



'Once upon a time' becomes now along Deutsche Marchenstrasse

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

GERMANY—The Pied Piper of Hamelin still pipes the rats and the children out of town every night at dusk along the German Magic Trail. Sleeping Beauty slept here and wanders around the ruins of Sababurg now with a thorny rose in her hand. Little Red Riding Hood can be seen on any feast day, walking in her

peasant costume through the woods of Schwalm.

All this storybook activity takes place along Deutsche Marchenstrasse, variously translated as the German Magic Trail or Fairy Tale Road. This is the land where the Brothers Grimm were born and from where they gathered their folk tales. Woodcutters cottages and villages now look as if they had just come out of a storybook.

The German Magic Trail runs for 375 miles (600 kilometers) between the central German city of Frankfurt and the north coast city of Bremen.

Fifty-three storybook sites are marked on the Magic Trail map, from Hanau, to the south, where the Brothers Grimm were born, through plaster-and-beam villages tucked in emerald green hills and forests near Kassel to the spa country north.

AMERICAN FAMILIES are accustomed to seeing storybook characters in amusement-park settings, but this is a different experience. Although local tourist bureaus exploit the tourist value of castles, museums, puppet shows, and folk costumes, the fairy tales are a very real part of the history and culture of this area.

Few American travelers have discovered it, because most of us go to Bavaria, where German Americans trace their origins, and to the Rhine River, where American soldiers were stationed during WWII.

Prices are high everywhere in Germany, but they are lower here than in other areas. Folk culture is living and visible in the villages. Not as many people speak English.

A FAMILY JOURNEY, designed for both adults and kids, would start by car or bus at the Grimm Brothers Monument in Hanau and go north roughly 200 kilometers through the towns of Celbhausen and Schlitz to Kassel. The exact distance depends on whether you stay on the main road or take various side roads through villages.

Germany has a confusing array of numbers along local, national and Eu-

ropean roads, so check your route with a tourist bureau before you stray. Allow extra time to visit villages like Homberg, the district capital of the Schwalm-Eder District.

Half-timbered houses lean over winding streets in Homberg, dominated by a huge stone cathedral which fronts the marketplace square. The Gasthaus Krone, a few steps off the square, may be the oldest inn in Germany.

Homberg is only a few miles from Schwalmstadt and the Red Riding Hood Museum. You will see children in their native costume in many parts of this countryside on Sundays and feast days.

Homberg is south of Kassel, the city where Die Brüder Grimm collected and annotated the ancient folk tales that had been told and retold for centuries in northern Germany. The Grimm Brothers Museum, and two ruined castles highlight this city for tourists.

To the northwest, there are two of the 72 castle-hotels belonging to the Gast im Schloß (loosely: guests in castles) Association—Sababurg, the Sleeping Beauty Castle built in 1334 and immortalized by the Brothers Grimm; and Trendleberg, which rises high above a village in the furred green hills.

Sababurg grew as a game castle and fortress over the centuries. One wing is used for hotel guests. Another wing, in ruins, is used for medieval dinners and barbecues. Helmeted towers rise above the spreading castle and gardens, with a view of a wilderness park where oaks have been bred backwards to their pre-historic state.

On special occasions, teenage girls from nearby towns take the part of Sleeping Beauty and the Prince, to the delight of color photographers and the cynicism of those who like all of their travel surroundings to be authentic.

The girl in fairy-tale costume is also a highlight of the road going north where a Pied Piper plays the part of the rat catcher who, according to legend, lured all of the children out of town.

Hameln, as it is called in Germany, is a medieval town on the Weser River. Tourists walk the flower gardens, and the ancient stone streets to the Hochzeitshaus (literally the High Time House) where the story of the Pied Piper is chimed every day in a moving clock, and re-enacted on the stage and on the town streets.

Sleeping Beauty, the Pied Piper and Little Red Riding Hood are only three of the familiar characters you will see in dozens of gardens, theaters, museums and showplaces along the Magic Trail.

THE MAGIC TRAIL is not all for children. Every community has its Ratskeller, a dining room and pub below the city hall, where German beer drinkers and stein-thumpers quaff their time away.

The spa country near Bad Pyrmont, between Hameln and Bremen, is still favored by the older population which goes there for its health. It is gradually being converted by the German government to younger activities.

Historic sites and gourmet, as well as country, restaurants are plentiful. Castle Trendleberg is known for its Trout à la poacher served on a flaming sword.

LThe North Sea cities are busy commercial centers. Bremen has not only the giant statue of Roland standing over historic sites, and the busy nearby ratskeller, but also the harbor tours of nearby Bremerhaven and the dancing-and-eating fun of places like the Rattenkrug.

Hamburg is famous for its inland lake, as well as for the pornography so popular with tourists on the Reeperbahn. Cities like Travemünde, on the East German border, are known for casinos and for ferry trips across the North Sea to Helsinki and Copenhagen.

For information on the German Magic Trail, contact the Deutsche Marchenstrasse, Postbox 102 420, D-3500 Kassel, Germany. For other attractions in this area between Frankfurt and the North Sea, contact the German National Tourist Office at 630 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10020.



The Pied Piper of Hamelin and Little Red Riding Hood—two fairy tale characters who bring to life the fantasy of the German Magic Trail. (Photos by Iris Sanderson Jones)



TRAVEL LOG of Iris Jones



It's a FERA way to travel

A smorgasbord of travel opportunities, once open only to Ford Motor Co. employees and their families, are now available to friends and neighbors as well.

The Ford Employee Recreation Association offers about 50 trips a year to the 125,000 area Ford employees and families and 20,000 retirees and families, as well as to 357,000 employees and retirees nationwide.

FERA is a volunteer, nonprofit organization that helps employees to organize recreational activities which range from photography and softball to travel.

When the Civil Aeronautics Board regulations required club membership for those seeking cheap charter flights, FERA trips were a low-priced bonanza for its members, but only 10 per cent of club membership could be held by outsiders.

The deregulation of air fares during the past year has changed all that. FERA trips now are open to anyone who asks for them, although most seats are taken by Ford employees and their friends, relatives or neighbors.

FERA will hold its annual travel rally from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 27, at Edsel Ford High School in Dearborn, on Rotunda, east of Outer Drive.

FERA trips, which are administered by area travel agents, will be promoted by destination films as well as by films taken on former club journeys.

Travel Club Chairwoman Trudy Friend of Detroit will host the rally, along with co-chairman Joe Roberts of Livonia and travel committee members Jim Culbertson of Farmington Hills, Ken Hibbard of Lathrup Village and Mill Jordan and Dean Stevens of Plymouth.

Ms. Friend has been at the airport for every FERA trip departure for the last 20 years. FERA president Dale Harrison says that "flights will take off every 45 minutes at the rally, when we start another film of a FERA trip."

The most popular trips are to Las Vegas and Hawaii, with Europe close behind. But FERA also offers trips to Rio de Janeiro, the Orient, Alaska, the Canadian Rockies and other places.

A new trip this year is scheduled for Casablanca in Tangiers.

FERA officials, all of whom are volunteers, want Ford employees and their friends to attend the Jan. 27 rally if they are interested in a FERA trip, but they warn non-Ford travelers that the rally traditionally hosts 3,000 to 4,000 people, so the place will

be crowded.

Trip reservations can be made there at the FERA office of the Ford Motor Co. in Dearborn or through the travel agent who is organizing a particular trip. FERA is not eager to solicit your reservation. They may even be a little afraid of being overwhelmed by outside-company requests. But they will add your name to their list if you ask them to and if there is room.

CHINA TRAVEL—John P. O'Hara Jr. of Bloomfield Hills would like you to know that the U.S. China People's Friendship Association still has room for China Travelers on study tours being scheduled for China in 1979.

O'Hara and his wife went on one of these tours last April. He believes that 4,000 people already are signed up for 1979.

The association brochure describes it as "the oldest

est American sponsor of tours to the People's Republic of China, organizing groups of members and friends since 1972." The group has been working for several years towards the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China.

For information, call O'Hara at 647-0436 or Stu Dowdy at the tour office in Highland Park, 868-0082.

THE TRIPLE CROWN of snowmobiling began this month, according to John Martini at the Michigan Travel Commission in Lansing.

The competition includes three races: the Thunder Bay 250, which took place Saturday in Alpena, the TC 250 on Jan. 27 in Traverse City and the International 500 on Feb. 10 in Sault Ste. Marie.

The L-500 is the world's longest closed-track snowmobile race. More than \$56,000 in prize money will be awarded: \$14,000, \$17,500 and \$25,000, respectively, for the three races.

Package for skiers

Cross-country skiers can now enjoy their sport to the maximum with a one-day offering from Win Schulz's Stevensville restaurant and Tabor Hill Vineyards.

On Saturdays and Sundays, from Jan. 13 to March 31, a ski package combines traversing the trails through the Tabor Vineyards with a wine-cellar tour, wine tasting session and a first-class dinner at Schulz's.

Said Ross Racine, manager of the restaurant, "The vineyards provide the ideal setting for the sport, and a gourmet dinner at Schulz's is the perfect finishing touch to a day on the slopes."

Leonard Olsen of Tabor Hill said the wine tasting will provide a pleasant mid-day break. Skiers will take to the cross-country trails at 11 a.m., return to the winery at 1 p.m. for the tour and wine tasting, followed by a box lunch from Schulz's. More

sking and then to Schulz's for a gourmet dinner which begins with apres-ski fondue and features many of the restaurant's specialties.

Stevensville is just outside the St. Joseph-Benton Harbor area of Michigan near the shores of Lake Michigan. Reservations can be made by calling 1-616-428-2272, or writing Win Schulz's, 5000 Red Arrow Highway, Stevensville 49127.

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