



Ukraine, Switzerland and prosecco

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Gerry's Diary

Hi, this is Gerry and this is my Diary for Friday 6th October 2017. Well, autumn is really here now. I had a very good and busy summer, but now I'm back to my autumn and winter routine, and today's show is my last chance to talk about my summer. It finished with a trip [1] to Ukraine and then Switzerland. After that I've got a story about prosecco. But let's start with my trip to Western Ukraine.

At the beginning of September it was time to meet up with [2] my old friends Reinhardt and Luciano to climb another mountain. Two years ago we went to Romania and the weather was too bad for Luciano and me to get to the top of the highest mountain. Last year we went to Iceland but the highest mountain there was too difficult for Luciano and me. This year we went to climb Horvela, the highest mountain in Ukraine – 2061 metres in the northern Carpathian Mountains, near the border with Romania. Ukraine's highest mountain is about as high as Romania's highest mountain: they're both in the Carpathians: one in the north and the other in the south. We had more trouble finding our hotel than finding the top [3] of this year's mountain. And I'm happy to say that we were lucky with the weather and we all reached the top. Reinhardt visits countries just to climb the highest mountain there – and this was his 81st country! As I said, the trouble was the hotel. We booked rooms online, but when we got to the village in the evening, it was dark. There was no sign of the hotel. Nobody spoke English, or German. Nobody knew the name of our hotel. Very strange. In the end we found it – at the end of a rough track [4]: not a hotel but a sort of private bed and breakfast, but with no breakfast!



After the mountain we stayed in Lviv or Lemberg as it's called in German. This is a fine old city with an interesting history. Lots of tourists there, but not many from Western Europe. Here's a list of the countries that have ruled [5] the city of Lviv: Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Russia, Poland, the USSR, Germany and now Ukraine. I visited the city cemetery [6] – one of the biggest and most interesting cemeteries I've ever seen, I think. It has 400,000 graves [7], and this includes three or four different war cemeteries: one for the war in Western Ukraine from 1918-1920 when the Poles and the Ukrainians with French and American help fought against the Russian Bolsheviks. Then the Second World War Russian graves, as well as the graves of Ukrainians who fought again in 1946 for independence against the Soviet Russians. And finally today's war graves of Ukrainian soldiers who are dying in Eastern Ukraine at the moment. It's easy to forget that this war is not over.

What else is there to see? Lots of churches. Western Ukraine is mainly Catholic – but Greek Catholic as well as Roman Catholic. There's a huge opera house and Luciano and I went to see a ballet there. The city is full of interesting statues [8]. One of them is of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch – born in Lviv in 1836. He gave us the name and concept of a masochist [9]. He was a writer and political thinker, but we remember him because he liked to play his mistress [10]'s slave. Finally, I should say that I ate some very good food on my trip and drank some good vodka. And prices in Ukraine are very, very low for us Western Europeans. After my stay in Lviv, it was back to Zurich for Reinhardt's wedding. Yes, Reinhardt is now a married man. Does this mean the end of his mountain trips? I don't know. We'll see.



When I was in Switzerland I stayed with my son in Zurich and he told me a funny story. Well, we think it's funny. He ordered a book online. The title of the book was "Zero Waste [11] Home". This book tells you how to reduce the waste in your home, so that you don't have to throw anything away [12], and you don't buy anything that you don't need. So, my son ordered this book online from Ex Libris, the Migros bookshop and then he went to the shop to collect it. "Good morning," he said. "I've come to collect a book: Zero Waste Home." "Yes, we have it for you," the assistant said, "Would you like a bag for that?"



Do you listen to any of the other PodClub podcasts? I do sometimes. I don't know much Italian at all, but I like Francesca's shows, Al Dente, because I find I can understand the main points of her stories. And in September she had a story about prosecco, the Italian sparkling wine [13]. An English journalist wrote that prosecco is bad for your teeth. The journalist got this information from an English dentist. And the journalist wrote this in a satirical [14] article about prosecco and British women. Anyway Francesca in her show defended the delights [15] of prosecco – and it was a good and amusing podcast. But let me tell you a bit more about prosecco in Britain. The British drink 40 million bottles of prosecco every year, 40 million! That's one third of all prosecco exports. The British, and especially British women, love sparkling wine. And they are drinking more and more of it. Champagne is too expensive. Prosecco is cheap, and it's fashionable [16]. Everybody knows the name – prosecco is an easy name to remember and to say. The French "crémant" or the Spanish "cava" or the German "Sekt" are just not such good names. Twenty years ago, I can't remember any prosecco in Britain. And so my question is: How does the Veneto area of Italy now suddenly produce so much prosecco? In Switzerland too, everybody is now drinking prosecco, it seems to me. That's what we had at Reinhardt's wedding. And prosecco is even part of the Brexit discussion. Boris Johnson, our Foreign Secretary, said something like: "Italy should give the UK a good Brexit deal [17] because it wants to export prosecco to us." OK, Mr Johnson often says strange things, but at the moment Britain without prosecco...? That would be difficult. But bad for British teeth? Perhaps, but I think fizzy [18] drinks like prosecco or champagne or Coca Cola or Red Bull are probably all a problem for your teeth!

I think my pub quiz question last time was a bit difficult. Do you agree? I asked you about a list of 20 men from different countries. What do they do? I asked you. Only one person sent me an answer. Well done, Willy! He was right: they were all the 20 football managers from the English Premier League. And I say, they "were" the managers, because one of them already lost his job! My new question is perhaps a little easier. Here it is. Prince Charles has just broken a record. I'm not sure if it's in the Guinness Book of Records – it probably is. So what is Prince Charles's new record? What has he just done?

Send me your answers and any comments on the show to the website podclub.ch, or you can use Twitter. My Twitter address is @gerrypod. You can also find us on Instagram with the hashtags #gerrysdiary and #podclubgerry. And finally, don't forget the PodClub app, where you can find the vocabulary learning programme. I'll be back with my next Diary podcast on 3rd November. Till then, thanks for listening, and take care!

Glossar: Gerry's Diary

[1] **trip**: journey, here: holiday

[2] **to meet up with**: to come together with (people) by chance or in a planned way

[3] **the top**: here: the highest point, the summit

[4] **rough track**: a path or road that is not good for cars

[5] **to rule**: to govern, to hold power over

[6] **cemetery**: area (field, park) where dead people are buried, graveyard, necropolis

[7] **grave**: place where a dead person is buried (put in the earth)

[8] **statue**: image of a person (or animal) made of stone, metal or wood, usually big

[9] **masochist**: a person who gets (sexual) pleasure from pain or unpleasant treatment (first defined by Krafft-Ebing)

[10] **mistress**: girlfriend (sexual partner) of a married man

[11] **waste**: rubbish, trash, garbage (things/stuff that we throw away)

[12] **to throw away**: to not keep, to get rid of

[13] **sparkling wine**: wine that has bubbles of gas in it (like champagne)

[14] **satirical**: making fun (of...) / laughing (at ... something political or socially important)

[15] **delight**: pleasure

[16] **fashionable**: trendy, popular

[17] **deal**: agreement (usually a business agreement)

[18] **fizzy**: (a drink) with gas, with bubbles (informal English)