

Round the World

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Introduction

Poor Waldemar Kuming was supposed to get a CHICON report from me: this is, I suppose, a little too late to serve his purposes.

We start on 12 August, 1982. I have a rather nifty round-the-world ticket which Robin Johnson has arranged, involving flights with Thai Airlines, Air Lanka, Sabena, American, and Air New Zealand. Jennifer is pregnant and will remain in Melbourne. *My* schedule is Eurocon, Silicon, and Chicon on successive weekends. I probably travelled further to get there than did any other attendee at Chicon. Please bear with me.

Travelling

The Thai Airlines leg was from Melbourne to Singapore, on Flight TG984, which seems to be the fag end of Flight TG983 from Bangkok. In Sydney we dropped off the ex-Bangkok passengers and took on a reasonable supply of outward-bound ones. I had managed to forget two important things when leaving: a supply of coins and a portable radio. I therefore bought a portable at Sydney Airport (\$21) and at about the same time began to regret the scheduling.

Originally, when I had booked the ticket, it had made a lot of sense to take a stopover in Switzerland. The Eurocon was to have been held in La-Chaux-des-Fonds, quite handy to Zurich or Basel, but then it was switched to Northwest Germany, near the Dutch border. Unfortunately my air ticket could not then be changed.

On my first night in Europe I was going to be sleeping in Hamburg, and Copenhagen or Frankfurt (other stopping points for Flight TG984) are each much closer to Hamburg than

is Zurich. But it was all too late, rather like the departure from Melbourne. We left Sydney on time at 1240.

The flight to Singapore lasted just over seven hours. It was pleasant enough, and the fact that it was in daylight meant that I could get a look at some of the islands I had failed to see on the 1979 flight.

By now Singapore had a large and flashy air terminal which is *mighty* big. In walking the kinds of distance you do in such a place I found myself talking to a German grandmother from Stuttgart who, like me, was changing to Air Lanka; she wanted to change her plans to include a stopover in Colombo.

She had had a run-around from the airline people in Sydney when she had tried to make the change there, and half-expected the same sorts of problems again. We eventually found the right queue, after trying several very long (and very wrong) ones. At the head of it she was assured that they would do their best, but that things were still a little uncertain as to detail. However, we both got seats on the Air Lanka Tristar we wanted.

I'd not been on a Tristar before, but Robin Johnson had assured me that they were pretty ace planes. That they may be, but the one from Singapore to Colombo that night didn't look too wonderful. I thought the food was good and the soft drinks more difficult to obtain than I could ever remember on any airlines (except for the various commuter airlines in Australia which operate without attendants).

When we arrived in Colombo I made the interesting discovery that Colombo Airport had a fairly small waiting lounge. Its size was about that of the lounges at Canberra, Australia, or Madison, Wisconsin. And there, just after midnight, Air Lanka rendezvoused its three Tristars.

The idea was, I gather, that this scheduling would minimise disorganisation for passengers who would have easy onward connections. That might make sense provided the shuffling of passengers did not take very long, but it took a long time, and for someone who arrived on the first of the three and departed on the last... when there was only just standing room... for several hours...

After I had been lounging about for an hour or so, a Sri Lankan traveller began talking to me. He had been working for the International Labor Organisation for about twenty years, and was now based in Geneva (a place I would have liked to include in my travels). He had worked in many countries, and was quite interested in telling me all about it.

It quickly became clear that he regarded the supply of electrical power as of great (if not first) importance in developing countries. He had been in Egypt from 1967 to 1970, and was very much impressed by that country's potential. He also felt that Zambia would have an assured future when the power of Victoria Falls was eventually harnessed.

In Sri Lanka the damming of the major river would be completed by 1984 and then Sri Lanka's power needs would be met. He felt that in the near future the smaller countries would have to begin to invest in agriculture rather than industry, and in this way they could gain power over the larger, industrialised, countries.

I mentioned the relative situations of New Zealand and Australia, and the fact that New

Zealand was much closer to his ideal than Australia was. Although he had spent a fair amount of time in the Asian region he had never been to Australia or New Zealand. We also discussed the use by the USSR of nuclear weapons to blast dams.

He warned me that we would be closely searched before boarding the plane, as a result of recent political disruptions in Sri Lanka, and suggested that we wait until most people had boarded. This we did.

(I had always travelled with Jennifer previously, except for lightning business trips to New Zealand and the United States of America, and this was the first time I was able to discover for myself just how true it was that you meet many more people when you travel alone.)

It is slightly uncomfortable to be frisked by gentlemen wearing machine guns, but all went well for me until they came upon the packet of white objects in my pocket.

'What these?'

'Oh, Koolmints. Have one. No, please do. Come to Australia and get more if you like them.'

It worked.

The next stop was Dubai, that place of the over-ornate air terminal. Over-ornate from the outside, that is. I had expected something quite extraordinary from the many photographs I had seen, but that expectation evaporates once you are inside and confronted with the usual rows of airline seats, bars, bazaar-style shops and plenty of security guards.

Dubai does not need so elaborate an air terminal as this, of course. The contrast with the surrounding landscape is strong, even at night when all one can see are the lights on the roads leading from the airport to, apparently, nothing.

This was the starting point for the continuation of the conversation with my Sri Lankan acquaintance. The question was what would happen to countries like Dubai when the oil runs out.

I thought that some of these countries might become quite dangerous in the last years of their oilrichness. He agreed, and cited the specific case of Libya, which was formerly dependent on Egypt for food and would, in all

probability, be in that situation again. Since Libya could have nuclear weapons any time it liked, the situation could become very dangerous.

He believed, on the other hand, that various countries (including Libya) could recover enough land from the desert to become self-supporting in agriculture. (But it is important here to consider his own biases. He, with his family, owns a large chunk of land and will benefit significantly from the dam development in Sri Lanka. He is also a major support for his extended family, and has to believe some things. However, during this period of two months' leave he had had to borrow his son's Renault 12, and managed to drive 6000 kilometres.)

The security check at Dubai was close, but by no means offensive. I slept for a few hours from Dubai. The ILO bloke had said that he would complain about the poor service on the flight so far, and things did pick up on the leg to Zurich.

I got talking to my neighbour and discovered that she was Gillian Klein, a South

African who had been living in the United Kingdom for about twenty years. She was editor of a magazine called *Multicultural Education*, a subject of passing interest to me, so we talked quite a lot.

As we were passing over Turkey she also suggested I look out the window. It was nearing dawn, and there was the horizon — a thin orange line, ruffled by hills, and above it a startlingly bright white Venus. I took a photograph, but don't need it for the memory; Venus from 30000 feet over near-desert is thoroughly unforgettable. We talked the rest of our way to Zurich.

Zurich

There I managed to get through Customs in less than twenty minutes. I tried to find an Air Lanka office to book my next flight but there wasn't one. After carrying suitcases up and down stairs I decided not to worry and go straight to the city.

Zurich is one of those immensely civilised places which has a railway station at the airport.

The train was quick and I got to the main station by 0900. I bought some Swiss francs and then organised some train tickets.

I reserved a seat from Zurich to Mönchengladbach for one week hence. I stored one of my two bags for a week and the second for a few hours.

At a railway bar I bought a Coke, and then wandered off down the Bahnhofstraße via the Tourist Office, emerging from which I helped a lady find hotel reservations. (Actually, Zurich being the place it is, she probably wasn't actually seeking a hotel reservation in the normal sense.)

The Bahnhofstraße is a fine wide street, with plenty of activity. Some pretty effective demonstrators from Iran, for example (50 Fr from me, anyway), and then past the statue of Pestalozzi (which was photographed by me).

As a concession towards duty I visited the Air Lanka office and did my forward booking from Zurich to London about two weeks hence. Then I continued my walk down the Bahnhofstraße, as far as the lake. (My intention had been to buy more food on the way back, but

Zurich is so fascinating that I found myself following a totally different path on my return.)

I sat for quite some time beside the lake (something I would happily do again, not for the contemplation of things to come, which I admit was an important part of my feelings on this fine morning, but for the sheer pleasure of it). But I wanted to do more than relax in Zurich, so it wasn't long before I was up and crossing one of the bridges across the Limmat via the Quai Bruecke, then climbing slowly along Roemistraße to the Kunsthaus.

The reason for my slow movement was not so much the gradient of the hill (even though it was more than a gentle slope) as the multiplicity of second-hand bookshops on the northern side of the street (the side I happened to be on). Travellers who are book collectors (or, as in my case, book readers) would do well to steer clear of areas with high book densities, since one cannot possibly do justice to these collections, at least in the way one would in one's own country. All that saved me from large expenditure was the fact that most of the books were in German.

By the time I got to the art gallery I was beginning to feel some pressure from the need to move along hurriedly — something I regret — and so paused only to take some photographs of the sculpture in the grounds (including a Rodin), rather than jog quickly around the interior, as had originally been my intention.

I dawdled back to the Limmat via back streets (mainly Kirchgaße) which twisted and turned around churches and more bookshops until, reaching the river, I turned upstream, towards the railway station. The dawdling seemed enjoyable but it has to be acknowledged that it is destructive to plans to do as much as one possibly can in a city; this is something to which I seem to be inclined in those cities I most like. I had been in Zurich for only a couple of hours, and already I was finding it difficult to contemplate leaving it, so that my actions oscillated between steps which hastened my departure (the rational me) and those which delayed it (the feeling me).

Along the Limmat I peered longingly at buildings I might never see again (except as I see them now, parts of the crowded memories

of a golden day), then crossed at the Muensterbruecke. Then, back on the western (and Bahnhof) side of the river I ambled back to the station, passing through many delightful squares and passing buildings deserving of so much more than my fleeting transient's flickering glance. And after two hours in Zurich it was time for a second Coke.

I was due to leave for Basel just before 1300, so I now had a bare two hours left in which to explore the Landesmuseum, which is just across the road (Limmatstraße) to the north of the Bahnhof. That visit, too, was rather rushed, but I did manage to see many of the parts I most hoped to see.

I was especially impressed by the large battle scene modelled in miniature at which one gazed through tiny telescopes mounted about the periphery of the exhibit, but also by the prehistoric exhibits generally, by the rooms preserved and/or recreated from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and by the display of historical scientific instruments.

By the time I was ready to leave there had been a change in the weather: through the

windows of the museum I had noticed people in the surrounding gardens running for shelter and fondly hoped that it would all be over. But the thunder and lightning which now followed meant that I was due to get at least a little wet.

Zurich-Basel (105 km)

But the station was, after all, just across the road, so I didn't get very wet, and had enough time up my sleeve to check out the shopping mall adjacent to the station, Shopville. I bought a light lunch — a ham roll and a Coke — and took the train to Basel.



Sixty-three minutes later we arrived at Basel, a city I knew rather well. I telephoned Jennifer's friend's home; a surly male voice answered and

then the telephone was quickly hung up. Since I had no time for more than a quick chat on the telephone this was no disaster. At the station I bought a Pepsi and a bar of chocolate. Chocolate is so good and cheap in Europe that it is almost by itself enough justification for living there. When the train arrived I was delighted to discover that no one else had reservations in the entire car (24 seats) which was one of those open-plan arrangements. I began to look forward to the trip north.

Basel-Hamburg (1097 km)

The trip north from Basel by train along the Rhine is one I've taken several times. But on this occasion it was a matter of going all the way to Hamburg, a much larger undertaking.

The first part of the journey — say as far as Freiburg — is very beautiful, and I tried once again to take photographs of the vineyards. By the time the train had reached Offenburg the clouds were returning, but they had departed by the time we reached Mannheim. Seventy-five minutes out of Basel, there were no more clouds and the interior lighting could be turned off.

From the railway station at Mannheim I could see plenty of trams (always exciting to me) which were similar in design to those in Zurich. Twice, between there and Hamburg, I nodded off, thus losing the opportunity to look at the German countryside (which had been so much part of my planning for this trip!), but I was sufficiently alert to buy a bockwurst and a Pepsi along the way. Just why a bockwurst bought in this way should taste so much better than any hot dog I had ever had anywhere isn't at all clear, but it did.

Hamburg

The train was ten minutes late when it pulled in to Hamburg's main rail station.

The whole station was undergoing extensive renovations, making it very difficult for me to find a telephone. Fortunately for me my contact, Tom Loock, had stayed at home a little longer to wait for my call, and he was ready to make arrangements to come to meet me.

But because of the redevelopment which was going on, and partly because (I suspect) I

was rather tired, we had some initial difficulties working out where to meet:

‘Can you see the big clock from where you are?’

‘From where I am I can’t see anything but scaffolding.’

And so on. But eventually:

‘There’s a small concourse overlooking the platforms: be there!’

So far as my bleary eyes could make out there were two concourses, and both looked pretty small. But by strolling to and fro between the two ends of the platform I finally made the connection with Tom, who presumably glowed with those special signs by which science fiction fans recognise one another.

We travelled by underground to Mundsburg and the pub at the British Centre where Elfie was waiting. This pub was also the base for the English Theatre of Hamburg, and naturally enough (for fans of *Minder*) there was Dave the barman.

The owner was named David, to make matters slightly confusing, and also there that night were a couple of actors for the next

production (*Tunnel Of Love*, due to start on 26 August 1982), Di Wilson and Paul Creighton. There was some conversation, but not much, and we left at about 0045 to walk back to Tom and Elfie’s apartment. It wasn’t very far, and the company, the surroundings, and the weather were all fine. But I had travelled rather a long way that day, and was only interested in going to sleep.

I dozed rather than slept and then ‘woke’ at about 1000.

Tom and I had a light breakfast and set off for the main city area by underground; I bought a day ticket for 5.50DM. We walked past the Amerikahaus where the Communist Party was staging a rather militant demonstration, and through the university to Wrage, a bookshop at which Tom occasionally works.

In there we checked over the stock, with Tom picking out things he thought I ought to consider buying. While most of the books were in German there was a small English-language section which didn’t, unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), have anything much of interest to me. Of the books Tom picked out I bought

none, since his advice was that I could get them more cheaply elsewhere; in particular, a week later at Eurocon.

That decided, we had had enough of Wrage and walked out the door, turned around, and walked promptly back in and began to study the books much more closely; while we had been inside, quite steady rain had set in.

Around and around the shelves and tables we went until the rain had eased to a drizzle. Or enough of a drizzle to encourage us to take the chance that the heavy rain had ceased (which it had).

Tom guided me to the main shopping area via a traffic-free walkway which was slightly elevated and at times passed through buildings.

My notes are inadequate to describe the walk, and in any case don't do justice to the care with which Tom worked to make sure that my short stay in Hamburg would enable me to see as much as possible.

The highlights, as I can now recall them, were the following:

From the walkway, Tom pointed out to me over to the right, as it were, a rather militaristic monument which had recently been trashed (red paint) by the demonstrators we had seen near the Amerikahaus. Tom would rather that this decoration were done away with. It was balanced(?) by a more admirable statue of Schiller over on the left.

Not much further along Tom took me into what seemed at first glance a fairly ordinary bookshop. Not so. This one specialised in music (specifically opera) and art. The collection on display was wonderful, and only the fact that anything I bought would have to be carried around the world prevented me from investing large sums (another factor, I guess, was the lack of large sums of money...). Amongst the cheaper and more attractive items was a poster *The Doors Of Hamburg* at about 20DM. And of other posters there were plenty.

In the middle of an old building I found myself in an ultra-modern (but McDonaldsy) shopping arcade. Tom knew the nooks and crannies of Hamburg, and made sure that I found out about at least some of them. Had a Coke.

While dodging around a shop we didn't particularly want to visit Tom took me aside to direct my attention to an art shop which had some works he particularly admired. I don't recall now the name of the artist Tom wanted me to take note of; it's all blotted out by my sight of a pile of the original editions of Gustav Klimt's fanzine, *Ver Sacrum*. As I recall, the price-tag was around 900DM, which I could have afforded had I spent no more money anywhere on the trip (an unlikely event), but I still think I did the wrong thing in deciding not to buy it. But this got us started talking about art, and led to Tom encouraging me strongly to do something I had half intended: go to the Documenta in Kassel.

We just failed to get to the Rathaus in time for a guided tour. But because Tom is a closet member of old-buildings fandom he made sure that I saw as many as possible.

Off the Jungfernstieg (a beautiful street which I later saw in the television version of *Smiley's People*), a most admirable street for walking. I bought some slide film for 17.50DM, a very reasonable price.

The highlight was the visit to the Kunsthaus, which got to me right from the start, with the magnificent stairway inside the front door. Amongst the painters I most remember works by Runge, Makart and (of course) Caspar David Friedrich. And Tom drew my attention to some works by Otto Dix which had just recently been removed from safe storage, having been politically unsuitable during the 1930s and 1940s.

Part of this wandering was shared with Elfie, and by 1500 we were ready for a meal. Out towards Landersbruecke we stopped at a small place called Pappa Leo's where Tom had

scampi, Elfie spaghetti and I scaloppine. I thought of ringing Melbourne at about this time, but the nearby telephones would accept only 1DM pieces, which would have made phoning a tedious business. By the time we got back to Landersbruecke it was too late. Perhaps this was because we stopped for an ice-cream on the way.

We took a bus back to the Loocks' apartment. A mid-afternoon nap was definitely called for, but by early evening we were off back to the pub at the British Centre, where we were to meet much the same people as on the previous night, except that Volker, a friend of Tom's who was going to Eurocon, was also there.

My prowess at darts has not previously been recorded in science fiction fandom for the most obvious of reasons, but Tom and I as a team managed to split four games against Paul and either of David or Volker. I dropped out early in the next game, and had a longish talk with David about his life in Australia.

Volker and I managed a conversation in broken English/mathematics (the latter being

his field of work now and mine a decade earlier). Also present that night was Klaus the yodeller, who burst into song (or yodelling) more frequently than at the drop of a hat. Klaus had not been able to advance his singing career as much as he had hoped in Hamburg, and was now thinking of trying to change his luck by moving to Berlin.

We walked back to the Loocks' at about 1330. This was an excellent time to telephone Melbourne and find out how Jenny was and report on my adventures to date. At the home telephone number I got a redirection message.

Now this was something we had planned. We had had a couple of nuisance calls in recent months, and the redirection was a notion we had to use either if there were any further calls or if Jennifer decided to visit her parents.

So I tried her parents and Jim Bryce told me that, although it was nothing to worry about, Jennifer was in hospital.

Since this was not much more than 48 hours after I had left Australia, and Jennifer had then seemed quite well, I was rather surprised. The further detail was that although there was no

risk, she was to have an operation the next day, and I could ring her at the hospital.

Naturally I was upset, and I am afraid that this turnabout also upset the Looocks, kind souls who had, after all, met me for the first time only 24 hours earlier. It was, of course, a dreadful night for me, and I inadvertently made it uncomfortable for the Looocks.

I hardly slept at all that night.

Next morning (Sunday, and gloomy) we set off for the Fischmarkt. It is very much the sort of place one should be enthusiastic about: full of life and action, crowded with people determined to enjoy themselves and to make others happy. The variety of stalls was much greater than the name would suggest, and there was always the Elbe to look at. But I was definitely mooching rather than enjoying myself.

By underground we went to the Reeperbahn but while this was more lively, even on a Sunday morning, than many a similar street, it didn't really compare with Amsterdam. We walked around, and then went back to the

Looocks'. Here we slept for a while, only to be awaked by a telephone call from Jennifer.

She had had a miscarriage, but was now well. Our overall plan for this period had been that, should anything happen, Jennifer was to take whatever steps she could to join me in Europe, then stay in England while I went on to the United States and Chicon. She talked enthusiastically about this.

We worked out that to allow enough planning time she should next contact me on the following Thursday (Australian time), in Paris. She would have all the flight details, and I would have obtained train timetables so that I could work out where we would meet up on the Friday (European time).

Things in Hamburg looked a little better now, even though the weather was becoming cloudy. Tom took me for an extended walk around the generally expensive houses near the Alster, then along the Alster itself, sometimes in the rain. We also stopped off for an American-style ice-cream sundae at Tom's favourite spot.

Now I felt at home and at ease. The worries which had been hanging over me ever since I

had left Australia, though now resolved in an unfortunate way, were at least behind me.

Back at the Loochs', Tom and I worked on the best way for me to fit in my next and very busy day (I had a very short-term EURAIL pass, and I was determined to get maximum value from it). After three nights of the easy life, sleeping in a bed, I would be ready for the real life again. By leaving early next morning (around 0900) I would be able to visit Kassel, Goslar, and Hannover that day (Monday), arriving in Munich on the Tuesday morning.

Hamburg-Kassel-Goslar-Hannover— Munich (353+149+724 km)

But I didn't leave on the 0845 train. Trains are so frequent, however, that I was able to catch a suitable one an hour later, thanks to Tom's vigilant scrutiny of train timetables.

Tom took me in to the railway station, perhaps to make sure that I finally did get away. It was still foggy as the train crossed the Elbe, but the day improved as it went along.

The train I took headed south through Hannover, but shortly thereafter (108 kilometres later) I had to change trains at Göttingen in order to take a short (about 70 kilometres) detour to Kassel. Between Hannover and Göttingen one travels fairly close to the Harz mountains, but in the afternoon I was to get much closer. To the east, then, this trip was one which involved for the most part gazing out onto forests and mountains, while to the west, on much flatter land, there were occasional lakes, towns, and castles. It was a fascinating mixture, and the farms gained my attention as much as anything else because they contrasted so strongly with Australian ones; there's not much that's green on an Australian farm in autumn.

At Göttingen, from the station, I peered about for the famous university, but all I could see was occasional important-looking buildings; I took a couple of photographs anyway.

I got to Kassel at about twenty past one in the afternoon. I was visiting Kassel mainly because *Documenta 7*, one in the series of modern art exhibitions held there every five

years or so, was running, but I quickly discovered that the city itself is well worth a visit.

While the railway station is small, it was a most welcoming place with a good news-stand, and I stashed my luggage in a locker and stepped out for the exhibition area, which was very well sign-posted. After crossing some major thoroughfares it was a delight to walk onto a pedestrian mall which sloped gently down towards the town centre. It was decorated in a modern style with a series of imaginative breakpoints — seats, steps, statues, small fountains — that did not interfere at all with one's progress.



There were, occasionally, shops which had decorations which I admired as well, but I was mainly interested in getting down to the exhibitions. Not that I was going in; I had already worked out that I would come back after the Eurocon, bringing Jennifer with me, so that this was but a reconnoitring mission.

This is a pretty hard stance to maintain when the area outside the main exhibition building (the Museum Fridericianum) is filled with a pile of stones put there by Joseph Beuys. The museum itself with the standard portico supported by six columns is



itself a quite impressive pile of stones, and I walked past it (after checking what the cost of a ticket would be) with some reluctance. I did buy the two-volume catalogue for 85DM. Turning back, I could see across acres of lawn to the city centre — one building apparently faced with aluminium, with trams running along the near boundary. (And above, some clouds were appearing in a semi-threatening way.)

I walked under a tunnel where the opposition artists were pleading their case, past a large theatre and down to the second site — the Orangerie, first built in the early



1700s

and, after its destruction during World War II, reconstructed by the state, being finished only a few years before. In front of the Orangerie

stretched vast gardens whose magnitude I never appreciated until I took a look at a map.

But I couldn't afford to dawdle: I had to make another trip of about 150 kilometres to Goslar, a small town I was most anxious to see, and I wanted to do it in daylight. So I took a few photos and scuttled back to the railway station and caught a train through Göttingen to Kreiensen.

Of Kreiensen I saw little but the railway station. Goslar lies on a line which branches off to the east from the main north-south line, and the main excitement seemed to be changing trains. I was to do so several times there, so it is just as well that over on the eastern side, overlooking the station, was a rather magnificent three-storeyed house which, come to think of it, loomed rather than overlooked.

The trip to Goslar doesn't take very long — 45 to 50 minutes on most days — for a journey which is, however, only 43 kilometres. This gives you a good chance to look at seemingly-undeveloped countryside at some leisure, and to pass through a small town (Bad Gandersheim) which looked like a wonderful

place to live, and not only because there was to be an opera performance in the town just after I passed through. The railway station is of elegant stone and great substance.



But most of the trip is through unadulterated countryside with villages separated by a couple of kilometres: easy walking distance, as some of the citizens demonstrated for those so lazy as to travel by train.

The Goslar railway station is less imposing, and somewhat more commercial.

One's immediate impression was of thronging tourist buses waiting to take passengers somewhere, while all I knew was

that I had to walk to the old town. There's not much that's old near the railway station.

I parked my luggage in a locker at the station, and set off in what looked a promising direction. This led alongside the railway line and, just as I was beginning to wonder which direction to pursue at a major crossroads, everything was resolved by the simple observation that everyone seemed to be walking in the same direction alongside a park, and then through increasingly crowded buildings whose age also increased.

Everywhere (or so it seemed) it was necessary to park cars close to the buildings, obscuring one's view of their footings. And then it got to the point at which the cars were less dense, and the old buildings more dense, and I was in old Goslar.

Goslar was all that had been promised me; though there had been a slight initial disappointment at all the modern buildings, this was only because I was looking at an outer shell, and once I reached the inner city the present could almost vanish.

It was late in the afternoon, and I knew that I had relatively little time here in Goslar but since I would be returning this seemed no loss. The age of the buildings seemed nothing beside their context; walking up towards the porch of the old cathedral I noticed a tempting ‘Zimmer Frei’ notice in one house’s window, and for a moment Munich and Paris retreated into the distance. But then a car passed by, breaking the spell.

I looked at the Kaiserpfalz from a distance and determined to look inside later in my travels; if only I had guessed what was in store I might not have worked so hard at that.

Back at the Market Square I was in time to watch the performance of the Glockenspiel (at 6.00 pm and there are only four shows a day) and to look at the surrounding buildings



(next time in Goslar, the following week, I was able to buy, in the Rathaus, a tourist guide which occasionally reminds me of Salient Facts) before hurrying back to the railway station to catch the train to Hannover.

Even though I didn’t yet have a copy of the Thomas Cook timetable, I had managed to find an appropriately-complicated way to get to Munich the next morning. Because of the train schedules, catching a train across to Kreiensen and then picking up a southbound train just wouldn’t work out. So I was taking a northbound train from Goslar via Hildesheim to Hannover, arriving in Hannover at around 8.30 pm. The lateness of the day meant that I didn’t see much detail of the countryside north of

Hildesheim (i.e. the last half-hour or so), but up to that point there was a continuation of what I had enjoyed so much during this day.

At Hannover itself I was not expecting to do much at all, with a 75-minute wait for the train to Munich, but I did have time to wander around the railway station and around a block or two of the city near the station.

I telephoned my friend in Paris to make sure the accommodation was still all right there. And I wrote to my daughter.

Like all the European cities I passed through so quickly, this was a place I wanted to return to.

I don't remember too much of the trip to Munich; just south of Göttingen the train passes quite close to the border between the two Germanies, and then the train traverses the Fulda Gap (which is where, as old-time readers of *Strategy & Tactics* know, the Red Hordes will flow in their unprovoked attack on the Western Democracies). But by then I was asleep, which was sensible, since the train arrived in Munich just before 7.00 a.m., and I

had an extensive program worked out for that day.

Munich

I had come to Munich for one specific purpose, but as it turned out things were much more complicated.

The Munich Railway Station is a very cosmopolitan place; the following weekend Waldemar Kuming told me a yarn about some visitors to Munich who decided that a railway station would be an excellent place to learn the local language and so spent many days there, learning by eavesdropping; they came away with a good smattering of Italian.

I loitered there for a while since, although I expected to have a busy day, I could not start until the Alte Pinakothek opened at 9.00. I tried to ring Jennifer, but she was apparently not yet at home. I put most of my baggage into a locker at the railway station, got some breakfast, bought a newspaper or two, and found myself in conversation with someone else interested in art galleries: a professor from Baghdad (Mohammed Ali Shakir) who was visiting

several art galleries in association with a trip to the Venice Biennale. He described the problems of being an art teacher in Baghdad (which seemed quite considerable as I listened to them), but more particularly wanted directions to the Alte Pinakothek.

That was easy enough, and we parted, although I did see him once or twice later in the morning, usually at a distance.

I had decided to walk up to the art gallery, because I had plenty of time and because I wanted to see what those streets were like. I walked along Luisenstrasse past Koenigsplatz, the Glyptothek and the Technical University before turning right into Theresienstrasse where the Alte Pinakothek and the Neue Pinakothek are separated by a park (and a roadway).

I much admired the Koenigsplatz, and took a couple of photos of the buildings surrounding the square. As it turned out these, like most of my Munich photos, have a rosy tinge, resulting from an unfortunate accident which is to be referred to later on. I also photographed a

building with an inlaid giraffe; this fortunately was less rosy.



When Jennifer and I had visited the Alte Pinakothek with Waldemar Kuming in January the lawns in front of the building had been buried in snow (and, indeed, I was not aware that there were lawns), but now they were superbly visible and green. Something else was more visible than when we had visited seven months before: the variations in the brickwork which are the result of the repairs after the Second World War.

This time I found myself eavesdropping on my fellow-tourists as I queued for a ticket; at the entrance to the Alte Pinakothek I found myself overhearing an Ugly American doing the sort of thing Ugly Americans do so well as she passed over money for her Eintrittskarte: 'I don't know what these things are; I just got off the train'.

Having visited twice before, I knew what I wanted to see. This time no one was copying Albrecht Altdorfer's greatest work, so it was possible to have an unobstructed view of his masterpiece 'Alexander's Victory' or, to give it the full title which my guidebook assures me is its due, 'Victory of Alexander the Great over the Persian King Darius at the Battle of Issus 333 BC'.

I've described our visits here in detail in the previous chapter, but could never do so adequately within the compass I'm allowing myself now. I refer you to the earlier pages for a more extensive description, nonetheless. I bought a handful of slides to remind me of some of the paintings.

On this occasion there was no opportunity to cross the road to the Neue Pinakothek; my schedule required a quick hour or so at the Haus Der Kunst (Staatsgalerie des moderner Kunst), at the southern end of the English Garden and quite close to the river.

It was a pleasant twenty-minute walk to the English garden, and I whiled away a few minutes watching ducks swimming in a pond. There was an exhibition of (mainly American) modern art in the gallery, but I especially liked Dali's 'Apotheosis of Homer', some paintings by Gerhard Richter, and a couple more by Otto Dix; another hour or so of a rushed day was easily absorbed by this.

I had decided that I would eat lunch somewhere along the way between the Haus Der Kunst and the Museum but, as I should have suspected, I found myself so interested in the buildings I passed that I forgot about eating. (I don't think that there was anything about the buildings which made them outstanding by comparison with other buildings in Europe; this was just a mode I moved into in all European cities.)

In all that distance there was not one telephone which would allow me to try ringing Australia!

And so, having reached the river Isar and the Deutsches Museum at the same time, I turned back and, in this cosmopolitan city, had a yiros and a Pepsi for lunch.

The Deutsches Museum covers an island on the Isar and is the best and biggest museum of technology I have ever visited. This is the kind of place for which a guidebook is definitely needed, but even then



it is off-putting to be confronted almost immediately with the statement that the museum has about 17 kilometres of corridors.

After nearly three hours of walking and gawking about this collection of technological wonders I felt that I had had enough, even though I had missed many things I had wanted to see. Part of the problem was that there were so many scheduled demonstrations that you knew you couldn't manage everything in one day (or even two). And eventually you gave up.

This is in miniature the experience which visitors to Europe (or other strange lands) have continually to endure. It's particularly painful when it is concentrated, as this visit was.

I went outside to rest in the courtyard at about 3.30 p.m. I thought I could relax by watching a mechanical fountain for a while (which I did). But the courtyard was also crowded with exhibits — one of which, a Dornier Vertical-Take-Off transport 'plane,



was so peculiar that I found myself being drawn back into the technological spell I'd been in all afternoon.

This would never do; I had some time to kill, but not that much. I gathered myself together and stared into the river from the bridge for a while as a way of getting back into the natural world.

My train was due to leave a little before 9.00 p.m., so I really had a lot of time for wandering, although I wanted to be at the station by about 8.00 p.m. Walking up through the centre of Munich is probably time-consuming no matter when you do it; in January we had to contend with crowds and snow, while now it was mainly a matter of looking more closely at buildings,

especially of course the old Rathaus which I had seen before but which I knew I wouldn't be seeing again soon.

I wasn't very adventurous in eating, settling once again for cosmopolitan fare (although this time it was Chinese): Rice Vermicelli, Singapore-style. I did drink again that concoction which seems peculiar to Germany, orange juice and Coke, aka Spetsi.

By the time I'd finished eating, the last of the workers had almost vacated the city, but there were still enough people around to make one realise that this was a busy place. It was also a pleasant place, friendly, varied, and worth far more than a rushed day's visit. I was fairly reluctant to leave.

At the railway station I checked that the train was due to leave on schedule, which it was, and then went to get my baggage out of its locker, where it wasn't. No matter how hard I looked.

Someone had opened the locker and removed the contents. I checked the notices in the locker-room, and none of them indicated any sort of early closing time; on the contrary,

the lockers were available almost around the clock.

So I went to the office, where no one spoke English, and my fleeting German was adequate only to describe the problem and to elicit from the officials the suggestion that I had made a mistake and locked the wrong locker, leaving my own open. This seemed very unlikely to me.

A bystander was helpful and told me that nothing could be done (which I knew; the train departure time was getting close, and there didn't seem to be much point in arriving in Paris late).

So I boarded the train, which just happened to be the Orient Express, leaving behind in Munich my clothing for the week, a camera lens, a hundred slides of Australian fans and their activities over the previous twenty years or more, the first roll of film from this trip, two volumes of the *Documenta 7* catalogue, and *Finnegans Wake*, a good read for a long trip alone.

I suspect that little of this was as valuable to the thief (or thieves) as to me. I only caught the

train because it was, for a change, a few minutes late.

(Waldemar Kumming, source of all knowledge, later explained to me that this was a well-known (in Munich) trick; the thieves identify a bank of lockers, 'legitimately' make use of them for a day and take the keys to be duplicated and then, for a time, have open access to those lockers using the duplicate keys. This wasn't much consolation to me, but it changed my way of using railway locker-rooms.)

Munich-Paris (970 km)

The EURAIL pass is a wonderful thing. So far I had travelled over 2500 kilometres on mine, over a period of about five days. But you can also usually sleep quite comfortably, as I had done the night before and expected to on this trip to Paris. Things didn't turn out quite that way.

I thought, for a while, that I was going to have a compartment all to myself, but just before the train started a youngish woman (a

little under 30, I would guess) brought her luggage into the compartment, and she too was travelling to Paris.

She was an American, and it turned out that she had also been visiting art galleries, and like me was hoping to see quite a few more. We both liked Europe, and we both liked travelling, so we talked for a long time.

Eventually, just before the train arrived at Strasbourg (around 2.00 a.m.) the question of how someone born in Tennessee (as she had been) came to have so great a commitment to Europe came up. Her father was in the US armed forces in Europe, and she thought it was a good thing that the US had troops in Europe. I did not and do not, so after a relatively heated exchange there was a stony silence for the remaining half of the trip to Paris.

At least there was a chance to sleep now.

And so I arrived in Paris, at the Gare du Nord, with another 1000 kilometres of train travel racked up, about four hours of sleep, and almost no luggage.

‘What would be Dermot Lyttle’s reaction?’ I blearily wondered as I lurched off the train at

6.45 a.m. But he wasn’t going to arrive for another hour or so, which gave me time to direct another American citizen to the Est station, and get some change from the Credit Lyonnais.

Paris-Basel-Zurich-Basel-Mönchengladbach (614+619+57 km)

He was surprised. I was, after all, carrying only a small shoulder bag, and Dermot knew that I had still to travel back to Germany, to England, and then back to Australia through the United States.

But he was very sympathetic when he heard my story, as we hurried through the early-morning Paris crowds back to his apartment out on Boulevard Sault in the 12th, near the Bois de Vincennes. We had to make only one change on the Metro, for which I was grateful, and at the apartment (only a short walk from the nearest subway station, especially if you haven’t got much luggage to carry) we planned how to use the time I had.

Much of it, of course, was given over to talking; Dermot and I had expected to be

working together in Australia in 1982, so I wanted to hear what he was doing and he wanted to hear what I was doing. But there were some other things to be attended to.

This was Wednesday morning, and fairly early on Thursday morning Jennifer would be ringing just before she caught the 'plane for Europe. I therefore had to get the Thomas Cook timetable. Dermot thought that we ought to try to replace *Finnegans Wake* while I was in Paris. We both thought I could use a change of clothes. So that was how I spent Wednesday.

Dermot had to go to work, so he sent me to an almost-nearby department store (actually next to a large Metro station called Nation) where I struggled with strange purchasing customs in a foreign country, somewhat spurred on by necessity, and wound up with some jeans (manufactured in Brazil, as I recall) and other light clothes which lasted about a year before falling apart, which surprised me a lot since I only paid about \$20 for the lot.

I then did a quick whip around of art galleries and bookshops, fortunately not buying

much. But no *Finnegans Wake*, not even at Shakespeare and Co.

In the afternoon I dealt with the other necessary matters. The timetable purchase was, thank heavens, quite simple. Then there were plenty of other Left Bank shops nearby which would be sure to have it. But no! Not even La Hune had *Finnegans Wake*!

(Next morning, willing to try anything, we went to the Paris branch of W. H. Smith and bought a copy of the Faber paperback edition for 84 Fr, which was not nearly as satisfactory as my old hardcover, but it was at least a copy.)

That night I leafed to and fro through the railway timetable. I knew that Jennifer's most likely port of arrival was Frankfurt, so I was able to work on the trains from there to Mönchen-gladbach. But she might arrive at some other airport, and I had to be sufficiently familiar with all the trains going to Mönchen-gladbach on a Friday afternoon or night to be able to give advice during the course of a Melbourne-Paris telephone call.

That night we had a meal which was quite the equal of the meal Jennifer and I had with

Pascal Thomas earlier in the year, but which was much cheaper (at 30 Fr each). It was in a small place (holding maybe four tables and a dozen customers) on the boulevard Soult, and next time I am in Paris I'll certainly try to go there again.

Afterwards we walked through the Bois de Vincennes or part of it and this was the first time in this trip that I had seen an untended park; parts of the Bois de Vincennes looked rather like one of those large Melbourne parks which the local council doesn't bother with too much apart from some perfunctory watering of major trees. (Other parts, near the lake, looked quite splendid.)

There were plenty of dog-owners taking their evening exercise and spreading dog-shit all over the paths, but apart from that the evening was very pleasant. That night I had to get used to sleeping in a bed again; after two nights on a train, something I managed with ease.

The next day, Thursday, Dermot had to go to work. I was left in the house to field the telephone call and then, provided the call came

through early enough, there was something I very much wanted to do.

Well, the call was an hour or so later than I expected, and there was some tension in my voice. Perhaps not quite as much as there was in Jennifer's, for she was leaving very soon.

She would be travelling via Tokyo and Moscow to Frankfurt (Robin Johnson always makes one's travel interesting...) and would be arriving late in the afternoon of Friday (i.e. in just over 30 hours).

That did make my timetable exercise interesting! I thought that provided she could catch a train to Köln by five o'clock Jennifer should be able to make a transfer to reach Mönchen-gladbach just after ten. I would wait for her train at the Mönchen-gladbach station (somewhere neither of us had been).

Well, risky as that plan might be, at least there was now a schedule for us to meet the next day. I could turn my mind to the other activity for the day — seeing a movie.

This was the week when *Porky's* and *Grease 2* were released in Paris (along with some local films, of course), but the film I

wanted to see was Hans Jurgen Syberberg's *Parsifal*. Here's the capsule description from that week's *Pariscope*:

La version intégrale de l'opéra de Wagner:
une oeuvre colossale, baroque, inventive, sur
la thème de la quête du Graal.

That's an accurate description, and the cinema in which I saw it, La Pagode, was pretty baroque and inventive too, with an entrance shaped (obviously enough) like a pagoda.

Syberberg's interpretation of *Parsifal* is quite wonderful, and I didn't mind at all paying 30 Fr. to see it. I saw it again several times in Australia the following year.

Parsifal is a longish film, and the session didn't finish until just before 7.00 p.m.. By the time I'd travelled back to Dermot's there was only just time to pack (little as there was...) and get to the station (Paris Est) for the 11.00 p.m. departure.

I'll spare the reader the fine detail of my trip from Paris to Mönchen-gladbach. You will recall that I had to go to Zurich to pick up some stored baggage. Everything went to schedule and I arrived in Mönchen-gladbach at about

four in the afternoon on the Friday, ready for the Eurocon.

Eurocon

Mönchen-gladbach

There were two matters to attend to as preliminaries. One was finding the hotel — the Gasthaus Geröhof — which Roelof had



arranged and, now that Jennifer was arriving, make sure that a double was available rather than a single.

Roelof's directions were excellent, but my German was once more tried somewhat beyond its capacity in attempting to explain in a mildly noisy bar that mein frau would be arriving later that night, but eventually we staggered to a mutually acceptable conclusion.

The second matter was discovering the outcome of the telephone calls in Paris. Robin Johnson's advice to Jennifer had been excellent, so as I later discovered she had had a comfortable trip to Frankfurt. That is where things threatened to come unstuck for her, for my schedule for catching a train looked more and more unworkable as she struggled to get through customs, get some change and buy a ticket. With some energetic pushing and shoving she managed to achieve these.

At my end things didn't look quite so good either. The station was no great distance from either the convention centre or the Gasthaus Geröhof but when Jennifer didn't arrive on the expected train I wasn't certain what this meant: was she in (a) Australia, (b) Japan, (c) the Soviet Union, or (d) merely a little late and in Germany?

I decided that so long as I kept meeting the trains which had passed through Frankfurt until about midnight I would probably find her if she had arrived in Frankfurt at a reasonable time. Jennifer finally arrived at around 11.30 p.m.

Next morning we discovered that the manager of the Gasthaus Geröhof was ferocious when it came to breakfast. Waldemar Kumming and Roelof were both staying there, and one morning we all staggered down to breakfast at about the same time. It seemed a good idea to sit together, but the management was most upset at this; each person had an assigned place, and was this not good enough?

We supposed it was, but preferred to sit together. The breakfasts were giant affairs. The uninitiated first dealt bravely with many varieties of bread rolls and croissants and butter and coffee and chocolate, only to be presented with dishes of meat and eggs for which there had not been room on the table! This made midday meals unnecessary and evening meals problematic.

This is the way to treat fans at a science fiction convention! Perhaps convention committees should give more attention to this normally-unheralded aspect of convention life.

Mönchen-gladbach has a population of about a quarter of a million and is situated in the Ruhr industrial complex. It must be

distinguished carefully from München, which is rather larger and at the other end of the country.

(At least one Eurocon attendee failed to make the distinction in her travel plans and so arrived rather later than she intended at what was, despite some fits and starts, the most international convention I've ever attended.)

There were some grounds for confusion because, up until a rather late date, the 1982 Eurocon was to have been held at La-Chaux-des-Fonds in Switzerland. My 'plane booking took me to Zurich because that was close to La-Chaux-des-Fonds. At the last moment (or seemingly so) Pascal Ducommun found that it couldn't be managed there at all and some German fans bravely volunteered their regional convention as a substitute.

I suspect, though I've no direct evidence, that this was achieved partly through the

organising skills of Jean-Paul Cronimus, one



of the European SFS secretaries.

I was wholly in favour of Mönchen-gladbach as a convention site because the city had enough facilities to cope, and a splendid mixture of older, traditional buildings and ways of life and newer buildings and attitudes and an openness to visitors which always helps.

(For example, a new museum had just been opened, and although Jennifer and I walked

past it every day on our way to the



convention we somehow never managed to go inside. Besides, the gardens outside were spectacular enough for visitors.)



One always felt safe wandering around, no matter what the time of day, and if the convention was dragging, why, one could simply wander in to the old town and seek alternative amusement there.

Indeed, as the convention grew older Jennifer and I found ourselves part of an evolving international rat pack which roamed between the convention site and several watering-holes in the town; Pascal Thomas, Christina Lake, Roelof Goudriaan, Nils Dahlskog and Ahrvid Engholm are the members I remember, and I suspect we were



well-treated by the townsfolk because the only words we seemed to speak were `another beer´.

Individually, or as part of that group, we didn't attend much of the convention; the only items we attended as a group were two reports on science fiction in Poland (very amusing, in a way, for the problem with Lem's productivity and standard is that he makes life almost impossible for other Polish science fiction writers) and in the Soviet Union (where we managed to persuade the translator to operate using Russian-English rather than Russian-German on the accurate grounds that there were no German speakers in the audience except for Waldemar Kuming).



Apart from that, Jennifer and I only attended one other convention item — which was really a combination of a John Brunner speech and the awards ceremony. Wolfgang Jeschke seemed to



collect somewhat over

half of the awards on offer, which was a very reasonable share if he had done half of what one heard.

One very tangible example was the paperback series *Heyne Science Fiction Magazin* which appeared to be so far superior to James Baen's more-or-less contemporary *Destinies* as to make comparison ludicrous. I had bought the first issue in Vienna back in January, and now hastened to pick up numbers 2 to 4.

Although it does exploit the benefits of being able to use translations, the balance of contents seemed to me to be simply unexcelled. And Jeschke wrote extensively as well! What a vast

threat he might be in English! (I note that



Jeschke's work as translated into English does not appear to have done very well, however.)

Apart from that, our convention participation was limited to chatting to fans and friends old and new. I had plenty of lobbying to do about the Australian bid for 1985, and was distributing literature and tram badges with unequalled fury. My efforts were less well rewarded when I talked to fans from Eastern Europe, but overall it was great fun. It's great fun also to look at what the publishing of science fiction is like in other countries, and there were better displays there than I've seen anywhere else.

There were also plenty of chances to talk again (if briefly) with people like Tom Loock, Karel Thole and Cherry Wilder, and to meet new people like Nellie Pardoel. But most of



the time was spent with the rat pack.

I am a curiously-poor reporter of science fiction conventions outside Australia largely, I like to suggest to myself, because I attend so little of the program that I never form a coherent picture of what is going on. My Seacon report is typical, and for that one I attended a

much larger proportion of the formal program than at any other.

In reporting on Eurocon I'm therefore



somewhat handicapped: I can't report on what was said or resolved at the convention not because I couldn't understand the proceedings but rather because I wasn't there. But this was certainly one of the best conventions I can remember attending, and the circumstances under which it was organised make that even more remarkable.

I haven't said enough about the environment. The convention was held in a technical high school, but in a section which lent itself particularly well to a science fiction convention of this kind, with a large hall, a large but enclosed area outside it for talking, and several small rooms for meetings, connected by passages large enough for displays. For a convention of that size it was just great...