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Memories from the EAHIL Workshop “Learn, Share, Act, Bridge Borders” 17-20 June 2019, Basel, Switzerland

Welcome Reception

The Welcome Reception was held in the Wildt'sches Haus, situated close to the Basel University main building by the Petersplatz. This magnificent building from the 18th century got its name from the Swiss silk trader Jeremias Wildt.

After entering the impressive Entrance Hall, we were shown to the large and beautiful garden situated behind the palace. When every delegate had a glass in their hand, Monica Wechsler from the University of Basel Medical Library and member of the Local Organizing Committee, greeted us all welcome. Her multitalented and musical colleague Christoph Wehrmüller (LOC Co-chair) then entered the stage together with Teresa Lee (Chair of the International Programme Committee).

Christoph stated that “librarians are versatile” which he and Teresa very much proved when they surprised us all by performing a string duet, composed by the German composer Telemann. The piece was very enjoyable and the music fitted very well to the baroque style surrounding.



The Welcome Reception was a great opportunity to meet new EAHIL friends and to network. Many thanks to the organizers for arranging a nice and welcoming reception in this very beautiful surrounding.

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Gala Dinner

We enjoyed the conference dinner in a beautiful Safran Zunft Guild House. The house is built in 1902, but the history of the guild dates back at least to the 14th century. The whole evening was wonderful! The great guildhall with all the decorations, high ceiling and stained glass in the windows was so impressive. Let alone the fine-dining quality dinner. I heard many similar comments on the food and surroundings: “One of the best vegetarian menus ever tasted in conference dinners!”

One of the high points was the taster of Basel Carnival parade, which LOC Co-Chair Christoph Wehrmüller together with his group gave us. As a great surprise, suddenly the guildhall was filled with drummers and fluit-players, dressed in beautiful carnival outfits, with fascinating masks and headdresses. Wow! What a great tradition! Someday I want to come to Basel during the carnival season!

In addition to the marvelous settings, it was of course the lovely people, interesting discussions – and at the end of the evening – dancing and cold drinks (very needed), which made the evening! Thank you for all the organizers and all the great colleagues – and of course the sponsors also, this is a night to remember!



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Visit to the Botanical Garden at the University of Basel



The Botanical Garden at the University of Basel was established in 1589 and is one of the ten oldest botanical gardens in the world. We were privileged to have Heidrun Janka, a Botanist as well as an Information Specialist from University of Basel as our guide. She shared interesting facts about the diverse range of plants and species of trees.

There are several greenhouses, one with a pond called the Victoriahaus, which was built in 1898 specifically for the giant water lily “Victoria Regia”.

Heidrun pointed out that Joseph Paxton architect of the “Crystal Palace” which housed the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London was inspired by nature and the structure looks like a giant water-lily leaf (see photograph below).

We were shown *Nelumbo nucifera* or Lotus Flower. A plant that minimize the water droplet’s to the leaf surface. The principle of this plant has inspired paints, glass, textiles etc.

Whilst in the tropical greenhouse we experienced thunderstorms and tropical rain. There, I was thrilled to come across the Ceylon cinnamon, a plant which originated in Sri Lanka (my home country).

In keeping up with conference theme, our visit was a sharing and a learning experience which for me was a highlight from #eahil2019

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Historical Walk – Black Death in Basel

Our guide focused on the plague of 1610. We started our tour at the Spalentor Gate where it “all” began in the summer of 1610. At the time, France, and most of Europe, were suffering a plague epidemic. According to our guide, a young baker arrived late from his visit to Alsace, after the city gates were locked up. He found a way to sneak into the city, as young men seem to be able to do. Unbeknownst to him he was carrying a disaster with him.... **The Plague.** Then no one understood this disease, and its presence and the resulting deaths brought a climate of fear and prejudice resulting in social, political, and economic chaos.

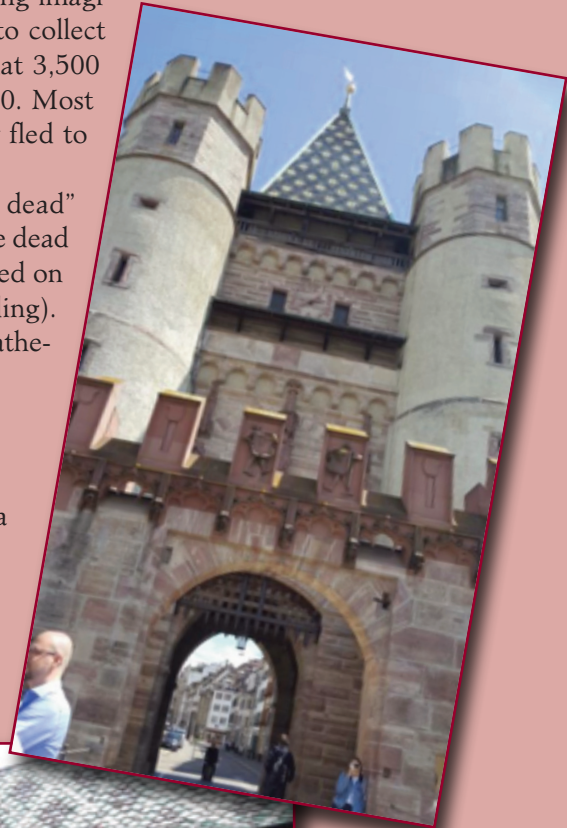
The tour was an interesting walk through Basel following a map of the city drawn by Dr Platter, the city physician. He drew every street and house in Basel, adding imaginary details to the map. Platter had visited every house to collect death statistics related to the plague, and determined that 3,500 people had died. The population of Basel then was 13,000. Most of the wealthy citizens survived the plague because they fled to their country estates.

We walked from the gate, past the “the alley of the dead” (*Totengässlein*) named thus since it was used to transport the dead to the cemetery by *Peterskirche*. From this church we walked on to the market square and the Town Hall (brick red building). The tour ended with a downpour. By then we were in the cathedral’s cloister, Basel Minster.

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photo by Ana Maria Ferrinho





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First timer's impression

When I was hired just over a year ago at the medical library at the University Medical Center Groningen one of the first things my boss, Annalies, told me was that I would be going to EAHIL. Until then I had not yet heard about EAHIL before and during my first year the word EAHIL was mentioned uncountable times. Together with Annalies and my colleague Guus, I was to go to Basel and while there, it would be fun to not only participate in workshops, but also give one and present a poster. Together with Guus, I prepared the workshop “How to get the PDF” and we were happy that we had to do it first thing on Monday morning. Our job was done and we could now participate in the congress, except for my poster that is. I had very high expectations of EAHIL because of everything that I had heard, and I have to say the congress did not disappoint me in any way. From the first day of my arrival, I had the pleasure to meet many new people from all over the world. After the dinner on Wednesday, we went to a couple of bars with a group of people and somebody said, “networking works best in a bar”. She was right, I had many interesting discussions about work, and I learned a lot. The atmosphere during EAHIL was very open and friendly and because of this, I have really enjoyed my time at EAHIL in Basel. I hope to see everybody again next year.



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