

Of misadventures and grandmothers

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Owen in China

Hello and welcome, this is Owen and this is my podcast for Friday 7th December, 2018. I hope you're all doing well. We're nearing the end of another year. Actually, this is my last podcast of the year, so let's get started.

Today, I'll be talking about a disastrous hike and a chat with my grandmother.

I went on a rather ill-fated [1] hike with my sister the other day. It was her 40th birthday and she wanted to hike along the coastal path on Anglesey in North Wales. We decided to take Gerry's dog Minnie with us. Minnie's a rescue dog from Spain and she was very excited at first about coming with us. The weather didn't look great but we checked the weather forecast and decided that our best bet [2] was to head to the south-west part of the island if we wanted to stay dry. Needless to say [3], we had no such luck. It started raining almost immediately. Minnie, being Spanish and used to sunshine, was no longer excited about the hike. She hasn't adjusted to the Welsh climate yet and she does not approve of rain. It was not a good start to the hike and things got worse from there. The coastal path at this point took us right down to the water and then into the water. At high tide [4] there's a stretch of path that is actually under water and, of course, we'd miscalculated [5] when we'd get to that part. We weren't going to let that stop us though, so we took our shoes off and walked barefoot through icy cold ankle-deep seawater. Now, Minnie has rather short legs. She looks like she might be part beagle and part dachshund. Her legs are a little bit longer than those of a dachshund but her body is still pretty close to the ground. She got very wet and she stopped wagging [6] her tail. We gave her some treats [7] to cheer her up once we were back on dry ground. It was at this point that she picked up the scent [8] of a rabbit and ran off into the bushes. There was no way we could follow her, so we just had to wait. She finally reappeared half an hour later. Then the rain and wind really started to pick up [9]. The raindrops felt like needles on our faces. Minnie looked really miserable and we noticed that she was walking in a slightly odd way. She was swinging her front legs out to the side like a bow-legged [10] cowboy. We realised that she was hurt. The harness [11] that goes under her front legs was wet and sandy and rubbing against her skin and causing her pain, so we took it off immediately. Her gait [12] improved but her mood didn't. In fact, it got worse. We had to cross some muddy fields and in one of the fields there was a herd of cows. Minnie is afraid of cows and refused to go any further. She wanted to turn around and head back, so I had to pick her up and carry her through the field. After that things improved a bit. We saw lots of pheasants [13] and Minnie was quite happy chasing pheasants. Seeing so many pheasants, I said: 'Oh, it must be shooting season.' As soon as I said it, shots rang out [14] in the distance. Minnie might be afraid of cows but she's terrified [15] of shots. She ran as if someone was shooting at her. It took us ages to find her after that. We eventually found her hiding in a barn [16]. We did finally get her home but she's ignored me ever since.



My sister has an Australian friend who's a documentary filmmaker. She was over for my sister's birthday and she got to meet our grandmother. She wanted to know what to call her before meeting her and we all just said: 'Nain.' Now, Nain is just what you call your grandmother in Welsh but at this point so many people call her Nain, it's almost as if that's her name. I guess, it does sort of sound like a name if you don't speak Welsh. Anyway, the Australian filmmaker was very taken with [17] Nain. Most people are. Nain is very likeable and her love for everything and everyone seems to grow every year. She turned 100 this year, so that's a lot of love. The filmmaker thought it would be nice to interview Nain on camera, since she's seen and done so much in her life. Nain, of course, being

the modest person that she is, didn't think she would have anything interesting to say. But she did eventually agree to do it. So I went along to help conduct [18] the interview. I could tell when we started the interview that Nain was a bit suspicious of it all. She might be 100 years old but she's still very sharp [19]. Before we started, she said: "Why are we doing this now? Is there something you know that I don't?" After a while I think she forgot that we were filming her and she seemed very happy to tell us all about her life. She was born during the 1st World War and she spent her childhood in North Wales. Welsh was her first language and what she spoke with her parents. She was raised mainly by her mother. Her father was a sailor and he spent most of his life out at sea. There were, of course, lots of details that she struggled to remember. These days her memory is a little patchy [20]. She's very accepting of her poor memory, it doesn't frustrate her. There's a period in her life that she remembers very well though. She spoke about this period in detail. And it's not the first time I've heard her reminisce about that time. I get the impression that it was one of the happiest times in her life. It was when she first moved to London. Her life has been split between two places: North Wales and London. And she first moved to London in the mid-1930s. She got her first job and all the independence that comes with that. She didn't have much money but she had a close circle of friends and she was in the big city with everything that had to offer. The little money she could save, she spent on going to the theatre. The theatre is what she loved. She always loves to tell us that she got to see Laurence Olivier on stage.

That's just about it for this month - or year, I should say. Thank you for listening and thank you for the comments you left after my last episode. You can listen to all our episodes by downloading our app or by visiting our website podclub.ch. Remember that you can also download our vocabulary trainer and you can find us on Instagram. I want to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a great start to 2019. I'll be back on 18th January. Until next year, goodbye!

Glossar: Owen in China

[1] **ill-fated**: unfortunate, likely to end in failure

[2] **so.'s best bet**: the thing or action that gives so. the best chance of success

[3] **needless to say**: phrase used for saying that sth. is already known or understood

[4] **high tide**: the time when the sea reaches the highest level

[5] **to miscalculate**: here: to make a mistake when estimating

[6] **to wag**: to move sth. from side to side

[7] **treat**: here: sth. nice to eat

[8] **to pick up a scent**: to notice a smell

[9] **to pick up**: here: to become stronger

[10] **bow-legged**: with legs that curve out at the knees

[11] **harness**: a piece of equipment used for holding or fastening

[12] **gait**: the way that so. walks

[13] **pheasant**: a large bird with a long tail that is hunted

[14] **to ring out**: to be heard loudly and clearly

[15] **terrified**: extremely afraid

[16] **barn**: a large building on a farm where animals are kept

[17] **to be taken with so.:** to like so. very much

[18] **to conduct sth.:** to guide or manage sth. in an organised way

[19] **sharp**: here: intelligent and quick to notice sth.

[20] **patchy**: marked by holes, incomplete

