

## GERMANY REVISITED John Broadhurst.

The route was 'hacked',  
The cases packed;  
Off on another holiday escapade,  
What a parade!  
July 29th was the date,  
Once again we set off late:  
But despite early worry  
We found there was no need to hurry. We arrived at the port with time to spare And sat  
around without a care  
Until a face at the window appeared Asking if we were quite prepared To travel on the  
roads of France, Some compulsory equipment needs to be bought in advance. So off to  
the shop I went to get New bulbs for the car all packed in a set Which to me all looked  
quite nice Until the man announced the price! The crossing on the 'Cat' was smooth and  
quick Disembarkation pretty slick; So Eastward we sped  
Our holiday ahead.  
All was going according to plan  
Until Mum said, "It would be nice if we can,  
Stop for the night if there's a suitable place."  
By now we were at the mercy of the Belgian race.  
Those who, by now, know the Broadhurst norm  
Will be cheered to hear how we ran true to form.

Leige, we decided was a suitable place,  
To be honest I'd had all the driving I could face.  
We left the motorway to find a motel,  
It seemed clear on the map, but that's all very well;  
We followed a sign with a car and a bed;  
But after so long to nowhere it led,  
So we asked at a garage if a motel he knew:  
He drew us a plan and off we flew.  
Sadly either the plan, or maybe I  
Was not very clear, or just pie in the sky.

After many miles of searching around  
In the centre of Leige ourselves we found.  
Mum spotted a hotel, so we parked the car  
And decided to walk as it was not too far;  
But there in the window was a bright pink light,  
We'd have realised earlier had it been at night,  
For as we walked along the street  
A scantily dressed female we did meet,  
And low and behold we'd not gone very far  
When there in a window was one in just pants and bra:  
I'm sure that what she has for sale  
Is not be available by mail.  
Back to the car we went in haste  
From the 'red light district' we raced  
For what we took to be a hotel  
Must surely have been the local brothel!  
That we realised in time I'm truly glad

'Cause in more ways than one we could have been 'had'.  
It was good to know we were running true to form,  
All part of the Broadhurst holiday norm.

Next, we asked a man on a bike  
Who sent us another great hike,  
He described the route, and gave the name of the place  
But it turned out to be a wild goose chase.  
We followed his directions, but when we got there  
It was a home for residential care.  
However, they were very kind  
And told Mum the way for us to find  
A place which suited us very well  
Called the El Castelino Hotel.  
So after 50 miles and two and a half hours  
We were in a comfy room we could say was ours;  
At least we might  
For just one night.  
We ate the rest of our lunch, and then had showers  
Went to bed and slept for hours.  
The clocks abroad are an hour ahead  
Which meant there was no time to lie in bed.  
Breakfast was salami, cheese and ham  
With the continental bread and jam.  
I paid with plastic, as I'd no Belgian money;  
If they'd demanded cash it would not have been funny.

Leaving the hotel at half past nine;  
Continuing our journey with plenty of time.  
Only once did we lose our way  
And so we arrived about mid-day.  
Cooked lunch at one, tea at three;  
They do nothing but eat it seems to me.

The relations all seem to be very kind,  
Each in their own way trying to find  
A reason to talk, and make us glad  
We'd come all this way, despite the journey we'd had.

At half past seven, a full blown meal  
Which they set about with the usual German zeal.  
More people appeared to share the spread  
To watch them eat you'd think they never fed.  
One enormous lady, a female 'bosch'  
Reminded me of Captain Pugwash;  
So large was she when she sat to eat  
I thought she'd take up more than one seat.

Whilst we enjoyed the food  
Along came a musical interlude:  
A student sang in medieval costume  
Which was most enjoyable, but left no room

To get to the food to replenish ones plate,  
So what we had was all we ate  
Until after an hour and a strange instrument  
He took his bow and off he went.

We ate and talked, and talked and ate  
Which all went on till very late.  
We ate and drank, and at last Mum said  
"If you'll excuse us, we're off to bed:  
Exhausted, full, with liquor content  
And very soon to sleep we went.

We arose late  
Overate  
Before leaving for Bernd's home,  
Calling in Mainz so that Anja could come.  
Bernd lives in the top apartment of three  
All of which he owns, complete with balcony:  
The rooms are large, the garden vast,  
The cost of owning property he's learning fast.  
From there to Frankfurt, not too far  
Which is just as well as it was so hot in the car.  
The centre of Frankfurt was also hot;  
But in a fairly short time we saw alot.  
Sunday was obviously a very good day  
As most of the crowds had stayed away.  
The city's a mixture of old and new  
With everywhere skyscrapers pushing through.  
The River Main was a dirty brown, and looked pretty grim  
Otherwise, in that heat, we might have been tempted to swim;  
But instead, with an ice-cream we made do  
So we looked like a typical holiday crew.  
Herr Von Goether, a very famous poet;  
The German equivalent of Shakespeare, although we didn't know it.  
We saw his house down a small side street,  
Hardly a mind-bending feat!  
Tea time  
Meant apple wine.  
The local speciality;  
Yet in reality  
It was dry cider, in all but name.  
Quite refreshing just the same  
Particularly if the last quarter  
Was topped up with the ever present sparkling water;  
Most acceptable in the heat  
Especially as we had to wait to eat.

Then to the car for the journey back  
By which time we were glad to hit the sack

The next morning, to the local hops  
We visited the Kirchberg shops.

Mum spent time in the kitchen ware,  
I looked at the tools while she was there.

We called at a factory at Reinzinn  
Which, we were told, made things out of tin.  
There were cups, trophies, plates, shields and medals  
Pictures, key rings, spoons, badges and models;  
Many were sculptured or beautifully carved  
I might have bought one had the prices been halved.

From there we went to Idar Oberstein  
To see the stones I so wished were mine.  
From many different parts of the world  
The beauties of natural stone unfurled;  
Some carved, some etched, some polished and shone  
Precious and semi-precious stones by the ton:  
Sapphires, diamonds, topaz, amethyst, quartz,  
Rubies, emeralds, turquoise, spinel and lots  
Of others, too numerous to mention  
The sort that would surely cost a pension.  
It really was the most impressive display,  
I would love to have taken them all away.

We had to leave early the next day  
'Cause Speyer is quite a long way away.  
The Cathedral was our first port of call,  
Which was amazingly plain and long and tall.  
We had a Dutch guide, Matteus was his name  
He told us that he was new at the game,  
Which soon became obvious because  
'Twas hard to tell whether we were guide to him or he us.  
The first fact he let us know:  
That it was built 1000 years ago;  
It was the largest in Europe  
With that I could cope.  
All in all it was pretty dull  
Except for the crypt where the tombs were full.  
The walls were bare  
And everywhere  
The same pink stone was evident,  
So we caught up with Christa and off we went.  
It certainly wasn't the best I've seen,  
But still, for some reason, I was glad I'd been.

By this time it was time for lunch  
A sandwich would have been quite enough to munch,  
But, having from the menu, chosen a meal  
Christa set off with her usual zeal  
Decided the beer garden was too hot  
So down to the cellar we did trot;

Only to wait for three quarters of an hour  
Under the light of candle power.  
All the same  
When, at last, it came

It proved to be very tasty, of course,  
But, I think, by then, I could have eaten a horse.

The Treasures of the Romanovs was the next port of call  
Situated in a sort of free trade hall  
Or 'Historical Museum of the Palatinate'  
Where it soon became obvious why the Tzars met their fate.  
There were gold and silver icons, encrusted with jewels,  
Inlaid furniture and ornate stools;  
All priceless treasures from St Petersburg,  
They really were the very last word.  
The only problem was the intense heat  
Which their ventilation system failed to beat.

Back to the car,  
Too hot by far.  
If we had needed any proof  
I'm sure we could have fried an egg on the roof.

To Heidelberg we made our way,  
The famous castle, the last sight for the day;  
Set in grounds high on a hill,  
You pay 2 marks, then wander at will,  
And see the statues all over the walls  
There are high barriers so that no-one falls.  
Some of the fortress has broken away;  
But to go in the apartments extra you pay.  
Mostly all that's left is a magnificent facade,  
Yet to visualise it complete is not too hard.  
It seemed we saw people from nearly every race  
Gathered to take in this magnificent place.

Just outside Mainz, Anja is living  
And she, to us, evening meal was giving.  
Bockwurst sausages, potatoes the German way  
Fresh fruit salad soaked in fromage fraise,  
It may seem ungrateful or even a touch rude,  
But the veg's were left overs from Saturdays food.  
Her apartment is on the third floor;  
But a single girl doesn't need any more.  
It was spacious, comfy and easy to keep,  
And besides she has to have somewhere to sleep.  
The very next day Anja told her Mum on the phone  
That she'd managed to find herself a new home  
Which was bigger and cheaper and better by far,  
And for her work she would not need her car.

We journeyed back without any frights  
At 90 m.p.h. plus I wish he'd used full lights.  
We looked at family photos 'till late that night  
And Mum asked Christa if she might  
Take some home to have copies made:  
She reluctantly agreed, yet seemed a little afraid  
She may not see her treasures again  
However we took them just the same.

Next morning we went to purchase the wine,  
We were on our own so we took our time  
To look around and see what else was there;  
From things to eat to clothes to wear.

We bought bottles of wine and bottles of beer  
As well as other souvenirs to prove we were here.  
Filling the trolley was all very funny  
Until we had to fork out the money.

In the afternoon at home we stayed  
And read our books and slept in the shade,  
'Cause by then we were out on our knees  
In a temperature of 31 degrees.

In the evening we took Christa and Helmuth for a meal,  
After translating the menu not a lot did appeal.  
I chose a vegetarian feast  
Its main attraction being that it cost the least.  
The setting was lovely by a lake full of fish  
One of which you could chose for your main dish.  
The food was good and nicely presented;  
It was the waits between courses that I resented:  
But I paid the bill with a smile on my face  
And at 9.45 we left that peaceful place.  
Mum packed the cases and put everything straight  
So the next morning we wouldn't be away too late.

An early start seemed to be wise  
So at half past seven we said our goodbyes.  
Beautiful home, lovely people, kind, hospitable, the best  
Its just that now we need to go home for a rest!

The plan was to beat the heat,  
And round about Mons I nearly admitted defeat;  
But Mum went to sleep so I pressed on  
And soon after Lille the heat was gone,  
So we decided to complete the day  
By spending the evening around Calais.  
The Hotel Balladin is part of a chain  
Of purpose built motels offering roughly the same;

A basic room with toilet and shower  
Just big enough to pass a comfortable hour  
Before we wandered round the centre of town,  
And then a chocolate drink, before we got our heads down.

Next morning, a continental breakfast  
With plenty to eat, so that we would last  
And would not feel we needed more  
Until we arrived at the Superstore.  
So after a fairly adequate meal  
We set off again for Centre Ville.  
By chance as we wandered through Calais centre  
Mum remembered the photos Christa had leant her.  
Copies were made in 15 minutes flat  
And they only cost us 30 francs at that.  
So th originals could be sent back to Germany  
To ensure the family's continued harmony.

We felt we wanted to make the most  
Of our day in Calais, so we made for the coast.  
The golden sand before us lay  
As we drove on further round the bay;  
Only to be caught in a thunderstorm  
Which brought an abrupt end to our exploring morn.  
So we made our way to the Mammoth store,  
We'd already bought wine, but we wanted some more;  
And fruit, carrots, celery and cheese,  
And lovely French bread to put in the freeze.  
No wonder Sainsbury's gave it the Mammoth name  
Every trolley was much the same  
Loaded with cheap French merchandise;  
We hoarded our goodies like harvest mice.

We arrived at the Hover port at half past two,  
An hour early; but we were allowed straight through  
To board the three o'clock boat,  
To me its a miracle how these things float:  
But somehow with a mighty roar  
This floating vacuum cleaner leaves the shore.  
The sea was flat and calm  
And gladly we came to no harm.  
Yet somewhere there must have been a fault  
'Cause when we got off the car was covered in salt.  
If we'd known about the leak before  
I think we'd have been tempted to stay on the shore.  
Arriving before you've left appeals to me  
'Twould be good if that's how it could always be:  
Yet to arrive in England at 14.40  
Having left France at 15.00, seemed strange to me.

There were three major roadworks on the motorway  
Made worse by the particular time of day.

Friday afternoon's a bad time to be  
Heading towards the Westcountry.

The Little Chef at Wimborne made a welcome break  
And helped us both to stay awake.  
We finally arrived home at half past nine  
Having had an enjoyable, yet exhausting time.  
An endurance test,  
Now for a rest!