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GET ON YOUR BIKE!



At noon on May 28th this year, 80 librarians and library lovers from twelve different countries gathered outside The Black Diamond Library in Copenhagen to embark on an 'unconference'. And we mean "embark" - because they were about to bicycle to Berlin.

The concept of librarians cycling approximately 650 kilometres while discussing library strategies was developed through collaboration between Danish, Finnish and German library professionals. The original idea was to have 100 librarians on the trip; although not all participated in the whole journey, 100 librarians did indeed cycle into the Berlin train station on June 5th.

The event started at the Danish Royal Library courtyard in Copenhagen, and ended at the 100th Deutsche Bibliothekartag! in Berlin. About 80 cycling library professionals from all over the world congregated in the courtyard outside The Black Diamond Library to collect their itinerary and bright yellow vests before hopping on our bikes and riding out of Copenhagen through the Danish countryside to our first destination, the Greve Library.

While cycling, the common language for communication between cyclist/librarians was English and various library-related topics and ideas were debated and discussed between Germans, Finns, Russians, Norwegians, Americans, Canadians and one lone Australian (me) as we cycled through the Danish and German countryside. The topics ranged from services for immigrants to libraries as a public

space. Most of us were based in public libraries, but there were also representatives from academic and special libraries – and a film crew, who launched a documentary of the event in Helsinki in August.

Along the 650km route Danish and German libraries welcomed the cyclists with water, healthy snacks, toilet facilities (a necessity) and library tours. Each day brought on a new unexpected experience, such as a three course dinner provided by Claus Meyer, co-owner of the world famous Michelin-starred restaurant Noma. After crossing the Baltic Sea from Denmark to Germany we were met by the Mayor of Rostock and various journalists and escorted by police through the Rostock highway tunnel that had been closed to all traffic just for us as cyclists are not normally allowed through tunnels in Germany.

All 80 of us are now ready for the second Cycling for Libraries event, wherever that may be (www.cyclingforlibraries.org will be the place to check for details if you want to join us).

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Our welcome in Rostock