

Lennestadt — The Town That's Not Really There

Lennestadt poses a challenge to some people. After all, how do you visit a town that's not really there? Well, some people just bristle and point out that it is there. See, right there, on the map. Yet rolling into town you will soon know exactly what I mean... it's not there.

Things that *are* there: A lovely shrine to a road saint, splendidly preserved half timber houses, miles of walking and biking trails. A town of Lennestadt? No.

The shrine, Madonna of the Road, lies on the Bundesstraße 55 between Oedingen and Eshloe. The half timber houses are in Altenhundem. The miles of trails snake between Habbecke, Altenhundem, Elspe, Theten and Sporke, just to name a few of the 40 communities hiding behind the banner of Lennestadt.

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So what's the story? Well, in 2009 Lennestadt will celebrate its 40th anniversary of being founded by the town fathers of those 40 communities. Many are within sight of each other, and intrepid hikers can hit a dozen in a day. The communities bonded to support growth in their metalworking and mining industries, as well as pooling resources to fund arts and educational programs.

An all-town festival is hosted annually in August and lasts several days, and it's sponsored at the same time as the Sauerland Street Musician Festival to maximize events and visitor traffic.

The Lennestadt Town Museum (in Grevenbrück) explains it all in words and pictures. The exhibits try to make a complex local situation simple, without poking too much fun at the people who show up to see the town, only to find the hamlets. Each has it's own charms, like the churches in Altenhundem, the Peperburg castle ruins, and mining museums.

By seeing the sum of it's parts, you can see the one whole Lennestadt... even if it's not really there! ;-)