

Trip report E.W. Dijkstra, Copenhagen, 12-16 Sep. 1982

I had been invited to give the banquet speech on Tuesday, September 14th, at the end of the second day of a three-day "ITT Worldwide Programming Managers' Meeting". The invitation had reached me during my last visit to Austin, Texas, and, having never visited that company, I accepted the invitation.

Originally I had planned to fly to Copenhagen on Tuesday morning and to return the next day. But when Ria told me that she would like to join me and pointed out that neither of us had had much of a holiday this summer, that schedule was quickly changed. We decided to go by car and to leave Nuenen so early that we could drive up North at our leisure.

The two of us left Nuenen on Sunday morning at 10:30. As soon as we had crossed the Dutch-German border, we left the highway and continued via secondary roads, changing seats every 120 km and stopping when we felt like it. Around dinner-time we found a nice little hotel, South of Lübeck. In the second half of the next morning we took the ferry from Puttgarden to Rødby and largely via very small country roads we drove to Copenhagen, where we arrived around 15:00. It had been a very nice trip: the weather had been fine, but not too warm and the late-summer landscape had been a joy to look at.

That afternoon I prepared my "visuals" while Ria found her way in Copenhagen. Afterwards we joined the -excellent!- ITT dinner for which Winston Churchill Jr.

had been invited as the speaker.

The next day Ria and I renewed together our acquaintance with Copenhagen. The town was windy that day. I rested an hour before dinner where I spoke from 21:50 until 23:15. My speech was largely devoted to the double-talk in which much of the discussion about computing is conducted and to my great amusement I saw it cut through the audience: half of it enjoyed it very much, half of it felt visibly uneasy (probably because I exposed their own behaviour).

On Wednesday morning we left after breakfast at 9:40. Shortly after 18:00 we crossed the German-Dutch border and half an hour later we had dinner in Denekamp. That evening we visited my colleague Coen Bron in Hengelo, where we stayed for the night. We had not seen Coen for quite some time and it was a very nice evening. The next day we drove home via my mother in Zutphen and via friends in Apeldoorn.

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An ITT brochure on the company's commitment to programming opens with a quotation from Rand V. Araskog: "We recognize software utilization as the technological challenge of the future and we've mobilized to meet it." There is a budding awareness that that software shall have to be designed, but -at least as far as I could observe- no idea that an intellectual discipline is involved. The whole enterprise struck me as gadget-driven to the extreme.

I quote from leaflets of the ITT brochure.

"Advanced Technology's work is basic to all aspects

of the ITT programming effort: the definition of the Optimum Programmer Workstation [sic], and Programming Development Environment. [...] Advanced Technology investigates the full range of programming resources, programming management tools, integrated text and graphics systems, programming analysis tools, very-high-level [sic] languages, programming design tools, voice commands, operational programmer workstation hardware prototypes, store and forward voice messages feasibility, and fully integrated programmer workstation prototype."

So now you know what ITT's Advanced Technology is doing! Applied Technology is also interesting:

"[...] Applied Technology specialists [...] work on all aspects of programming metrics [...]. Applied Technology continuously improves the quality and the productivity of the corporation's programming by developing standards and auditing performance."

To someone whose only tool is a hammer, each problem looks like a nail. I found it impossible to take ITT's Programming Effort seriously.

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