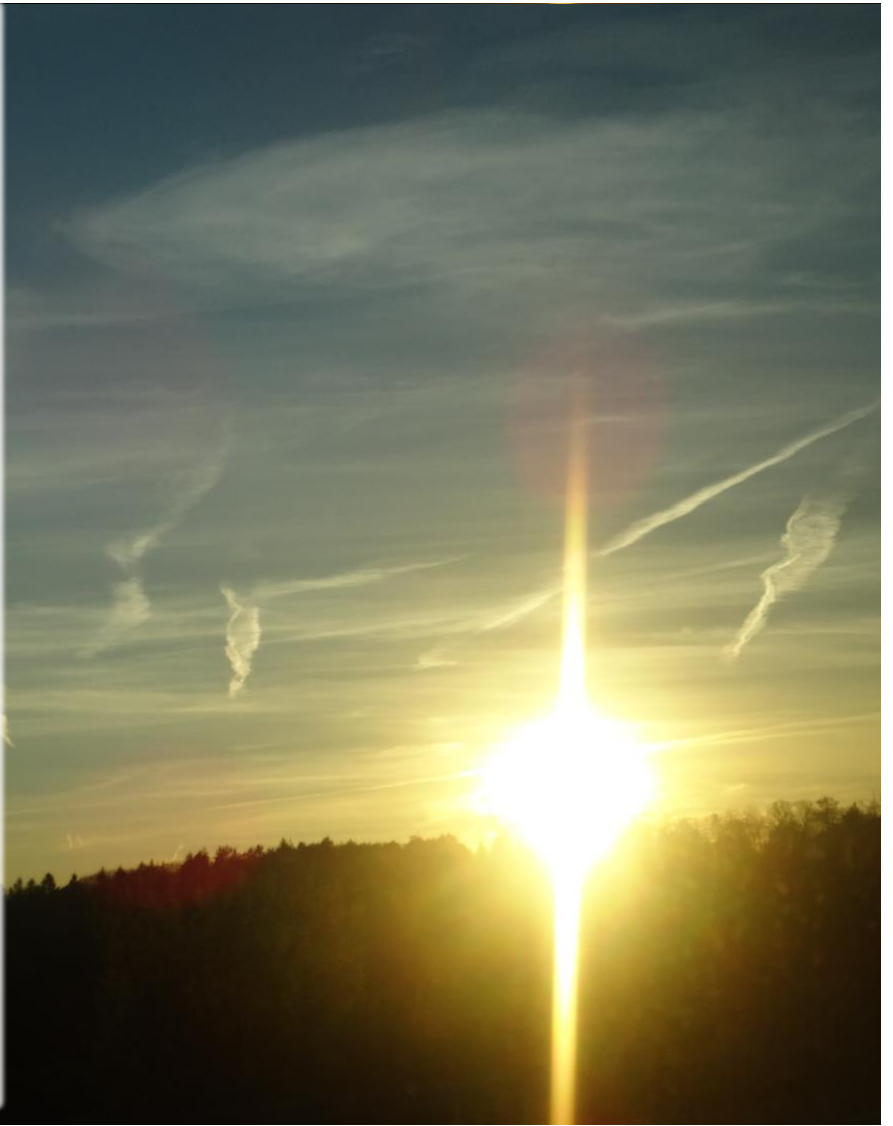


Summer Semester Exchange

Dylan Aird DHBW-Stuttgart

2014



This is a document about my first semester abroad as a RMIT exchange student studying at DHBW-Stuttgart. I am studying computer science; my total duration of stay in Germany will be from the 27th of February 2014 – 28th February 2015

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My first semester abroad on student exchange at DHBW-Stuttgart, was full of great experiences, people and memories. The past 100 days thanks to the Baden-Württemberg Scholarship I have seen 12 notable places across Germany, 3 countries and a handful of great people.

Before Leaving Australia I took German language and culture classes and received a level A1 in German language, it was a very good insight into the upcoming experience I was about to have, the application process and getting enrolled was fairly straight forward once I was accepted.

Upon arrival in Stuttgart after landing and staying with my girlfriend's family in Hamburg I was greeted with open arms. Agnieszka Halina made the process of finding classes, and logging onto the network in DHBW easy. Alongside those essential things Aga in collaboration with the international office put together a package of necessary information for all the international students. Mine had information regarding registering for the city of Stuttgart. The information session for the international students for me was cut short as I had to attend my first class, where I was later to meet and make a few friends. Their names were Stephan, Marc and Dennis. They were later in 2 classes for group work and made it easier for me to get used to life and culture in Germany as it is a little different from Australia, Melbourne in particular.

The class structure I was used to in Melbourne from my first two semesters at Rmit was fairly different the structure at DHBW, for my classes back home we had 2-3 assignments/tests and then the exam it was a little different here with just having the course work and then the exam, it was something new to me but I adjusted to cope.

The professor I worked with on my project class Pr. David Suendermann-Oeft is possibly the smartest yet so easy to work with and relaxed person I have ever met. I had the classes' machine learning and speech processing with him with a current ongoing project for Stuttgart's VVS (Transport System). The lab meetings for this class were every Monday at 4pm and half of the students would use google hangouts to attend the meeting as some had internships or were part of cross university collaboration.

Through David I met Ahmed who I was to work with on the VVS System later becoming good friend's, Ahmed and I gelled over similar interests and hung out quite a lot if it involved just talking about life experiences, throwing the NFL ball I brought from Kanstadt sports, or even hiring DB bikes and riding around the city.



The Stipendium from the state of Baden-Württemberg helped me achieve my goal of exploring another country with the coinciding ability to study and gel with the culture of



Germany and its people. The notable things I done during my stay was see four of my favourite bands and even get talking with one of them when they realised I was also from Australia. Becoming entwined with the German culture and becoming more of a resident rather than a tourist. Seeing major cities in Germany such as Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt, Munich, Karlsruhe and Cologne, Although I didn't really spend much time in Berlin and plan to go back there next semester.



On the 17th of may I went to the Porsche museum in Zuffenhausen in Stuttgart it was interesting to finally indulge in the history of Porsche and the European side of motor racing. If you were a car fan I would highly suggest you go have a look.

On the 27th of May I went to a presentation at the Hamburg planetarium that Col. Chris Hadfield gave on his time in space, aboard the international space station (I.S.S), his life experiences and the content of his book ("An Astronauts Guide To Life On Earth") which I have read. It was one of the most memorable experiences in my life. Chris Hadfield is very inspirational as striving towards your goals no matter how impossible they may seem. I have always been a person interested on space, life in space and the great unknown, so it was a good insight for someone studying computer science to really see what is possible when you put the right heads together. I also managed to video him singing an original song he wrote with the bare naked ladies called Is Somebody Singing (I.S.S)



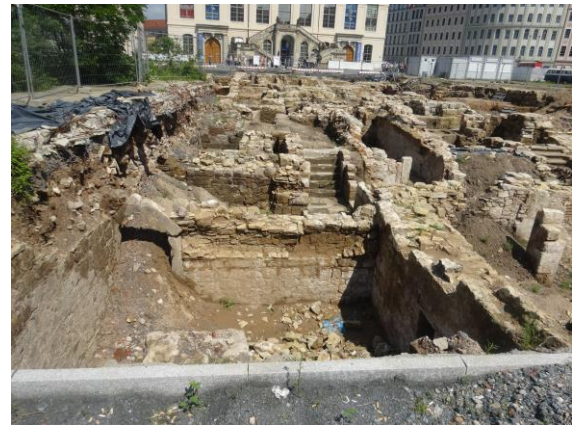
[A Link to the youtube video performance](#)



On the 25th of May I went to Karlsruhe to see a favourite Australian band of mine called Buried In Verona, I brought 2 tickets as my girlfriend was supposed to come but she got caught up in University work. So with the spare ticket I had I walked up to the door and said the next person who walks in give them free entry with this, because of that I

managed to meet Yve and Andre who are also big fans and we hung out for the rest of the night.

The concert was amazing I managed to meet the band and get free entry for a show on their tour later in the year with another Australian band so that made my week.



Dresden, I went there for the same concert from Karlsruhe on the 31st of May but before the concert started I decide to do a little exploring around the city and it just blew me away, it was so nice and I took lots of photos. Even Skyped my dad back home and gave him a little walk around tour so he could see what I was experiencing. I was later unable to attend the concert as I got really sick and went home.

One city that really stood out to me was



On the 3rd of June I went on a road trip to Munich with my friend Al that I met in the first week of being in Stuttgart, Al was the head cook at one of the restraunts I went to and realised that I was speaking with an Australian accent so he sat down and chatted and things went from there. On the drive to Munich I seen the giant "Legoland" on the side of the road and

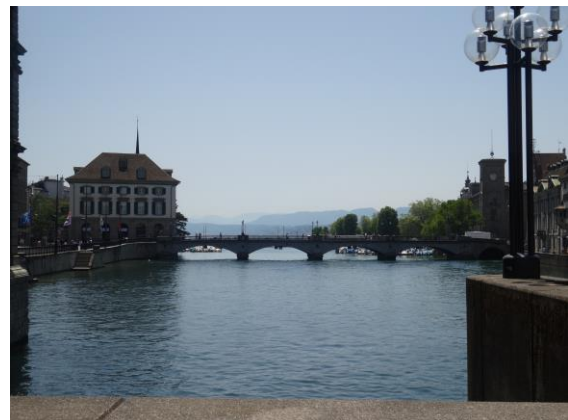


even got my own chance to drive as I have an international driving permit, Munich to me was a very tidy city and I will be going back later in the year for the Oktoberfest as I feel I didn't see enough of it this time, but I seen the main city and Took lots of photos in the short time I was there Al and I really made of it what we could and helped me tick another city of my list of cities to visit in Germany.

On the 6th of June I went to Switzerland with another friend I made, Thomas was actually my roommate but he had to move out as he is not a student but an intern for Bosch. On our way down South we stayed in a city called Konstanz which is located on the Bodensee and is right on the border of Germany and Switzerland. The city was beautiful and the Bodensee blew me away with how clear it was. I took lots of photos and videos even went swimming in it for a few hours. We went out for dinner and walked around the city on a nice summer night, Konstanz was a really nice city and I certainly plan to revisit before I leave Germany.



Due to the limited time I had I only got to see Zurich in Switzerland I took lots of photos as a typical tourist would and the weather was really beautiful I think it hit a total of 33 degrees and completely clear skies with no wind, it reminded me a little of home in the summer but was great none the less.



On the 11th of June I went to the Keller Klub in Stuttgart to see another band I like called Memphis May Fire was a good night over all as you can tell from previous happenings in this report I am quite the concert goer and will be going to many festivals over the summer break.

A list of tips for future exchange students:

- Surround yourself with good people early on and it will help with the culture shock / homesick feeling, I cannot say I really got hit with it bad because I already had some people over for me but I sometimes certainly felt it.
- Keep busy, you're time in a foreign country is limited so whenever you have some free time go adventuring explore the city you're studying or perhaps travel a little bit.
- Really take the time and effort to take a step out of your comfort zone, make friends with the locals rather than just the other exchange students, not discouraging that at all. Join a club of some sort whether it be sports or social. I joined a gym.
- Use the resources you are giving as best you can, this could be with things such as money, help from people around you, or just general information from people with better knowledge of the culture.
- If you are planning for a long stay such as a years learn the local lingo, it will make life easier in some situations.

DHBW-Stuttgart really accommodated me well for my first semester and I have decided to continue a second semester there, working closely with a professor on a project was a new experience to me and I really enjoyed it. The international office was very helpful and for me Agnieszka Halina was a huge help with me getting enrolled and all courses organized even before I left Australia. For me Germany is such a pleasant country to stay in and I would recommend it to anyone looking to study abroad. Overall my stay in Germany so far has had its pros and cons as any extended trip away from the norm, I am really looking forward to the content I am going to learn over the next semester and I cannot wait to extend on this letter with more experiences with DHBW-Stuttgart and Germany as a culture and country.

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