

Duisburg harbour – The door to the world

Statement on cruise vessel

0.20

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome on board the Rheinfels. My name is Rolf Karmineke. On behalf of the crew members and myself, I would like to warmly welcome you and take you on a small two hour cruise trip round Duisburg – Ruhrort harbour. It would not be a problem to cruise round the harbour for eight hours.

0.40

For more than thirty years, the Duisburg – Ruhrort harbour was the work place of Rolf Karmineke. Today he's the skipper of his own cruise vessel.

Statement on Cruise vessel

0.50

On the left is the Samira, a huge Rhein waterway ship. These ships sail from Duisburg to different places, ten to fifteen times a day. These ships make ports of call in the entire North Sea, the Baltic, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Atlantic coast and all of Africa

Statement Rolf Karmineke

1.13

The visitors are interested in Industrial culture, to see cargo loading. To see oncoming ships. To know where they come from and where they're sailing to. We use telecommunications to get this information, then tell the passengers what they want to know.

1.30

The harbour connects the Ruhr area, Germany's largest industrial region with the rest of the world. Duisburg is located in the lowland Rhine area at the confluence of the Rhine and Ruhr. For past centuries the location was

an ideal place for product transportation, trade and ship building. The place – 250 kilometres from the coast was Europe's biggest inland waterway port. Today, there are 21 port basins and almost 40 kilometres of river embankment. The vessels sail to Sweden and Finland, to Italy, Latvia and Greece.

2.17

The small town of Ruhrort is the very heart of the harbour. Today, Ruhrort belongs to Duisburg, the neighbouring city. Harbour life, always characterised this place. In early days, wharfs were built, sail makers and shipping companies moved in.

2.31

This illustration is more than three hundred years old. It shows a trading boat, in front of Ruhrort. The traders and business men originally constructed a loading bay on the banks of the Rhine. However, the recurring high water levels made the place hazardous.

2.48

As a result, they built at the turn of the nineteenth century a secure inland harbour.

2.53

Today, it's not easy to find remnants of the old harbour. Only a small section of the original structure remains. In those days, ships could not do a reverse manoeuvre. Subsequently, the harbour was constructed with a ring like formation. Part of the original loading machines are still found in the area. From the beginning, the harbour was continuously enlarged and rebuilt. There was always something happening.

3.26

With the introduction of colonial products, began the history of the Haniel family. In the middle of the eighteenth century they received approval from the Kaiser to build a storage and packing depot.

3.38

Today the Haniel group use this building as a museum. Tea and tobacco used to fill the storage facilities.

Statement Weber – Brosamer

3.47

It had to be specially constructed so it could hold heavy products. That is how the house was built.

3.54

During the heyday of the Ruhr region, Haniel quickly became one of the biggest enterprises.

Statement Weber – Brosamer

4.01

Iron ore came, Haniel shipped iron produce to the West. Then came coal. Even in the 18th century coal was here. It rose to become the main business of the nineteenth century.

4.15

Every day water levels of the harbour along the Rhine are noted, even though it has been long ago since sailors came in this office. The rise of the company in the nineteenth century can be seen when looking at the ledgers and yearbooks. Haniel, again and again established new business relationships between industry, trade and mining. Many coal barges sailed up and down the Rhine on behalf of the company.

Statement Weber - Brosamer

4.45

We can see that on 29th December 1895, Hillebrandt with some tons of coal of a certain quality set sail for a destination. The harbour was of course of central importance for the Haniel business. The harbour was a huge loading area for coal from the Ruhr region and the Haniel family owned in the Ruhr area a lot of collieries, huge collieries. Well known was the Zollverein colliery.

Every day, tons of coal arrived, by train at the harbour in Ruhrort. It was loaded into barges which then left on another day, pulled by tug boat, going up and down the Rhine. Taking cargo to mountains and valleys. The whole of the Rhine area got coal from Ruhrort. From Basle to Rotterdam too. And Haniel was of course in the thick of business.

5.47

Immortalised on canvas: The blast furnace of the families own steel works and steamships on the Rhine – characterised by the firms colours of black, white and green.

5.55

The harbour grew rapidly. Up to the beginning of the twentieth century new harbour basins were constructed, railway tracks were laid, canals and approaching roads were built.

6.07

Ruhrort harbour in 1926. Iron for the steel industry, wood for the construction of collieries and of course coal the main freight product. In those days, huge steam tugs towed non motorised barges. The cities of the Ruhr area and their collieries were interlinked through the canal system and train network, to the harbour.

6.35

The meeting point for sailors from Belgium, Germany and Holland was the maritime shipping exchange, which was found at the entrance to the harbour. This was where brokers, ship owners and their customers traded cargo goods or agreed tariff prices with tug boat owners.

Statement Marlies Diepenbrock during cruise

6.51

Then came the guild and the ship people

6.54

At the very place of the old shipping exchange Marlies Diepenbrock talks during a guided tour, about these times. Her late husband was for many years the skipper of a vessel. He wrote with his wife about the history of the place.

Statement Marlies Diepenbrock (During guided tour)

..but you always did your trade in the inns around here: Hey, last time I got a few guilders for a ton , didn't I ? Here was really the centre of activity for Ruhrort and for shipping.

7.21

Marlies Diepenbrock still knows a lot of stories from the times when Ruhrort was a thriving and bustling shipping city.

Statement Marlies Diepenbrock

7.29

We had grocery owners who opened all night. The sailors came and rang at whatever time they wished.

The Sailors always wore their ship caps so you saw where they came from. If they were Belgian or Dutch. There is for example a unique language that has a Belgium and Dutch linguistic origin called Ruhrsch-

Platt. And you had many nationalities here. They lived peacefully together and helped each other.

My husband was born here. Over there is the Luftball, the original sailors tavern as all ships moored here. Fishermen also came. Grand pa had fishing rights from here to Emmerich. My husband was associated through and through with shipping and Ruhrort.

And when you sit here and see ships sail by you really should know the type of vessel they are. And I wanted to learn about the different ships. If it's a motorised ship with such and such a length. How wide she is and where she comes from. What type of engine does she have? I could after a time recognise the ship by it's sound. Like other people know cars by the sound of it's engine. I could do the same with ships.

8.58

In Duisburg, Marlies Diepenbrock also experienced the second world war. Ruhr armament factories were intensively targeted by allied bombers. The heaviest bombardment of Duisburg was a weekend in October 1944. The city was reduced to rubble, the harbour basin was destroyed, the traffic routes were cut.

Statement Marlies Diepenbrock

9.24

I can still remember the destruction of the bridge. Ships lay in the harbour. A frightening sight of ships lying there submerged under water. Only steam ship funnels could be seen

9.41

10 years later the destroyed Rhine bridge in Ruhrort was reconstructed. But not all the war damage was cleared up. The Ruhr area, with its steel works and collieries manifested economic development in the young

German Republic. The steel used for the rebuilding of the bridge came as always from Duisburg factories.

Statement archive film "Hütten und Hafen"

10.01

Here beats the heart of the European economy. Important raw material like coal and iron, finished products and goods pass through this lively traffic junction.

Statement archive film 2 „Hier und Heute“

The number one activity of Duisburg harbour is coal loading. On a daily basis seven hundred coal wagons move along the tracks. Before the war 70 % of coal distribution and loading was done here. Today only half that number is distributed. This happened because of the second world war and structural change in West German industry. Nevertheless, Duisburg is still the biggest collecting point for Ruhr coal.

From coal to oil. In the very places, where coal in earlier days was piled up, are now in the post war years oil terminals. They have shot up like mushrooms. Every year German industry needs more oil which must be safely kept and in an inexpensive place for transportation. The Duisburger went with the times and built an oil facility in their harbour.

11.15

In early time Walter Schröder was a helmsman on a tanker. Accompanied by his wife he still visits the harbour. With his bargeman apprenticeship he followed family tradition.

Statement Walter Schröder

11.26

My father was a sailor, two brothers of my mother were sailors. That's how I got involved with sailing. Also, when I was younger, I sailed during

holidays with my uncle. So it was sort of inevitable that I would one day sail the inland waterways.

Then I applied for a job with a Duisburg firm. I wrote on the application form the ship I wanted to sail with. The head of personnel would later always laugh a lot about that.

The Klökner shipping firm had a whole fleet with Rhine-Ruhr numbers. Rhine-Ruhr 15 and Rhine Ruhr 14 were the strongest and very quick. I heard that from a colleague. So I sent in my application form and ended up on Rhine-Ruhr 15.

Here was the intersection. Yes, a sort of nerve centre. I'm not sure about the number of firms who have headquarters or office branches here in Duisburg. A lot of money was made here, at one time in mining, then good money was made with shipping. So it was an attractive place.

Statement archive film

As over 300 ships pass under the Ruhrort – Homberg Rhine bridge, on the way to the harbour entrance, it's not difficult to figure out how many people work in the harbour. But for them the harbour is not just a place of work. It's often a second home. They are people who work hard never asking for praise.

Statement Walter Schröder

I got to see a bit of the romantic period. 56' when I began sailing, when there were steam ships, side wheel steam tug boats still sailed. Those huge things with wheels on the side with a lot of steam and thick smoke and so on. Otherwise it's really hard work and stress because of long day time journeys. An 18 hour voyage was nothing unusual. You did that in those times. There were no laws that forbade it. You could theoretically sail day and night, which led to exploitation. It was pretty hard.

13.44

Still today, the families live alternately on land and on board ship. 1965
Walter Schröder fell in love. Of course, with the daughter of a sailor.

Statement Walter Schröder

13.55

When I got married, they came on board. My wife and even my son, when he was a baby. Although I must say that in '69 I moved to dry land. That is what happens with sailing, when the children reach school age you have a new perspective. Either the wife goes on land and cares for the child during the schooling period and returns back some time later. After 10, 12 years she then comes back on board. Or you can send the child to a nautical boarding school. We thought about both outcomes. So I decided to look for a job on land and the three of us ended up there.

14.37

Walter Schröder stayed loyal to shipping. He began as a harbour administrator. Later, as a harbour master, he supervised the incoming and outgoing cargo. That year, his new employer proudly announced.

Statement Archive film

As the biggest and largest is how Duisburg harbour sees itself. With 39,2 million tons of goods. annually transported it's firmly placed at the top of the German harbour list. It exceeded, the next biggest harbour Hamburg, by more than 1 million tons.

15.05

From the fifties, coal no longer played in the harbour a major role. At the end of the sixties coal was only in third place as the most traded commodity. The emphasis changed, new container terminals for liquid gas

and oil were built. Much room was needed for scrap and iron. It was what the steel industry required.

15.25

"You'll never be unemployed in this place" thought Rolf Karmineke when he came to Duisburg at the end of the sixties. As a twenty three year old, the present director of the Atlas shipping company navigated tugs and ships throughout Europe. In those days as an employee of a shipping company.

15.44 Statement Rolf Karmineke

In 1977 I went on land. I was seven years a captain. In 1980 I moved to the Haniel shipping company and was in charge of personnel management. As an authorized agent, I chose where personnel work . We actually employed two hundred and eighty people.

16.04

For many shipping companies bad times started. Ship owners were forced to stop business. The freight costs sank. After the coal crisis, the Ruhr area had to cope with the steel industry crisis. German inland waterways had to cope with foreign competition. Many firms sent their personnel to low cost countries. Also Haniel had to disband their shipping firm.

16.30

Only 'Franz Haniel 14' sails today, representing the company on behalf of their clients. The firms head quarters are still in Ruhrort, the company now operates worldwide in other areas. The fleet rich in tradition can still use the firms flag, but they now belong to another shipping company.

Statement Rolf Karmineke

16.49

After years of making people redundant, I finally said to myself, I'll make myself self employed and make something of it. I started with six

employees who worked with Haniel to set up my own business. I took them with me, the secretary also followed. So our firm operated from 1994. It really wasn't that easy.

17.16

Opposite the harbour administrative buildings are the former Haniel premises. In times gone by, ships were repaired here. Rolf Karmineke found office rooms for Atlas shipping company. Today, he owns three cruise ships which do trips in the entire Ruhr area.

On top of that he teaches radio and radar courses to would be captains. For him Haniel and the harbour belongs to the past.

Statement Rolf Karmineke

17.42

Fifty ship propellers were left here. Ships had on board at least one spare propeller and one in this place, in reserve. All this is unfortunately a thing of the past. To look at this place brings tears to my eyes. It's a shame, a real pity.

18.13

Songs of praise emanating from the southern harbour. For over thirty years, Werner Paquet, the Catholic ship priest sails through Ruhrort harbour on the St. Nicholas. The small sailor who awaits baptism is called Miguel. His father was also a skipper and got to know Werner Paquet through a religion lesson in maritime school. The association with his ex teacher has continued.

Statement at baptism

18.42

Miguel, I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

18.56

Before he began work as a ships priest Werner Paquet had nothing to do with inland water vessels and the harbour, although he's a born and bred Duisburger.

Statement Werner Paquet

19.06

Here was a bridge that led to the Lower Rhine. I knew that, but otherwise I had nothing to do with the harbour or sailing. My father was an engineer with Mannesmann [steel industry]. A south Duisburger.

19.19

Twice a week Werner Paquet sails round the harbour with his helmsman Karl Westphal. He goes on board other vessels, gets into conversation, checks on young sailors or families.

Statement Situation

Can I come aboard?

19.37

Werner Paquet knows most of the vessels that are berthed in the harbour. Most of them visit Duisburg regularly. As people can't visit him in church, he meets them. The sailors hardly ever enter into a conversation with him about God and religious belief. Instead, Werner Paquet hears a lot about their every day life and problems.

Statement Werner Paquet

20.04

The major concern of the sailors are weather related, like the water level, storms, the rain. Then it's the economic situation. The freight charges are a big worry so are accidents. The family play an important function and

relationships also the relationship the crew have with each other and with their company.

20.32

Through years of experience, Werner Paquet learned that it's difficult to offer practical help and it is not really always wanted. Sometimes the priest visits the sick or arranges a meeting with the authorities. But this happens only occasionally.

Statement Werner Paquet

20.47

Most of it is about listening but you shouldn't forget that the truth can hurt.

20.58

Sometimes, when on holiday the ships priest sails long voyagers with cargo vessels. Then he has more time to talk with sailors about the pressure to meet deadlines and how the job has changed. In the harbour, his visits are not always welcomed.

Statement situation

It's an obvious word

Yes,

Bye bye

Statement Werner Paquet

The ship business has got quicker, docking times have shortened. The harbour offers quick cargo loading and unloading. It's a pressure that gets on your nerves and this pressure has certainly increased.

21.38

Coal and steel are steadily losing importance for the Ruhr area economy. Container ships have in most cases replaced the iron and coal freight vessels. The harbour has changed.

Statement Rolf Karmineke

21.49

Dramatic. About six years ago, we unloaded here on the other side of the embankment, seven million tons of ore which was then taken by railroad to Hattingen an der Ruhr, to Dillingen. And Dortmund and Hattingen stopped steel production. For Dillingen it wasn't any more worth it and seven million tons of ore is a real big amount. And when you want to change a harbour into a modern logistical enterprise, it's difficult as the harbour director always has to fight for his workers jobs. Harbour basins were filled with slag heaps from the mining industry so that new industrial companies could find bigger grounds. Not so much docking space is needed as the loading is done quicker, much quicker.

22.42

The area is now needed for oil, chemicals, steel and coal. Whereas coal was originally shipped from the region it's now imported as freight cargo from abroad.

Since 1990 Duisburg has a free-trade harbour. The first of it's kind without customs duties to lie on an inland waterway.

The logistic operators who store goods at the harbour for unloading and transportation need more and more space. When Walter Schröder was the harbour master, he experienced all these changes.

Statement Schröder

23.11

In earlier days you had time for a chat . Today however you hardly have time to shop. Foodstuffs are brought aboard so that the ship after loading, can quickly set sail.

23.29

Logport is a new area. At the centre of this new project are the amalgamation of three transport systems: Shipping, railway and roads. It was in 1993 at this place that the blast furnaces of the Krupp iron and steel works Rheinhausen, ceased to operate. A decision, that cost many jobs. The closure was vigorously contested. Today, a big piece of land and hope of new jobs awaits the arrival of new companies from the haulage and logistic business sectors.

23.59

Further in the south, a very different development occurred. The old silos and wind mills remind us that in earlier days timber and grain were transshipped. In those days this Duisburger inner harbour was called "The breadbasket of the Ruhr area".

For some years now this part of the harbour has a culture and promenade section. The development plan for the reconstruction was designed by Sir Norman Foster at the beginning of the nineties. Museums, galleries and offices have moved there.

24.32

Today architects work in the old Werhahn mill. The firm is constructing industrial buildings and found this place in the former granary to be very attractive.

Statement Lompa

24.34

We have a lot of clients from the Rhine and the Ruhr region. You could also say that Duisburg is the meeting point of both areas. We of course also searched for an idea which had a vision for the future. We saw the potential of the area and we obviously saw that many possibilities were open for employers and contractors. We have an infrastructure where you can go and eat and go shopping. For us, it turned out to be the ideal place.

25.17

In early days only workers had access to the harbour and waterways. Now citizens of Duisburger live there.

Statement Lompa

I live in the harbour, about a 100 metres from the office. I think it's a classy area. The canal system that was constructed here ensures that the place is exceptionally good to live in. And there's an added advantage, which is that in the evening and at weekends, a lot is happening. You can always have a beer, after work. There's a lot you can do during the weekend.

25.49

Culture, service industries and leisure activity – with the development of this part of the harbour Duisburg followed a trend that's seen in other European ports. New life brought into areas that no more, have industrial use.

26.06

In contrast the view from the Rhine bridge of the Ruhrort harbour entrance hasn't changed. The amount of cargo, loading and unloading is still of importance for the harbour. It's true that a lot less ships sail into

the harbour but they're on the other hand bigger and better. And most of them don't stay for long. It's quiet in the old shipping town of Ruhrort.

Statement Diepenbrock

26.28

Occasionally you meet a sailor who was often here, but fewer now come here and stay. Most move on. Earlier you could send light signals from your window. Memories are best brought back when you happen to come across at your table in the pub, a fellow sailor from the waterways,. But really, it's all gone very quiet. Unfortunately, unfortunately.

26.55

On the old houses, pictures and symbols are a reminder about the busy harbour life of days gone by.

Sound church service

Lord, let us celebrate without hindrance

27.04

Once a year the Ruhrorter celebrate their harbour festival. Tradition is revived. The representatives from the shipping organisations get flags out and dress in their uniforms. It is for Marlies Diepenbrock one of the annual highlights in her calendar. The whole of Ruhrort meet at the maritime shipping exchange. To begin with, the priest Werner Paquet reminds those present that the modern day sailor has more to fight than just structural change.

Statement church service

We pray to you that you accompany the barge crews and sailors on their journey. And that you spread your hand of protection over them, when you try to calm the elements. We pray for your help.

27.40

After this sermon, it's off to the fairground, beer halls and rides. The sightseeing cruiser and Rolf Karminke's Rheinfels have been spruced up. And late into the night the old romantic atmosphere of the harbour returns again.