

Bad Godesberg

Suburbs don't come much leafier than Bad Godesberg, the Bonn suburb chosen by the Deutscher Go Bund for this year's European Go Congress. We played in the Stadthalle, a modern building in the middle of a lovely green park. The main pedestrianised shopping area began 200 metres away, and a kilometre walk took you to the Rhine.

Overlooking the town was Bad Godesburg, (watch the spelling) a ruined castle on a hill. There was a good view up there, and a very pricey restaurant, where my good friend Geoff Kaniuk spent 7 euros on a bottle of water. Leafy suburbs don't come cheap, and hotels were on the pricey side. If you were happy to come in every day by bus there was cheap hostel accommodation available. In the evenings you could visit three pubs that had been equipped with go sets; a nice touch. A good way to spend the evenings when you weren't involved in any side events.

Organisation was on the whole well up to expected German standards. Stronger players played in a few smaller rooms, but most of us were in the main hall with getting on for two hundred tables. The rounds started on time, though there was the usual crush to read the tiny printing on the pairing lists. We had all the usual side events; 9x9, 13x13, blitz, and various less familiar events such as Midnight Madness: a tournament in the small hours. A goodly range of professionals was available for simultaneous displays, lectures, and game analysis. If you want more details about all this, visit <http://www.egc2012.eu/>.

This year there were over 20 of us Brits, which sounds a reasonable attendance compared with the small numbers of us that there have been at some recent European congresses. But it doesn't sound so good when you compare our attendance with that of other countries. Finland, for example, with less than a tenth Britain's population, had more players attending. I don't know what is the answer to the problem of stay-at-home Brits. If more of us were willing to travel we might have a few more 5- and 6-dans.

We were all issued with *Kombi* tickets. You could use all the public transport in the Bonn area for free, but needed to be ready to show your passport. Buses, trains and U-Bahn had no gates; you just got on and were trusted to have a ticket. No one ever challenged me. It was a short ride to Bonn. Because Bonn was the state capital of Western Germany before reunification, it boasts more museums and galleries than you would expect in what is only a medium sized town. I also took the chance to revisit Königswinter on the other side of the Rhine, the site of the 1979 European Congress.

One of the off-day excursions was a boat trip to the Lorelei rock. Price 85 euros. I preferred to pay just 10 euros for a boat trip to Linz. No not that one; a charming little mediaeval town a couple of hours (and one back) up the Rhine. On the way we passed Remagen, site of the famous bridge which first took US troops into Nazi Germany. I was surprised to find no bridge there now; just a ferry. The bridge abutments are still there; one is now a peace museum, and the other a seismological station, of all things.

I did appallingly badly in the main tournament, but had the positive of two excellent sessions with Catalin Taranu, the Romanian 6p player who is a first class teacher. He always seems to have a smile on his face, and doesn't rubbish your moves, just points out better ones.

As always, on the final evening we had the song party, attended by about 20 singers, and lasting three hours. I am expected to produce a new song for these occasions, and it appears below.

I always enjoy German events, and this was no exception. A fine location, good weather, good organisation; all I would have liked was a few more wins!

European Go Congress Song 2012

Francis Roads

Bad Go

Traditional German waltz tune



1. Bad go, bad go, is what we play, We play it all day as long as we may,
2. *Bad Go- Bad Go- Bad Go - des - berg,* *It's where we all are, from near and from far,*
3. Byo - yo - mi rules are ra - ther strange, They don't fall with - in the Ing clock's range,
4. *To take a board out - side to play, A larg-ish de - po - sit you have to pay,*
5. When drink - ing beer is your in - tent, Re - mem-ber the bot - tle's on - ly lent,



- Bad go, bad go, is what we play, We play it as long as we may. _____
Bad Go- Bad Go- Bad Go - des - berg, We're all here from near and from far _____
So la - ter they were re - ar - ranged, Not e - v'ry-one knew they'd been changed. _____
Re - mem - ber when your game you've played To get thir - ty eu - ros re - paid _____
A bot - tle's not quite like a set, Fif - ty cents is all you will get. _____

6. When I have dinner, you bet your shirt
That first comes the main course, then dessert.
When Nie Wei Ping gives birthday cake,
Dessert is the first course we take.
7. The river trip was far from cheap,
At 85 euros, rather steep.
We took our own trip down the Rhine,
A ten euro fare seemed just fine.
8. A couple of hours, and we reached Linz,
No, not that one, don't make me wince.
The Danube Linz is far away,
You'll not get there in just a day.

Repeat verses 1 and 2.

Notes:

Apparently the official EGF byo-yomi rules were such that it was impossible to programme an Ing (electronic) clock to observe them. Because of this the time rules had to be altered, but not all players were aware of the alteration, which led to some bad feeling.

The organisers were quite reasonably determined to keep track of all their equipment. You had to pay a 30 euro deposit to take a go set outside, which contrasted rather strongly with the 50 cents that you got back on beer (and other) bottles at the food bar.

During the congress professional player Nie Wei Ping's 60th birthday was celebrated, even though it was not actually due until 17th August. We were all issued with a slice of cake, of the sort which does nothing for ones waistline, and well before dinner time.