

Cheese, clogs and ... liquid nitrogen? Impressions from a cryonics training in the Netherlands

By Torsten Nahm

When Cryonics UK announced that they would do a road show and training session in 2015 in mainland Europe, we got very excited. Cryonics UK organizes sessions in UK four times a year, and members of our group, Cryonics Germany, had been going there every once in a while for the last few years. But logistics are much easier when there is no air travel involved, so we looked forward to not only getting hands-on training from the experienced folks from Cryonics UK, but also brought along the full set of our equipment. This way, we could show what we had, and get instructions and feedback on our kit.

The training took place on the weekend of November 14 and 15 in the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands, and was graciously hosted by the Dutch Cryonics Organization (DCO). The Dutch guys did a fantastic job at organizing the meeting. We had a nice location, a spacious room where we could set up and train, and a great dinner on Saturday evening.

All in all, 19 cryonicists from four different countries joined. There were 5 members from Cryonics UK (with Tim Gibson as always doing a fabulous job with leading the meeting and the training sessions), 7 members from DCO (with Jappie Hoekstra as main organizer), and 5 members from Cryonics Germany. We were especially pleased that 2 members of CryoSuisse, the newly founded Swiss cryonics organization, were present as well, including their president Patrick Burgermeister.

The training sessions covered two full days, and included setting up the ice bath, the infusion of medications, operating the thumper and setting up the perfusion, as well as a summary / walk-through of a whole case, from preparation to shipping. Cryonics UK had brought along their fully equipped ambulance, which is always great to see (have a look at their website at cryonics-uk.org), and their training dummies and materials.

It was the first time the ambulance had been across the channel, and so this was also a good testing case for a deployment to mainland Europe. If a case arises in Germany, we will operate in joint fashion: Cryonics UK will handle the case and come over in their ambulance, and our volunteers will act as local liaisons to the hospital and doctors, as well as helping with procedures and equipment. While we are equipped to handle a case by ourselves on a minimal basis, the UK team has much more equipment and experience. For this reason, their cooperation is vital to us, and we are very grateful for their continued support (for example, our equipment is to a major part based on their inventory lists).

Apart from the training sessions, we also had detailed discussions of the last two cryonics cases in the UK (one in 2014 and one in 2015, which members from Germany had joined in for both cases), practical experiences and lessons learned. An important part of any case is securing the cooperation of hospital staff and doctors. Cryonics UK does a great job here, which has allowed them to initiate cooling quickly, often within minutes of cessation of heartbeat.

The training sessions were intense, and some of our newer members felt their heads spinning from all the information. But from my experience, with the second and third training the equipment and steps become more familiar and things falls into place. And luckily, there was time to relax as well. When we weren't in session, we had lots of fun getting to know each other, and discussing cryonics, life and everything else.

As a nice bonus, we were also pleased to take into our possession two LUCAS-1 thumpers. Their

story serves as a neat example for our well-functioning cooperation in Europe: We had gotten a hint from our friends at KryoFIN (the Finnish cryonics group) that some used, inexpensive LUCAS devices were on sale on Ebay. We procured two for a really good price (less than \$300 each), but the supplier could only ship to the UK. So Cryonics UK was kind enough to have them delivered to their place, and bring them to Utrecht for us. They are now at our main hub in Dresden.

Altogether, the weekend in Utrecht was fun and productive, and I really liked the spirit of openness, enthusiasm and shared aspirations. It was great to see that cryonics is growing healthily in Europe. Where a decade ago there was (almost) only Cryonics UK, we now have strong organizations in many European countries. There was actually quite a bit of talk of forming a European Cryonics Organization to coordinate our efforts. I certainly feel the time for this is coming, and I am pleased and proud to see cryonics developing so well here on this side of the Atlantic.

Thanks again to Cryonics UK and the DCO for making this wonderful meeting happen. This was the first, but certainly not the last pan-European training weekend. Stay tuned!

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Picture:



Caption: Tim (left) giving instructions as Torsten (right) works on the meds tubing