

5.45 pm Euston Station

Although lots of things went wrong this morning, it got worse!! To put it another way I'm always (or almost always) an optimist, so when things started to go wrong..... I'd better start at the beginning.

The importance of having a "proper" breakfast is something about which I'm constantly being reminded so to give myself time to eat I decided to catch the 8.27am from Berkhamsted instead of the 8.17am. My daughter Barbi had borrowed my car but hadn't yet brought it back so Nigel drove me to the station. When I got on to the platform (at about 8.25am.) I was surprised at how many people were waiting, until I heard the announcement that the 8.17am was running late. I joined the waiting throng and opened my magazine. The tannoy system was working overtime because it wasn't long before we heard the Bing Bong announcing another message.

"Attention passengers on platform 4. The 8.17am train to Euston is running late. We will give you more information when we have it." A murmur ripples through the waiting passengers as they discuss the proclamation.

Bing, Bong - "Attention passengers at Berkhamsted station. Owing to problems caused by yesterday's excessive rain"(or something like that)"..... the 8.17am service to Euston has been cancelled. I have been informed that a special train will be running, but at the moment we don't know what platform it will arrive at." Chit, chat, murmur, murmur.

Bing Bong - "Attention passengers on platform 4. The special train, replacing the cancelled 8.17am will call at Hemel Hempstead, Watford Junction and London Euston only. This train will arrive on platform 2". There was a pause, then the voice added what must have been the understatement of the year, "It is a bit crowded!".

A tidal wave of hopeful travellers flooded towards and down the stairs, briefcases and umbrellas submerging and reappearing as they were washed along. Fighting against the flow would have been impossible, but I saw a couple of brave souls (or should that be soles) sheltering behind a bench to avoid being sucked along. I allowed myself to be washed down the stairs. At the foot of the staircase the passageway allowed for individual voluntary movement. I left the throng and made my way towards the station entrance and the public phones.

The knowledge that the special train was "a bit crowded" had matured the embryonic thought of phoning Nigel to come and get me to take me to the nearest underground Station, Chalfont and Latimer. Whilst I was waiting for him I again heard Bing Bong but at that distance from the platform I couldn't make out what was being said. It was easy to guess though, because almost immediately the human flood washed into the foyer, and gathered in turbulent pools around the ticket office windows and the telephones.

I recognised the voice of one of my ex-students asking for a form to claim a refund. I caught her attention to see if she wanted to travel with me, but she declined. As Nigel arrived we saw another friend but he too opted to sort out his own transport.

Once on the underground railway system I managed to get to Blackfriars uneventfully. I had been teaching the same girl all week, which by itself was pretty heavy going. To make matters worse, someone had double booked the training room for some of the time. In order to fit in with the other tutor, my student and I had to use a room in a completely different building for 3 of our 5 morning sessions. On the morning of The (Nearly) Impossible Journey we were supposed to be working in this room. Naturally I forgot and went to the other one. When I got to the right one I found her waiting for me. No one had passed Nigel's message about the travel difficulties on to her. She hadn't asked anyone in case I'd simply been late and she didn't want to make any problems for me. (I was touched - it was a thoughtful gesture.)

I'd been asked to show her the entire package during our time together. She told me that she'd enjoyed the first couple of days, but by day 4 was beginning to hate it. I decided not to show her any more new features. Instead I suggested she work through printed exercises on what we'd already covered. The day before Whilst I in the training room, I had offered to sit on the other side of the room so she didn't feel as if I was constantly watching for mistakes. We couldn't do the same in this room as it was much smaller.

We had to cover E-Mail during this morning session. It didn't turn out too badly considering the rest of the week. the course ended at lunchtime so I asked my student, Nuala, to complete an Appraisal form which she did before we parted company.

At lunch time I was given sets of notes for my 3 afternoon students. Until that moment I had been under the impression I was only teaching them E-Mail. However according to Teddy, who gave me the 6 books of notes, I was to be showing them the Diary too.

At lunch time I wrote a Tutor Appraisal on the course I'd just completed. This took longer than I'd thought it would, so I didn't get the chance as I'd planned to do of revising for the afternoon. Being totally unprepared I opted to work my way through the notes and exercises created by the previous trainer for these products. I don't think it worked. I'd felt stressed because of the pressure I was imposing on my previous student, so through no fault of the 3 students in the afternoon class, I found the afternoon session heavy going.

At the end of the day I felt that I'd not done a good job and said so to Teddy when I spoke to her afterwards. Two of my students took their appraisal forms with them rather than completing them and giving them back to me. They said they didn't have time to spare just then but naturally I have assumed they were not happy with the course.

I'll 'phone and ask Teddy tomorrow if she's had them yet and if so, what was said.

Extras worth mentioning

Verbal Slip

Whilst chatting earlier I didn't know if something was in a folder or a box, so it came out as "is it in a boulder or fox?"

Driving Frustration

Being stuck in a queue of traffic waiting beside a closed level crossing. The entrance and car park to the station are on the far side of the crossing. You sit helplessly watching the train you wanted to catch pass in front of your car, stop at the platform to let other passengers get on and off, then leave the station again, before being you can drive across the road to the carpark.

Did You Know?

Shredders cut the paper fibres too short for it to be used for new paper. Its only use is for rotting down for compost.
