

Trip report E.W. Dijkstra, München, 12-14 April 1984

[EWD885.html](#)

The moral of this trip report is: don't organize meetings on Friday the 13th, at least not in München. (Three years ago - see EWD790- we had a similar meeting on 19 May.) It was a 36-hour trip: on Thursday evening I left Eindhoven at 21:10, on Saturday morning I returned at 9:12, all courtesy Britannia Express. But for the Britannia Express it was still "out of season", which means that the 1st class sleeper is only included during the weekend. So, on the journey out, I used the 2nd class couchettes; I shared the compartment with two Germans, the berth was uncomfortable, and I did not sleep at all. On the way home, the weekend had started and I had a compartment in the sleeper, which was a good thing because the train was very crowded, the German Easter holiday having started with a discount weekend of the Deutsche Bundesbahn. As there was something wrong with a shock absorber between two carriages, it was not a smooth ride, but I was so tired that I did not notice it and slept until I was woken up by the passport control at the German/Dutch border. (On the way out, the German customs went through the train with a sniffing dog, undoubtedly for drug control.)

At 7:22 I was met by Herr Kuss and Manfred Broy; Fritz L. Bauer joined us a few minutes later and the four of us went to the Technical University München, where we made ourselves a breakfast from the rolls and milk we had bought on the way.

Around 8 o'clock we were joined by Tony Hoare, who had arrived by plane from Heathrow the previous evening. He also had hardly slept, but that was because he had been working on EWD880b. His efforts had been rewarding: the first thing he showed me was a simplification of my proof!

The day was spent at the selection of the participants for the next Marktoberdorf Summer School. We had to select 90 participants from 160 applications. More rolls were brought in by way of lunch, and thanks to the fact that we made it a non-stop meeting, we were finished in time for Tony to catch his return flight at 17:15. (On Sunday, Tony would be off to Minneapolis, where he had been asked to perform in a Distinguished Lecturer Series and to give a few further seminars; he would be back in Oxford before the end of the week. I could understand the choice of the organizers. At such occasions, the hospitality lavished on the Distinguished Speaker is always beyond reproach; nevertheless, the life of a Distinguished Speaker is a hard one.) The difficulty of the selection process is the comparison of letters of recommendation written by different people. It was very amusing (and sometimes amazing) to observe how much (and by what curious channels) we collectively knew about the candidates or their recommenders.

Afterwards Manfred, Fritz and I had a light dinner in town. Manfred then went his way and I

went with Fritz to his home in Grafrath until I had to go to catch my train. In Grafrath I had two surprises. The one was that I met the good old Alston S. Householder - nearly 80- , who was staying with the Bauers. The other one was when Fritz said "Did you know that I have a new grand piano?". I said "No" and walked into the next room to have a look and a try. Immediately I could fully understand Fritz's pride and joy: a 2.15 m Bösendorfer (just for the record: serial nr. 36392). I played Scarlatti and Mozart, but not wearing the proper glasses and already having had two glasses of white wine, I left it at that. It was a delightful instrument.

I had planned to sleep on my way back twice as fast as usually, but I did not make it: on Saturday afternoon I took a solid nap of a few hours.

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