

YELLOW FEVER IN THE PETRUSSE

Community: How thousands of plastic yellow ducks and a soggy day out have helped kids in Ghana, Romania and Rwanda.



The 14th annual Duck Race on Saturday



Photo(s) : Mike Zenari

It is the only time of the year people are allowed to throw stuff into the Petrusse river. Of course the stuff is several thousand plastic duckies and the people are members of the **Luxembourg Round Table**, a community service group. The annual Duck Race was held under cloudy skies on Saturday.

Each duck had a "godparent" who, based on how their duckling fared in the race, could win one of 34 prizes, including a camera, a cruise or a new Citroën car. There was also plenty of local fare to sample along the riverbanks. Proceeds from this year's event go to three children's charities: **Little Sequoia**, which supports schools in Rwanda, **Shalom Orphanage** in Ghana, and **Study Help**, which helps bright students continue their studies in Romania.

The 14th edition was organised by all 150 or so members of the Luxembourg Round Table, said one of the volunteers, Lars Goslings, a lawyer. The outfit "brings together a huge amount of young professionals" under the age of 40 and its good works are "really something to be proud of," he said. "I was lucky to have been invited" to join the group.

Last year's race netted around €53,000 in proceeds but organisers expect this year's tally, when the final figure is tabulated, will be lower. "It will be much less because of the weather." Last year at 3pm "it would have taken ten minutes to walk" 10m in the food patio, he said, pointing to a much thinner crowd. The race is held on what is typically the "first weekend of good weather", drawing a big crowd to one of first outdoor events of the year.

Unique event

"It's a shame about the weather," agreed Denis, who found a dry spot near the start line: directly under the Viaduct bridge. He attended for the first time after reading about the Duck Race in **City magazine**. He had expected a bigger crowd but was not disappointed after seeing the flotilla of ducks stream by.

"I lived in Germany for the [previous] five years and I hadn't heard about anything like this before," said another first timer, Divya, who moved to Luxembourg six months ago.

She came with Karthik, who said the event is "something not happening anywhere else" in the world. He has lived in Luxembourg for six years and bought ducks the four previous years. But "I never won" so this time he was "just watching".

Shortly before the starter gun fired at 3pm the group had sold roughly 12,000 "real" ducks (plus around 400 souvenir ducks to take home). The list of this year's lucky **prize winners** will be published on the **Duck Race website** on Tuesday.