

Germany Again. By John Broadhurst.

As is usual we started late
Made worse by having for food to wait
At the Wimborne Road Chef on the A31;
With a meal inside us we felt our journey'd begun.
We pressed on without another stop
Except to call at a petrol shop.
Arriving at Chatham at quarter past ten,
Steve and To were waiting, so when
We had collected our pass from the main guard house on the right
We took our things to our room for the night.
Our room was enormous s1x metres by six
It made us wonder how Steve could fix
For us to spend the night in the VIP suite
Everything seemed new and unusually neat.
On to Steve's room for a welcome cup of tea
While we made plans for the next day's journey.

Next morning an early start,
For Folkstone at 6.30 we did depart.
The sea cat was supposed to leave at eight,
So fortunately we didn't have long to wait.
The crossing itself was very rough,
Sorting out those whose stomachs are tough.
With Steve and I sharing the driving
At Christa's house we were soon arriving.
Our time of arrival was approximately five
After a comfortable seven hour drive.
Greeted by tea and two enormous cakes,
The sort of size Christa often bakes,
Followed later by a special Autumn dish
Of onions and bacon, but how I did wish
There were slightly less onions and rather more bacon,
But apparently that's how the German's make 'em.
This was washed down with 'nearly wine',
Drunk in Germany at this special time.
Before the wine has time to ferment
Down our welcome throats it went.

Breakfast on Sunday at half past eight,
Bacon, cheese and fresh rolls is what we ate;
Then off to the local village hall,
First removing the shutters from the outside wall.
The building is made completely of wood,
For a family party it looked pretty good.
Was it a hall or an upmarket shed?
The meaning was lost in the translation, Christa said.
Helmut lit the fire, the tables were put out,
Leaving plenty of room for thirty, there was no doubt.
Back to the house for lunch we slowly strolled,
Frankfurter sausage, potatoes all cold.

To and I took the long way back
Passing the walnut tree on our track.
We found a few, but they were a bit of a mess,
They'd been lying on the ground for a while I guess.

The party started at half past two,
We all wondered what we were going to do
For the next eight or nine hours,
Most of the guests arrived with flowers.
At three,
Time for tea.
A vast array of cakes and flans,
The sort that play havoc with slimming plans.
Cream and fat, and still more cream,
For some a nightmare, for others a dream.
Then we just sat around and talked,
While some, more energetic, went out and walked.
To break the monotony, we played a memory game
Picking two picture cards that were both the same.
To was the expert and won the lot,
The more we played the better he got.
We stopped at six for more to eat,
Pork and salads this time was a treat.
At least it was something different to do,
The time passed quite slowly, it was quite true.
After the food some drifted away,
Those with children just couldn't stay.
So by eight there were only a few left
And the party room seemed rather bereft
Of all the noise, bustle and conversation,
It seems what they're good at this German nation.
For something to do I washed the dishes
Not normally, on holiday, is what one wishes,
But I was, by then, I'm sad to say
Glad to do anything to pass the time away.
We drank and talked, and talked and drank,
Until by half eleven, to be perfectly frank
I'd had enough of what others said
And just wanted to go back home to bed.
I regretted I could not talk to the kids,
Sadly that's what a different language forbids.
It was good for our men to meet their relations,
It was possible to converse, it just needed much patience.
The party was good, but went on a bit
The language barrier had much to do with it.

On Monday morning ,we could not decide
In which direction, we should ride.
Steve and To went in search of the US base,
The rest of us to the hall to clean the place.
After lunch, we left in two cars,
I went with Anja as the men had gone off in ours.

Frankfurt was our destination,
Financial centre of the German nation.
At her flat in Mainz, we left Anja's car,
Then to the US base which was not too far.
We made for the centre of the town
With Helmut driving like a clown,
Changing lanes as Christa said,
Turn left, then right, no left instead.
Poor Steve was following behind
The other traffic didn't have to mind.
We parked the cars in the multi storey
And set off to see Frankfurt in all its glory.
A huge pyramid, and grass covered cars
Resembling a scene from Mars,
In the centre for all to see,
It certainly seemed odd to me.
The Modern Art Museum was next for Christa and Mum,
The rest of us decided we didn't want to come.
So off we went
For the shops hell bent.
To went this way, Steve went that
Anja, Helmut and I went to La Fayette.

We met up with Bernd for an evening meal,
He'd chosen a place with German zeal.
The only trouble was it was shut for the day
So, we had to find yet another way.
Fortunately, just down the road
Was an equally satisfactory abode.
Rough cider was the order of the day,
How much it cost I cannot say.
We ate a variety of German meals
Then returned happily to our wheels
For the homeward journey through the rain.
The wet and the darkness made it a real pain.

We set off for the Globus early next morning
For the problems we met there could be no warning.
After choosing all that we wanted to buy,
They wouldn't take Visa, we didn't know why.
Eventually, thinking our purchases were all rather nice
Till we found out they'd charged us for the Calvados twice.
By the time we realised their expensive mistake
It was too late a complaining journey to make.
It would have to down as a lesson in life
As it's no use letting it cause you a van load of strife.
For lunch we had rissoles to eat,
But Christa said they didn't eat much meat.
We suggested they turn over a new leaf
And started to eat good British beef.

Christa assured us it only takes
About one hour to reach the Volcanic lakes
Formed 20,000 years ago
We were very surprised to know
That they were up to 70 metres deep,
But on the way back we all fell asleep.
After walking round one lake and taking stock
Of some samples of their volcanic rock
We planned to take them out for a meal,
But Christa put forward a better deal.
They had so much food in their deep freeze
We'd be doing them a favour if we could squeeze
Some of what was left from the party.
So we all sat down and ate a hearty
Satisfying filling evening meal
Eaten with the usual Broadhurst zeal.
Afterwards we watched football on TV
Which pleased Helmut it was plain to see.
Christa was about to show her displeasure
When I said it was how we liked to spend our leisure.

We rose early to be greeted
By Helmut who looked like he'd been ill treated.
Apparently poor man was far from right
Having been up and down half the night.
How time flies
Soon saying our goodbyes.
The car packed to the very top
It was hoped we didn't have to make a sudden stop.
Bottles of wine, bottles of beer
All purchased to add festive cheer.
Adding weight to our laden car
Which had already travelled far.
In France we added even more,
It's a wonder the chassis didn't touch the floor.
The journey home passed quite quickly
The crossing was calm and so no one felt sickly.
Back at Chatham to the Curry Nest
Indian food at its best.
Off to our room after a beer with Steve
The same VIP suite, but it's hard to believe
That it only cost £3.45 a night.
Something, somewhere wasn't quite right.
We left after breakfast in the mess
Calling at the Camberley M & S.
Having lunch and how I wish I
Had chosen something other than chips and fish pie.
Home at Whitchurch at half past three
After our 1500 mile return journey.