

File 20101218.1430: Notes from meeting with Thorunn Lonsdale in the Gardener's Arms, Plantation Road, Oxford. She bought me a lemonade and asked about Miranda and Andrea. For M's high school, we should consider an International Baccalaureate programme. There is one called United World Colleges. It is ages 16–18 and equivalent to a high school diploma. Oxford does not consider a U.S. high school diploma to be enough, unless she takes all AP courses, but they do consider the I.B. to be good enough. M could go to school in Wales. The school (it is a boarding school) is in a castle, like Hogwarts.

She told me stories of her PhD work, in literature. She studied in Santa Fe, NM and has driven through Denver. She grew to be good friends with her advisor, because she worked on the PhD for so many years. Don't be discouraged by being referred (even if that isn't what happened this time; this was just a confirmation of status viva, not a referral); if referred, go away and do the work, then come back and graduate! Too many people give up after a referral. If you just swallow your pride and re-do the work, then you will graduate after a referral.

Don't throw away the numerical model; that's your postdoc right there. Do the 'boring bits' as directed now. The assessors gave you very detailed instructions; they can't very well say no after you have done exactly what they told you to. So go do it, precisely as they said. Come back with two or three chapters in hand after no more than two terms, and you will pass with flying colours. Use the March 2011 trip to bring back one completed grounded theory analysis, of RM 5.0. Do that case study first, then RTG 1.0, and finally the less well-documented AEHF MCS Ground Segment. Thorunn wants to see me back in a year to graduate. I said I would do that.

Thorunn asked me if I wanted to teach, some day. I said maybe yes. I told her about all the talks I have given to audiences of Lockheed engineers. She asked if it bothered me that I work for a company that makes weapons. I said yes, it does sometimes. She asked if M knew what the company does. I said yes. She said it could be worse, you could be a banker. I admitted to having been one in a previous lifetime. We talked about Seattle. I told her how Andrea and I dated for fourteen years before we got married, and how she didn't speak to me for three years, because I was so literal. I think Thorunn liked the story.

We talked about heraldic imagery language ('argent a cross potent purpure, a quarter counterchanged') M's Latin classes, and her blindness. Thorunn gave me a Christmas card and present to take back to M.

Her PhD took many more years than mine. She was surprised that I was even worried about finishing in such a short time. She said absolutely they won't kick you out after four years if you are making good progress. They just tell you that (and the MPhil story) to scare you into moving faster so their completion rates don't look so bad.

Thorunn noted that you have to manage supervisors carefully.

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## References