

# Institute of Physics

## LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION Autumn Visit to Darmstadt September 2008

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This visit is being organised by David Pick

### Summary

The timing has been chosen to coincide with the annual “Rhine in Flames event”.

Day 1	16 September	Arrive at Hotel Restaurant Poststuben, Schloßstraße 28-30, 64625 Bensheim-Auerbach (coach from Frankfurt Airport)
Day 2	17 September	Train to EUMETSAT; Afternoon coach trip: Russian Church & Mathildenhöhe; Guided visit to Messel Pit Fossil Site
Day 3	18 September	Train to ESOC; Afternoon coach trip: guided tour of Roman archaeological sites in Odenwald and supper in Gaststätte Dornröschen
Day 4	19 September	Coach to Auto & Technik Museum Sinsheim; Train back to Heidelberg & Bensheim-Auerbach
Day 5	20 September	Coach to Rüdesheim; Rhine cruise to St. Goarshausen; “Rhine in Flames”; coach to hotel
Day 6	21 September	Coach to Frankfurt am Main Airport

**Day 1 16 September** See separate flyer.

**Day 2 17 September** Visit EUMETSAT and an afternoon coach trip: Russian Church & Mathildenhöhe; Guided visit to Messel Pit Fossil Site.

The main purpose of the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) is to deliver weather and climate-related satellite data, images and products– 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This information is supplied to the National Meteorological Services of the organisation's 20 Member and 10 Cooperating States in Europe, as well as other users world-wide. EUMETSAT is an international organisation and was founded in 1986.

See <http://www.eumetsat.int/Home/index.htm>.

In the afternoon it is proposed to visit the [Mathildenhöhe](#). This area has the Hochzeitsturm ('Marriage tower', also commonly known as the 'Five-Finger-Tower') by [Joseph Maria Olbrich](#), the Russian Chapel (built as a private chapel by the last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II, whose wife Alexandra was born in Darmstadt) and many private villas built by the Jugendstil architects who had settled in Darmstadt.

The coach will then take us to the nearby Messel Pit, claimed to be the richest site in the world for understanding the living environment of the Eocene, between 57 million and 36 million years ago. In particular, it provides information about the early stages of the evolution of mammals and includes exceptionally well-preserved mammal fossils, ranging from fully articulated skeletons to the contents of stomachs of animals of this period. The coach will then take us back to the hotel by a “scenic” route for the evening meal accompanied by a local wine tasting.

**Day 3 18 September** Visit ESOC; Afternoon coach trip: guided tour of Roman archaeological sites in Odenwald and supper in Gaststätte Dornröschen (Sleeping Beauty)

Since its creation in 1967, the European Space Operations Centre (ESOC) has planned missions, operated more than 50 satellites and ensured that spacecraft meet their mission objectives. The mandate of ESOC is to conduct mission operations for ESA satellites and to establish, operate and maintain the necessary ground segment infrastructure.

As soon as the first data is acquired, the complex operations of the Launch and Early Orbit Phase (LEOP) begin. LEOP includes the solar array deployment, the transfer of the spacecraft to its final orbit and the gradual switch-on of the payload. Once the proper functions of the satellite are confirmed, staff at ESOC monitor the routine operations of the craft to ensure that the spacecraft conveys its products and meets mission objectives

In the afternoon we are joined by the Darmstadt Head of Archaeology for a guided coach tour of some of the Roman sites in the Odenwald, followed by supper in the Odenwald Gaststätte Dornröschen (Sleeping Beauty). Unfortunately we are two days early for the Odenwald potato festival!



**Day 4 19 September** Visit the Auto & Technik Museum Sinsheim and visit to Heidelberg

A coach will take us to the Auto & Technik Museum Sinsheim. This has about 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> under cover, and open-air grounds of about 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> with around 3,000 exhibits. Among them are the original Air France Concorde, a Russian supersonic-jet Tupolev TU-144, 300 vintage cars, 200 motorbikes, 40 race- and sports cars, 27 locomotives, 50 airplanes, 150 tractors, steam engines and trucks. There is also an IMAX 3D movie theatre that projects three-dimensional movies on a 20x27m screen.

The museum is close to a railway station, allowing you to leave when you have had enough. The train will take you to Heidelberg. There the more athletic can “do” the Philosophers’ Walk, which is on the northern side of the Neckar. This Walk derives its name from the fact that Heidelberg's philosophers and university teachers are said to have once walked and talked here. It shows excellent views of the old town and castle. The less athletic can ride on Heidelberg’s funicular railway and visit the castle, indulge in some retail therapy or simply take a boat trip up the Neckar. A local stopper train will take you back to Bensheim-Auerbach.

**Day 5 20 September** Travel to Rudesheim then boat to St. Goarshausen



A coach will take us in the morning to Rudesheim. This is a busy tourist and holiday centre on the Middle Rhine. The 10th C. Brömserburg houses the Rheingau Wine Museum and there are also remains of two other castles, the Boosenburg (originally 10th C.) and the Vorderburg, and numerous old burghers' houses and aristocratic mansions (16th-18th centuries). In the Brömserhof is a collection of mechanical musical instruments.

In the afternoon we take a Rhine cruise from Rudesheim to the Loreley town of St. Goarshausen past winegrowing towns nestling in the foothills, steep vineyards and dozens of castles and forts and the Loreley rock. St Goarshausen is a long straggling place which has preserved much of its medieval core and lies at the foot of Burg Katz (14th C.; restored in 19th C.). At the upper end of the town are two 14th C. watchtowers, relics of its medieval fortifications. When we visit there will be the local wine festival taking place and at 20.45 the Rhine in Flames fireworks show.

After the fireworks a coach will take us back to our hotel

**Rhine in Flames,  
*Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany***



**Day 6 21 September** Return to UK

Coach will leave hotel around 9.00 for Frankfurt am Main airport (FRA)