

Bad weather, bodies on the beach, fruit and veg

16.03.2018, Episode 192

Gerry's Diary

Hi, this is Gerry and this is my Diary for Friday 16th March, 2018. Today's diary is about bad weather, bodies on beaches, tea, coffee, fruit and vegetables. Let's get started!

March 1st is Wales's national day. It's St David's Day – the patron [1] saint of Wales. On the last weekend of February, the sun was shining and we looked forward to a nice day on March 1st. But then on Monday 26th of February, everything changed. The "Beast [2] from the East" arrived. You had it in Switzerland before us – strong winds from the east, and the winds brought really cold temperatures, and a lot of snow. The newspapers gave us the name for this wind: the Beast from the East. It was a good name because the wind was really beastly [3] – very horrible [4]. And then we had another really big storm, called Emma, from the southwest, and when they met, it was chaos [5].

A lot of roads and railways were blocked, and for a week the weather was the main news here. In Wales there was a lot of snow on the mountains, but here, where I live, on the island of Anglesey, it was the wind that was the main problem. On St David's Day and again on the 2nd March the freezing [6] east wind just came howling [7] down from the mountains. Holyhead is the name of the port in Anglesey for the ferries to Ireland. It has a very big harbour [8] and a marina for yachts. It has very good protection from the usual winds from the south west, but not so good when the wind comes from the east. The wind in Holyhead reached Hurricane Force 12 – that's the maximum level on the Beaufort wind scale, a wind with an average [9] speed [10] of about 120km an hour. The storm destroyed over 80 boats in the marina and harbour. In my garden I lost a big old rhododendron and some fencing [11], but that was all, I'm glad to say.

It was like the beginning of a new murder series [12] on television. A report in the local news said: A walker in Felinheli this afternoon found a man's foot on the beach. (Felinheli is a little town about half way down the Menai Strait, and the Menai Strait is the sea channel between us on the island of Anglesey and the mainland of Wales.) So whose foot was it? And why was it on the beach? Then two days later, somebody found the bodies [13] of two men on another beach, on another side of the island – about 30 kilometres round the coast from Felinheli. And – yes, you've guessed – one of the bodies had a missing [14] foot. A horrible story, of course, but we thought it was funny because the police said that there was nothing suspicious [15] about it. The deaths of these two men were unexplained, but not suspicious. Really? But in fact, the two men were visitors to our area. Maybe they were on a boat. Maybe they had an accident [16]. Perhaps the boat cut off the foot of one man. And the sea currents [17] took the foot one way and the bodies another way. We don't know yet. We're waiting for more news. But it probably wasn't a mafia killing after all.

My pub quiz question last time was about tea and coffee in Britain. I asked: In Britain do we drink more tea or more coffee these days? Not an easy question to answer, I think. Thank you to Agnès and Charles for their answers. They both think that the British used to drink more tea but now they drink more coffee. I'm not sure. Perhaps they read the same survey [18] as me. It was about all the new coffee shops in Britain now. In every town you can find Costa Coffee, Starbucks, Caffe Nero and lots of others. So it seems that when the British go out they now prefer coffee. Our local supermarket gives you free coffee if have a loyalty card [19]. And the British like milky coffee best – latte, capuccino... But at home perhaps we drink more tea. In another report, I read that we actually drink twice as many [20] cups of tea as cups of coffee. Tea is easier to make than coffee if you use a tea bag [21]. And, by the way, we nearly always drink strong black tea with milk. So, I think, coffee is more and more popular, but tea is still our number one hot drink.

Do you have a fruit and vegetable shop in your village or small town? Probably not. In Britain, you can find greengrocers [22] in cities – a greengrocer, by the way, is the name for a person who sells fruit and vegetables. But we buy nearly all our fruit and vegetables from supermarkets these days. So it was a big surprise when somebody opened a new greengrocer's shop in our little town. The owner was an ex-social worker. He was tired of his job with the government and he decided to do something new. The new guy [23]'s idea is that fresh fruit and vegetables are good for us, and it's important that our children eat more of them.

He wanted a shop in the middle of the town where young people, old people, families with children and so on can go to see, and taste and buy fruit and veg, as we say. He opened in October, and people began to visit his shop. Slowly, the number of customers increased. His shop was next to our very good butcher's shop, so it was very handy [24]. The greengrocer was pleased with his little business, but then he had an accident. He had to lift lots of heavy sacks of potatoes and so on, and he got a hernia [25]. His doctor said that he had to stop, and in January the shop closed. He's looking for somebody to take it over, but he hasn't found anybody. What a pity!

Just a couple of things before I go: first, congratulations to Isabelle. It's her 50th Balades podcast. And she has a sort of competition for you. Check it out! And second, you now know what a greengrocer is, but what's the name of a person who sells fish? That's my new pub quiz question. You can send me your answers 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 don't forget the PodClub app, with the vocabulary learning programme. I'll be back with my Diary in four weeks on April 13th. And a word to Guy: I'll try to answer your question then! Take care!

Glossar: Gerry's Diary

[1] **patron**: somebody who protects or supports another person or organisation, etc.

[2] **beast**: an animal that is dangerous or strange

[3] **beastly**: very unpleasant, nasty

[4] **horrible**: very unpleasant, nasty

[5] **chaos**: a very bad situation where everything is disorganised and nothing works (NB Be careful of the pronunciation!)

[6] **freezing**: very cold (cold enough to turn water into ice)

[7] **to howl**: to make a noise like a wolf or a dog (when they make a long, loud noise)

[8] **harbour**: a protected place built near the land where boats can stay in calm water

[9] **average**: the middle number (here the middle between the fastest and slowest in a period of time)

[10] **speed**: how fast something goes

[11] **fencing**: material to make a sort of barrier or wall (here: made of wood)

[12] **murder series**: here: a number of television programmes with a drama about somebody who is killed

[13] **body**: here: (the physical remains of) a dead person

[14] **missing**: not there

[15] **suspicious**: here: strange, unusual (NB The police meant that they didn't think there was a crime: nobody killed these men.)

[16] **accident**: here: an unexpected event when people get hurt or something gets damaged

[17] **current**: here: the movement of water from one place to another

[18] **survey**: a piece of writing that describes (tells you) what's happening in a situation, or what people think about something

[19] **loyalty card**: a card that you get from a shop, for example the Migros Cumulus card

[20] **twice as many (cups)**: double the number of (cups)

[21] **tea bag**: a small paper container with tea in it that you put into a cup or a teapot to make tea

[22] **greengrocer**: somebody who sells fruit and vegetables

[23] **guy**: man (sometimes woman) (informal English)

[24] **handy**: convenient, easy to use (here: visit)

[25] **hernia**: a medical condition where an organ in your body pushes through the muscle around it