

Written by Jacqui Birnie, [jacqui.birnie@googlemail.com](mailto:jacqui.birnie@googlemail.com)

Widely regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, Budapest sits astride the River Danube in the heart of Hungary. It is home not only to the world's largest thermal water cave system, the second oldest metro in Europe, the third largest Parliament building and some 80 geothermal springs but also to Kilgray, the successful developers of MemoQ, and it was here that the first-ever MemoQfest was held on 23 and 24 April 2009. In a leafy suburb just five minutes walk from the famous Andrásy út and the glorious Széchenyi baths in the City Park, around 120 participants from 22 countries gathered to learn more about MemoQ, MemoQ Server and the TM Repository from industry experts and the MemoQ developers themselves.

From the start this was a conference with a difference. During the day the presentations were professional and serious but by night the atmosphere became casual and convivial with a wonderful mixture of humour and camaraderie. The conference itself was preceded by a day of workshops for those arriving early. On the pre-conference evening, a sizeable group assembled for dinner at 'M', a quirky little restaurant with a great reputation for good food and attention-grabbing décor - the walls and ceiling are covered in brown wrapping paper covered in black line drawings of furnishings - then after dinner the group gathered on the quayside to board the boat for an evening cruise down the Danube. The floodlit buildings were very impressive - from Buda Castle to the Parliament building. A number of 'guides' provided a running commentary and a mini history lesson as the boat travelled down to Margaret Island and back to the imposing Széchenyi Bridge.

The conference opened with an air of anticipation as Balázs Kis welcomed everyone to the first MemoQfest. Balázs Kis, Gábor Ugray, István Lengyel and Peter Reynolds form the management board of Kilgray and during the course of the conference they were put on the spot to answer some very penetrating questions from the attendees. Some of the speakers needed little introduction and Jost Zetzsche was no exception with his presentation about the Brave New Post-Trados World where open standards will prevail and there will be less emphasis on a single dominant tool. Not a CAT but rather a TEnT - a translation environment tool. Balázs Kis presented an overview of the TM Repository which is aimed at LSPs (language service providers) and is designed to handle huge numbers of TUs (translation units). After lunch the conference split into specialist presentations and workshops and came back together after the coffee break for a lively presentation by Carsten Peters of BAUR, an Austrian electronics company which decided to handle its corporate translations in-house. He had a great attitude to his translators and was a very popular speaker with the freelancers!

The first day was followed by the memorable Gala Dinner held at APA cuka. Nowhere near as grand as its title, the event opened with a glass of champagne followed by a shot of Unicum. This is Hungary's national drink - a black and bitter blend of 40 herbs and very much an acquired taste. The most surprising thing about the restaurant was that Kilgray's office opened into it! It was an opportunity to mingle, and to meet the very first person ever to buy a MemoQ licence!

Needless to say, some of the participants were rather subdued on the second day of the conference but Juliet Macan of Ic.doc gave a polished presentation on translation challenges and translation environment tools and Benoit Desjardins from Canada presented beetext Flow, a way of integrating translation workflow management with MemoQ. Gábor Ugray discussed Kilgray's development roadmap, strategies, the team, release policies and other related issues. Daniel Goldschmidt gave a humorous presentation entitled "No-one ever got sacked for buying SDL". Integration was the topic of the afternoon presentations too and the conference finished with a question and answer session led by Jost Zetsche as the quizmaster with questions submitted by conference participants and ably answered by Kilgray's management team.

On Friday evening, around 60 people met for yet another fun dinner with drinks sponsored by Plunet so the beer and Unicum flowed once again. Quite a number of people tacked on an extra day for sightseeing so István Lengyel and Gábor Ugray took them on a guided walking tour of Budapest. They sampled its religious past, its beautiful architecture, Buda Castle and the Fisherman's Bastion area and finished the day with another memorable dinner at 'M'. A perfect end to a thoroughly enjoyable trip which many hope to repeat.