

## Bouillon, Belgium

# LINUX BEER HIKE 2001

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**The Linux Beer Hike took place at Bouillon in Belgium this year. This might not seem like an obvious place to go to but the facilities and scenery certainly make up for this.**

Coupled with six days of sun and only two days of rain it made this year's event one of the best so far. A large crowd of people assembled over at the Archeoscope at Bouillon. Much beer was consumed and most were doing their level best to keep up with everyone else. The 10th anniversary of Linux was celebrated in some style. If only Linus Torvalds could have been there with us.

The Friday and Saturday at the beginning of the week saw a whole army of geeks arrive in Bouillon from all over the world. In the seven days that the Beer Hike took place much of the local area was covered on foot and much of the local beer was consumed by the beer-crazed fans of da penguin. The author himself was able to find a "leettle more room for ze local Belgian ospitalite" even after a whole seven days of partying (mostly with the help of local people who did not give in even after midnight). At the start of the week we had to assemble a network which included the cluster and the



wireless link up to the campsite. The latter proved to be something of a pain to set up and dragged on into Monday. People were seen standing around in groups discussing the difficulties and what to do next. As well as this, the cluster kind of clustered on and the rest of us shoved off for more beer which at eight per cent volume was the kind of thing that shouldn't be missed out on. One of the first social events was over at the bar next to the campsite. Most people turned up and the first overly large quantity of beer was consumed. The Beer Hike isn't only about beer – there are also many events organised for everyone during the seven days that it runs. Willem Konyngberg started this off with his presentation which asked how we make Linux better and why does it need to be so much like a Microsoft product when there's no real need for it. He says that he wanted to raise a few eyebrows and question current thinking about computers and software in general. The assembled crowd loved it and gave him a big round of applause.

On Sunday evening after a successful day of hacking at the keyboard most of us went on the torch-lit tour of the castle. This was something of a gem from beginning to end. Very touristy but also well thought out and not to be missed. It was all about how the crusade was led from the local castle in ancient times and how the political shape of Europe was changed as a result. It's well worth going to Bouillon just for this trip alone. The tour was organised by Juergen Braukman. We would all like to thank him for his efforts.

On Monday, we had Writing PHP Extensions from Harmutz Holzgraefe and IP Networking from Andy Fletcher – both proved to be really popular. At about the same time the trip round le Caves de Han-sur-Lesse took place. Most people said that they enjoyed it. There were more talks and presentations in the afternoon for those of us who could just about manage to hold our heads from the night before.

On Tuesday Lance Davis from UKLinux.net took



Bouillon town



### Hacking away

a group of people out for the rail hike. Everyone who went said it was really good. I saw Lance when he came back. He looked about 10 years younger and smiled all the time that I talked to him. Wednesday turned out to be the Perl and Apache day. By now we were all suffering the effects of the beer and the heat. Some of us just dozed off. Thursday and Friday turned out to be the rainy days when Brad Knowles took people along to two very famous Abbeys to look at the Chimay brewery and some of the others. Brad was distracted by others on Thursday morning. They left an hour late and were only able to see the grounds of the Abbey and not the brewery. Thursday was Trappiste Monasteries, Chimay and Friday was Trappiste Monasteries, Abbaye D'Orval. Everyone said they enjoyed it though and more beer was consumed on Thursday night. Brad also gave us an Introduction to Basic DNS Administration on the last Friday of the week which was fascinating from beginning to end and lead to some well informed discussion afterward. Later on he gave us Design and Implementation of Highly Scalable Email Systems. He's given this talk in many places and it never gets to be boring or the same whenever he presents it. I think that Brad probably did more for the beer hike than we realised at the time.

One of the little-noticed highlights of the week, other than the construction of the internal LAN and cluster, was the installation of QPE into an iPAQ Compaq palmtop.



Alban Pearce from Salford University and myself spent a whole six days installing and configuring his iPAQ. It was well worth it. The talk that he gave about how to install such a beastie with a cut down version of Debian GNU/Linux was brilliant and the demo MPEG sent across the LAN to his handheld iPAQ finished everyone as once again Bill Gates got the same custard pie in the face. He even replayed it a few times due to popular request. John Hearn helped him with the presentation. Together they make a fine team. Have a look on the Net for the familiar project if you want to know more.

The final discussion on Saturday afternoon, after clearing up, was all about where to go next year. There have been many suggestions. The Saturday night session can only be described as head banging. The venue was the Cafe Baratin and much piano music was heard while some of us browsed some very nice oil paintings that had been produced by a local artist. Excellent food as well. The locals thought we were great and they want us back again.

All of us are waiting to find out what comes next year. If you want to join in with the rest of us please do subscribe to the Linux Beer Hike list. You can join the list by sending mail to [majordomo@lists.cyberware.co.uk](mailto:majordomo@lists.cyberware.co.uk) with the word "subscribe" somewhere in the message.

We do hope that you will all be able to come along to the next one. ■  
Richard is Chairman and Organiser for Sheffield Linux User's Group – you can view their website at <http://www.shelflug.co.uk>

### Info

Linux Beer Hike  
<http://bw2001.ynfonatic.de/>  
 Webcam site  
<http://killefiz.de/bw/online/ind ex.html>  
 The Familiar Project  
<http://familiar.handhelds.org/>  
 UK Linux  
<http://www.uklinux.net>