

Cotgrave & District U3A goes to Germany.

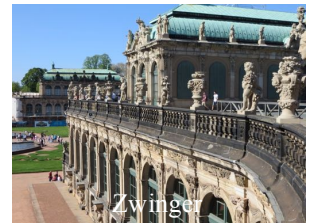
From Monday 29th April until 3rd May a group of U3A members from Cotgrave embarked on a short break to Germany. We travelled with Riviera Travel and flew from East Midlands Airport to Berlin, from where we were bussed to Dresden for two nights before returning to Berlin for the remaining two nights.



We left East Midlands in the fog and arrived in Berlin to equally dreary weather however this did not curtail our enthusiasm for the adventure ahead. The journey to Dresden was uneventful but on arrival we were pleasantly surprised by the 4 star hotel and its positioning, in the middle of a beautiful baroque square, not far from the rebuilt Church of Our Lady.

Our guide, Frank, was excellent. He was extremely well informed and went out of his way to make sure that we had plenty of information about each city we were visiting and about events that were taking place locally. On arrival in Dresden he gave us a quick tour of the area near the hotel pointing out places of interest and restaurants that he had experienced.

The following morning we embarked on a three hour guided walking tour of Dresden. It was extremely interesting to see the beautiful baroque style buildings that had been rebuilt after the war, some of which were rebuilt from just using old photographs. It was amazing to see the details that the craftsmen and builders employed to replicate the originals.



The afternoon was free time. Some of the group made use of the open-topped buses for an extended tour of the city whilst others had a trip on the river Elbe. Some went back to visit the other beautiful palaces, churches and museums. In the evening a few of us went to a Bach organ recital in the Church of Our Lady, a boat trip on the Elbe featuring a 'Dixie Music' show or to a concert in the opera house.



On day three we transferred to Berlin. On route we call at Meissen and had a guided tour of the porcelain factory. It was very interesting to see how the potters produced plates, cups, dishes, figurines, china flowers and other decorative items. We watched whilst artists hand painted the porcelain from before and after the firing process. The finished items were beautiful but due to the labour intensive nature of the business many articles were very expensive.





We travelled to Coldiz arriving at lunchtime. A local baker stayed open especially for us as many of the shops were closed due to it being a bank holiday. After an uphill trudge we were given a very entertaining guided tour of the castle by a gentleman named Alex who originated from Yorkshire. He brought to life the stories of the many escape attempts. Much of Coldiz is now made over to a youth hostel as well

as a music school so it was limiting as to what we could see. However we were able to see the Chapel and the escape tunnels that had been excavated underneath.



We arrived in Berlin about 7:00pm. Again the accommodation was in a 4 Star hotel. As before, Frank pointed out places to eat but we could have eaten in the hotel. The following morning we had a three hour bus tour of Berlin. Frank was able to point out all the interesting buildings including the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate, the Russian Memorial, Museum Island where there are five world famous museums to be found. We stopped at Check Point Charlie, the Holocaust Memorial and the Topography of Terrors which highlights the history of how the Jews in Berlin and across Germany before and during the war were treated. It is here that we saw a section of the Berlin wall. After this tour the afternoon was free time.



As with all of these types of holiday they are just a taster. There is so much to do and to see in Berlin that it is impossible to do it all in a few days. Visiting Berlin has been a very thought provoking experience for us and I am sure that some of our group will want to go back at another time.