

The Grundtvig Echo

Famalicão: the Hidden Variable



And so the ship docks in from its last voyage, having sailed from one destination to another on European waters: Mediterráneo, Uelzecht, Boğaziçi (more or less), Adriatico, Wisła and finally Douro. The Portuguese partners hosting the Leisure and Free Time meeting were very clever in concealing their cards, keeping all the surprises until the end. First they said the weather would be rotten and that guests had to be prepared for rain and low temperatures. Of course, they knew all along that our last variable would not do without a glorious warm sun and beautiful blue skies.

The evening get together was due to take place in a gloomy and anonymous downtown place in Porto. Instead, all of a sudden, a Guarany Café appeared with a fado on the menu. The next surprise was the school. Was it real? It looked like it had just come out of the ground with its futuristic architecture and stylish design.

Little did the partners know they would soon be transported back in time by a Vale do Ave bus to the 18th Century Bom Jesú sanctuary. It was said that, like the pilgrims, we would have to climb the 600 steps of the zig-zag baroque staircase. Of course, this was a joke. But there was more to be revealed to the Grundtvig experts who had by now become professionals in the analysis of living conditions.

They were offered the opportunity to hold an on the field examination of the lifestyles of the Braga people during the Roman era. For this purpose all the citizens had been asked to replicate the city as it was in those days, with its markets, taverns, musicians, dancers and even gladiators. After this the experts decided to add the study of ancient lifestyles to their list of variables.

However, it was getting late and the bus driver was waiting. So the partnership had to come to a close and to its farewell party. That's when the Portuguese pulled yet another rabbit out of their hat before drawing the final curtain: the Hidden Variable!

It all happened so quickly, some would say too quickly, at Casa do Outeirinho, just outside Famalicão. The starters, the tarte de bacalhau, the arroz de pato, the sumptuous dessert table, the tiny coffee cups, the singing swinging guitarist, the trances and crazy folk dances, all this was too much to handle and before you knew it, it was over.

That night, the experts refused to leave and had to be dragged out. They could not find sleep, reliving the Hidden Variable experience.



May 2013 - Daniel Oddie
Partnership Coordinator

