



Figure 1: Some of us went back to the village of Tüchersfeld, where the first LBW took place.

It all started in May 1999 on a dark Saturday afternoon in Prague, when 15 geeks from America, Russia, Germany, and England met at 5pm on the Charles Bridge ...

This sounds like the opening of a thriller, except that the people on the bridge weren't exchanging spies or money but were frantically waving penguins and trying to recognize each other. "Look for a small Russian with a small camera with a big lens and a stuffed penguin," one of the attending geeks told the mailing list.

It was during that first meeting (LBW 0.99) that the geeks decided on a format for the Linux Beer Hike [1]: Not a huge conference with hundreds of participants and speakers (as originally suggested), but rather an informal geek meeting in a place with good hiking opportunities, interesting local cuisine, and accommodation for every budget. Finding a date and location was pretty easy. Because there was a solar

Open Source and Free Software enthusiasts and friends from more than a dozen different countries. The Beer Hike is an entirely volunteer-run event, funded from a combination of donations among the attendees toward the cost of the hall, Internet access, and other expenses.

Walking Back in Time

The Linux Bier Wanderung returned to Germany for its 10th anniversary, which took place from August 15 to 23 in Helmbrechts [2], Bavaria. Around 45 people from various countries turned up



Figure 2: Members of the first LBW (L to R): Shane (New Zealand), Evelyn (US), Andy (UK), Reinald (Germany), and Henrik (Sweden).

The 10th anniversary Linux Beer Hike

GEEK TREK

Happy birthday, LBW! Ten years of hacking, hiking, and beer tasting – the movable feast wanders back to Bavaria. **BY HEIKE JURZIK**

eclipse in Germany in August 1999, it was decided to hold the first Beer Hike in Tüchersfeld/Pottenstein, Bavaria.

The LBW is a week-long event that takes place in a different European country each summer, drawing together

to celebrate. Several hikes and excursions, the traditional potluck (including the competition "New Zealand pancakes vs. Austrian Palatschinken"), beer and Schnitzel tastings, and a visit to the first LBW location (Figure 1) happened during the week.

Many hikers reminisced about previous LBWs: "Do you remember how we sat under a gazebo with a couple of desktop PCs next to a van in the rain trying not to get the hardware wet?" "No, but do you remember how we drank the brewery in Coniston dry?" "Yes, but their beer was better than the peach beer we had in Belgium!" And so on ...

Much has changed over the past 10 years. First there were desktops, then laptops, and now the geeks are hacking on netbooks or mobile phones. Digital cameras were pretty rare during the first events, and Linux on laptops was a real challenge. Also, the geeks no longer have to build antennas on rooftops or cow meadows for wireless service, in that many areas now provide fast (wireless) Internet access.

To The Next Ten!

Something that hasn't changed in the last 10 years is the spirit of the event: Friends from around the world get together to have a good time. The fact that eight people from the first LBW are still attending the event (Figure 2) speaks for itself: The LBW is about friendship and community, and I'm happy to be a part of it. ■

INFO

- [1] The Linux Beer Hike:
<http://www.linuxbierwanderung.org/>
- [2] City of Helmbrechts:
<http://www.stadt-helmbrechts.de/>