.

They were gradually becoming experts in living conditions getting ready for point 8 of the meeting agenda: the choice of a new lifestyle variable to be more specifically studied in relation to its local context.

They subconsciously knew that here, in these royal quarters, lay the answer to their search.

They could now start comparisons with former lifestyles and ancient practises such as forgetting plotters in secret dungeons, pouring boiling oil on assailants or giving splendid receptions in the terraced ball room.

But time was passing and all our now learned lifestyle professionals were getting hungry. Luckily for them tables had been reserved below the castle, next to the river Our, at a place called the Victor Hugo in memory of another distinguished visitor to the castle. This was the right choice, making the link with the previous lifestyle variable, for Hugo wrote: *"Il y a des hommes qui sont nés pour servir leur pays et d'autres qui sont nés pour servir à table"* (There are people born to serve their country and others to serve at the table).

Was he thinking of Henry I of Vianden and his grandiose dining room while having his evening supper?

