

5th ISCP Meeting from May 3rd till May 6th 2007 in Plauen

By Wolfgang Strobel, translated by W. Poenitz

Before the official beginning of the meeting, President Captain David Jones and his wife arrived from Swansea, Great Britain. After a 15-hour journey he and his wife Edwina were welcomed at the Airport Hof-Plauen by members of the club.

On May 3rd President Jones gave a speech in front of about 80 students of the Diesterweg High School. He reported about his experiences when his ship "Quebec City" met U 156 "Plauen" under the command of Corvette Captain Werner Hartenstein in the South Atlantic on September 19th, 1942 and presented his slides from this event. His speech was very impressive, the torpedoing of his ship, the humanitarian help of Hartenstein and his crew towards the survivors, the two-week sailing trip over 1200 sm to the West coast of Africa, the experiences with the native people there, the return to Great Britain all the way to the sinking of U 156 Plauen East of Barbados. 52 crew members found their graves in a depth of 3500 meters.

The students accepted the speech with great interest and applause. A number of questions were raised by the students and they expressed their intention to buy David Jones book "The enemy we killed, my friend".

At night the traditional welcoming evening took place at the "Hotel Alexandra".

The second day of the meeting started with a visit to the "Sternquell" Brewery in Plauen in the morning. During a guided tour by Mrs. Nenner, the visitors received an impression how the beer is being produced consisting of water, barley malt and hops according to the German law of cleanness of 1516 all the way to the filling of the bottles. In the afternoon, the board held a meeting with the President to discuss various matters of the club.

In the evening, the friends of the ISCP were guests in the home of the Navy Society of Plauen. The attending members of both the clubs expressed their intention to fill with life the agreement of January 26th, 2007 for mutual cooperation. Some members of the Shanty Choir of the Navy Society and the kitchen crew contributed their part to make the evening successful.

As there are a number of ladies among the members an arranged visit to both the factories of the "Plauener Modespitze" was very welcomed. While the ladies were more interested in the products, the men of the club showed more interest in the old embroidery machine from the company "VOMAG" and the modern machines as well as their technique and development from the beginning of the 20th century.

The highlight of the meeting was the festive evening on Saturday May 5th in the country hotel Zwoschwitz. The evening united the members of the ISCP and the Navy Society together with a number of guests who support the aim of our international association with sympathy.

Officially, the 40th member of the club was introduced. It is the City Councilor Hansgünter Fleischer, who also was there as a representative of the Mayor of the City, Ralf Oberdorfer.

The room was decorated with a world map with light points indicating the residences of our members from the USA all the way to Australia. A blinking red light is marking the sinking of U 156. Also a newly created oil painting of Corvette Captain Werner Hartenstein has been shown.

While President Jones remembered Hartenstein as former sea war enemy whom he thanked his life as well as others, Manager Strobel concentrated more on the problems of the board, which have to be taken care of.

The members spent their last day of the meeting in the Erzgebirge (Ore Mountain Area). The first place was the city of Schneeberg. The nephew of Werner Hartenstein, Werner Schuppan, explained very well the history of Schneeberg. While searching for pewter and iron, a miner discovered in 1470 pure silver. This was the start of mining in Schneeberg which determined the life for over 500 years in this place. In 1477 a silver block of 20 tons has been found. 1841 Schneeberg received the right of a Free Miners City.



Das Stadtwappen von Schneeberg



The tracks of mining brought the visitors to the mine no. 371 of the company Wismut GmbH responsible for restoration of the area in the “Westerzgebirge”, where already in the 19th century uranium has been found. Since 1949 most of the uranium has been taken out from that area around Niederschlema-Alberoda. Out of this place about 73,000 tons of uranium was exploited up to a depth of 2 km. It was one of the largest deposits of uranium worldwide at this time.

After the political change in Germany the uranium mining stopped. A collection of minerals has been created to be shown in three rooms with a complete description about the geology, the minerals and the places they were found. Werner Schuppan gave an excellent explanation about all these items. The visit ended with a coffee break in the “Kurhaus”.

In the farewell evening on Sunday, President David Jones and Manager Strobel thanked the members and guests for the successful 5th meeting of the ISCP.