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Finland A Lovely Lady Invites To A Cup Of Kahvia¹

(by *Sebastian Jansen*)



Roman Schatz² loves it, Conan O'Brien loves it and even Michael Palin loves it – it's about time you loved it, too! Finland, homeland of, well, the Finns. It is the country of Eläkeläiset³, of Lordi⁴ and of Väinämöinen⁵. Finland rocks! Yes indeed, Finland is quite the country to be. And yet, it seems hardly anybody knows about it. But how come this blessed pearl of Europe is so sadly neglected? Perhaps this inexcusable lack of knowledge is due to the fact that the Finns are not very outgoing people. Well, they went out a little during the Thirty Years' War and collected some fame as the so called Hakkapäliten⁶. But in general they are rather shy. Instead of going out to build empires and commit genocide on other continents, they would rather build saunas and stick to themselves. They do not like to cross borders for their killing business, they keep it in the family. A pretty heart-warming attitude, but no good for fame. So who are these Finns, and what is their country like?

First of all, it appears necessary to do away with some traditional misconceptions. Finland is no part of Russia, nor is it part of Sweden or Scandinavia. Finland is part of Finland. It is situated in Europe, to the right of Stockholm and to the left of St. Petersburg. Just go to Estonia and cross the Channel to the north. That is where you find it. On a modern map, 'Finland' should be written there. There is no monarchy in Finland. Since the country exists, it has never known any king or queen. They have Tarja Halonen. There are also no penguins in Finland. You will find many books, but no penguins, not even polar bears. In general, Finns live neither in igloos nor saunas. They have houses. Inside those houses, however, you are very likely to find a sauna. The winters are cold and dark, that is true, but I swear, I have never seen an Igloo there. Not even in Lapland.

Now, after these revealing lines about what Finland is not, it is high time to go on with what it actually is.

¹ We talk about coffee here (a lot of it). You won't win any hearts by ordering semi-decaf acquatico con latte macchiato.

² You don't know this famous man? Shame on you! Now, it is high time you do some research at <http://www1.swr3.de/info/weltweit/magazin/schatz/>

³ Well, you should search for "humppa" if you don't know Eläkeläiset. You might find this enlightening, too: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVW2AA6ID4>

⁴ Eurovision Song Contest?

⁵ This is the first Finnish rock star

⁶ "Hakkaa Päälle!" is Finnish and does not mean a wellness massage for your head.

Finland is the country of *sisu*. *Sisu* is not a French football player, it is a Finnish attitude. Comfortably leading at the ice hockey World Cup final, for example, and then actually win is not the Finnish thing. Simply contend with taking home the victory might appear to make sense, but it is just not the their way. Finland is not Chelsea. That is not *sisu*. In order to win, a Finn must be with his back to the wall. That is *sisu*. If they are five – nil down, that is where the trouble starts. The fact that Finland and the Finnish language still exist, is an act of sheer perseverance in itself. That is *sisu*, too.

Finland is the country of sports. Every year they venture out to test their strength and their skill at a symbolic sports war against their bullying neighbour Sweden. They call it competing in athletics, but do not dare come close to a Finn with a javelin in his fist⁷. For the Finns, the best thing next to independence happened in 1995. That was the year when they finally did win the ice hockey world championship. Of course it was against Sweden in the very city of Stockholm. And of course the Finns were with their backs to the wall⁸. At the end, they were tearfully singing victory at the capital of their former invaders. To make it complete, they were singing it in Swedish⁹.

Finland is the country of languages. There are at least two official languages in Finland, Swedish and Finnish. And, contrary to Canada, people tend to be able to speak them both. And one should not forget to mention that there are a whole lot of Sami languages, too. But fear not, my dear reader, speaking double as many languages as the typical Englishman is not enough for a normal Finn, and you really don't need to worry as a visitor. There is no need to know any of their Finnish, Swedish or Sami. The normal Finn's English is just perfect. Yes, rumours have it that some of them even know how to speak in exotic tongues such as German or French. Language is a Finnish thing. In fact, that has also a slightly frightening touch to it. Never underestimate a Finn. These friendly and shy people know exactly what you are talking about. And you may bet, you don't have even the hint of an idea at what *they* are laughing.

So, if you want to experience all that and all the things that were not even mentioned in this text, if you want to drink *salmiakikossu* and taste *voileipäkakku*, if you want to walk through Suomenlinna or see Lapland's breathtaking *Ruska*, if you want to experience real *Suomen hytiset*, or if you want to sit relaxed in a sauna in a *kesämökki*, if you want to look at the *Mumins* or simply shake hands with *joulupukki*, just take heaps of money and do it before everyone else has. For it should be unmistakably clear by now that Finland is, or will be very soon, *the* place to be.

⁷ Tero Pitkämäki, Rome 2007.

⁸ Shameless lie!

⁹ „Den glider in“ sing along at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lb-emt078fU>

Pack Your Bags And Off You Go! ...Is It That Easy?

Organising a period abroad might be stressful, but it is definitely worth it!

(by *Jana Oelkers*)

Christmas time two years ago I was biting my nails while nervously surfing the Internet, drinking too much coffee after sleepless nights, and driving everybody in my vicinity mad with my constant complaining about how awful life can be. No, I had all my Christmas presents bought and written to every single person on my Christmas card list. The reason for my catastrophic constitution was not related to the stress of the festive season: I was planning my year abroad. Even though friends assured me how proud they are that I will finally start this important part of my studies, I hated the idea of leaving home and everybody I loved. Above all, I was not sure whether I could ever manage the apparently endless application procedures.

As already mentioned, getting started certainly is the most difficult part. First of all, I had to consider what I expected from my stay, and then decide on *where* to go. Over the years, I had already spent a few weeks in Scotland, England and the United States, which is why I was already quite confident about my command of spoken and written English. But I wanted to improve my skills of the academic language and style. Furthermore, one of my goals was to continue with my studies of (British) English linguistics and medieval literature but also to perhaps enter a new field of research. Apart from academic expectations, I was also interested in really getting to know the culture, the language, i.e. the regional variety, and, all and foremost, the people of the country. All in all, I wanted to *live* in this place and become a part of its society for one year. Admittedly, these are very high expectations but, on the other hand, the work which is involved in such a project had to be rewarded somehow. For these reasons, my plan was to apply for one year at a foreign university, preferably one in Europe. Moreover, I preferred cities to smaller towns because there would be a better variety of cultural and social activities, which is, in my opinion, crucial in order to experience life outside the campus. Since I had always thought about a visit to the "Emerald Island", my first choice became the Republic of Ireland and its capital Dublin.

The second part of my preliminary considerations was concerned with financial matters. As I had already assumed, Irish universities have tuition fees for

international students, which seemed to exceed my financial possibilities. On the other hand, government programmes such as Erasmus were not an option for me. At this time, the Technical University Dresden only had a bilateral agreement with the Institute of Technology Tallaght, in Dublin's South-West, for only a very short period of study. Apart from Erasmus, I found information about exchange programmes and scholarships of the DAAD, the German Academic Exchange Service. Their "European Excellence Programme" offered a place as a visiting student at Trinity College Dublin with focus on Irish literature, language and cultural studies, which appeared as a highly interesting offer to me. But unfortunately I had to realise that I was already too late with my plans since the application deadline had been the 15th November. After looking for further information on the Internet, asking friends who had been abroad for their advice, and reading through various leaflets of the office for student grants (Bafög-Amt), I almost lost my courage to continue with my plans. The outline of the DAAD programme had already drawn my attention to studies in Trinity College, but it seemed impossible to avoid paying about 4,600 Euros for the academic year. Government grants such as "Auslands-Bafög" would refund such fees, but in the long run, I would have to refund a part of this financial loan, too. I felt desperate.

However, where there's a will, there's a way. I once again read through the information of the office for international student affairs of Trinity College Dublin. Below the list of tuition fees a footnote stated that "some full year visiting students will be eligible for fee remission." The details mentioned that this eligibility depends on whether the students are attending an academic year as an integral part of their degree, i.e. their course of study there will be fully recognised by their home university. As "Magister" student of English in Dresden, I am obliged to spend at least six months abroad in the course of my studies. Consequently, a year at the department of English in Dublin would give me the opportunity to attend classes which will certainly be recognised by the teaching staff in Dresden. And as it turned out, this would be no problem. Eventually I could fill in the application form. The application included a form with personal and academic details, a letter of motivation, and a letter of recommendation. My long preliminary considerations were very helpful for the application because I knew exactly why I wanted to attend courses at Trinity College and what my motivation was to apply for this particular institution. I asked the professor who hold my intermediate exams and

knew me quite well to write an evaluation of my skills and suitability. After all the difficulties I had encountered in the beginning writing the application was quite simple.

I handed in the application at the end of February 2006 – relieved, but still unsure whether I would be successful with my plan. Although I knew that an answer could not be expected before May, I was very nervous after I had not heard anything from Dublin by the beginning of June. These months were another test for my self-confidence: the more time passed the less I believed that I actually had a chance to obtain a place. But as it turned out there was nothing to be worried about – I received my letter of acceptance in June. From then on everything went very fast and I spent the summer finishing my classes in Dresden and organizing my journey and my stay in Dublin without having even a minute to think.

Nevertheless, the last week before departure I suddenly realised that I was due to leave my home, my friends, my two cats, my family and the comfort of everything known to me, as it were. I wanted to give all these things up and depart for another country where not only the road system is different but where there was nobody I knew, no cosy place to stay, nothing familiar. I felt panic rising in me, and my confidence in this plan dwindling down to nothing. All I wished was to stay where I was and not go anywhere. Only on my day of departure did this feeling gave way to some ambivalence towards everything. Not before I was sitting in my car on the way out of Dresden, did I feel enthusiasm and excitement arise.

All the stress and trouble was irrelevant and forgotten when I arrived in Ireland, when more important and exciting things occupied my mind. Within days I had to find a place to stay and adapt to the way of life in Dublin. I needed to familiarize myself with the university regulations and then register for my classes. Consequently, I was concerned with more fundamental issues, particularly because the Irish capital is one of the most expensive places in Europe to live in. Fortunately, I quickly met new people in a hostel and at college who were in a similar situation. Thus, finding my way around in Dublin became less and less difficult. After a week I had found a nice place to stay, had registered for all my classes, and had had a few pints in a traditional Irish pub. I had finally arrived in Dublin, which had appeared impossible to me only a few weeks ago.

In hindsight I would admit that I was very lucky that I did not encounter many difficulties when I arrived. However, it has to be said that chance did not play as an important role as the will to succeed. At no time would I have wanted to go home to Dresden, even though the idea seemed very attractive in certain situations. In November the weather became so bad and days so short that I wished I was at least home on my comfortable couch with all my friends, drinking the first glass of mulled wine. But soon I discovered that mulled wine and even “Dresdner Stollen” were fairly popular with Irish students, too, and could be exchanged against hot whiskeys and mince pies. Celebrating with the Irish is probably the best way to get them to know – all it takes is an open mind and a good sense of humour. But apart from sociability I very much appreciated the way people treat each other regardless of their background and position. Trinity teachers always presented themselves in a very informal and unconstrained manner, which had a positive effect on discussions in class. Students felt less intimidated to explain their points of view which in general were based on sound knowledge of the academic matter. Later in the year, I worked in the tourism office in Dublin where I encountered the same open-mindedness and friendliness among my colleagues. This uncomplicated attitude towards people from all over the world could furthermore be observed in all areas of life. For me this became the “Irish way of life” which made me feel very much at home for one year in Ireland.

Being back in Dresden for nearly two months now, I am very glad about the way things have worked out in the last year. I spent one year in Ireland, in which I gained so many new insights into interesting areas of study, into job possibilities, and, all and foremost, into a different culture. The people I met still mean a lot to me and I visit them as often as I can. This Christmas, my miserable condition of two years ago is forgotten and stored as “irrelevant” to my memories of this stay abroad.

These are my individual experiences and subjective interpretations. Nevertheless, I strongly recommend a year abroad – be it as close as Ireland, or as far away as Australia – to any student of any subject. It is a challenge to organise it and to finally get there, but once you have arrived at your destination all the trouble will be worth it.

Useful links to help you organise a period abroad

- **TU Dresden: Office of International Student Affairs**
<http://tu-dresden.de/internationales/deutschstud/>
(a good and quite comprehensive overview of various possibilities to go abroad, e.g. university exchange programmes, work experience, scholarships etc. – a good point to start from)
- **German Academic Exchange Service / DAAD**
www.daad.de
(certainly not an insider tip but an essential source of programmes financed by European governments, e.g. the European Excellence Programme – just don't miss the deadlines!)
- **International student grants / Auslandsbafoeg**
www.auslandsbafoeg.de
(even if you do not receive "Bafoeg" in Germany, you might have a chance to obtain a grant for your stay abroad – apply as early as possible!)
- **International Education Board Ireland**
<http://www.educationireland.ie>
(If you want to go on your own initiative to Ireland, you will find all important contact details here: Irish universities, language schools, information on living & working in Ireland, links to find accommodation etc.)

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The Erasmus Experience

(by Sabine Sämisch)

With the ongoing internationalisation of the education systems and in the course of the extending globalisation international experience is becoming more and more important. But not only should that be taken into consideration. The fun and the experiences that can be gained for life play a crucial role as well.

At the beginning of that year my studies of English led me to London. Six months without my parents, my friends and all the people I know. What a challenge. Nevertheless...we are talking about London – a metropolis with 7 million inhabitants which might be everything but not boring and which is just so completely different to Dresden.



With my anticipation and all my expectations I booked the flight as soon as possible. The 6 January 2007 was the deadline. Even though a lot of new people, fun and excitement were waiting for me, I felt a bit of melancholy. I was supposed to leave everything that I knew and liked behind me so I left Dresden with having a lump in my throat.

I arrived at my host family at around 2 o'clock am and was dead tired the next morning, the enrolment morning, since I had slept only for 4 hours. But that was finally when my Erasmus experience really started.

During the enrolment I got to know the first Erasmus students who were from Denmark and Switzerland and just looked as puzzled and overwhelmed as I did. Contacts were made quickly, numbers were exchanged and appointments were made not to lose contact again.

By -and- by we met more and more Erasmus students. That is one of the best things about Erasmus and stays abroad in general – you get to know people from so many different countries: Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Colombia, France and Spain – just to mention a few.

Due to the fact that the Queen Mary University of London did not really have a real Erasmus initiative, as we have in Dresden, we started to organize ourselves and hence created our own Internet platform and organized Erasmus and country evenings. We organized cooking evenings, with specialities of the German, Italian, Spanish and Danish cuisine. We went out together and celebrated – the main task of a proper Erasmus student (after studying, of course☺) and together we explored the country and its people.

During those stays abroad you not only meet a lot of new people but you also learn a lot about yourself. You grow with everyday tasks and all the new situations. Unknown people are completely open-minded and without prejudices. And that was quite an exciting and relaxing situation for me.

Unfortunately, a big city, such as London, does not only provide good things but also unpleasant and negative ones. So some of us had to face London's crime themselves and in reality. On their way home from a party, they were threatened with a gun and robbed. Fortunately, the gun turned out to be a fake one but no one really felt better because of that. In addition to that, we could and had to read each day in the newspapers about murders, robberies and other crimes, which did not really create a feeling of security.

However, my stay abroad in London was and is one of the best things I have ever done and all the excitement and the enormous fun we had was worth every single cent or better penny (and we spent a lot of them). I met people that I am still in touch with and will be for a long time and we experienced things that no one can take away from us.

For example, we had visitors from Italy this summer and we travelled to Copenhagen. And at the end of November there was Erasmus reunion in Rome with all the fellow students we met in London.

Eventually I can only recommend everyone to do such a stay abroad. Even though your studies may not ask you to do so it is certainly a worthwhile experience and it would probably not be amiss.

“Wair Ya Bin?” – “To Bir-min-um!”

Exploring England’s *true* Second City (sorry Manchester...)

(by Michael Müller)

“One has not great hopes from Birmingham. I always say there is something direful in the sound”, Jane Austen in her novel *Emma* (1816). Was it the sound of the city’s name (which my parents usually referred to as ‘Burning Ham’) that had worried her? Or did she actually allude to the ill-reputed accent of its inhabitants, which, according to sociolinguist Steve Thorne, “in previous academic studies and opinion polls consistently fares as the most disfavoured variety of British English”? Or perhaps she already foresaw the roaring thunder and tooting of the myriad of cars populating Birmingham’s vast network of streets like motorised ants?



University Campus, Edgbaston

No matter what had inspired Austen’s comment, Birmingham today is certainly different from the concrete jungle of 1950s and 60s re-development nightmares, elevated roadways, pedestrian subways and ‘spaghetti junctions’ it used to be known for to the world. Like most post-industrial English cities, the “ignored void at the heart of the country”, as the brilliant British writer and broadcaster Jonathan Meades depicts it in his documentary *Heart By-Pass* (1998), has undergone an extensive programme of urban regeneration over the past two decades, culminating in such projects as Brindleyplace and the Bull Ring. The former is the centrepiece of a large modernisation development of the 1990s at the heart of Birmingham’s canal network (there are more miles of canal than in Venice, but most of them run through rather not-so-pretty industrial brownfields) and offers a wide range of upmarket restaurants and cafés, adjacent to the city’s nightlife area on and around Broad Street. The Bull Ring, on the other hand, was completed in 2003 and is Brave New Brum’s central shopping mecca and, together with the shops in New Street and Corporation Street,



The Bull Ring Shopping Centre

is the UK's second-largest retail centre after London's West End. Part of it is a branch of Selfridges department store, situated in an award-winning, futuristic landmark building that is covered with thousands of shiny aluminium disks. The next in line for re-development is the city's – admittedly hideous – main railway station, which is going to be transformed from the ugliest building in the UK (according to a 2003 poll) into a modern, airport-like glass structure.

Founded in the 6th century and granted city status only in 1889, at the height of its Victorian heyday, the Birmingham of the third millennium is a vibrant, inspiring city. One of the reasons for this is its remarkable ethnic diversity. One third of its population of one million have a none-white background, most of them South Asian, making it the most ethnically diverse of the major English cities. As a result, Birmingham boasts a multi-faceted cultural life, manifesting, for instance, in its large variety of restaurants. Asked about how I was able to survive on British food for a whole year, I replied that, well, I never really had any; but I enjoyed Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Pakistani, Italian, Greek, Australian, French, Japanese, Sri Lankan and South American cuisine. Birmingham is world-famous for its invention of the 'Balti' ('bucket'), a Kashmiri curry-style dish cooked and served in a steel or iron pot and best to be consumed in one of the restaurants in South Birmingham's 'Balti Triangle'. Another popular 'dish' which originated in Brum is the Cadbury Cream Egg, manufactured by Cadbury Schweppes at their factory in the former Quakers' village of Bournville, now also home to Cadbury World, a museum on all things 'choccie'. But there is much more to explore than just food. Birmingham was the birthplace and source of inspiration for J. R. R. Tolkien and his "Lord of the Rings". Two of Brum's Lord Mayors – Joseph Chamberlain and his son Neville – both grew up here and later became prime ministers. The Mini was 'born' here, and so were gas lighting, the UK's first working cinema (The Electric), Ozzy Osbourne, Heavy Metal and bands like ELO, UB40, Duran Duran and The Streets. The St. Patrick's Day parade of its Irish community is the single-largest event in Birmingham and Europe's second-largest such parade after the one in Dublin. And there is also the UK's biggest international

jazz festival, a world-class Symphony Orchestra and – for those of us who like to feel at home – a German Wine Fest and a Frankfurt Christmas Market (with *real* Germans).

Thus, there is no reason for Brum to be shy. And there is no reason as well for potential Erasmus and study abroad students to shy away from this diverse and exciting city. Birmingham is home to three big universities: Birmingham City, a former polytechnic; Aston University, which has a focus on industry and applied subjects; and the University of Birmingham, with approximately 30,000 students and maximum star-ratings in research in languages and social sciences, among other subjects. The latter's large, green and hilly campus with its turn-of-the-century red brick domed as well as 1960s concrete buildings is located in the relatively affluent southern suburb of Edgbaston (whose local MP is the Bavarian Gisela Stuart). Most of the (undergraduate) students live in shared flats in the endless rows of rather run-down terraced houses just across the road from campus in Selly Oak, also sometimes tellingly known as 'Silly Oke' (in Brummie) or 'Smelly Oak' (among students). As usual in Britain, housing is 1.5-2 times as expensive as in Dresden, with the quality only half as high. However, there are a number of pubs and eateries in the area, and late-night shoppers will be pleased by a 24/7 Tesco Express as well as branches of Sainsbury's and – yes! – ALDI.

For those doing a politics degree at Master's level, demands are lower than in Dresden, with fewer contact hours, shorter essays and lectures tending to give an overview rather than to go into much detail. The focus is more on discussion and argument, which come naturally in the casual atmosphere of groups of 8-12 students who address each other (and the lecturer) by their forenames. Also, every student is assigned a lecturer as a personal tutor, who she or he can talk to if there are problems. However, in the event of the late submission of an assignment, the University pursues a very strict penalty policy; exemptions are only granted under severe circumstances and following a rather bureaucratic procedure.

As far as facilities are concerned, the University is particularly well-equipped. Large computer clusters featuring brand-new PCs with TFT displays and web cams are everywhere on campus. The library may seem a bit obscure at first and it is certainly not as modern as our SLUB, but at least you are allowed to take all of your belongings in there with you. There are also a number of commercial facilities,

including a Waterstone's, a post office, hair dressers, cafés and cafeterias and – yes! – two SPAR supermarkets. Moreover, Birmingham University has ranked consistently among the country's top-three universities for the success of its sports teams and it offers a multitude of competitive and participation sports as well as fitness classes. However, people not familiar with the sometimes rather fierce and highly competitive nature of British university sports may find it difficult to adapt. There is indeed something direful in the sound of Birmingham football players shouting angrily across the pitches as if they were giving orders on a battlefield and it was a matter of life and death. This stands in stark contrast to the "lilting and melodious tone" of the Brummie accent, which, as Steve Thorne asserts, is highly favoured by foreign visitors who are unaware of its social connotations to native speakers. In the end, of course, it is the people you meet and the friends you make (provided that you do not fall into the trap of hanging around solely with the familiar crowd of krauts), who will make your stay here a time to remember.

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AMERICAN GANGSTER

(by Clemens Scheffler)

Just when I thought I had seen all the representative Gangster-movies like the Godfather trilogy, "Goodfellas" or "Scarface", to name only a few, along came the new masterpiece by Ridley Scott (who was also in charge of classics like "Thelma & Louise", "Alien" and "Blade Runner") - American Gangster.

This movie - set in the late 60s and based on a true story - is about Frank Lucas (Denzel Washington), a black Mafioso from Harlem and his counterpart, the incorruptible cop Richie Roberts (Russell Crowe).

After the death of former mob boss Bumpy Johnson, Lucas takes over his small empire and tops it off by establishing a drug route from Thailand to Harlem with virtually no middlemen (thanks to the Vietnam war), thus allowing him to sell the heroin of high quality and low prices, thereby eliminating any competition in Harlem. Not only is Lucas the first black man in such a high underworld rank at the time, but he also has an effective code, is always carefully dressed and well-behaved in public. This - and the corruption within the New Yorker police - is what keeps Lucas off the police radar for quite a long time.

This is where the paths of both men slowly cross. Richie Roberts is one of the few honorable detectives left in his department with just the right perception to spot the few flaws in Lucas' life to slowly build a case.

Denzel Washington seems to be made for his role. Whereas Russell Crowe seems a bit weary from time to time, Denzel is a cold-blooded 'badass' drug lord, who is nevertheless caring for his family; he even takes his Mom to church every Sunday.

Similar things can be said for the rest of the cast, which is mostly outstanding and does a great job gripping the viewers. Ruby Dee, for example, who plays Lucas' Mother, is another highlight, although she has only a few appearances.

This movie easily ties in with the above- mentioned Gangster epics without imitating them. So if you liked one of those, I am sure you will love American Gangster.

Are You Ready For The Best Weekend Of The Year?

Are You Ready For Glastonbury?

(by Iris Klengler)

Well, it is high time you took a closer look at the world's largest greenfield music and performing arts festival.

But, what is Glastonbury all about?

This event is simply unique. Attending Glastonbury during that last weekend in June, you might feel as if you were in another country as the whole area looks like a mini state under canvas, a tented city of about 900 acres in size. No matter whether young or old, you will surely meet there all kinds of people, of all backgrounds, nationalities, lifestyles, music and fashion tastes. Everybody is there to have a great time and enjoy themselves.

It all started off in 1970 near a small village in the Vale of Avalon, South West England in the county of Somerset. Being heavily inspired by the hippie era, this first venue took place as a part of a series of festivals held in farms around the country at that time.

The so-called *Glastonbury Fayre* was then established one year later showing a medieval tradition of music, dance, poetry, theatre and spontaneous entertainment. It has become an annual fixture since 1981, permanently organised by Andrew Kerr, Arabella Churchill, and the landowner himself Michael Eavis.

During the last 20 years, the festival has become bigger and better, breaking the attendance mark of 100,000 after the millennium. However, it does not just stand for fun and entertainment. The organisers even make a profit that is partly donated to Charity Organisations such as Oxfam or Greenpeace in order to call attention to the poverty of third world countries, or the climate changes.



Combining an amazingly tolerant and colourful atmosphere, everybody can find their favourite music genre depending on one's taste, from Rock, Alternative, Punk, and Reggae to Dance or Folk Music.

Another legendary feature of Glastonbury is, believe it or not, the weather. Although this huge happening takes place during the summer months, it is most of the time accompanied by heavy rain, mud, flash floods or lightning which certainly makes a pair of wellies indispensable.



If all that sounds appealing and interesting to you, you had better be quick. Tickets are incredibly popular. Hence, they are usually sold out within a few hours. However, if you are one of the lucky ticket holders, you will definitely experience the absolute fascination of Glastonbury.



Big Aim, Small Shot - The World Culture Forum In Dresden

(by Ronny Rammelt)

Between October the 23rd and 25th 2007 the Founders' Symposium for a World Culture Forum took place in Dresden. Aiming to establish a resemblance platform for culture to the annual Davos World Economic Forum the conference discussed in particular the importance of culture in reference to ongoing and overwhelming influences of economy in the people's lives. Further conferences are planned for 2009 to establish a more European focus, starting from then as an annual event.

Topics mostly dealt with questions like the disappearance of economic frontiers and its simultaneous growing influence in all areas of society creating an imbalance in the culture of the 21st century. Furthermore a possible development moving towards a global monoculture of the primarily economic sphere and the abilities of culture as a mediator to re-integrate this disappearance (also of social frontiers) into overall cultural equilibrium in a meaningful way and with economic advantages were debated.

Initiated by the Tiberius Forum, an international forum for culture and economy, founded in 2003 and dealing mainly with the matter of what culture is able to contribute to economics, the World Culture Forum was hosted by the prime minister of Saxony, Georg Milbradt, and attended by 300 participants, including several important representatives of politics and economy.

Nonetheless the international claim was realized poorly as the conference only covered western civilization matters and even there concentrated mainly on German contributors and topics. This lack of efficiency was also mirrored in the more or less non-existing national and international press attention drawn by the conference. Although the aim of initiating an ongoing dialogue between culture and economy with regard to the recent social developments is interesting as well as necessary, further efforts still have to prove whether the title of a "world" culture forum is really justified or just an empty label of self-adulation by national representatives of economy and culture.

For further information see also:

www.wcf-dresden.com

**From The Sex Pistols To Take That –
The Heartbeat Of The British Music Scene**
(by Fabian Schürer und Tanja Lohse)

Popular music from Britain has been a dominating force all across Europe for almost half a century. Of course, everybody knows about the Beatles' close ties with Liverpool, and the cities' rich contribution to popular music during the 1960s. However, outside Britain it is probably a little known fact that some 35 miles eastwards, in the City of Manchester, you can trace the actual heartbeat of the British music scene across more than three decades.

The particularity about the evolvement of the Mancunian music scene is that it can be pinpointed to a specific day: on June 4th 1976 the Sex Pistols – a band that would form the spearhead of the British punk wave – played in the Lesser Free Trade Hall in central Manchester for the first time in the band's career. This gig, nowadays considered one of the “most influential gigs of all time”¹⁰ stands out not because of its music quality or its vast audience, but because it was attended by a handful of people who would later constitute what became Britain's most vibrant popular music scene of the later 20th century. Organised by would-be members of the pop-punk band The Buzzcocks, others among the audience included Mick Hucknall from Simply Red, Morrissey - later to form The Smiths - and two future members of Joy Division, later to be renamed New Order. The latter two bands, amalgamating traces from punk, dance and indie rock, defined the alternative British music scene of the 1980s, albeit with limited commercial success, and their musical legacy is emulated in what nowadays critics call 'Britpop'.

However, not only the 1980's British music is closely tied to Manchester, but the city, in particular one of its innumerable clubs, is considered to be - in terms of popular music - a birthplace of the 1990's. The Hacienda, a night club financed by the Factory Records label and the record sales of New Order, became the epicentre of the evolution and popular acknowledgement of house and rave music in Europe as early as 1986. For some time, Manchester was the host for what has later been called the Second Summer of Love. The Ibiza nights at the Hacienda, fuelled by heavy doses of ecstasy, attracted huge crowds of people, but failed to accumulate

¹⁰ http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/content/articles/2006/05/11/110506_sex_pistols_gig_feature.shtml

sufficiently enough money to keep the club going. Several shooting incidents and an increasing presence of drug dealers in and around the club aroused the opposition of police and politicians, and finally the Hacienda closed its doors ultimately in 1997.

Whoever is interested in the course of these events should take a look at the 2002 movie "24 Hour Party People", that depicts the development of the Mancunian popular music scene, starting with the infamous Sex Pistols gig and tracking the career of Tony Wilson, the driving force behind bands like New Order or the Happy Mondays and the Hacienda club.

The legacy of Manchester's musical continues into the present years. Oasis, Take That, The Verve or I Am Kloot are only a few of the popular and highly successful groups rooted in Manchester's vibrant music scene.

Although the Hacienda had to shut its doors in February 1997 as a result of the threat of gang violence in and around its halls, its memory is still alive. This is not only proven by events like "Hacienda 25 The Exhibition: Fac 491" that runs in the Urbis¹¹ from 19 Jul 2007 - 17 Feb 2008. Moreover, every Manchunian can tell you where its ruin stands, what it symbolized and why it can be called a core sight of the city. That this club has never reopened and great bands, such as The Smiths, The Sex Pistols and The Stone Roses are a thing of the past, does not mean that Manchester's cultural heartbeat has come to a halt.

One of the artists who prove that music from the northwest still fits into the category of world-class is Badly Drawn Boy, who not only originates from the city, but still lives and works there. When he is not just touring around the world, he leads a perfectly normal life in Chorlton¹², where you can easily meet him shopping in Sainsbury's¹³, or giving a private concert in a local church in the course of a school programme for his children. It seems that local artists cannot part from the former epicentre of British music culture. At night you can meet Andy Rourke¹⁴ at the table next to yours in the Rampant Lion¹⁵, drinking a beer with his mates and listening to a small live gig of some other local band.

And it is worth listening to. Of course, these bands are not popular yet and maybe they never will be. But they are good as ever. It is a sad truth that the average

¹¹ exhibition centre in Manchester

¹² one district of Manchester

¹³ local supermarket

¹⁴ former bassguitarist of „The Smiths“

¹⁵ pub in the city

local band from Manchester is just so much better than the average of all the local bands I have ever seen in Germany. That's a fact.

But it's not only quality. The quantity of gigs and festivals is so rich that you just cannot fail to develop a special feeling for this culture. Regular small independent festivals are just so normal! On the one hand, unknown artists here have the chance to make a name for themselves. And on the other hand, the audience has the chance to enjoy really good music for nearly nothing. It's so cheap! The entry fee for local festivals is more than humane and for small gigs in pubs most of the time there is no entry charge at all. Often you even get free records at the end of the concert but if not, every artist has at least some songs on *myspace.com* or *YouTube*. If you are interested in a nice sample, just have a look for "Nomad Jones".

Dozens of legendary pubs, clubs and concert halls present great music in Manchester every night of the week. Many world-class artists started their careers in this city. And surely, many will do so in the future.

New Art In Dresden

(by Andrea Theilig and Henrik Barsch)

Tobias Lorenz was born in Löbau on April 20th 1982. He started studying cartography, computer science and geology. 2004 he changed subjects to history of arts, computer science and geology. Since 2003 he has exhibited at various locations in Dresden. He works at the SLUB where he is concerned with the "easyart"-search engine. In 2007 he became spokesman of the "Doppel De" art association in Dresden.

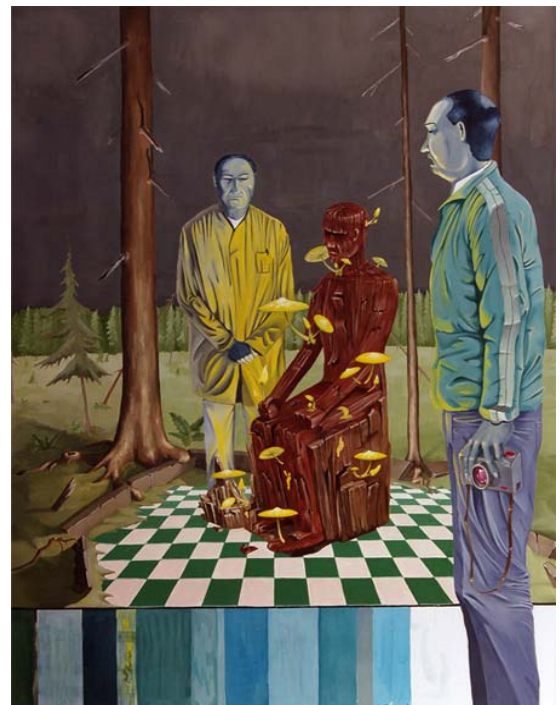
Q: *Tobias, when and how did you get in touch with art and with painting in particular?*

Tobias: I can't even recall at what point I started to paint – when I started to walk I'd even say. At high school and at the Gymnasium I already sold several paintings to my fellow students. After graduation I wanted to head in a more professional direction with my paintings, which means exhibiting them in the public. In 2003 I finally opened my first exhibition at the Studentenwerk here in Dresden and named it "Testgebiet". This was, by the way, also the name of the first painting I sold at the exhibition.

Q: *What is special about your paintings and what motifs do you paint?*

Tobias: I like painting rather figuratively than abstract. A huge advantage of fine art is the possibility to express things that can hardly be expressed with words.

It's also interesting to see what one's own subconsciousness contributes to the process. Some things that pour out from within can be understood better once they are put on canvas. Lastly, I'm very interested in stereotypes and clichés and their impact on people. For example rock stars, drug addicts or other things connected with youth culture.



"Patient", 50x70 cm, Öl auf Karton

Q: *Your paintings often seem to be slightly aggressive. Why?*

Tobias: Well, there is a permanent aggression present in every society I guess.



"Madonna", 50x70 cm, Öl auf Karton

Everybody seeks to gain advantages over others and nobody can really escape from doing so. However, I don't want to judge and I don't want to point the finger at anything or anybody. It's more like an inner force that drives me to paint like that.

Q: *Could you name a few locations of your exhibitions?*

Tobias: There were several exhibitions in the "Aquarium" club in Dresden and one is just about to begin (05.12.07 – 31.01.2008). The Studentenwerk in Dresden is another location where I have had the chance to present my work several

times now. Apart from those exhibitions the Wu5 Studentenclub presented and sold prints of my pictures.

Next year there will be exhibitions at the "Wirtschaftspräsidium" in Dresden, in Weimar and in Freiburg.

Q: *Recently you became involved with the work of the "Doppel De" art association. Can you tell us a bit about the association and your work there?*

Tobias: "Doppel De" is an art association that consists of and supports young artists from Dresden. Most of its members attended the HfBK and they produce a wide variety of art.

"Doppel De" is located near "Waldschlösschen" at Buchenstr.16a. It is my job to write and edit newsletters and press releases. My function also includes press relations and being spokesman for the organization.

Q: Tell us about projects that are currently in progress at “Doppel De”?

Tobias: We have an interesting exchange project going on right now. Artists from the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar have presented their art at the “Doppel De” gallery. In return, various artists from Dresden will have the chance to exhibit their work in Weimar next year. For an artist this is a nice possibility to broaden his audience considerably.



“Attack”, 70x50 cm, Öl auf Karton

Q: What are your thoughts about the art scene in Dresden or in Germany in general?

Tobias: Nowadays German art reaches ridiculously high prices. Take the “Leipziger Schule”, for example. It is considered to be the first major art movement of the new century after Pop Art. Neo Rauch, an artist from the “Leipziger Schule”, sells his paintings for prices way beyond six-digit numbers.

Q: You recently created “John Meteor”, your alter ego. What's all that about?

Tobias: John Meteor is actually my name as an artist. I deliberately chose a cheesy name with a nice sound. German “musician” and producer Dieter B. once said to one of his TV victims: “Nobody listens to music from Lieschen Müller”. If you want to spark interest and want to be remembered nowadays, you need a catchy name.

As a nice side effect, my alter ego allows me to release different work that is not instantly connected with my real name.



“Art Brut”, 70x50cm, Digitale Collage

Q: *Lastly, do you have any idols or artists that you look up to and who influenced your work?*

Tobias: Too many influences! For example, renaissance painter Tintoretto because of the halo above all the people in his pictures. Or El Greco because his work is timeless and he already uses abstract elements such as deformed bodies, which one would later on find in Expressionism again.

Thank you for the interview!

John Meteor: Made of ice and dust, he was created by a meteor impact on June 23th 2018 near Gibraltar International Airport. Since his creation the man has walked the earth trapped between the future and the past. On his journey through the decades he tries to remember events from a time long ago.

http://www.myspace.com/john_meteor

Audrey Niffenegger's "The Time Traveller's Wife"

(by Steffi Müller)

Sometimes you encounter a book which is so fascinating that you want to encourage your complete environment to read it, too. Thinking about birthday presents for friends and relatives, you cannot stop yourself from buying the same novel over and over again, because you are absolutely sure that the recipients will truly enjoy the work just as you did. Audrey Niffenegger's novel "The time traveller's wife" is exactly such a book. Published in 2003, it became well-known immediately and the film rights were even sold to New Line before it was published. A film version of the novel will be released eventually, and hopefully it will be able to convey the beauty of the book version.

At first glance, "The time traveller's wife" appears as a science fiction story. Because of a genetic effect, the protagonist, Henry, is able to travel in time. He has a 'normal' life in the present, but very often, without being able to control it, he leaves his natural place in the time line and travels into his past and, occasionally, into his future. He suddenly appears somewhere, naked (because he cannot take any material items with him) and feeling dizzy, mostly at places which bear an emotional meaning to him. He often meets himself, the Henry who lives at the time he has just entered. Niffenegger is an extraordinarily creative author who constructs amazing and intriguing situations which derive from the awkward situation of Henry's appearances in the past. Our usual sense of cause and effect is deconstructed and designed anew in a surprising way. For example, when Henry is five years old, he time- travels for the first time, at night, to a museum he had visited the afternoon before. Full of fear and confusion, he there meets a strange man who presents himself as a guide and gives him a tour through the museum. The reader later finds out that this man is Henry himself, at the age of 40, who himself remembers the event from his own childhood and 'reconstructs' it when he is older and travels to the present of his five-year-old self.

Still, the most amazing aspect of the novel is the love story between Henry and his wife Clare. When Henry is about 20 years old, he meets this beautiful,

intelligent woman he falls in love with, Clare. The crux is that she has already known him all her life. When Henry is about 38 and already married to her, he starts travelling back in time to the place where Clare grew up as a child. Paradoxically, Clare has therefore already got to know him when she was a very young girl, only 6 years old. While she is growing up and becoming a young woman, Henry regularly appears from future times and visits her, because he is emotionally drawn to her. The friendship they have during Clare's childhood is a part of the past of Clare's life, but when they meet in the present, this is still a part of the future for Henry, since his journeys to her as a child will only begin much later.

The relationship is a very intensive one, because the partners never know when they will see each other again, once Henry has disappeared. The novel tells the story of a recurrent farewell, which intensifies the time the lovers have when they are together in the present. The science fiction element makes it possible for Niffenegger to write about a great love story, which is much more realistic than many other stories that do not belong to the science fiction genre. Clare and Henry value their time together, because Henry can always disappear at any moment. The element of longing then creates the intensity of love. The couple in the novel knows that their love is always in danger and always interrupted, which prevents them from falling into a daily routine. They are very aware of each other's presence. We are confronted with the fact that quality in a relationship is not defined by 'eternal, never ending length of time', but by the quality of every-day life and single moments. "The time traveller's wife" should be read by everyone who is interested in getting to know an amazing science fiction story with truly innovative ideas and, not forgetting, an emotionally and intellectually rich modern love story.

Love Blues

(by Alexander Alexandrov)

Unexpectedly I am woken up by the timer of my hi-fi system. I can hear a troubled, almost screechy voice coming out of the dusty speakers. Finally, a commercial radio station host managed to do what previously incoming telephone calls, the shrill sound of knocking on the oak-wooden, beige colored door and the melodious singing of a blackbird did not manage: to wake me up.

My hand glides through scattered litter, passing left-overs of yesterday's evening dish and of emptied beer bottles. I jump up as my left index finger slides over a piece of broken glass. I manage to open my clotty eyes and spot the tiny blood-fountain that shoots from my forefinger. My attention is then drawn to the smudgy remote control, which I was so eager to find, in order to switch off the annoying conversation of the radio chat-show host and his hysterical female guest and change to the CD-playing option of the sound system.

There I was, sitting next to the vitreous sliding door of my bed-sitting room. I look beyond the French beach of the charming Saint-Jean de Luz, towards the foamy water of the Atlantic Ocean. My mood is similar to the constant changing of the low and high tides of the ocean. Currently I am in a self-destructive state, finding the only pleasure in drinking just enough alcohol to make my heart stop weep. The tiny flat reflects my state. The whole room looks like a garbage dump. Newspapers cover the chestnut-brown carpet but still do not manage to keep away crimson wine blotches. Additionally, pizza crumbs provide my cruddy feet with a feeling of walking on thumbtacks. The accumulated pile of unwashed laundry and greasy dishes begins to reflect the image of a miniature Himalaya. One could say that I am physically, as well as mentally, a wreck.

In between scattered music Cd's lies a glittery wedding photo of my ex-girlfriend. I pick it up and gaze at the couple. He is a tall good-looking man, probably in his mid-twenties. His long, cinnamon hair covers his wide shoulders, which puts emphasis on his athletic body. She is delicate,



wonderfully looking young lady, with a veil disguising her ash-blonde hair, wearing a white wedding dress that makes her look like a hard-fought Greek goddess. I

encounter myself indulging in sentimentality while I listen to a song containing the lines "But lovers always come and lovers always go, and no one's really sure who's lettin' go today." I wash down some liquor as I evoke the good old days when we were still together, listening to the same music to which I would now shed tears. It seems as if I am tied to a wheel of fire. A blazing fire which inflames my crying.

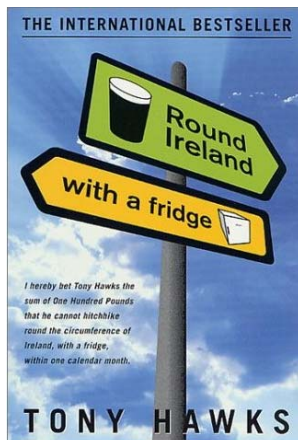


Suddenly, heaven seems to be showing a great sense of compassion as raindrops drizzle onto the golden sandy beach. As the rain keeps falling, a rainbow appears in the sky, reflecting all sorts of happy colors.

With this image of happiness in front of me my eyelids slowly begin to close. I stretch my legs and push away the wine-dazzling broken piece of glass that previously cut my finger. The photograph slides out of my hand, just as a tree would drop its leaves. I notice how I doze off and imagined images of me and my beloved darling cross my mind. Just like in the song that is playing now: *It is me, who holds her close, pulls her near and says the words that she needed to hear...*

Tony Hawks: *Round Ireland With A Fridge*

(by Prisca Vollmann)



The first thing that I read on the front cover of this book was a quote from the Sunday Independent. It said "... far too hilarious to read alone in a public place." After reading the first chapter I understood why.

Our main protagonist is named Tony. He is a, well, quite famous comedian in Britain. At least he is so famous that he made an appearance at the Royal Gala. Our main protagonist is named Tony. He is a, well, quite famous come-

dian in Britain. At least he is so famous that he made an appearance at the Royal Gala. Our hero likes a good drink and while he is following his favourite free time occupation he signs a bet. This is where the action starts: Tony bets his friend he can hitch-hike the circumference of Ireland together with a fridge.

So Tony sets out to win his bet. And what sounds absurd in the beginning turns out to be a fantastical adventure. Tony and his kitchen appliance start their trip outside Dublin, where at the end they will hopefully also finish it.

Tony gets to know a lot of people who seem to think that travelling around Ireland with a fridge isn't such a bad idea. While Tony and the fridge are enjoying Irish hospitality, i.e. a lot of free drinks, they develop a new understanding of the Irish people.

In the course of their journey, the two of them build up a very close relationship. A new philosophy is born during their trip, the 'fridge-philosophy'.

In the end you ask yourself who the actual hero is – Tony or the fridge.

If you want to find out if Tony actually did finish his trip, find your local bookseller and see if he can find a copy somewhere in the circumference of his store.

Don't forget the warning though. I read the book on a train and I got a lot of silly smiles about my suppressed giggles.

Wolves' Hunt – A Short Story

(by Sarah Steinke)

A branch snapped in the coppice. The boy and the girl first looked around and then at each other. Strange. "What was that?" asked the girl. "Just a rabbit or a little deer," said the boy. "Are you sure?" "Yeah, of course. What else could it have been?" „Well, I don't know. Maybe a wolf or even a bear." "A bear? Now, you're overdoing it! I've never heard of bears or wolves around here. Besides, do you always have to meet trouble halfway?" With this the girl fell silent and the amorous couple walked on through the woods, not noticing that dusk was already fading into night. The skies grew darker and darker around the two of them and slowly they began to feel a bit worried. Although they were already on their way home, a long road still lay ahead of them.

By and by they stopped talking and looked around, losing their way. Sinister clouds covered the sky and the stars, an owl sent her cry through the vespertine air and an unknown noise, which sounded like a wheeze, reached the couple's ears from somewhere. Suddenly there was another snap on their right and both the boy and the girl looked around – appalled. There the girl discovered two gleaming red eyes watching her out of the dark of the trees. The girl seized the boy by the arm and pointed to the pair of goggling eyes. However, by now they were not alone anymore. The two of them were being gazed at by at least ten red pairs of eyes, and behind them, shining red points emerged, too, fixing them – and then they also heard a subliminal snarl.

The boy and the girl stood paralyzed by fear. None of them moved even a single muscle. They didn't even dare to blink, but the creatures in the dark didn't give a damn about this. As one of the beings growled aloud, suddenly all of them jumped out of the bushes and dashed towards the two humans. There was no escape for them.

The last thing they were supposed to feel in their lives was sheer horror. Not fear, not panic, but pure horror. Just at this precise moment, when the red-eyed creatures dashed out of the underbrush, the clouds pulled back and the full moon illuminated them. Their appearance was simply overwhelmingly intimidating. Giant wolves, as big as horses and as black as night itself, assailed the small humans and snarled with their mighty teeth, which shimmered white in the moonlight. Saliva dropped off their lips and the stare of their red eyes bored through the bodies of the two adolescents.

However, they didn't even have time to scream or to run away, because just a moment after they had noticed the black mammoth wolves, these had already reached them and smote their massive set of teeth into the human flesh to swill their blood and to refresh themselves with some young and fresh flesh, because they were hungry – infinitely hungry. And they had just tasted blood – human blood.

Get To Know Your Tutors!

(by Ina Schliebner)



Cultural Studies

Rita Schwanebeck (23)

Lehramt English, 7th semester



Literature

Wieland Schmid (23)

Lehramt English and German, 7th semester



Linguistics

Philipp Decker (24)

Lehramt English and Protestant religion, 8th semester

What tasks do you perform as a tutor?

Rita: Showing the students what they know. Helping them with the rest. Preparing them for the tests as well as I can. Keeping up their spirit. Marking the students' essays.

Wieland: Turning some of the students' question-marks into full stops, explaining theoretical concepts on the basis of literary texts, and marking some little assignments throughout the term.

How did you get the job?

Phil: After my intermediate exam Prof. Schaefer asked me if I would take over a tutorial. As I had already acquired a taste for linguistics, I accepted quickly, and one semester later I found myself sitting in the same boat.

Rita: Probably not the usual way; I sort of sneaked in. After coming back from England, I just, well, “applied”.

What was your motivation for carrying out the job?

Wieland: I liked the idea of gathering some experience in teaching, and literature would always have been my first choice.

Phil: My interest in linguistics and the opportunity to brush up my own knowledge; because as you all know: it’s in explaining something to others that you understand things better.

How intensive is the cooperation with your professors?

Wieland: It’s enough to guarantee that the general “strategy” is clear. I like the fact that we’re quite free in structuring our individual sessions; everything else is down to the communication between the tutors.

Phil: I think the cooperation between us tutors and the other staff at the department is very good. Two or three times per semester we hold a meeting that serves organisational purposes but also contributes to personal and academic communication. What is particularly interesting is the status you have as a tutor: On the one hand, you are still a student, on the other hand, you are already a teacher.

What has been your greatest challenge during your studies up till now?

Rita: It was probably something in between my Intermediate Exam and the presentation in Prof. Kühn’s *Hauptseminar*.

Wieland: Nothing had me sweating more than the *Latinum*!

Phil: Firstly, handling my own weaknesses and the poor performances that have sometimes resulted from it. Secondly, the organisation of my studies: Where do I need a *Schein*? What course should I take? etc.

What do you intend to do after your graduation? Could you imagine staying and working at the university?

Rita: The first thing on the agenda would be the *Referendariat*. However, I am also toying with the idea of staying and writing a “diss”.

Wieland: The *Referendariat* would be the safest option (provided that I get a place) yet writing a dissertation is also on my mind.

Do you have any essential tips for first semester students?

Rita: Ask! Read! And be assured: your prof is a human being as well!

Wieland: In the immaculate words of George W. Bush: "Reading is the basics for [sic] all learning," i.e. never leave the house without a book. Or two.

Phil: Pipe up in the seminars and do not be afraid to answer the lecturers' questions because this makes the courses come to life! Further, you will understand things better if you actively take part in the lesson. And what is actually even more important: Enjoy your student life! Stay in town instead of going home every weekend. Your years of study offer great opportunities to look beyond the rim of your teacup.

If everything was possible, what would you change at your department or in your studies?

Phil: I would see to it that a sufficient number of seminars were offered, so that 20 students maximum attended a course. I had the privilege to take part in a seminar with only five people (including the lecturer), which was a very intensive learning experience. Needless to say it was a seminar on Linguistics.

Rita: A better student-to-prof ratio. And nicer, er, let's call it *facilities*.

Wieland: If everything was possible? Tear down that miserable old hut that is our home in Zeunerstraße, and build something from scratch. Might take about 1/10 of the sciences' budget.

What should students of English at your department always keep in mind?

Rita: Signifying Practice! You should roughly know what it means but then you can use it extensively. Oh, and never mess with Prof. Kühn and religion.

Wieland: Two things for studying English in general: You can spice up any answer by referring to Foucault, because nobody has understood that guy in full anyway. Secondly, avoid repeated use of the pseudo-word INHOWFAR. It's a disease!

Phip: a) Whoever plagiarises, will be out of favour with any lecturer. b) E-mails are a kind of letter and therefore should not start off with 'Hallo' or 'Hi', at least if they are addressed to professors!

M.A. – degree: What comes next?

(by Maja Schnelle and Marlen Barthel)

Being M.A. students majoring in American studies ourselves, who are just about to graduate from University, we wonder what kind of job we will have after studying and how good our actual chances are on the job market holding an M.A. degree. Will we find a job easily and will it be related to our field of interest? Realizing that we were not trained for a concrete profession in the course of our studies as compared to doctors, lawyers, teachers and Co, we more and more questioned whether we made the right decision regarding the desired University degree. Having these second thoughts, we asked ourselves if other M.A. students have the same doubts or if it was just the two of us getting cold feet when thinking about an uncertain career entry.

Therefore, we started a survey among other advanced M.A. students of American/ British studies at Dresden University of Technology. The students were given questions concerning their subject combinations, practical experience, and future job plans. Furthermore, they were asked to give a personal evaluation of their actual chances of getting the desired job position by holding an M.A. degree.

According to what most students said, we are not the only ones who look skeptically towards our future careers. Although answers concerning the students' desired jobs ranged from English tutors, translators, Public Relation operators, city planners, journalists and ambassadors et al, it turned out that more than fifty percent of the asked students did not even have an idea about what kind of job they want to do with their M.A. degree.

Moreover, the survey revealed that most students have not even participated in any kind of practical training yet. Those who did participate, definitely evaluated their actual job chances far more optimistically than those without any practical experience at all. However, the majority of students evaluated their actual job perspectives in a pessimistic way.

Corresponding to what we found out in our survey, most M.A. students lack the same security concerning their future careers just as we do. In the end, it depends on each student's personal efforts, the wise choice of the subject combination and practical experience, to what extent the M.A. degree will open doors to a successful career for them.

Roadside Assistance

(by Sabine Schreiber)

“Volkswagen-Assistance, bonjour! Sabine à votre service.” (*Here we go again...*)

“Good afternoon. I borrowed a VW Golf from a friend – and I just wanted to know how to turn the lights on.” (*What the heck is that? And what am I supposed to tell you? Alright, first time I drove the Golf 2 of my parents, I didn't know it either, but that's the kind of thing you ask BEFORE borrowing a car!*)

“What model of a Golf i...?” (*Thanks for letting me finish my phrase...*)

“Oh, alright, I found it. But I have to tell you: that is NOT obvious! Goodbye!”

“Goodbye.” (*And also thanks for letting me say goodbye before hanging up. And for not talking to passers-by right after having asked me a question. What do you call the assistance for, if you're going to ask someone on the road anyway?*)

“Goodness, we suck, the SLA is at 76.”¹⁶ - “You'd better answer the phone, you got a call coming in.” - “Yeah, thanks, and it's a Skoda.”¹⁷ - “Have fun!”

“Skoda-Assistance, bonjour! Sabine à votre écoute.”

“Bonjour. I don't have a Skoda; I wanted VW assistance. Did I dial the right number?”

“Yes, no problem.” (*Lucky me.*)

“Alright. Well, I have a problem (*Now, who would've thought of that?*) with my Polo. Can you send someone to help me?”

“We will have to open a file first. Do you have your registration document and the service record with you?”

“No.”

“Well, to open a file and send someone to help you, I need the chassis number / VIN of your car, and also the date and mileage of the last service. Without that, unfortunately, I can't help you.” (*She'll hate me, I know it.*)

“You're not being serious there, are you? I was just about to leave for work, so I put my purse in the car and left the keys on the seat. And then I went back a minute to call my husband and tell him that the car had started again, because we had had a problem there too last night, and when I got back, it was locked.” (*Well, lucky you – what if someone had taken a walk this morning, seen your car there, open, with the car papers and the keys, and just taken it? How thoughtless can you be?*)

¹⁶ SLA = Service Level Agreement between the Groupe Volkswagen France and A.C.T.A. Assistance who was responsible for their roadside assistance as well as the assistance of the ADAC, the AA, the ANWB...; supposed to never be lower than 80 (= 80 % of all calls answered in less than 10 seconds), which was hardly possible at times.

¹⁷ Nobody I knew there liked treating Skoda files. (The conditions were too different from the ones for VW and Audi.)

"You said, you had a Polo?"

"Yes!"

"And the key is on the seat?"

"Yes!"

"What about the second key?"

"My husband has it, and he's at work."

"Well, I am sorry (*I know, we're not supposed to be sorry, it's not our fault, tant pis*), but this kind of incident is not covered by the assistance. Even if you had the papers, the assistance wouldn't intervene. Only incidents caused by the fault of the car producer are covered." (*She'll hate me even more...*)

"Are you kidding? How can the car lock itself like that? Is that not fault of the car producer?"

"I am sorry, Mrs., but I can't help you there. If the key was in the ignition, we could have sent you someone, but not, if it is on the seat."

"This is absolutely incredible! You can't be serious!" (*You bet... Now have fun calling your husband...*)

"Mrs., there is no point in yelling at me, I have a procedure to respect and I can't change it."

"This is simply unbelievable! VW will be hearing from me!" (*Yeah right, they sure will. Goodbye Mrs., have a nice day, with or without your car, and thanks for hanging up, my ear drums really appreciate it...*)

"Key locked in a Polo?" - "Yeah..." - "Bad luck. Should've had a Phaeton..."¹⁸ - "If I ever have a Phaeton, I will lock the keys in the trunk, just because I can! Although I'll probably never be rich enough to be stupid..."

"Audi-Assistance, Sabine, bonjour!"

"Hello, I have a problem with my VW, it doesn't start anymore." (*Why the heck does my phone say "Audi", when it's someone for "Volkswagen" calling? It's not like it matters, he wasn't listening anyway, but still...*)

"Do you have your registration document and the service record with you?"

"Yes, I do. What do you need?" (*For once someone who has everything straight away. I love you Mister.*)

"Alright, we will open a file and then we will send you someone who will check your car. Can you please tell me the chassis number of the car?"

"Where do I find that?"

"It's in the registration document, the vehicle identification number. It's made up of 17 characters."

¹⁸ Phaeton being THE car of VW, category Prestige, it is covered for almost any incident, including having locked the keys in the car.

“OK, I found it: W V W ZZZ 3CZ (*alright, a Passat*) 2W 84 96 26 .”

“Is it a Passat?” (*Come on, cACTus¹⁹, find him!*)

“Yes.”

“Did you buy it in France?”

“Yes.”

“OK the program didn’t find him. Let’s check whether I got the chassis number correctly: WVW 3CZ 2W 84 86 26 .”

“No, at the end, it is 84 96 26.” (*Quatre-vingt six – quatre-vingt seize, it’s all the same... Stupid me, I really need to learn French. And stupid French, why can’t they give me numbers one by one?*)

“Alright, now I got it. Was the car first registered in November 2002?”

“11 November 2002, that’s it.” (*Well, Mister, although you are very cooperative, I’ll have to make you wait a little, there’s someone wanting to talk to me...*)

“Please hold on a second, we have a technical problem.” (*And listen to our awesome “Merci de patienter. - Please hold the line.”-music...*)

“Salut. What’s up?” - “What’s ‘embrayage’ in English?” - “Clutch.” (*www.interglot.com is much faster than waiting for me to ask my client to hold on a while...*)

“Thank you for waiting. Our program has been updated and is giving us some trouble at the moment.” (*Although it is working very well for the moment, call back in 20 minutes and there really will be a technical problem...*)

“The license plate is still 5782 DG 69?”

“No, I changed that, it’s 7390 FK 69 now.”

“Alright. Can you tell me the actual mileage?”

“About 86’700 km.”

“When was the last check up of the car? And at what mileage?”

“Hold on a second, I’ll check that, it was... just a second... (*Yes, go ahead, take your time, who cares that we’re supposed to create a file in no more than 10 minutes?*)... right, there it is, it was June 6, 2005, at 62’738 km.” (*That makes almost 2 years, next week I would have told you to call your assurance...*)

“Alright, I got that. So, you are Mr. Dupont?”

“Yes, Guillaume Dupont.”

“Are you still living at 43, rue du Général de Gaulle at 69160 Tassin la Demi-Lune?”

“Yes.”

¹⁹ cACTus : program used for opening and treating case files; included a database of (almost) all cars produced in France (chassis number, year of production, car owner, license plate number...)

"Do you have a phone number where we can join you? A mobile would be best." (*And here we go again, dictating numbers as fast as possible to the obviously NOT French operator...*)

"OK, so my portable is 06 85 98 57 26 ."

"Now, I need some information concerning your car: (*alright, it is registered in France, no need to ask that*) What kind of fuel do you use? Petrol or Diesel?"

"Diesel. Why is that important?" (*Don't ask me, I wouldn't know, I'm just doing what I've been told to do...*)

"It's for the procedure. Do you drive a manual or automatic gear shift?"

"Manual."

"Of what color is the car?"

"Black. What does that matter? My car does not start and you're asking me about insignificant details..." (*Duh, go figure, ever tried to find a car on a parking lot without knowing what it looks like?*)

"It's to make it easier for our technicians to find you. You told me the car didn't start anymore. Are there any warning lights burning when you turn the key?" (*Let's make a bet: you don't know!*)

"No, there are none. When I parked the car last night, the ventilator didn't stop working, so I guess it's a battery problem." (*Ok, I lost my bet. Should've gone for the ventilator, happens often enough as well...*)

"Alright, I noted that. Now, where can we find the car? Are you at your place?"

"No. It's in Lyon, on the parking lot of the Part-Dieu, about in the middle of it." (*Thanks for being that précis..., as if there was only one parking lot down there...*)

"Is it outside or in one of the parking garages?"

"Parking garage, second floor." (*Fat chance that the tow truck will be able to get in there easily if they can't fix it right away...*)

"Alright. Now, can you tell me where you bought the car?"

"At Francheville." (*Nice, one that I know how to spell and that I will find on cACTus...*)

"At 'Central Auto'?"

"Yes, there are not that many down there!" (*So what?*)

"Has the check up also been done there?"

"Yes! Why does that matter?" (*Now, don't get impatient, this kind of question will not speed things up. Stay calm, smile on the phone... Lucky me that I can turn down the volume of the phone...*)

"It's the procedure. If the check up has not been done by VW, you are not covered by their roadside assistance."

"Alright, alright, I don't care about your procedure, I have to get started on my work and I'd like someone to go there right now. It's been difficult enough to join you in the first place."

What kind of service is that?" (*Yes, that's it, it's my fault that your car doesn't start, that you'll be late for work, probably also that it's raining outside...*)

"Well, it's a service VW provides to help people when their cars have broken down. Other car producers don't offer anything similar at all. Anyway, I have the necessary information. We will send you a breakdown service which will arrive within the hour. Are you going to stay where your car is?"

"Well, no, I'm at work, I can't spend my days waiting at a parking lot."

"We can't send you anyone, unless you are there. What I can do is either tell the breakdown service to come at a fixed time, say during your lunch break, or give your phone number to the people from the breakdown service so you can fix a time yourself."

"Well, can you ask them to come at 1 o' clock? I can be there then."

"Alright, no problem. So, they'll be with you at 1 o' clock. (*Hopefully, after all, this is France...*) They will try to fix your car right there, but if it doesn't work, they will tow it to the nearest VW garage. If it is necessary to tow it away and the repairs take more than 3 hours, we can organize you a rental car for (*Passat, no prestige, from before 2005 but after 2000, flotte Ex-Europe²⁰*) 3 days maximum (*I can almost see the commercial: Buy a new car, have a breakdown, and you can have 5 days of a rental car...*). Do you have any questions?"

"Can I have the rental car right now?" (*No, stupid, I just told you, you can only get it if fixing yours takes too much time! Thanks for listening to what I am saying...*)

"No, to get a rental car, you will have to call us back when the breakdown service has arrived and stated, that the car can't be fixed straight away. Although I think, if it is only a battery problem, they will be able to get your car running again." (*Yeah, they will do that, and you'll probably have to go to a garage yourself and that way can't even get a Mobility Guaranty²¹... but I'm not telling you that...*)

"So all I can do right now is wait?" (*Why would you be waiting? I thought you were at work, doing your best, not only to earn money, but also to merit it...*)

"Yes, that's about it."

"Alright, thank you very much! (*I can tell you don't mean it.*) Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

²⁰ ACTA had taken over art o what Europe Assistance had done before, therefore we had two categories: Flotte ACTA (cars less than two years old, foreign cars, cars of higher categories, e.g. Phaeton, Touareg, Audi A8...; more service offered) and Flotte Ex-Europe (cars older than two years, French cars; less service offered than for the other one)

²¹ Mobility Guaranty: If you can get the car yourself to a garage to have it fixed, you can have 5 days of a rental car; only for Flotte ACTA.

Russia has voted – what’s the fuzz about?

(by Stephan Strelow)

The winner of the State Duma elections is Vladimir Putin and the party that supports him, United Russia. Vladimir Putin’s party won more than 300 places in the State Duma, which means the party has enjoyed a two-thirds majority. However, foreign observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Council, foreign media, and the Russian opposition have condemned the elections as unfair and undemocratic.

During the election campaign the Russian government and Vladimir Putin abused their powers to support United Russia. National TV stations strongly favored Putin’s party in their coverage before the elections. Even during prime time news Putin was given the chance to promote his party. Furthermore, Government critics like Garry Kasparow – former chess world champion and supporter of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia – was sent to custody for several days because he allegedly impinged the right of assembly during an electoral event. All in all, the elections are considered unfair because the Russian government seriously limited political competition and the chance of opposition. Still, the discrepancies in the course of the State Duma elections do not imply that their outcome is totally distorted. On the contrary, the overwhelming majority of Russians is pro-Putin and pro-United Russia.

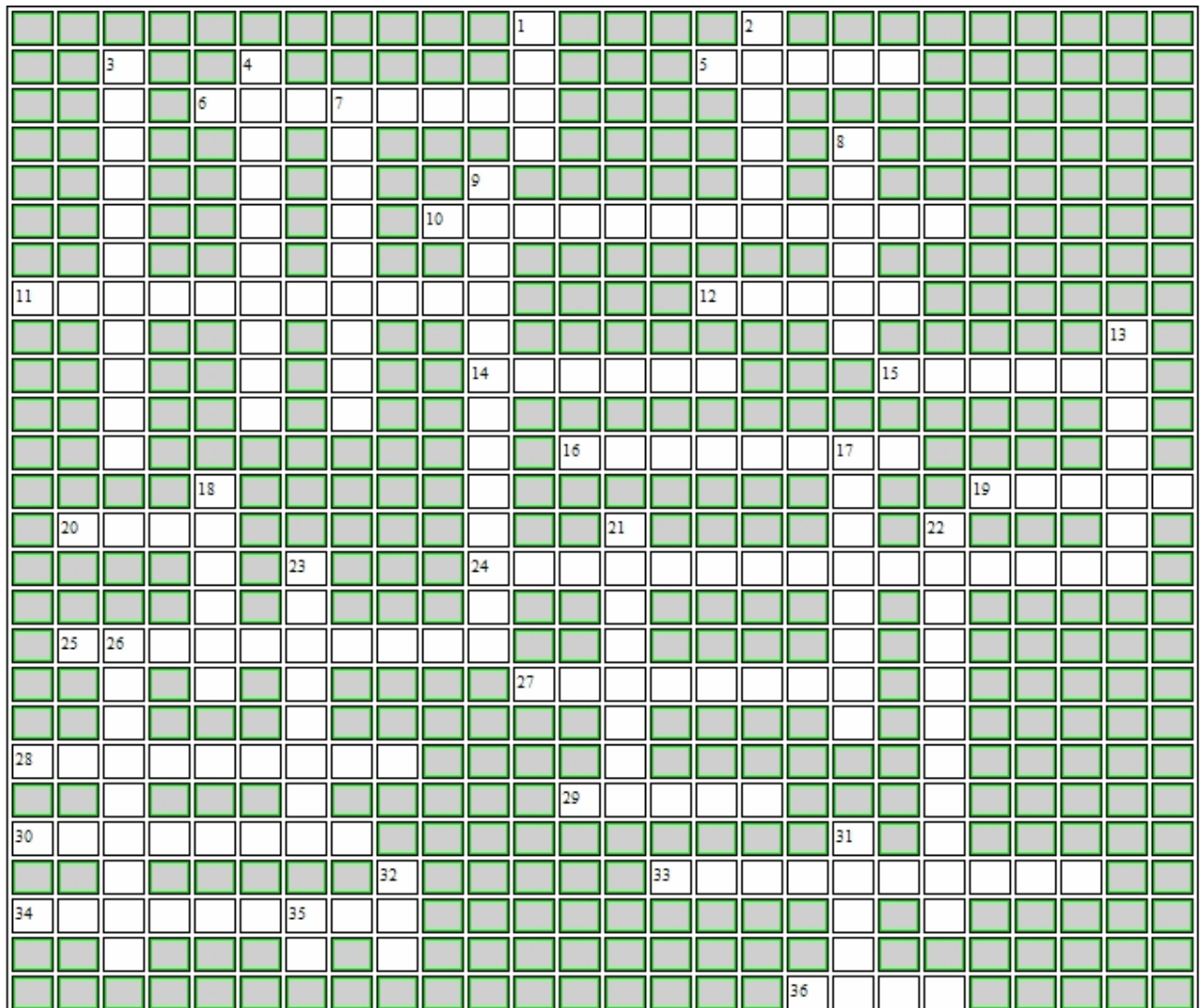
How come so many Russians support a party that is obviously not too fond of democratic procedures and structures? A quite likely reason is that they have had bad experience with democracy and hence favor a strong leadership to guarantee order and security. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union former President of the Russian Federation Boris Jelzin introduced democratic reforms in the 1990s. As a matter of fact, these reforms failed. The economy collapsed, inflation was boosted and the political situation became instable. In the view of many Russians, the situation improved after Vladimir Putin became President on December 31st, 1999. Ever since that day, Putin has tried to turn Russia into a super power again and in order to achieve this aim he has changed the Russian system into something that is occasionally referred to as ‘controlled democracy’. Unfortunately, Putin is constitutionally obliged to stand down after his second term as President ends in March, 2008.

At this point, we shall focus our attention again on the outcome of the contentious State Duma elections again. The Legislature of the Russian Federation consists of two chambers. The first is the State Duma which is elected by the Russian nation. The second chamber is the Federation Council in which 85 administrative councils of Russia are represented. To pass a law successfully, the majority of the State Duma has to vote for the bill, then it must be approved by the Federation Council and eventually it must be signed by the President. The Federation Council has power of veto but it can be outweighed by a two-thirds majority of the State Duma. To summarize this, with the two-thirds majority of United Russia Vladimir Putin has the power to change the Russian constitution and he could abuse this power to enlarge his authority significantly. Putin could actually imply a change of constitution that would allow him to run for a third term of office. This is probably one reason for the excitement about the State Duma elections. The West is afraid of tsar Putin. Whether the excitement is justified or not we will see in March, 2008, when the Russians have to elect a new President.

The Russian legislature consists of two chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the State Duma (resembling German Bundestag) and the Federation Council (resembling German Bundesrat).

Show What You Have Learnt

(by Susan Horschig)



Across

5. feeling unable to stand steadily
6. highest point in G.B.
10. an organization of about 50 countries that were once part of the British Empire
11. U.S. active intervention in world affairs to prevent spread of communism
12. large organ that cleans your body
14. longest river in South America
15. winner of the last European Football Championship
16. the part of your face above your eyes and below your hair
19. a song or poem praising God

Down

1. to let out a short breath
2. a small raised spot on your skin
3. Who wants to be a ...?
4. a substance that is put on the soil to make plants grow
7. a very frightening dream
8. second name of George Bush
9. a difference between two statements or beliefs
13. a punishment for breaking a law or rule
17. *

- | | |
|---|---|
| 20. act of rejecting a decision or bill | 18. past participle of seek |
| 24. American holiday celebrated on July 4 | 21. chinese way of putting your furniture |
| 25. first president of the USA | 22. the provision of sufficient support to promote learning |
| 27. people with one Native American parent and one Spanish parent | 23. capital city of Australia |
| 28. capital city of Scotland | 26. arranged or decided without any reason or plan |
| 29. a female dog or an insulting word for a woman | 31. a line of people waiting for something |
| 30. a priest of high rank in the Roman Catholic Church | 32. cash machine in AmE |
| 33. immigrants who never intended to make the U.S. their permanent home | 35. 1,024 Megabyte |
| 34. BrE two weeks | |
| 36. unable to hear well or unable to hear anything | |

The Battle for the Shuttle

(by Constanze May and Daniela Wolf)

This time, I promised to myself and my comrades that I would take the mission even more seriously and that I would not make the fatal mistake of underestimating the enemies' cunning tactics again. Prepared to fight tooth and nail, I arrived early at the battleground to find that only few of my fiercest rivals had taken up their battle positions right in front of me. Thanks to my excellent tip-toeing skills, which took countless years of hard practice up to this degree of perfection, I sneaked up on them without being noticed. First step of mission – take up position without loss of camouflage: accomplished. Now, the success of this mission depended purely on my patience and intuition to launch the attack at the right time. Hour after hour went by and the only thing me and my rivals could do was wait. Securing my position, I extended my camouflage and placed some efficiently misleading traps around me so that arriving enemies were doomed to stay away from me as far as possible. At 1500 CET, the tension had mounted to such an unbearable extent that no one was able to conceal their inner alertness, which was observable in our constant scanning of the surroundings for the target. Suddenly, the alleged target appeared at the horizon of the battleground, we all abandoned our cover, jumped on our feet and stormed the target's fortress. In the middle of the attack, struck by an intriguing thought, I began to wonder whether at least half of these fighters, including me, who were so keen on registering for one of the university's Badminton courses, knew that...

The history of Badminton dates back to ancient Greek and Egypt. Different versions of the game have been discovered throughout history. A game named "Battledore and Shuttlecock" was played in the west, where the players used the battledore – a paddle – to hit the shuttlecock back and forth. In Japan, a game called "Hanetsuki" was played during the 16th century. In the 1860s, a similar game was played in India called "Poona". This version of Badminton involved a net. It is said that the British Army Officers, who were stationed there, took this version back to England during the 1860s. At the beginning, the game with a shuttlecock, a net and battledores was part of the amusement of the upper classes. In 1873, the Duke of Beaufort gave a party at his country place called "Badminton" in Gloucestershire. As a result the sport received its name – Badminton. As early as 1895, the Badminton Association of England was constituted. Unfortunately, England is not automatically

one of today's leading Badminton nations. Europe has been outmatched by the Asian countries: Indonesia and China are the to most successful Badminton countries. They have won about 70% of all IBF (International Badminton Federation) events so far. Major Badminton tournaments in Malaysia or Indonesia attract the attention of crowds of up to 15,000 people. Since 1992 Badminton has been an Olympic discipline and provides the disciplines: men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles. Badminton impresses with rallies like lightning. Fu Haifeng from China heads the list of the fastest shots: 332 kph (206 mph). In comparison, the fastest serve of tennis player Andy Roddick reached a speed of over 150 mph. The shuttlecock weighs only between 4.74 and 5.5 grams, is made of 16 feathers and if there are taken from the left wing of a goose, the shuttle is supposed to be one of the best. Nonetheless, Badminton players are often smiled at because many people think that the fastest racket sport is not so demanding.

.....Back at the battlefield, I thought it might be an extra-ordinarily good idea, as the registration would go down in a more peaceful and less aggressive manner, to urge the hundreds of students to register for a course after they have successfully solved this crossword...

The Game

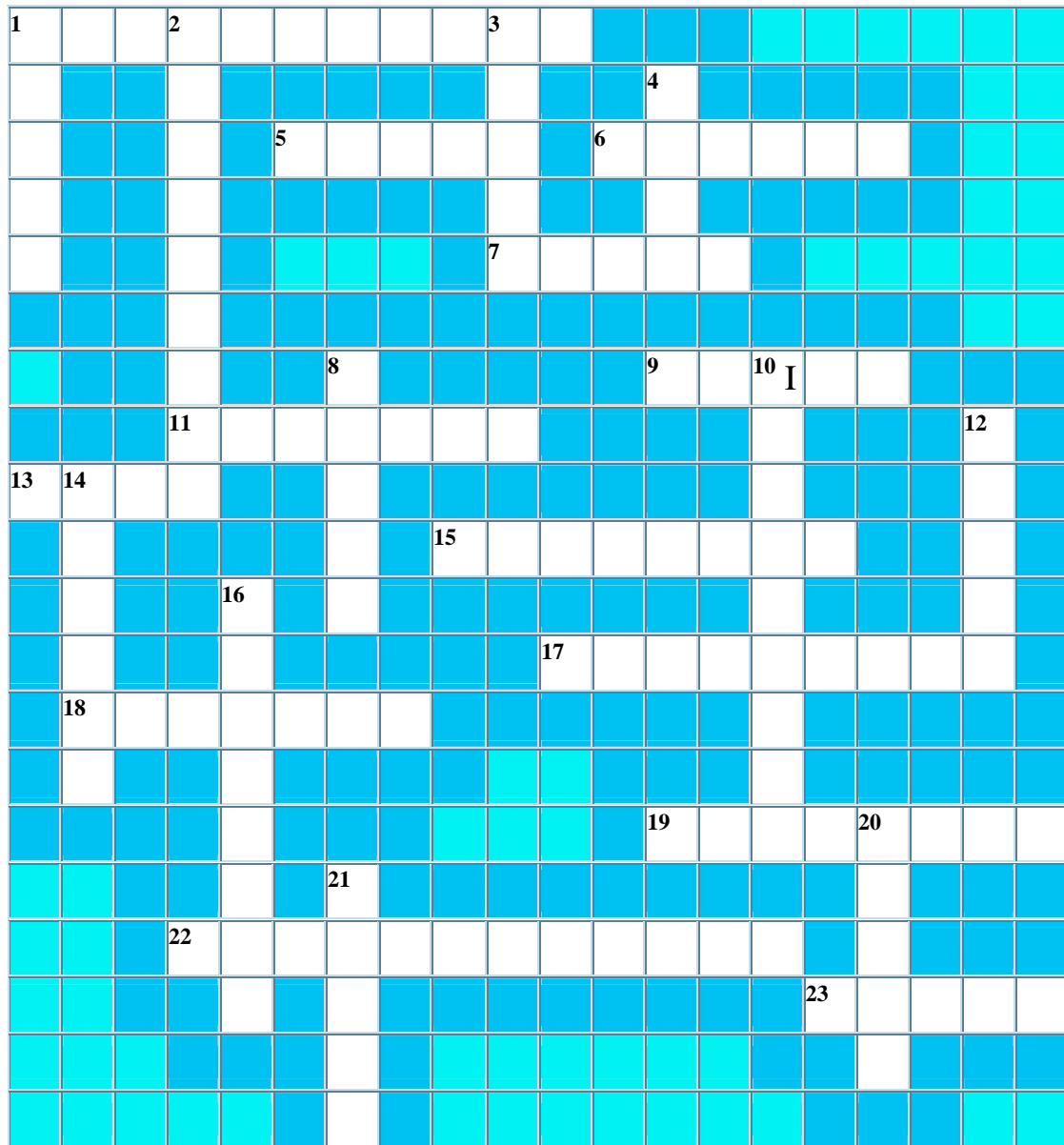
(by Constanze May)

Tension
Concentration
Visible in the air
Laughter vanishes for a while
Deep thought

The tone
Muffled and deep
Is hunted by all eyes
Activity replaced tension
This sound

Tactics
Subtle and clear
Deliberate distraction
Proper conduct of the plan of
Action

The Ultimate Badminton Crossword



**Across:**

- 1 Name of the flying object ("ball") used to play Badminton
- 5 The animal whose feathers are used for the production of Badminton "balls"
- 6 A common name for the Badminton "balls" referring to flying animals
- 7 The exchange of shots while the shuttle is in play
- 9 Any deceptive movement that disconcerts an opponent before or during the serve (homophone to 'faint')
- 11 The women's world team championships (1st part: German 'above' without umlaut; 2nd part: a small mug)
- 13 A shot hit softly and with finesse to fall rapidly and close to the net in the opponent's court (rhymes with 'top')
- 15 A legal shot in which the shuttle hits the frame of the racket (starts with the material trees consist of)
- 17 Badminton as an Olympic Sport was played first in the 1992 Olympic Games in? (city)
- 18 One of the founding members (country) of the International Badminton Federation (IBF)
- 19 The country place of which English Duke gave Badminton its name?
- 22 A doubles formation in which each partner is responsible for one side of the court
- 23 A quick wrist-and-forearm rotation used to surprise an opponent by changing an apparently soft shot into a faster passing shot (rhymes with 'kick')

Down:

- Hard-hit overhead shot that forces the shuttle
- 1 sharply downward; Badminton's primary attacking stroke
- The men's world team championships (1st part: name of German author-..... Mann; 2nd part: a small mug)
- 2
- A shot hit deep into the opponent's court (rhymes with 'fear' and is synonymous with 'plain')
- 3
- Fast downward shot that cannot be returned (synonymous with 'to murder')
- 4
- A fast and low shot that makes a horizontal flight over the net (same word as the action you conduct when using a car)
- 8
- Most successful
- 10 Badminton nation apart from China
- The name of an Indian predecessor to Badminton
- 12
- Instrument used by the player to hit the shuttlecock
- 14
- In which country is the IBF's headquarters located?
- 16
- A violation of the playing rules, either in serving, receiving, or during play (also used when blaming s.o.: It's your!)
- 20
- The stroke used to put the shuttlecock into play at the start of each rally
- 21

Across: 1 shuttlecock 5 goose 6 birdie 7 rally 9 feint 11 Uber Cup 13 drop 15 wood shot 17 Barcelona 18 England 19 Beaufort 22 side-by-side 23 flick

Down: 1 smash 2 Thomas Cup 3 clear 4 kill 8 drive 10 Indonesia 12 Poona 14 racket 16 Malaysia 20 fault 21 serve

The long-distance relationship generation

(by Rosalie Schimmel)



Long-distance calls to the United States or China are nothing exceptional in our globalized world anymore if you are seeking job opportunities or internships; long-distance flights dominate the international air traffic and very likely many of us have experienced its inconveniences on the way to our holidays, to our skiing trips in Canada or shopping sprees in Manhattan. You will find long-distance haulage, long-distance learners, long-distance trade and long-distance networks – everything is somewhat “long-distance” today. It comes as no real surprise that our interpersonal relationships are affected by this process.

In the good old days, being in love did not seem so strenuous. Both my grandparents were born in the small-town idyll of neighboring villages where they were brought up, educated and trained for work. Grandpa rode on a horse to court grandma, simple as that. And even the generation of my parents managed to get married, to settle down and foster their relationship within the city limits. Apart from that, there was only a slight chance for the citizens of the former GDR to become engaged in long-distance relationships anyways.

But let us have a look at the relationships of my generation. I am in college right now and at least half of my female fellow students are in a long-distance relationship, me included. We are forced by circumstance to conquer distances from a few rail kilometers to cross-country flights to spend a couple of days or the weekends with the chosen one. We invest a lot of money from our meager student budget, not to speak of the time we commonly waste waiting for the delayed means of public transport. You can imagine that the trade union strike of railroad engineers in Germany was my personal worst-case scenario.

As a result of studying abroad or attending colleges nationwide, because of online dating services and international chat rooms; due to deployment abroad, job careers, business meetings or regional unemployment, people of all backgrounds can be forced to lead a long-distance relationship – today even more so. You simply cannot choose whom you fall in love with. Of course there are both advantages and disadvantages to it. My generation is claimed to be young, mobile, spontaneous and flexible anyways - therefore “globalized love” should not be a problem, should it? And

don't we agree that long-distance relationships make life more exciting, more extraordinary and save us from living that boring daily routine of our parents? Self-determined people who are looking for variety in their lives, who seek change, excitement and careers and want to retain their independence might be happy with relationships of this kind. But people like me who seek shelter, security and a partner willing to share life on a daily basis are strained to the utmost by all the travelling, by sky-rocketing telephone bills and the weekly farewells.

With regard to the stability and the duration of a long-distance relationship, one can listen to stories of both success and failure, of great happiness or tragedy. My first long-term relationship was a story of failure. My ex-boyfriend and I had endured three of almost five years being separated by 240 kilometers during the week. I was not fond of commuting back and forth between home and college although I got used to it over the previous years. My boyfriend, however, had rather quickly developed good coping strategies and did not seem to be annoyed by this state at all. Last August I found out why – he was not lonely during the week as I was but was instead enjoying himself with several female students. As a result of two-timing me – wait, five-timing me would be more appropriate – I dumped him. My new relationship is again long-distance. I honestly envy others living a daily relationship routine.

I would love to have breakfast with my boyfriend every morning and I would love to go to sleep every night and watch him breathing.

Here are some stories of other long-distance relationships:

**JULIA**

age: 22 (in relationship 18-21)

place of living: Dresden

job: college student at TU

in love with: Lars

age: 28 (in relationship 24-27)

place of living: Bad Lausick/Leipzig

job: architect

Where did you meet and how did you fall in love?

He was a friend of my sister. We meet each other at parties more than once. But it took some time until we started going out by ourselves.

How long have you been in a long-distance relationship?

The relationship lasted three years (2003-2006), but only the last two years were long-distance.

How often did you see each other?

We saw each other nearly every weekend and during our first year sometimes even four days a week (Thursday through Monday).

How did you overcome the distance?

I overcame the distance by train. I always went home (the town where he lives is my hometown as well), he never came to see me in Dresden.

What do you think of long-distance relationships?

Long-distance relationships are hard work. It is important for both partners to think the same in terms of how often they want to see each other and what the future of the relationship will look like. Most of the times, one partner suffers and invests more than the other partner does. But if a long-distance relationship is only long-distance for a limited period of time, then it can work. I am sure that people cannot have long-distance relationships for the rest of their lives.

**CHRISTIN****age:** 22**place of living:** Dresden**job:** college student (medicine)**in love with:** André**age:** 23**place of living:** Dresden**job:** college student (waste management)***Where did you meet and how did you fall in love?***

I met him while working as a volunteer in a hospital where André worked at the same time after having resisted the draft. One day he asked me out on a date and so we had some coffee together. After a couple more dates we fell in love.

How long have you been in a long-distance relationship?

We've been a couple for 3 years now and about 1,5 to 2 years were long-distance as I was studying in Berlin and André attended college in Dresden.

How often did you see each other?

We saw each other almost every weekend and during our semester break. Usually, I went from Berlin to Dresden and we would spend the weekends in his room that he had to share with a room mate. That was a hard time as we basically did not have much time in privacy.

How did you overcome the distance?

We called each other a lot, usually three to four times a week. Moreover, we sent each other text messages, postcards and letters.

What do you think of long-distance relationships?

Long distance relationships are quite hard because sometimes you feel like you and your partner kind of drift away from each other during such a long week of loneliness. After almost two years of having a long-distance relationship I moved to Dresden to live together with André in our own 3-room apartment. Even though I had to leave my friends behind and make a new start in Dresden it was the right decision for me. Now we can finally live a "real" relationship.



KATRIN

age: 23

place of living: Dresden

job: college student

in love with: Nick

age: 28

place of living: Bodmin (Cornwall), England

job: Geography teacher

Where did you meet and how did you fall in love?

Nick and I met at the school where I worked as a foreign language assistant. My boss, the head of the foreign language department, had asked him if he would take me surfing. When he saw me in the hall he assumed it must be me - the German assistant. After that, we spent a lot of time together. I fell in love with him because he is a real gentleman, he makes me laugh and we can have amazing conversations. He fell in love with me because he could be himself without feeling trapped.

How long have you been in a long-distance relationship?

I left Cornwall in Sept 2006. Thus, we've been in a long-distance relationship for 14 months now. We started seeing each other a quite long time before I left.

How often did you see each other?

We see each other about once a month. Luckily, there are term breaks which I usually spend with him in England.

How do you overcome the distance?

We have to book flights if we want to see each other, usually Ryanair or Easyjet.

What do you think of long-distance relationships?

In the beginning both of us didn't think a long-distance relationship (England-Germany) would work, but when we became aware of the fact that we couldn't be without each other we made it work. Even though there are 1000 miles between us, I am closer to Nick than I've been to any other person. We are talking on the phone for about an hour nearly every night and we treasure the time when we see each other. ...As long as you know what you want, everything is possible.

Uni With Child

(by Sandra Grunert)

Monday, July 23rd in this summer was one of the most amazing, but also frightening days of my life. That day a little test confirmed my condition of pregnancy. And with that condition a lot of questions emerged. How would I manage my studies and a baby at the same time? Will I be forced to abandon my studies? Who would help me with the organisation? Suddenly I felt pretty alone with my “problem” until I came across this website “Uni mit Kind” made by the student union of the TUD.

The essential aims of the initiative „Uni mit Kind“ are the development of a campus office provided by the TUD student union for consultation, seminars and help around the topic of having and raising a child while studying. It also aims to expand the provided child care facilities on the TUD campus and the improvement of its temporal flexibility. It is planning additional nursing and diaper changing rooms in the buildings of the TUD campus and an active support for students for career entry with a child.

The campus office for child care at the TUD is situated behind the Hörsaalzentrum on the George-Bähr Street, number 16. There are 4 rooms used as quiet and nursing rooms, as a play room or for consultation and seminars. In addition, the staff uses them for their work and information meetings. Changing tables offer everything needed for baby care and can be used during the office hours. It also provides a range of engaging possibilities. The office can be used for meeting other parents and exchanging experiences with child care.

There is the baby nursing group, which is provided by trained nursing counsellors and takes place under special topics like “the organisation of studies and raising a child”.

Another choice is the toddler group where the children can sing, paint and do handicrafts while their parents have the opportunity to drink tea and chat.

The campus office also offers courses for several topics during pregnancy such as a childbirth-preparation course, a pregnancy-yoga course, a workshop for parenting and various information meetings around the topic of “baby and studies”.

Additionally, there are reforming-gymnastic and baby-massage courses for the time after child-birth. These courses are especially funded for students and therefore less expensive than courses provided by federal facilities.

On June, 19th in 2007, the TU Dresden achieved the commendation of the audit “familiengerechte Hochschule” from the *beruf und familie gGmbH*.

The special aims of that audit are to take a leading role in being a family-orientated and gender-conscious university; to prevent students from dropping out of university due to problems of organising studies with child care; and to advertise the already provided child care arrangements of a university for a better use. The award was given by the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Ursula von der Leyen.

More information about the initiative can be found on the TUD website.

In 2007 the university leadership honoured the family-oriented commitment of several faculties of the TUD. The first prize went to the faculty of construction engineering for enabling the balance between family and career. It expanded the child care facility of the TUD with an additional 18 spaces, which were funded by a special-research-division of the faculty. They also built an adventure playground for the nursery school at the Beutlerpark.

For the coming years several faculties are planning on more improvements in child care facilities and hopefully the TUD will keep its leading role under the family-oriented universities in Germany.