

Japan 1991 to attend the 2nd International Symposium on PQQ and Quinoproteins.

This was held in Yamaguchi. I was paid by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science because I was the Main Plenary lecturer. They paid for a generous 18 day visit including business class flights. This is transcribed from my letters home. I have omitted most personal messages.



16th Nov. 9.20 pm Kyoto.

At last I have the will power to write. I am sitting in my kimono (cotton dressing gown) in the NewMiyoku hotel with a tummy full of raw fish and seaweed. At this moment you are all sitting down to Sunday lunch.

To begin at the beginning. We arrived with two hours to spare at Heathrow. I checked in at the Concorde desk and was ushered into a special expensive lounge (free for me). Had some nice free smoked salmon sandwiches. The flight was very comfortable as I had two huge seats to myself. Lobster and champagne for dinner but I only managed 2 hours sleep in the ten hour flight. My bag was first off the plane. I changed my coupon for a rail pass and caught the bus into the centre of Tokyo. It was all easier than I had feared as the people on the information desk were keen to help and spoke perfect English. The journey was 1 ½ hours through industrial suburbs. I had to get a taxi from the bus station to the Hotel Gimmondo. I started to fall asleep on the bed but felt guilty so got up, bravely shaved and set off for a walk (it was just 2pm). Everyone I saw was wearing a suit. I walked to the Imperial Palace but could then only walk around the walls admiring the the 2 ft Koi Carp in the moat. These were being fished by loads of cormorants. After one hour solid walking I set off home through the Ginza district (like Oxford St). Not a very restful start. I was starving and it was nearly dark and I was lost. I asked a man the way and he insisted on changing direction to walk me all the way home – about 10 minute walk. Before going in I went into a little coffee bar and had coffee then into restaurant for curried shrimps (Why??). Then to bed at 8.0pm. Then woke and read then slept then woke etc etc eventually woken by alarm at 9 in morning.

Had omelette for breakfast then taxi to station. I'd reserved a seat on the bullet train while at the airport. Set off at 11.0 for yoto, 3 hours at 170mph through mainly cities suburbs but also some

mandarin orange groves. Very comfortable. Saw the famous mount Fuji just outside Tokyo but it arrived so quickly I had no time to take a picture. In Kyoto my comfortable hotel was sensibly very close to the station. Set off immediately sightseeing with a packet of peanuts for lunch. Again I walked my feet off just to see two temples. Sanjūsangendō temple has the largest wooden structure in Japan. Full of ugly wooden statues that needed a good dusting. Then up a hill through loads of pottery shops to Kiyomitsu temple built on a hill amongst many-coloured Maple trees. All very beautiful and with long tailed tits! [*Just made yet another cup of green tea*]. I staggered down the hill through the pottery shops. The cups that I liked were at least £50. I found a very nice fan but it was £25 so gave up the idea of shopping and instead collapsed into a coffee shop and had lovely chocolate cake, shedding a little tear thinking of Hugh. As I left there was a great shout from 12 boys out doing karate training – to avoid knocking me over. So shed a tear for Clive. I found that I had gone the wrong way so bravely caught an underground train. Of course I had to get someone to get my ticket as I could not understand the machines. Back at the hotel I harnessed a very pressy girl at reception to confirm my hotel booking in Yamaguchi, how to find my way to the nearby ancient city of Nara and how to get the train to Yamaguchi. She was a typical helpful friendly Japanese citizen. I immediately went to the station to book a train for the Monday. It is all very expensive but well within my allowance of £8 a day. I still don't like to spend so much. So I shall eat cheaply tomorrow to allow money for pressies. Now 10.40 so time for bed.

Here are a few notes to jog my memory. Japan has many blue roofs – seen from the plane. The customs man was like a war film Jap soldier, shouting at me while he cracked his knuckles by pulling them in his pure white gloves. Tokyo station was packed with school girls in black uniforms, looking and sounding like a starling roost. By contrast the boys were all silent. I went to great lengths to photograph the tall red pagoda at the end of a street grotesquely marred by tangled overhead electric wiring. The bumps on the backs of Kimonoed ladies are for purses and knives! The taxis all have white linen crocheted table cloths on their seats. Not seen many birds yet. Mainly black kites and egrets. The weather is similar to the UK. The drink vending machines in Tokyo are so well lit I can use them for reading maps. I get lost anyway.

So to bed.

11 pm New Miyako Hotel Sunday. Hello all. It is a bit late so I will rush through this so that I can post it tomorrow. I slept very well and my persistent cough has gone. I took a picture of the bullet train going past my window. My breakfast omelette cost £7 – last I shall eat like this. The hotel is 4* so a bit outside my experience. Proud to succeed in catching my 10.40 train to Nara – 30 miles south of Kyoto. The original capital. The centre is a lovely park on the side of a hill, full of tame deer and families out for the day with little girls dressed in traditional costumes. Saw the biggest wooden building in the world and the biggest bronze Buddha. The city is full of Buddhist and Shinto (old animalist) shrines mixed together. I had lunch in a teashop with the usual problems of ordering at the counter. So I took the serving boy to another table and pointed at their noodles. How rude. Very good. I had problems taking pictures because of the crowds so I climbed a mountain (so called) overlooking the temple area thinking I would use my long lens only to find it was bust with no focus or zoom. The shutter then jammed. My guide book says that cameras are very cheap here so I set off to find one after hamburgers for dinner. Also to see a one hour tourists theatre/ music show. I bought a replacement camera just a little better than the previous. So I must forgo my standard hotel £20 dinners. Tell Clive I have failed to find a Samurai sword or a gong. Not quite true as the one I found was £95 so is still in the shop. Good night.

8.30. Monday night. Sun Route hotel Yamaguchi.

I have arrived at my next hotel which I think is in Yamaguchi. There was a reception of students to direct us to the hotel, putting us into a taxi. I expected lots of people here but it is almost deserted. My room is tiny and the wardrobe will take either my jacket or my coat but not both. I came down to the restaurant -empty! Then the bar – empty! Then another restaurant with lots of little separate curtained booths – all empty. I walked down the road searching for a restaurant and met Frances Gasser a French scientist I knew. He had not slept for 36 hours so was off to bed. At last a restaurant, - playing the same music as all Japanese hotels, Gounod/Schubert. I have just finished an excellent seafood pilaff so I will finish today's chapter while having coffee. Its been a good day.

I woke early with a feeling of foreboding and realised it was because I had decided to get a new camera. It would be stupid to be here, take no pictures then buy a camera on return. Last night I arranged to buy but could get only 5% off (already 60% off) for cash but not with card. I went over the road for a cheap breakfast in the station. I had to call the waiter to come outside and pointed to their plastic model of a fried egg and toast. Lo and behold it appeared 3 minutes later arranged on the plate exactly as on their model. So fast that clearly magic is involved. I have now found the truth(Shonti in Japanese). The plastic copies are changed instantly to real food. It tasted very good and was less than £2. A beautiful cool sunny morning. I checked out, putting my luggage in their left luggage place and set off to Kameswaramichi-Dori (?) to get a camera. This was a 10 minute walk by a river where I later sat down to read the instructions. Its main lens is 28-88mm so I will rarely need to change lens. It can be automatic if needed. So I then walked for 4 hours through Shinto shrines on the nearby hillside. I had thought that shrines are small but these were huge estates with walks into the wooded hills. Took many pictures. Great camera. Great decision. I have just ordered cakes to celebrate. Some Italians have just come in – conference people but I don't know them. Had a lovely walk by the river - like a Japanese version of our Winchester walks. Had a sort of tuna sandwich for lunch. The Chinto shrines have bright orange arches at the entrance and rather ugly bells to wake up the spirits so that they pay attention! You then tie a prayer on a tree or rock. Everywhere is covered in these little bows. I bought some delicious sugared grapes etc – as Japanese travel sweets. Saw many noisy birds but didn't have binoculars so a bit frustrating. I photographed an egret in a little stream. I completed my 4 hour walk by subway (?) back to hotel. Everyone is obedient here waiting for the green light before crossing. There is often a 3 minute wait. When the light goes green there is a sound like a song thrush or cuckoo. I resisted getting a train back and walked a mile to the subway and the difference on coffee and cake while waiting for the subway train.

I had come here at 180 mph on the Shinkansen bullet train sitting in the front seat upstairs. Mainly continuous cities for two and a half hours.

I look forward to a few days without decisions. As this is not a touristy town nothing is written in English. I am hoping to get Kazunobu Matsushita (who visited us) to one of the more obviously traditional Japanese cafes here so that he can write down some of the best sidhes for me. I found the armrests of my first trains here had little TV sets in the armrests. Saw a brown-eared Bulbul and a Rufous Turtle Dove. Time to pay by bill and off to bed.

6.40 Thursday Morning. Couldn't sleep so got up to write this. I am sitting on the bed (no chair provided in my kimono eating snacks from the fridge and drinking green tea. The snacks were packets of nuts, dry fish, spicy somethings all in a cute plastic cylinder. I now have to struggle to remember the last two days.

Tuesday. I woke to find I have a view of the nearby hills. Had breakfast of eggs and bacon with Mary Lidstrom (David Nunn's boss), Victor Davidson and Judith Klinman. Victor had taken 48 hours to get here from America because of missed connections etc. I went for a walk in the beautiful morning air into the hills by a river up towards a dam. I heard a few birds but saw none. I found myself in a shrine near a glorious pagoda where I met Prof and Mrs Mondovi from Rome, so strolled back and had lunch with them. Delicious sole au gratin. I prepared my talk for the afternoon which turned to rain. At 4 pm we were all bused to the University for a struggle through pouring rain to a welcome by Prof Ameyama. Before this I was taken away by Matsushita and given a £900 cheque and £1000 in yen. In return I had to discuss my plans for using this money from JSPS. Back at the reception I was asked to accept a favour – to make a welcome speech because Has Duine had not yet arrived. He had organised the first of the Symposia in Delft. Fortunately he arrived and let me off the hook. I am scheduled to give an informal Farewell speech. The reception was mainly the consumption of sake whiskey, beer with excellent standup food with lots of shoving and shouting. All very enjoyable then back to the hotel for a bad night of suddenly waking and worrying about my lecture. I woke with my old cough. I nearly missed the bus because the lift kept coming up toward my 9th floor then going down before arriving. Efforts had to be made to stop the driver from durifully driving off at the scheduled time – as the first speaker was not yet on the bus. Kamayama started by introducing me as the obvious person to open the conference because "he is so famous in our subject and a beautiful speaker; but more important he has such a wonderful personality and even more he has found the secret of eternal youth". So now you know!. This shocked my cough into disappearing. Matsushita told me last night that I am the only Fellow of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science at the conference. Everyone else had to pay! I enjoyed my lecture and it seemed to be received OK. The rest of the morning was a series of special lectures by Hans Frank and others. Most important was Scott Mathes, an eminent American crystallographer who is 'competing' with us (me and Meenakshi – at Oxford). He is very similar to Bob Gennis and we got on well. They have sort of won with some beautiful pictures of MDH. Our work is still important as we have the amino acid sequence and so can publish a much more refined structure. In the evening back at the hotel we had a special informal meeting sitting around a table drinking. During the day I sorted out plans for the rest of my visit after the conference. On the way to Tottori with Prof Kato I will stop at Hiroshima. Just before returning home I will visit for a lecture Profs Yamanaka and Fukumori in Tokyo. I shall stay 3 nights in the area where Andy lived. This left Tuesday to Friday to fill in so I made arrangements with Matsushita I am going with one of staff by train to Kyushu (the big southern island) to the Mt. Aso volcano and the back here to Yamaguchi. It is nice and relaxing for it all to be planned for me. Matsushita is a truly excellent friend and colleague. I may possibly get to see a typical traditional Rikoyan hotel. I have just read through some of this and see it is not very exciting. Sorry. I must go to the lobby now to see if they can reserve seats for me on the final train to Tokyo.

We have a visit to a cave today followed by a traditional Japanese banquet. We can't come back to the hotel so the ladies are worried that they must dress suitable for a cave and a banquet.

I shall post this now to keep in touch. I spent some time yesterday with an Italian couple discussing Gran Paradiso National Park where we have camped as they are enthusiastic caravaners. 23rd Nov. Floor 13 restaurant New Otani hotel Tottori.

Dear Family; more than halfway through my visit. As I posted the last instalment I cannot remember where I left off.

Wed. I think. After the morning lectures we were taken on an excursion to a limestone plateau and the largest cave in Asia. It was so big it was like Tokyo station without the trains. Afterwards we walked up to view the limestone – not very thrilling but nice hilly countryside. The Japanese all seemed very interested; even the trees have little labels and they all troop off down the paths to 'view' the tree. I am having trouble writing this because the tables are so artistically laid out that I can't disturb anything to write without committing sacrilege. The waiter has just bought my sake – sherry strength wine. After the 'viewing' I was dragged off by the students up a long track to view a rock! I had to photograph it. One of the postgraduate students (Yamamoto) has been taking all the conference photos and is keen to play with my camera. We then trundled down to the local Buddhist temple to see the pagoda. It was now dark and cold lit only by the full moon which made it all a bit ghostly with the sound of murmured PQQ conversations among the tombstones. Then down to a formal banquet Japanese style with 100 of us sitting cross legged. Fortunately the legless chairs did have a back but it was still a challenge to reach our food. We each had our own table. I had the chief conference organiser (Osao Adachi) on my left and Kenji Sode on my right. Falling back occasionally. Postma and Jan Jongejan caught me. Everything is laid about beautifully with bowls and dishes on a lacquer tray. And three clay stoves and cooking things. I successfully cooked octopus and other unidentified things. Lots of raw fish and wonderful crab brain paste and of course miso soup. It was all rather hard on the hips and knees. We were accompanied throughout by wild drummers dressed as demons (perhaps they were real). We were served by ladies in Kimonos creeping about on their hands and knees. I kept stopping myself from offering to help them up (a true English gentleman). I think we will adopt this for Sunday teatimes. After all this we recovered our shoes and staggered back to the coach for the hotel.



At the banquet. Scott Mathews, Kenji Sode, Me, Osao Adachi and Victor Davidson.

Every evening at 9.0 we had what I labelled the Sake symposia (generally adopted) and tonight was no exception so we staggered to bed at about midnight. All very tiring. As usual I found myself giving an English lesson to Yamamotoa and Miayura.

Friday. The last day of the Symposium (from 9.0 – 6.). By now we had all become very good friends. Except right at the end. Hans Duine's summing up was attacked by ferocious American (Gallup). This always happens with these two. We ended with a meeting of a few 'elders' to decide if and when there should be an ISQ-3. I think I won. We will have it in Capri with Modovi organising it. [Jump to a few years later in Capri; Mondovi presented me with a special medal perhaps to say thank you for getting him the Symposium]. At the final reception we had a few introductory speeches and I had to propose the main toast [where everyone shouts campeye]. I seemed to say the right things about our wonderful Japanese hosts and their successful creation etc. Prof Hauge's wife (Swedish) came up and said "I am so impressed you can find so many nice words to say just one thing" (good or bad? I think it was meant as a compliment). More wonderful food although I find it hard to walk about chatting while eating with chopsticks of a slightly floppy plastic plate. I have been surprised at how warm-hearted the Japanese are (others feel the same) so it was a very nice sentimental evening. Mrs Ameyama gave me a nice silk hanky to thank me for coming and giving them the nice Southampton University plate. I then showed them pictures of my nice family. Two giggling students (a girl and a boy) came up to say "thank you for being such a sweet friend and can we something personal – we think you look like Christopher Reeve" – Superman! This balanced the earlier comment that I looked like Danny Kaye. An aggressive Japanese research student called Yakashami demanded to know why we complain about them killing whales when you eat pigeons?!?!? This led to a wild debate with him Nishigori, Yam and Miya about the war and the atom bomb. They avoid teaching this bit of history in schools. Then arguments about immigration. When to make it simple I asked the noisy student was his attitude to Koreans love or hate. He banged his fist on the table and shouted HATE. I was eventually allowed to go to bed at 1.30. I had packed earlier so no problem.

Saturday 23 Nov. Labour day. Had farewell breakfast with Mary Lidstron, Scott Mathews and Nishigori. [Looking ahead: Scott remained a great friend and competitor. We discovered the same remarkable thing about 'my' enzyme MDH but using different approaches etc so no problems in publishing. One time he waited 3 weeks before sending a paper to Science so that it would synchronise with our letter announcing the same remarkable stuff to Nature. Prof Nagai collected me to take me by train to Tottori by Shinkansen going first to the Peace Park at Hiroshima. There is a museum with pictures, films and relics. We had to go and ring a huge Buddhist bell as a token of care for the fall. There were a lot of young people collecting anti-nuclear signatures – explaining that they were 2nd and 3rd generation victims. We had lunch at a Japanese fast food place – noodles with eggs and bean sprouts. Then a Shinkansen to X? followed by ordinary small 3 hour trip in the rain over the mountains to Tottori. I have been put into a very posh western hotel and they are insisting on paying. Before dinner I wandered around the adjacent department store with background loudspeakers playing horrible arrangements of Rudolph the red nosed and white Christmas. There was so much lovely stuff for Christmas presents but it would all be too bulky. I will finish now and creep off to bed. I wish you are all here. I guess you will be going off to my CSO concert in a few hours time. Good night.

Sunday 24th Nov. 9pm. New Otani Hotel in Tottori.

I think you are all at church while I am watching an orchestra on TV playing a Sicilienne by Faure. Sorry boys – I have failed to find any interesting postcards – only of the hotel. I have had a remarkable day. I had bacon and eggs for breakfast and then taken off sightseeing by my host Prof Nagai in his Toyota. We started at a museum to see a mammoth and some Samurai swords. There was an exhibition of paintings of the fire bombing of Tokyo when the same number were killed as at Hiroshima. Then in the rain we walked up a hill to the old castle walls and saw where the earthquake knocked down half of the (Nagai was ten). There were lots of singing bulbuls. Then to the famous sand dunes spoiled a bit by huge number of small cafes and junk music blaring out over the camel rides. We staggered up to the top – all a bit like our sand dune at Pyla. Nagai hoped we would see some birds but no. Had lunch with Prof Kato and his wife and Prof Izumi. Six years ago on the first day of the C1 meeting in Haren (Holland) Kato had asked me to take a photo of him and his wife. The next day he found that I was the "famous author so I had not dared to speak to you again"!!! Now was his chance to make up for it. (I like this attitude). Lunch was in a traditional tiled wooden house with paper inner walls and windows looking out over gardens with ponds rocks small pine trees and Shinto carved lamp holders. Inside were rice-rush floor mats and beautiful simple flower arrangements. As I was chief guest I had to sit in such a way that I could be seen as part of the beautiful setting. We sat cross-legged on the floor. I was a bit better at it this time but it was agony getting up. Nagai plays violin and his wife sings in a performance of Mozart's Requiem next week. They have some disks of du p's life. After lunch we wandered round the gardens and fed the carp. We were served at table by kimonoed ladies on their knees and then peeping round the door to check we were all ok. I said I thought my wons would be hazardous in a house with paper walls. They renew them every year and more often with children in the house. We next drove in ouring rain around the coast where we saw squid-caching boats. They use extremely bright lights to attract the squid so the coastline can be seen from satellites at night. I was dropped at 4.30 at the hotel to prepare tomorrow's lecture. Two hours later I was collected for dinner – in another floor restaurant and as usual in a small private room. Are they ashamed of me? 'this time the special dish was cooked by us at table,, of very thin slices of beef and mushrooms veggies etc. You take food out with chopsticks dip in your own bowl of raw egg and eat. Very good. It is cooked in sake, oil, masses of sugar and soy sauce, with side dishes of seaweed. Kato refused to let me pay for the hotel because he has no funds to pay pay me for my lecture. Daphnis and Chloe has just finished and I must wash undies and hair and go to bed. I hope you all had a good weekend. I will see you soon after you receive this I guess. Miss you. I just remembered I saw a yellow spotted duck and a mandarin duck. Tuesday night. Sunroute hotel Yamaguchi.

I spent the morning with Matsushita in the Department. Their labs are older and dirtier than ours and not so well equipped. At 12 I went off with a driver and Ebe Izumi and miryura to Ashiro to see some cranes. The best place to see them in Kyushu is too far they say. So the compromise is to go local then go to see Mt. Azo volcano. The journey was typical flat agricultural flat valleys separated by steep wooded hills. The cranes were there. I might have got some pictures but had problems mastering the new camera. The student's English is poor and they try so hard it is exhausting. We returned by a mountain route with steep hills sharp bends with big barriers and mirrors on the corners. The students were very excited. Then 30 minutes of advice from an old scientist from Tokyo on how to get to my hotel – it's in the same area that Andy lived. The 45 minutes with a 4th year undergraduate (Miyaura?) who is working on my enzyme. Very hard going but he is so willing to

try. But a relief to stop. At 7.30 went with Matsushita to dinner. I suggested a non-special place or whatever they preferred. They preferred very special – sitting on the floor again. Tomorrow I shall be in a traditional Rikowyan hotel on Kyushu. The ladies crept around on their knees giving advice when needed. Sorry that I have still failed to find postcards. Money is going well so may have some for presents.

I am very sleepy as I woke this morning at 5.0 then read Matsushita's papers for three hours. Very worthwhile as we had a very good discussion today.

Have you made the Christmas pudding and cake yet? I am looking forward to Christmas – I guess I am not alone. I can hardly hold my pen so goodnight.

27th Nov. Somewhere in the crater of Mount Aso.

I am writing this while watching World Basketball Championship on TV between Japan and Russia. I am staying in a Ryokan – a traditional Japanese hotel. Sitting on the floor for dinner. It seems I am always writing about food. Beside raw fish this evening they though I needed a change so had raw horse. I woke up this morning to rain – for our journey to the southern island of Kyushu. We are staying one night. My driver is a student Ebe. We went by train through the undersea tunnel to Kyushu to Hakata and Kumagata where we hired a car. Fortunately it was now sunny for our drive to the Mt Aso volcano. We drove to the top to peer down into it. There are concrete shelters to run to if it gets too excited. No flames today, only lots of smoke and steam. Very attractive scenery before the barren top. Ebe got very excited when we saw a cow (city boys!). I saw no birds except crows on a 5 hour country drive. There was more rain on our way home to the hotel. The maids have cleared away dinner and laid out our futons. Ebe's English is poor and I have to struggle to stop being irritated. He took me to lunch in a typical Kyushu restaurant. We sat around a sandpit with little charcoal fires in it. Some men went out with a fishing net, coming back 2 minutes later with gaping live fish on skewers which were stuck in the sand over the fires. They tasted very good in spite of the guilt. I associate traditional Japanese living with peace and flower arranging but here there rowdy parties. Old peasant ladies around here wear huge bonnets. When they are involved in road mending they have to cover them with enormous safety helmets.

28th Friday. I am writing this while waiting for a driver in a 'pub' in a Tokyo hotel. In my Japanese hotel last night I slept very badly because of short futon tiny pillow etc. Breakfast was in my room on a low table. I had ordered a western breakfast so they bought a sort of camping stove and eggs and bacon for me to cook myself. It poured with rain all morning as we drove out of the volcano caldera back Kumamoto where we bought a boxed lunch (£3). They had a huge selection I had rice and fish and also some micned beef all very good. We got back by 5.30 in time for a 3 hour discussion with Matsushita and his students. I made a little goodbye speech and goodbe. Sad they were always so appreciative and caring for me. Then to M's for dinner (at a welcome table) where his boys were waiting and starving. Loads of raw octopus squid and salmon and other raw fish. Then raw beef followed by welcome meat on kebabs. The boys are 11 and 13 so nearly same as Hugh and Clive. The younger one gave a demonstration of fencing with special bamboo swords (Shinai swords for Kendo fencing). The younger boy was quiet while the older tried to talk, As they got more confident they started fighting and larking around. They then gave me a present for my boys (a secret) [It was 2 swords). So I had a wonderful evening. The house was on a hillside with half facing East and half facing West. It was a pity we had not had time earlier to visit his home but he was staying at the hotel for the conference period. We drove back to the hotel where I had another poor night and finished the novel Shogun (I took 6 books but read only one).

29th. Got a taxi to the station where my good planning to avoid traffic left me with about an hour to pass. It is safe to leave luggage lying about so I did and visited the station shops. The Shinkansen took five and a half hours to Tokyo. Very comfortable and kept alive with a sandwich and tin of ice cold sweet coffee. In the lab the nice students had gone to great lengths to explain how to get to my hotel in Shinjuku district - a 20 minute train ride from the centre. No problem. A kind young man found me the train and came with me and helped me off. It was very crowded. At the hotel I found I had been booked for the 29th and 1st but they had no rooms for the 30th! They gave me lists of hotels with telephone numbers but all in Japanese. By the time we had tried five hotels and found them fully booked they had a cancellation so all was ok. I have a lecture in Yokohama tomorrow. Then Sunday it is shopping then soon home.

I can find no more letters so I guess it's ok and got home. I remember that the security people at the airport insisted that my two swords had to go with the pilot in the cockpit to avoid any mediaeval uprising.