

From October 8th to October 12th „Nederlandstalige TeX Gebruikersgroep“ hosted the EuroTeX conference 2012, joined with the autumn meeting of DANTE, the „Deutschsprachige Anwendervereinigung TeX e.V.“ The conference took place in the Dutch Breskens, in that part of the country that is only accessible via ferry, tunnel or directly through Belgium. Thanks to the open European borders one won't even notice if he or she is in Germany, the Netherlands or Belgium.

The [EuroTeX 2012](#) report was initially published in „[Die TeXnische Komödie](#)“, the German TeX users magazine of [DANTE e.V.](#)

Travelling to Breskens

Getting to Breskens did not pose to be a big deal for me since Thomas had offered me a ride in his car. Loaded with various laptops, iDevices and complete photo equipment we hit the road on Sunday afternoon. Thanks to Thomas' driving and his GPS' navigation skills we successfully arrived at 8pm at the „Scaldis“ hotel, our home for the next few days.



Breakfast in the hotel Scaldis

Having about 5'000 inhabitants Breskens is not really the „center of the world“. It's location at the North Sea however make it a nice place to stay, its size also allowed us to walk between all

Written by Uwe Ziegenhagen
Monday, 26 November 2012 20:57

the conference-related places; the cars could stay at the hotel.

Maandag

After breakfast we walked together to the „de Platte Knoop“, a small café pretty close to Breskens’ levee, with open WiFi – which had a few issues with the amount of people trying to connect – and coffee for the attending TeXies.



Café „de Platte Knoop“

After a short unplanned delay – the fuses of the café also could not handle the 50 laptops – the conference started.

Almost 50 people had found their way to Breskens, with their origin as colourful as the brands of the laptops they used: besides larger groups from the Netherlands and Germany (as mentioned the EuroTeX was also DANTE’s autumn meeting) there were people from France, Italy, Czech republic, Norway and many more countries. Even from Japan three people had found their way to Breskens.

The first presentation by Kees van der Laan, „Recreational TeX & Co - with a serious undertone“ showed us that for many types of graphics no TeX would be needed – it could be done directly in PostScript. In a second presentation in the afternoon Kees showed how fractal Julia sets could be displayed with the help of PostScript.

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After Kees Jano Kula from the Czech republic spoke on howto create personalized T-shirts for the Nike Run in Prague with ConTeXt.

The textile side of LaTeX & Co. was Mari Voipio's topic as well. She presented the creation of braiding patterns in MetaPost and also gave a workshop how to braid.

After Taco Hoekwater's talk about MetaPost Patrick Gundlach had two talks. In his first talk he showed the current version of his „speedata“ publishing tool, which – based on pre-defined rules – typesets large amounts of text on paper respectively a PDF file.

In his second presentation Patrick showed how to visualize the spacings between words with LuaTeX, something that would be pretty difficult or even impossible without Lua's TeX interaction features.

After Monday's presentations DANTE e.V. had its members meeting, followed by dinner at the hotel.

Dinsdag

Tuesday started with my presentation on „Reporting with TeX“, where I showed a few examples on the interaction of LaTeX and Python.

After my presentation Leo Arnold from Technical University Munich showed how to create various PDF files from a single LaTeX run. His class – on the basis of comment.sty and write18 calls – instantiates further instances of pdfLaTeX which then create the individual PDF files.

Before Breskens I had thought, that this was impossible, now I really look forward to trying out the CTAN package Leo promised to create.

Before lunch break Taco Hoekwater, who was also the local organizer of EuroTeX, presented on the topics „Path resolution in Metapost“ and „Parsing of PDF Content Streams“.

The afternoon was by Hans Hagen to present various ConTeXt topics, followed by Luigi Scarso talking about „MFLua“. Concluding Tuesday one could work on conference maps with Willi Egger.

Woensdag

Wednesday was reserved for the touristic programme. At 9am an original US American school bus waited for us in front of the „Scaldis“ hotel. Our first stop was a local ostrich farm, where we – after having coffee and cake – got pretty close to the little (pretty cute) and large (pretty much frightening) ostriches.



At the ostrich farm

After lunch in a country guesthouse – which fortunately also provided open WiFi – we went to Brugge. Brugge, once the richest town north of the Alps, had been part of the Hanse trade organisation and was located geographically suitable for trade. After the guided tour, which showed many of Brugge's sights, we spent the remaining time eating Belgian waffles and buying some of the excellent chocolates the Belgian chocolatiers produced. The chocolates from „The Chocolate Line“ with their fresh (!) mint leafs inside were definitely the most amazing things I had eaten since years!



At the Minnewater



At the Minnewater and on the canal, Bruges, Belgium, a special Dutch stop and a visit to



Conference dinner

Donderdag

Thursday started with various font-related talks. Bogusław Jackowski, Jerzy Ludwichowski and Piotr Strzelczyk from the Polish GUST showed the workflows to create the mathematical TeX Gyre fonts, presented the current status of the project and spoke about the backward compatibility of LM Math and CM Math.

After lunch Hans Hagen fulfilled my special wish and showed some ConTeXt basics. Since the current version of ConTeXt works on the basis of Lua there is no more reason to install Ruby or Perl, everything is included in TeX Live.

After the basics we dived deeper into the world of ConTeXt when Hans showed how to calculate in tables with Lua, how to parse XML-files and the connectivity to MySQL databases.

Thursday concluded with a visit to Breskens' glassblower who formed bowls and animals from amazingly hot glass.

Vrijdag

On Friday our visitors from Japan, Munehiro and Hironori, gave their presentations. They discussed the usage of LaTeX in Japanese typesetting companies and the issues that Japanese typesetters face. I immediately forwarded the presentation to a Japanese friend of mine who found many of his LaTeX issues covered.

By the way: If one wants to know more about Japanese typesetting he or she can go to Japan next autumn, end of October 2013 the TUG conference will take place in Tokyo.

Besides Hans, who presented more on ConTeXt, Ivo Geradts and Kai Eigner spoke about typesetting Sanskrit with LuaTeX, Tomás Hála about the differences in typesetting Czech and Slovak, before Jean-Michel Hufflen talked about the advances in the development of his MIBibTeX.

The last presentation of EuroTeX 2012 was made by Sietse Brouwer, who discussed improvements of the ConTeXtgarden website with the EuroTeX participants.

Odyssee – Return with Obstacles

The ride back to Cologne with Doris and Ulrik was almost as exciting as the conference itself. A first unplanned stop we had in Hoofdplaat, only a few minutes from Breskens, when Doris' and a Dutch car definitely got too close. Luckily there was only material damage, so our journey could continue after the exchange of the insurance data.

Another unwanted obstacle happened to us in Belgium, when after a short stop in the local McDonald's branch Doris' car decided to play dead, the battery had emptied while I had been trying to set up the GPS. A few well-dosed pushes from Ulrik and me however convinced the vehicle to start its engine again.

Summary

What remains is the memory of a really great conference which provided – also due to Taco's excellent organisation – many interesting talks and new friends. Although some of the topics were much beyond my TeX skills and interests I got a lot of new insights how amazing our

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beloved TeX is.

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