

Feature Articles

egg999 2012 in Copenhagen

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As Sepp Herberger¹ used to say: *Nach dem Spiel ist vor dem Spiel*.² So I guess it is not surprising that **egg999**'s second day was not over yet, when people already started discussing the whereabouts of **egg999** 2013.³

But what greater compliment can there be anyway than people asking for more? The claim is well justified, **egg999** 2012 was another success. As one participant put it when I asked:

I had more than just a 'reasonably' good time.

I had a f***** hilarious time!

So there.

Including speakers we were 28 people, members from TNS, ISPE, OATHS, friends and family. Quite a few had already attended the London meeting, but there also were new folks to be met. Just as it should be.

Thursday

Well, the meeting did not actually start on Thursday, but as a few of us were already there we met for dinner and drinks. Somewhat unexpectedly it turned out that the mainstay of Danish cuisine is not fish, but beetroot. Another interesting thing to learn was that Danish (pastry) is of course not called "Danish" in Denmark but "*wienerbrød*" (bread from Vienna).⁴ Anyway, we had a good start into the weekend, and it turned out we would need our beetroot-derived strength...



Bread & butter

¹German football player and manager

²After the game is before the game.

³see p. 8 for details

⁴which reminded me of the silly fact that turkey is called peru in Brazil

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Friday



Kjeld showing the way

We met at Østerport Station, 5:15pm, for the official start with a city walk. Kjeld introduced us to the principal sights of Copenhagen (the Little Mermaid, Nyhavn, ...), but things got a little blurry after a while — not least because the Danish Royal Family had chosen to live at a square with 4 more or less identical palaces. This will surely confuse invaders. Not being used to walking a lot (well, yes, I *am* a couch potato) and having exhausted the beetroot at some time, I was happy to reach our restaurant for the evening, “Hercegovina”. The place had a note at the door to the effect that it was full and therefore had closed its doors, thankfully Kjeld still managed to get us to our reserved tables.

Food was plentiful, some even managed to have two ice cream desserts while others were still at the main course.

Quite late a bunch of well-fed, tired and exhausted HIQers crawled to their respective hotels for well-deserved sleep.



Caspar, Kjeld and Grethe-Lise

Saturday



Managing technical hurdles

Sleep was short, though, as Saturday’s official program started at 10am in a Northern suburb of Copenhagen — some found that it took them a lot longer to get there than expected. Those who had made it on time found that it is the same everywhere. No matter how well you are prepared and how often you checked, connecting a projector to a laptop will not work initially. Soon, however, **Jan Stevang** (the guy in the middle on the picture) of the Sino-Danish Breast Cancer Research Centre gave us some information on the Centre’s work in “translating” basic science work to bedside medicine. Unfortunately, the aspect that I had been interested

the most, the Sino-Danish cooperation, wasn't mentioned at all — but as Jan had to fill in on short notice for his boss, I think he can't be blamed.

Mikael Bellers Madsen then told us about Denmark's green think tank Concito, about global warming, about CO₂ and about how he became blind within a few weeks working on a project in Ethiopia. Nobody will ever doubt that getting blind changes one's life on a huge scale, but what Mikael told us about his experience and about the reactions of other people was as interesting as it was touching. While getting blind is seen as some sort of divine punishment in some countries, in Europe often positive attributions are made to blind people. They are said to be great musicians, are more sensitive, are inherently wise people and are better lovers. Mikael assured us that, apart from the last point, this is nonsense.



Mikael Bellers Madsen



Beer tasting

After lunch, Søren Houmøller made an interesting presentation by linking two rather different subjects: beer and business. Søren told us how he and some friends came to found the *Danske Ølentusiaster*, the Danish Beer Enthusiasts. Far from being an excuse to sit together and drink, this organization tried, and managed (!), to change the Danish beer culture by creating beer awareness, beer festivals and encouraging small breweries.

Even to non beer drinkers, it was inspiring to see what a few dedicated people can achieve. Søren brought beer for us to taste, but I admit that I stayed with Diet Coke.

By now you might have gotten a wrong impression — apart from being a beer enthusiast, Søren also is a successful businessman with his company 1st Mile whose business it is to bring good ideas in the clean-tech area to business by helping with management issues, funding and all other obstacles those start-ups encounter on the first mile...



Søren — beer and business

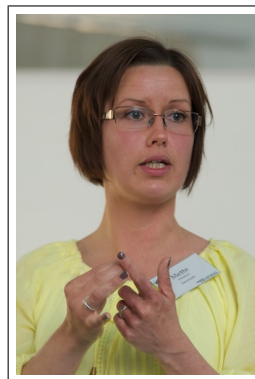
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Left to right (by noses): Alan W. Ho, Andrew Paul, Caspar Nijhuis, Carsten Osterwald-Lenum, Simon Hannus, Jacob Deleuran, Eric Tierie, Kyra Rosenkranz, Casper Tvede Busk, Grusche Rosenkranz, Kurt Fuchs, Max Fischer, Jens Schrobback, Kjeld Danneškiold-Samsøe, Richard Ballerand, Grethe-Lise Danneškiold-Samsøe, Andrew Aus, Melanie Eberle, Donatienne Brasseur, Jonathan Som, Noks Nauta, Karyn Peters, Thorsten Heitzmann Missing: Maria Kaatranen and the 4 speakers

Mette Plambeck presented the concept of the “Highly Sensitive Person”⁵ (HSP), mainly with examples from her own family. Unfortunately, Mette did not present a lot of hard data, so for example the number of 15-20% of HSPs in the general population, floated by Elaine Aron, was doubted a lot later on. This presentation left me a bit uneasy about the inflation of concepts to understand what to me seemed simply a variation of being normal so far.⁶

The last speaker of the day, Noks Nauta, more or less resumed her talk from last year’s **egg999** with a workshop on giftedness. Doing a SWOT analysis of giftedness held quite a few unforeseen surprises (some saw megalomania as a strength, others saw it as weakness) and it was refreshing to see how difficult it was to find consensus on seemingly trivial stuff in our small groups.



Mette Plambeck



Noks presenting the “Delphi Model of Giftedness”

In the evening we met in the restaurant “Peder Oxe”, where I had an excellent burger (following Kjeld’s recommendation) but I am not entirely sure whether this was typical Danish fare in the end. By coincidence, I sat next to Jonathan Som (picture on next page) who had already volunteered to organize an **egg999** meeting last year. So it was only natural that he and I soon went into discussing a possible future meeting in Paris which was then generally acclaimed.

Despite we all talked and talked, somehow I never had the feeling that it was enough, it always felt that by talking to one person I was missing out on 20 others. But then, that’s how it should be, shouldn’t it?

The only drawback on an otherwise perfect evening was that Bayern München lost the Champions League final to Chelsea FC on penalties. Can’t have it all...

⁵the term was coined by Elaine Aron

⁶HSP reminded me a bit of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, about which I feel a similar uneasiness

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Melanie, Simon, Eric & Noks listening to Eyvind



During Noks' workshop



Kurt listening



Jens drinking

Sunday

On Sunday I was knackered. The long walks on cobblestone seemingly hadn't been ideal for my knee, 2 days of talking and intense discussions in another language made my brain hurt and the thought of having to leave Copenhagen was not encouraging as well.

On the other hand, Kjeld had arranged an exclusive visit to the *Folketinget* (the Danish Parliament), with Eyvind Vesselbo, an MP and friend of his — so of course we all went there and did not regret it. Apart from the security staff, we were alone in the building, having undisturbed views of the monumental halls and staircases, the paintings and of course the Chamber. Eyvind also gave us a very open insight into the daily life of a politician in Denmark, about what is possible and what is not. This was a very special event (outside was the noise of the Copenhagen Marathon while we were



Jonathan Som

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Grusche reading



Carsten thinking

in that quiet empty building) and I can only thank Kjeld and Eyvind very warmly for it. I enjoyed it a lot. Afterwards we all went together to “Færge Cafeen” for lunch, and most participants went to the tour of *Fristaden Christiania* (Freetown Christiania), an alternative living project in Copenhagen. Unfortunately, I cannot report from this event as we had to leave to catch our flight home.



Eyvind and the Danish Constitution

This simply proves that in order to get the full picture, you have to be there for yourself – so why not join us at **egg999** 2013 in Paris?

BIG THANKS to Grethe-Lise and Kjeld who worked hard and diligently for us to have this great weekend! You were great hosts!!

If you want to keep in touch with the European meetings, join the **egg999** Facebook group on www.facebook.com/groups/192165424239873/