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Introduction

[1] **David:** Welcome to edition 12/2019 of Spotlight Audio. This is David Creedon from Britain. Join me now for a 60-minute expedition around the English-speaking world — with stories, language tips and exercises.

As part of our special crime edition, we have a three-part short story with Spotlight's very own amateur detective, and we also look at an example of a regional crime novel from Britain. The Lake District in the north west of England is one of the most beautiful and popular tourist areas in the country. Find out about the region in our new quiz section and meet a mountaineer and writer who has made the area his home.

Voodoo is a cult with witchdoctors trying to hurt people, right? Not at all. In A Day in My Life, we talk to a real-life Voodoo priestess and find out what this traditional religion is really about.

Britain Today

[2] New leader, old system

David: If you've been wondering how Boris Johnson became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom without winning a general election, fear not. Our columnist Colin Beaven is here to explain the peculiarities of the British political system in the latest edition of Britain Today.

How did Boris Johnson become Britain's new prime minister? Who chose him to fill the gap left by Theresa May when she decided enough was enough? It was members of the Conservative Party.

"Wait a minute!" some said. "Not that we're experts, but aren't we supposed to have an election?" No, was the answer. When the Conservatives are in power, and choose a new leader, that person automatically becomes prime minister.

This is how it works: Conservative MPs vote several times to bring the long list of candidates down to two. Then party members choose the final winner. Or as journalist Andrew Pierce wrote in the *Daily Mail*: "The final two candidates will be put to Conservative Party embers."

I think "embers" was a misprint for "members".

general election

- Parlamentswahlen

misprint

- Druckfehler

mountaineer

- Bergsteiger(in)

MP (Member of Parliament)

- Abgeordnete(r)

peculiarities

- Eigenheiten

priestess

- Priesterin

supposed: be ~ to do sth.

- etw. tun sollen

witchdoctor

- Mediziner

Embers are the bits of a fire that glow when the flames have gone out. It's actually not a bad metaphor: members of the Conservative Party are getting rather old. Maybe not as geriatric as the politburo in the former Soviet Union, but they seem to share its system of choosing new leaders. If the Conservative Party finds inspiration in such questionable models from history, it's a wonder its embers didn't vote to bring in a tsar.

In a way they did. Russia had Boris Godunov. We have Boris Not Goodenough. Mr Johnson often puts his foot in it, and probably does so on purpose because he knows that's what his party embers like. Take the deal that Theresa May agreed with the EU. He criticized it strongly, and reportedly said it was like polishing a turd. This is rather indelicate language, Boris — but also not a bad metaphor. In the elite education system that produced him, parents flush their children off to be polished at Eton, which then flushes them off to Oxford for more polish, in the hope that they'll all become prime ministers.

In theory, it's a system that turns youngsters into polished professional adults. Sadly, no system is perfect. Take my local water company, Southern Water. The system there broke down so seriously that the company was taken to court for failing to stop pollution from waste water.

You could almost say it failed to do what Boris Johnson was referring to. Southern Water was fined by Ofwat, the organization that polices the UK's water industry, and it'll have to pay its customers at least £61 each.

We have a number of offices with silly names: Ofgem monitors gas and electricity companies; Ofsted inspects schools to check standards in education — and so on. We could almost do with one to minimize political pollution from unpolished leaders: Ofpol.

At least we might then get another £61 as compensation for having Boris as prime minister.

court: take sb. to ~

► jmdn. verklagen

fine ► mit einer Geldstrafe belegen

flush

► hinunterspülen

foot: put one's ~ in it

► ins Fettnäpfchen treten

geriatric

► betagt, altersschwach

glow

► glühen

indelicate

► unfein

pollution

► Verschmutzung

questionable

► fragwürdig

refer to sth.

► sich auf etw. beziehen

reportedly

► angeblich

turd vulg.

► Scheißhaufen

waste water

► Abwasser

youngster

► Jugendliche(r)

Having said that, some of us would cheerfully pay £61 to see him flushed off into the history books. And pay another £61 for an office to check it was done properly: Offlush.

Source: *Spotlight* 12/2019, page 11

A Day in My Life

[3] Voodoo queen

David: What do you know about Voodoo? A lot of people think it's like a cult or black magic used to hurt or control other people. Well, that's just in the movies. In fact, Voodoo is a traditional religion that was brought to the Americas by African slaves where it became mixed with Catholicism. In *A Day in My Life*, we're lucky to have an interview with a Voodoo priestess. She might not want us to mention her actual name, but the Voodoo Bone Lady from New Orleans is the real deal. A fifth-generation psychic and priestess, she has her home and shop in the famous French Quarter of the city. In the first excerpt from the interview, the Voodoo Bone Lady explains why people visit her and her shop.

VBL: I would say that most people come out of curiosity. New Orleans is a very unique place in that there are many Voodoo shops here. None quite like ours, of course, but there are many Voodoo shops. Most people come from places where they've never seen a Voodoo shop in their lives, and their only

perception of Voodoo is what they've seen in Hollywood and in popular culture. So, when they come in here, we're quick to inform them of the real deal about Voodoo, how it is a real religion, etc., and it's positive. And then, a lot of times, they'll tell us about the issues or the situations they're facing. And then we can suggest these are products that may possibly be helpful to you for those situations.

David: And what are the most popular products in the Voodoo Bone Lady's shop?

VBL: Ah, Voodoo dolls would definitely be very popular. And our love potions, OK. I have a very special "Love Potion No. 9", OK, that I hand-brew with herbs and things in the old-fashioned Voodoo way, and that sells quite well also.

David: The Voodoo Bone Lady performs fortune-telling for people who are curious

cult ▶ Kult, Sekte

doll ▶ Puppe

excerpt ▶ (Text)Auszug

fortune-telling

▶ Wahrsagen

hand-brew

▶ von Hand aufgießen

herbs

▶ Kräuter

perception

▶ Vorstellung

potion ▶ Trank

priestess ▶ Priesterin

psychic

▶ Medium, Hellscher(in)

real deal

▶ das einzig Wahre

unique ▶ besonders

about what will happen in their lives. But can she really tell the future?

VBL: Yes, yes, yes, definitely. I do divination. I read tarot cards, I read palms, and, of course, I read the bones, which is why they call me the Voodoo Bone Lady. You see, I'm a fifth generation Voodoo priestess; this is nothing new to me, OK. As I say, "I'm not new to this, I'm true to this," OK, alright? So, my family has been doing this a long time, and it's something that I grew up in, essentially.

David: So, what do people want to know when they have their fortune told?

VBL: Well, in an hour-long session, they want to know about their entire lives: love, careers, success, family. So, we cover all of the bases on the situation. But most people are focussed on love the most.

David: The Voodoo Bone Lady also looks after the people taking part in her city tours.

VBL: And when you come to New Orleans, I definitely want you to come on one of my Voodoo Bone Lady tours. We do cemetery tours, ghost tours, French Quarter tours, etc. And so, I'll go and greet my guests many times, take pictures with them, and just let them know that I do appreciate them coming, appreciate them and their business.

See Spotlight 12/2019, pages 12-13

Quick Quiz

[4] The Lake District

David: In the new quiz section in Spotlight Audio, we look at the background of an article in the magazine. This time, we focus on our travel story about the Lake District entitled "Landscapes of poetry".

Claudine: This month in Spotlight magazine, our travel feature, "Landscapes of poetry", takes us to the Lake District in north-west England. In Spotlight's new "quick quiz", we look at fascinating facts about that region. Maybe you know these things, travel fans — and maybe, just maybe, you don't. We'll give you a chance to test yourself with three quiz questions. Here we go:

Did you know that the Lake District National Park, contained within the larger Lake District region, is the largest national park in England? After the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland, it is also the second-largest national park in the United Kingdom. The UK has a

appreciate

► schätzen

cemetery

► Friedhofs-

divination

► Hellsehen, Wahrsagen

entitled

► mit dem Titel

essentially

► im Grunde

read palms

► aus der Hand lesen

total of 15 national parks. Others you might have heard of include the Yorkshire Dales, right next to the Lake District, and Dartmoor, which is in Devon, in England's south-west.

Here is the first question of our quick quiz: Other than its lakes, what natural feature is the Lake District best known for?

- glaciers
- mountains, or
- hot springs

The answer is b., mountains.

The highest mountain in the Lake District is Scafell Pike. At 978 metres, it is also the highest mountain in England.

Scafell Pike and other high hills are in a part of the park called the Southern Fells. "Fell" is an interesting word. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a fell as a hill or segment of high moorland, especially in the north of England. It comes from the Old Norse word *fjall* or *fell*, meaning "hill" and may in fact be related to the German word *Fels*, meaning "rock."

OK, let's move on to the next topic. One of the famous people connected to the Lake District is Beatrix Potter, the creator of Peter Rabbit. She had several farms in the region

and worked hard to guard the natural character of much of what today constitutes the Lake District.

Here comes our second quiz question: If someone seeks to preserve landscapes in their natural state, what do you call them?

- a land conservationist
- a landscape architect, or
- a land baron

If you chose a., congratulations! If you conserve something, you try to protect it from harm; a conservationist is someone who does just that. If you chose b., you could be... partly right. Many landscape architects — people who create outdoor environments such as parks and gardens — are also conservationists. And c.? A land baron is someone who owns and rents out land. If that person happens to be a conservationist, too, then that's a good thing.

Back to Beatrix Potter, a fascinating woman.

constitute

➤ ausmachen, bilden

glacier

➤ Gletscher

hot spring

➤ heiße Quelle

moorland

➤ Heidemoor

Norse

➤ Altnordisch

preserve

➤ erhalten

She was born in London in 1866 and died in the Lake District in 1943; she is best known for her first book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Do you know it? I used to read it as a child — and have it read to me. But here is something I didn't know:

The story of the little boy rabbit who steals vegetables from Mr McGregor's garden was born of a set of illustrated letters. Potter had sent these to the children of Annie Moore, her friend and former governess. In one of them, addressed to five-year-old Noel Moore in 1893, Potter wrote: "I don't know what to write to you, so I shall tell you a story about four little rabbits, whose names were Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail and Peter." It was Annie Moore, charmed by the pictures and the stories, who suggested in 1900 that the letters be made into picture books. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* was first published in 1902 and is among the bestselling books of all time.

Alright, here we go with part three of our quick quiz. Did you know that William Wordsworth, the English Romantic poet who is most associated with the Lake District, spent time in Germany?

Here's our question: Where did Wordsworth stay in Germany?

- Berlin
- Munich, or
- Goslar

Well, we really tried to fool you this time. The correct answer is c., Goslar, at the foot of the Harz mountains in today's Lower Saxony. Wordsworth went abroad with his sister, Dorothy, and their good friend, the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in the autumn of 1798; Dorothy and William stayed in Goslar until the following autumn. Goslar is where he wrote "the Lucy poems" about a girl who died young. I've just read a couple of these poems; they are very pretty and very sad. If you want something a little sunnier, try Wordsworth's poem entitled "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud". Its first lines are very famous:

"I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er valleys and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;

daffodil

➤ Narzisse

host

➤ Menge, Meer

float

➤ treiben, ziehen

o'er

➤ over

governess

➤ Gouvernante

vale

➤ Tal

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.”

That's it for the quick quiz this month. I hope you had fun. I know I did. See you next time on Spotlight Audio.

See Spotlight 12/2019, pages 26–33

Travel

[5] Mountain Man

David: What do you do when you're thirty-something and feel trapped by your desk job in the city? Well, if you're James Forrest, you quit the job, move to the Lake District and start climbing mountains. Lots of mountains. His first book, *Mountain Man*, documents his successful attempt to climb every mountain peak in England and Wales in just six months — the fastest ever time. In an interview with *Spotlight*, Forrest talks about his adventurous life and his love for the Lake District. We first asked what drove him to climb all those mountains.

Forrest: I just absolutely love the mountains, I get so much from it, like I said in my talk, so much. They give me so much. The mountains just really help with my mental health, they help you to relax and to de-stress, to just feel happy in life. And then there's the escapism, the fresh air, the views, the closeness to nature. So many benefits I get from mountains. I feel

they're just a real great part of my life. And also, I just really had this determination to try and test out whether you could have a big, grand, epic adventure even though you've got a job. This challenge was something a bit crazy, a bit radical, obviously a bit bonkers, trying to do that many mountains in that short amount of time, but the whole point was to prove that it is possible, and to see if you can integrate a big adventure with your everyday life.

David: Despite growing up in the West Midlands city of Birmingham, Forrest has chosen the Lake District as his new home. What attracted him to the area?

Forrest: I've always had this kind of real strong pull to the Lake District. I think it must be linked to my childhood holidays and visits to the Lake District with my family. They were

bonkers *ifml.*

► verrückt

breeze

► Wind, Brise

epic *ifml.*

► hier: riesig, Mega-

escapism

► Fluchtmöglichkeit

flutter

► flattern

mental health

► psychische Verfassung

peak

► Gipfel

pull

► Anziehung

quit

► aufgeben

trapped

► gefangen

my first experiences of coming to real mountainous areas. That must really have just stuck with me. I gained a real love for the landscape. I think it is all that past, and that emotion, and those previous stories that all interlink to kind of draw me back to the Lake District, and when I did finally move to live here, it just felt like the right thing to do. It felt right for me, and it felt like I was coming to where I wanted to be in the world. I'm so happy that I did move here.

David: After conquering the mountains of England and Wales, Forrest crossed the Irish Sea and climbed all the mountains in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as well. For his next adventure, he hopes to tackle the Munros — the mountains of Scotland with a height of over 3,000 feet, which is approximately 914 metres.

Forrest: Obviously, I've done loads and loads of mountain walking in England, Wales and Ireland. Haven't done very much at all in Scotland, so everyone is telling me that I have to go to Scotland, that all of these climbs I've done so far have just been a warm-up for the real action in the real high mountains of Britain in the Scottish Highlands, so I'm really, really excited about heading up to Scotland over 2019 and trying to tick off as many of the Munros as I can. Fingers crossed, I'll be able to do them all. I've got quite a few work commitments and things, so it's going to be a challenge, but I'm

really looking forward to it. If I can do them, then it will complete my trilogy of adventures.

See Spotlight 12/2019, pages 26–33

Crime: book review

[6] *The Grasmere Grudge*

David: Although the Lake District is famous for serving as both home and inspiration for poets like William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge and children's authors like Beatrix Potter and Arthur Ransome, there is also a darker side to the literature from the area. As part of our Spotlight crime issue, Editor-in-Chief Inez Sharp reviews a crime novel — the latest in a whole series — set in the Lake District.

Inez: This is Inez Sharp, editor-in-chief of Spotlight and this is Spotlight Audio's first book review. Welcome. As you know, crime is our special focus this time, and I have chosen a crime

commitment

• Verpflichtung

editor-in-chief

• Chefredakteur(in)

fingers crossed

• drücken wir die Daumen

interlink

• sich verbinden, verflechten

previous • früher

tackle

• angehen, in Angriff nehmen

tick off

• schaffen, abhaken

story, and it's not just any crime story. This one is set in that lovely corner of north-west England, the Lake District. What you need to know right off is that our book, *The Grasmere Grudge* by Rebecca Tope, is the most recent in a series featuring the amateur detective Simmy Brown — the entire series is set in the Lake District.

It's June in the village of Troutbeck in the Lake District, and Simmy Brown, who has a flower shop in nearby Windermere, has just come back from a relaxing holiday with her boyfriend. Everything, if you will excuse the pun, is looking rosy, until Chris, who runs an auction house, discovers the body of an antiques dealer — and friend — in an empty house of an old lady who has recently died and whose potentially valuable property Chris has come to look at. The man has been brutally murdered, and when Chris phones to tell Simmy about his gruesome discovery, he appears to be in a state of shock. Simmy becomes drawn into this case not just because she has helped to solve previous crimes, but because Chris, her partner, and this is where it begins to get creepy, seems somehow to have been involved in the murder or, at the very least, know more about the killing than he is letting on.

Our author Rebecca Tope's great talent is writing natural and very modern dialogue.

Even more importantly, the author has created a very believable central character in Simmy — a kind and careful woman often caught between what she would like to believe and what she can see. Tope really allows us to feel Simmy's fear as she begins investigating the crime — especially the mistrust between Simmy and Chris. The backdrop to all this is a place of high and barren landscapes — fells — and deep lakes, but also pretty, albeit crowded, towns and villages.

Did the old lady and owner of the house have a secret? Is there a valuable antique involved? And will Simmy, with the help of her two

albeit

- wenn auch

antiques

- Antiquitäten

backdrop

- Hintergrund, Kulisse

barren

- unwirtlich

creepy

- gruselig, unheimlich

featuring

- mit

fell

- Hochmoor

gruesome

- grauenvoll

least: at the very ~

- zumindest

let on sth.

- sich etw. anmerken lassen

previous

- früher

pun

- Wortspiel

unofficial assistants Ben and Bonnie, find the murderer?

Grasmere Grudge is published by Allison and Busby and is available as a hardback and costs €27.80

See Spotlight 12/2019, pages 26–33

Everyday English

[7] Feeling unwell

David: Getting sick is never fun. It's even worse when it happens on holiday. But that's the situation Trudie and Marisa face in *Everyday English*. The friends are staying at a London hotel when Trudie begins to feel ill. Listen to their conversation and try to find out what Trudie thinks is the reason she isn't feeling well. And what does Marisa do to help her friend?

Marisa: You look really pale. Are you feeling all right?

Trudie: No. I feel really sick. I'm just going to have a lie down.

Marisa: I'll get you some water. Or do you want a cup of tea?

Trudie: A cup of tea would be really good.

Marisa: Do you think it was something you ate?

Trudie: I'm not sure. I started to feel sick after I had that cream bun at the market. Maybe I've just eaten too much.

Marisa: Do you think you need to be sick?

Trudie: Not at the moment. I'll probably feel better in a little while.

Marisa: Why don't I go out and give you some spa? I'll go to the chemist's and ask if they have something for nausea. Just call me if you need anything.

Trudie: OK.

David: Trudie tells her friend she started feeling ill after eating a cream bun at the market. Marisa helps her friend by making her a cup of tea and then going to the chemist's to ask if they have something for nausea. At the chemist's, Marisa explains her friend's symptoms. What does the chemist ask her? What does he recommend for Trudie?

Chemist: Hello. How can I help?

Marisa: My friend is feeling really sick. Do you have anything she could take for nausea?

Chemist: Has your friend vomited?

Marisa: No. She just began to feel really nauseous about half an hour ago. After she ate a cream bun.

Chemist: Does she have any other symptoms?

cream bun

► mit Sahne gefülltes (süßes) Brötchen

nausea ► Übelkeit

pale

► blass, bleich

Marisa: Not that I know of.

Chemist: It might be due to lactose intolerance or she might have a tummy bug. I could give you this, which should alleviate the nausea. But if the symptoms persist, she should see a doctor.

Marisa: OK, thank you. How many should she take?

Chemist: She should just chew or dissolve two tablets in her mouth. She can repeat the dose every hour if necessary.

David: The chemist asks Marisa if Trudie has vomited. Vomiting is that uncomfortable situation when food from the stomach makes its way out through the mouth. The chemist also asks if Trudie has other symptoms. He finally gives Marisa tablets to help Trudie with nausea. Being nauseous is another way of describing feeling sick to one's stomach. Luckily, after some rest and the medicine, Trudie feels much better. The friends can now get back to having fun in London.

Source: Spotlight 12/2019, pages 54–55

American Life

[8] Our better angels

David: The colours red and blue feature prominently in the flag of the United States. Red and blue are also used to refer, respectively, to the Republican and Democratic parties.

In American Life, columnist Ginger Kuenzel despairs over the deep political and social divisions that these two colours have come to represent. Yet not all hope is lost, as a new organization tries to bring red and blue together again.

America is a land of colors. I'm not talking about the skin colors of the people who live here, in this country that once proudly called itself a melting pot and has now turned into a boiling cauldron. No, I'm talking about the colors of our flag — red, white, and blue. While we should feel a sense of unity when we look at the symbol of our country, we are instead deeply divided. Those in the Republican camp are referred to as “red,” while Democrats are termed “blue.”

cauldron ➤ Kochkessel, Hexenkessel

chew
➤ kauen

despair over sth.
➤ an etw. verzweifeln

dissolve
➤ auflösen

melting pot
➤ Schmelztiegel

prominently
➤ auffallend

refer to sth.
➤ sich auf etw. beziehen

respectively
➤ jeweils

tummy bug
➤ Magen- und Darmbeschwerden

Many here support their party without understanding what that party stands for. In the poor rural region where I live, the great majority of the population consistently votes Republican, even though that party favors cutting the social welfare programs many of them depend on. They vote Republican in part because their family has voted Republican for generations, and in part because they feel that Republicans impose fewer regulations.

Today, many families and friends can no longer discuss politics because the sides are so polarized. To help people get beyond this, an organization called Better Angels offers “red-blue workshops.” Founded in Ohio shortly after the 2016 election, the group soon realized that there was a demand for these special workshops, which are designed by a family therapist and community organizer, in other places as well. They now offer them around the country. The workshops are small, with just 10 to 14 participants, half conservatives and half liberals. Participants learn to listen to the “other” side’s experiences and viewpoints, and they try to find things upon which they might agree. The goal is to identify common ground as a basis from which individuals can work together for the good of their communities and the country.

The name Better Angels comes from President Abraham Lincoln’s first inaugural address:

“We are not enemies, but friends. ... Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory ... will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.” It was March 1861 when he said these words, and seven Southern states had already seceded from the United States. Weeks later, the Civil War erupted. The country was divided as never before.

Today, while nobody is predicting a second civil war, opposing sides are polarized to the

bonds of affection

- Bande der Zuneigung

chord

- Zusammenklang

common ground

- Gemeinsamkeit

consistently

- konsequent

demand ► Nachfrage

erupt ► ausbrechen

get beyond sth. ► über etw. hinauskommen

impose

- auferlegen

inaugural address

- Ansprache zur Amtseinführung

participant

- Teilnehmer(in)

predict

- vorhersagen

rural ► ländlich

secede: ~ from sth.

- sich von etw. lossagen

strain

- belasten, strapazieren

swell

- anschwellen lassen

point that Congress is basically dysfunctional, unable to pass important legislation on immigration reform, healthcare, infrastructure, and more. It's hard for any of us to have a rational political discussion unless we are with people who share our opinions. Better Angels is a grassroots movement that encourages people to talk to one another and show understanding. It seems to be a promising strategy as we wait for the better angels of our nature to touch us once again.

Source: Spotlight 12/2019, page 23

English at Work

[9] Irregular verbs

David: Business communication expert Ken Taylor joins us in the studio now with tips on using English at work. This time, Ken has advice on using irregular verbs in their simple past forms.

Ken: Hello. This is Ken Taylor from London. The simple past is one of the most commonly used verb tenses when speaking English. We all know that to create a verb in the simple past we just add -d or -ed to the infinitive: love — loved, repair — repaired. Simple! Yes, simple if you don't take into account the irregular verbs. These are the verbs our English teachers loved to test us on.

Let's see if you can remember the correct form of the irregular verbs in the following

sentences. First, you'll hear a sentence in which the verb is in the present simple form. In the following pause, repeat the sentence but change the main verb form to the irregular simple past. Then you'll hear the correct answer. OK. Good. We'll start.

Several companies begin to cut their costs.
Several companies began to cut their costs.

We hold meetings every Monday.
We held meetings every Monday.

They take complaints very seriously.
They took complaints very seriously.

I choose my own office furniture.
I chose my own office furniture.

We sell both products and services.
We sold both products and services.

I forget his name.
I forgot his name.

grassroots
• hier: Volks-, Basis-

unless
• außer

take into account
• berücksichtigen

They teach time management courses.
They taught time management courses.

I meet my customers at trade fairs.
I met my customers at trade fairs.

They bring new ideas to the team.
They brought new ideas to the team.

We feel happy with the results.
We felt happy with the results.

They lend money to start-up companies.
They lent money to start-up companies.

How was that? Did you know most of them?
You were probably better than you thought
because your English teachers at school made
you learn them. If you want to practise some
more, just go online and put in “test English
irregular verbs” and you’ll find plenty of sites
where you can test yourself.

David: If you have a question for Ken, send
it by e-mail to language@spotlight-verlag.de
If Ken chooses your question to print in *Spotlight*
magazine, you’ll receive a free copy of his
book, *Dear Ken... 101 answers to your questions*
about business English.

See Spotlight 12/2019, page 57

Peggy's Place

[10] A pest at the pub!

David: Now it's time to visit our favourite
London pub, Peggy's Place. Normally, Peggy
and the pub team are more than happy to
welcome visitors. But there are limits. Their lat-
est visitor happens to be small and furry with
big teeth! Yes, a rat has taken up residence at
the pub. What on earth are Peggy and her crew
going to do?

Phil: It was going to become a problem sooner
or later.

George: It's the price you pay for living in a
big city.

Sean: I wonder if the hot weather makes a dif-
ference.

Phil: Apparently they love hot weather.

George: So, this is another depressing side-
effect of climate change.

Peggy: Where exactly did you see the rat, Sean?

Sean: I didn't actually see it, but I sure enough

apparently

➤ anscheinend

copy

➤ hier: Exemplar

furry

➤ pelzig

residence: take up ~

➤ sich niederlassen

side-effect

➤ Begleiterscheinung

trade fair

➤ Handels-, Fachmesse

heard it — scrabbling away in the cupboard under the sink.

George: Are you sure it wasn't a mouse?

Sean: It was very loud for a mouse.

Peggy: Even if it was, one way or another we seem to have vermin, so we're getting in the pest control.

George: Shouldn't you wait until you've actually seen one of our furry friends?

Sean: There were some droppings on the floor. I'm pretty sure at least one rat has moved in with us.

Phil: Well, I've already called a pest control company. They said they'll be here by two at the latest.

Sean: What are they going to do? Try and catch it? Put down poison?

Peggy: I don't know. The information on the website was a bit vague, but there was a picture of someone putting down a kind of box.

George: Maybe you should take a look at the cupboard you think the rat is in.

Peggy: That's a good idea. Sean?

Sean: Perhaps you'd like to come with me, Peggy.

George: Why? Are you scared to look alone?

Sean: Don't be silly.

Peggy: I'd rather not, dear.

Sean: Phil?

Phil: It would probably be better if we waited until...

George: You're all scared of a little rodent. Every one of you!

Sean: Well, if you're so brave, off you go. I'd be happy to point you in the right direction.

George: Come on, then.

Peggy: It's a bit pathetic really, Phil — being scared.

George: Bloody hell! That's a monster rat.

Sean: I'm shaking all over!

Peggy: What happened?

Sean: George opened the cupboard and it jumped out and ran across the kitchen into the space behind the freezer.

Phil: At least we know where it is.

George: I need a brandy... Is that someone's mobile?

Peggy: Yes, it's mine. Hello, Jane!

bloody hell

• verdammtter Mist!

droppings

• Tierexkremente

pathetic

• erbärmlich, armselig

pest control

• Schädlingsbekämpfung; hier: Kammerjäger

pretty

• hier: ziemlich

rodent

• Nagetier

scrabble

• krabbeln

sink

• Wasch-, Spülbecken

vermin

• Ungeziefer, Schädlinge

Phil: So, George, how big is this rat?

George: About like this.

Peggy: OK, you're not going to believe this, but that was Jane on the phone.

Phil: Why wouldn't we believe it? Your daughter calls all the time: to ask for money, to complain about her job, to moan about being a single mum.

Peggy: That's not what I meant. Jane bought Simone a pet rat for her birthday.

Sean: And?

Peggy: She brought it round here and left it in the kitchen because there was nobody around. She was going to collect it but forgot.

George: But it must have been in a cage.

Peggy: Jane says it was.

Sean: But there's no cage in our kitchen, only a big live rat?

Phil: Peggy, Jane's your daughter. You can explain this to the pest control people.

Source: Spotlight 12/2019, page 10

Short Story

[11] "The mudlarkers — a Ms Winslow investigation" Chapter 1

David: Spotlight's amateur sleuth, Dorothy Winslow, is back! In a new three-part mystery, Ms Winslow finds herself in London, attending a meeting of a venerable British-German society with her friend Armin von Weiden. Unfortunately, it seems that not all

members have the society's best interests at heart.

"My friends, we have a fantastic past," said Colin Horridge to the members of the Anglo-Palatinate Merchants Society. "But at this moment in our nation's history, we need to ask the question: is this how we see ourselves moving forward?" He looked at his audience in the elegant 19th-century conference room of the society's building near St Paul's Cathedral in London. "The Brexit process made us all painfully aware of the shackles imposed on us by Brussels — of the tyranny of the European Union. But we've learned a lesson from that process. We must take a much bigger view of

impose

- auferlegen, aufbürden

merchants

- Kaufmannschafts-, Kaufleute-

moan

- jammern, klagen

mudlark

- Schatzsuche im Uferschlamm der Themse

mystery

- Kriminalgeschichte

Palatinate

- Pfalz, Pfälzer(in)

shackle

- Kette, Fessel

single mum

- alleinerziehende Mutter

sleuth

- Detektiv(in)

venerable

- altherwürdig

our future — outside the borders of the EU. We must stop limiting our society to an association with a small province in Germany. We must be more ambitious. I suggest we change our name to the Anglo...” — he paused for a moment: “...the Anglo-Global Merchants Society.” Several people in different parts of the room clapped loudly as Horridge sat down, but most members looked puzzled. The society had always been such an uncontroversial organization. It met twice a year, once in London and once in Mainz, and although the purpose had originally been to promote trade between Britain and the Rhineland-Palatinate, it was now much more of a social club for middle-aged to elderly British and German business people. Yes, they invited important guest speakers to come to talk to them (on one legendary occasion, Mrs Thatcher had visited) and now and again they organized visits to companies in one another’s countries. But more important were the social events that were part of their meetings: going to Wimbledon or visits to Royal Ascot; a boat trip down the Rhine or a wine tour of a particular region. A couple of years ago, however, Colin Horridge had joined the society and quickly made himself indispensable. Yes (members said behind his back), he was pushy. His taste in suits was unfortunate. Yes, he had invited other people like him to join the society.

But (as members always added), he was only 35 and time would improve his manners. For the moment, though, it was useful to have someone to do the society’s boring administrative work. He had advanced quickly from being a member of the events organization team to vice chairman of the London branch, and now he had invited all the British members to an emergency meeting to discuss what he had called in his letter, “the future of the society”. “Well... um... I must say, er... Colin,” said Sir Rufus Foulks, chairman of the London branch, as he struggled to his feet. He had drunk a little too much at the lunch they had just finished. “A bit of a surprise, this proposal, but... yes, well... I think one needs to be careful here. The EU is not all bad. In fact, most of our German partners are very pro-Europe...” “And why wouldn’t they be — if you look at the advantages...” began somebody sitting next to Horridge.

ambitious

• anspruchsvoll, aufstrebend

branch

• hier: Filiale, Zweigstelle

clap

• klatschen

elderly

• (schon etwas) älter

indispensable

• unverzichtbar, unentbehrlich

puzzled

• verwirrt

“Sir Rufus,” interrupted a clear voice from the back of the room. “I don’t think a decision to change our name and direction can possibly be made simply by the British members of the society. I think we need to involve our German friends as well. Why not put it on the agenda for our full meeting in July?”

“Yes, yes, absolutely... just what I was going to say myself, madam,” continued Sir Rufus, glad that somebody had helped him find a way out of the difficult situation. “Well, that’s settled, then. Colin, if you write up the minutes of this meeting, we’ll present your proposal in July.” As she put her pen and notebook away in her handbag, Dorothy Winslow stared long and hard at Horridge. Armin von Weiden — Dorothy’s friend and president of the society — could have told him that he was making a big mistake.

“This proposal is disgraceful!” said Armin, waving a copy of the agenda for the July meeting in the air. He had come over from Heroldstein to stay with Dorothy in her house in Cambridge for a couple of weeks before the society’s London meeting. “Horridge is a troublemaker. The society has been going since the marriage of King James I’s daughter Elizabeth Stuart to Frederick V of the Palatinate in 1613. What he’s suggesting is a takeover!”

“Yes,” said Dorothy. “But with all the German members at the meeting, it can be

voted down.”

“Not necessarily,” said Armin, unhappily. “The British part of the society has more members than the German part, and as the meeting is being held in London, not many of the German members will attend. How much influence does he have, do you think?”

“It’s difficult to say,” Dorothy admitted. “He seems to have a group of friends just like him...”

“Those damn new people Horridge brought in,” interrupted Armin. “I told Sir Rufus we should be a bit more careful about the kind of person we allow to join, and he told me we needed fresh blood!”

“Yes, well it looks as if he’s built himself a power base within the society which could influence the result. And with the trouble Brexit has created, you really can’t tell how people are going to react. But I can’t understand why he wants to take it over. I mean, Armin, I joined last year only because you asked me to. The members aren’t exactly exciting.”

disgraceful

► beschämend, erbärmlich

minutes

► hier: Protokoll

power base ► Machtbasis, Machtgrundlage

takeover

► Geschäftsübernahme

vote down ► ablehnen, niederstimmen

“They’re mostly very respectable people,” Armin said, loyally. “And we do nice things together. I don’t understand what he wants either. But what am I going to do about it?” “Hmm,” said Dorothy thoughtfully. “Perhaps we should visit a friend of mine...”

Source: Spotlight 12/2019, pages 62–67

[12] “The mudlarkers — a Ms Winslow investigation” Chapter 2

Dorothy’s friend was Gregory Lychgate, a professor of political science at Trinity College. He met them at the entrance to the library, and to Armin’s delight, he was everything that a Cambridge don should be. He took them on a tour of the college, so it was a good hour before they were finally sitting in his study with some tea. “...and you must see the rooms that Lord Byron had when he was at Trinity,” Gregory said. “Of course, you know the story of his pet bear?” Armin shook his head, and for another 20 minutes, he heard how Byron had been told he could not bring his pet dog to college. “...but the college rules said nothing about bears, so he brought a bear, installed it in the room next to his and would take it for walks on a chain around the grounds. Now Isaac Newton apparently...” “Gregory,” said Dorothy. “We’d love to hear about Newton another time, but we have a question.”

He listened carefully to their story and for a while said nothing. Then he turned to his computer.

“What’s the name of your man again?” Gregory asked. “Horridge, was it? Colin?” He opened a program and typed in the name. A long list of hits appeared instantly.

“This is a database we have that collects names of political activists from around the internet and then cross-references them,” Gregory explained. “Let’s try this,” he said, pressing a key. The list was transformed into a pie chart. A large part of it was brown, a big piece of it blue and then smaller slices in different colours.

“Oh dear! That doesn’t look very nice. It shows

apparently

- offensichtlich

cross-reference

- einen Querverweis erstellen

delight

- Freude, Entzücken

don

- Universitätsdozent(in)

hit

- hier: Treffer

install

- einrichten; hier: unterbringen

instantly

- sofort, augenblicklich

key

- Taste

pie chart

- Kreisdiagramm

slice

- Stück, Anteil

study

- hier: Arbeitszimmer

the direction of his political interests. Let's see who he's connected with." Again, he pressed a key, and this time the screen displayed a picture of Horridge, with lines — some thicker, some thinner — connecting different names and faces. There were a number of very thick lines going to British politicians.

"It looks like a classic example of political infiltration," Gregory said, sitting back in his chair. "You can see from this that he's got a lot of connections to right-wing politicians and far-right groups. Horridge has joined the society and installed his supporters because he wants to control it for his own purposes."

"But why?" asked Armin. "We aren't powerful or wealthy. Dorothy, do you have any idea?" She shook her head.

"None," she said, "but I don't like these infiltrators. Gregory, thank you so much for your help. I shall invite you to dinner before Armin returns to Germany, and you can tell us about Isaac Newton. We have some plotting to do." Dorothy and Armin walked back through the town. Exams had finished, so most of the students had left and the streets had been taken over by tourists. They had to stop outside an estate agent's as a coach blocked the pavement and was dropping off the next group of visitors. Armin looked in the window at the properties for sale.

"Goodness!" he said to Dorothy. "How

anybody can afford to live in Cambridge nowadays is a mystery to me. You could buy a castle in the Pfalz for the price of a little flat here. It must be even worse in Lo..." He suddenly stopped, turned to Dorothy and clutched her arm.

"How stupid I've been! It's the building Horridge wants. The society's London building!"

When they got back to Dorothy's house, Armin called the society's solicitors and they confirmed that the London building did indeed belong to the society. The location had been given to them by James I when his daughter Elizabeth married Frederick. Although the building had been rebuilt several times, it was still theirs. The parts of the

clutch

➤ packen

coach

➤ hier: Reisebus

drop off

➤ absetzen

estate agent

➤ Immobilienmakler(in)

far-right

➤ hier: rechtsextrem

infiltrator

➤ Eindringling, Spion(in)

pavement

➤ Bürgersteig

plotting

➤ Planen

right-wing

➤ rechts (politisch)

solicitor

➤ Rechtsanwalt,
-anwältin

building that the society didn't use were rented out and — the solicitors explained — brought in quite a lot of money.

“But I still don't really understand,” Armin said, after telling Dorothy everything he'd found out. “Why is it so important to him? He can't live there.”

“Yes, but think about it,” Dorothy replied. “Lots of those right-wing organizations he's connected with would love to have a nice, respectable address near St Paul's Cathedral. He doesn't own the building, but if he runs the organization that does, he has enormous influence on who lives there. He could push his political agenda, and it wouldn't surprise me if he earned a little bit of money from it all for himself.”

“Well, I shall put a stop to it,” Armin said. “I shall explain everything to Sir Rufus and then we'll throw him and his little gang out.”

An hour later, after an uncomfortable call, Armin came back to Dorothy, looking depressed.

“Let me guess,” said Dorothy, putting down the crossword puzzle she'd nearly completed. “He said this was all speculation and the society couldn't throw people out just because you don't like their politics.”

“Yes,” Armin said. “And he said I shouldn't worry, he was sure that the proposal would be rejected, everything would go on as before, and

although Horridge was not exactly his type, he was very useful... blah, blah, blah. Sir Rufus is an old windbag!”

“So, it's up to us, then,” said Dorothy. “Tell me, before the official business starts at this meeting, Horridge has organized some social events, hasn't he? Let's have a look at what he's planned.”

Source: Spotlight 12/2019, pages 62–67

[13] “The mudlarkers — a Ms Winslow investigation” Chapter 3

It wasn't until the society's July event actually started that Colin Horridge felt he could relax. So many things had nearly gone wrong in the week leading up to it. The speaker he had booked had dropped out because of a cold, the string quartet hired to play Mozart after dinner was stuck in Auckland, New Zealand, because of a pilots' strike, and the trip to see the Crown Jewels had to be cancelled because of security issues at the Tower of London. Fortunately, each person cancelling had recommended an

cold

► Erkältung

drop out

► hier: ausfallen

string quartet

► Streichquartett

stuck: be ~

► festsitzen

windbag

► Schwätzer, Flachpfeife

alternative, so he still had a full entertainment programme. Soon they would get rid of all the naysayers and it would be time for Sir Rufus to step down as chairman, leaving Colin to take his place.

He walked around the room as the members arrived, reminding his supporters to be enthusiastic in their applause for the substitute guest speaker, a former television presenter who'd been forced out of his job because of something unfortunate he'd said on a news programme about a foreign head of state.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Armin. "As president of the Anglo-Palatinate Merchants Society, it is my privilege to open this event. We are grateful to Mr Horridge for organizing the social activities. We're looking forward to seeing what he's arranged..."

Colin was a little surprised at this. Nice of the old bloke to recognize his hard work.

"...so without further ado, let me welcome our guest speaker this afternoon, Mr Neil Andrews!"

The television presenter took the stage wearing the serious expression that was so familiar to the British members of the audience.

"It's an honour to be with you, my friends," he began, "but what I'm about to say may shock many of you today." This sent a little shiver of excitement through the room.

"Friends, I regret to tell you that Her Majesty

the Queen and all her family are actually alien lizards from the planet Jira."

There followed 45 minutes of embarrassment for Colin as the presenter demonstrated why he was no longer on national television.

Things improved over dinner. The food and wine were excellent. After coffee, Armin stood up and tapped his glass with a spoon.

"Before our concert, Colin might like to say something about the musicians he booked for this evening," he said.

Again, Colin was taken by surprise. Music wasn't really his thing. He had been told that the Cacophony Quartet were famous in the contemporary classical music scene, and that was all he knew. He stuttered a few words then quickly sat down as the musicians entered the room, led by a young woman with bright

ado: without further ~

► ohne weitere Umschweife

bloke

► Kerl

embarrassment

► Peinlichkeit, Betretenheit

lizard

► Echse, Eidechse

naysayer

► Neinsager(in)

regret

► bedauern

shiver

► Schauer, Zittern

stutter

► stottern, stammeln

substitute

► Austausch-, Ersatz-

orange hair.

The concert was only an hour long, but it was a very long hour for the audience. Not that anyone fell asleep — the noises were too painful for that — but the look of relief on everyone's faces when it was over made it clear how they felt.

"Thank you, Colin," said Armin. "A very... er... brave experiment. We'll meet here tomorrow morning and Colin will explain what we're doing before lunch."

As Dorothy and Armin left, they saw Sir Rufus and Colin in a loud discussion with a group of society members.

By lunch the next day, Colin was feeling good again. The morning event had been a great success. The society had gone on an organized mudlark . When the Thames was at low tide near St Paul's, it was possible with a guide to go treasure hunting along the river. Well, it was only rubbish from London's long history, really, but they had also found old buttons, pieces of pottery , clay pipes, even coins. As the members returned to the society's building for lunch, they were happily comparing their finds. Yes, Colin thought, everything would be fine.

After lunch, everyone returned to the conference room. Colin had just stood up to explain his plan, when two police officers stepped into the room.

"Excuse me! Who's in charge here?" one of them called out.

"The gentleman standing there," said Dorothy helpfully. "Mr Horridge," she added.

"Did you organize a trip along the river this morning, sir?"

"Er, yes," said Colin, nervously. "Is there a problem, officer?"

"Well, I've got a complaint here from the Port of London Authority. It seems members of your group removed items from the ground. That's against regulations. I'm going to have to ask all of you to hand over anything you picked up. And Mr Horridge, you need to come with me to the police station."

Dorothy and Armin returned to Cambridge that evening. The next day, Armin received a phone call.

"Horridge has resigned ," he told Dorothy. "Sir Rufus told me that more than 50 members had

charge: be in ~

► zuständig, verantwortlich sein

clay ► Ton-

item

► Gegenstand

low tide

► Ebbe, Niedrigwasser

mudlark

► Schatzsuche im Uferschlamm der Themse

pottery

► Tonware, Töpferwaren

resign

► kündigen, abtreten

treasure ► Schatz

demanded he leave. I feel a little bit sorry for him.”

“Don’t,” answered Dorothy. “He deserved it.” “I have to ask you, Dorothy: how did you manage to change the programme? You know, get the originals to drop out and recommend those substitutes.”

Dorothy looked a little uncomfortable. “I promised that the society would book them next time and pay them double. Of course, our mudlarking guide was a little different.”

“The one who ‘forgot’ to tell us not to take anything we found?” Armin asked.

“Yes. He’s an old police informant friend of mine,” said Dorothy.

Armin shook his head. Dorothy’s mysterious past was full of surprises.

“I don’t know how you do it, Dorothy, but thank you. The Anglo-Palatinate Merchants Society lives on.” Putting on his most charming voice, Armin added: “By the way, we now need a new vice chairman for the London branch of the society, and I thought...”

Source: Spotlight 12/2019, pages 62–67

Conclusion

[14] David: Thanks for joining us for Spotlight Audio. You’ll find more information about becoming a regular [subscriber](#) to either our CD or download at www.spotlight-online.de/ hoeren Join us again next time, won’t you? Until then: goodbye.

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• Abonnent(in)

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