



Dienstag

Servus!¹

Peter the Bus Driver set a very high bar this morning, welcoming us aboard his brand new, fully air-conditioned, 53-seater, left-hand-drive Scania. Neither the heavy traffic in and around Munich nor several overzealous renditions of John Denver classics could stop Peter's progress, and we arrived in Hohenschwangau by mid-morning. For car park enthusiasts, Frau Frantzke and Frau Steffan opted for 'the other car park' this year, which, frankly, is a superior car park and will hopefully become the default.



Gorgeous weather all day: wall-to-wall sunshine and a pleasant breeze. First, we had a spot of free time in which Frau Steffan successfully sourced a bottle of Almdudler - the essential Austrian lemonade for Alpine adventures. We then began our ascent to the castle and one oversight on Mr Furnival's otherwise comprehensive risk assessment immediately presented itself: being run over by a horse and carriage. Following a surprising but thankfully accident-free equine encounter, we made our way up an increasingly steep hill to admire the fairy-

¹ 'Servus!' is a local way of saying both 'Hello!' and 'Goodbye!' here in Bavaria.

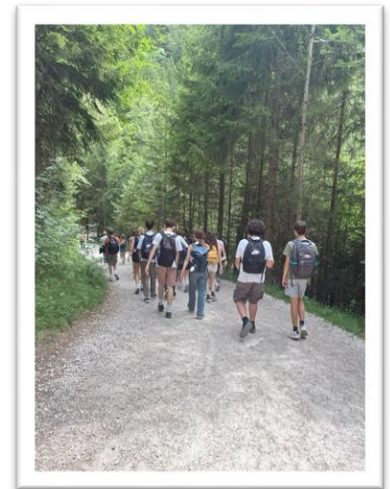


tale castle and its breathtaking surroundings. Photo opportunities abounded, and Mr Furnival augmented his Neuschwanstein mug collection and was presented with a charming, initially rather mysterious regal portrait for his classroom wall. In a daring feat of heroism without precedent in the annals of German teaching, Mr Furnival then bravely scaled a rocky escarpment to retrieve a much-treasured artefact, vanquishing various villainous foes and slaying at least one dragon in the process.²

Ludwig II was an interesting monarch. At a time when a newly unified, modern Germany was first emerging, it might be said that Ludwig literally had his head in the clouds, almost bankrupting the Bavarian state with his prolific castle-building spree. There were various discussions about how we could take inspiration from his design ideas to spruce up the common rooms in the house blocks at school (ideally without risking bankruptcy). A grotto with multicoloured lights perhaps? A sumptuous throne room modelled on Byzantine churches with a four-metre-high chandelier? A medieval banquet hall with 600 candles and Wagnerian wall art? Mr Penny, take note!

We ambled our way back through the woods and ended our day by the crystal-clear waters of the Alpsee. Some particularly intrepid hikers managed a full circuit of the lake. Meanwhile, Mr Furnival made short work of a strawberry cheesecake and befriended a swan called Heidi.

Apparently, some ducks had a misunderstanding, but everyone else enjoyed themselves and Peter drove us safely back to Freising.



Bis morgen!

² Or did he just reach over a low fence to pick up a student's dropped water bottle? Accounts vary and a full analysis of the historical record will be undertaken by Mrs Mason.