

The German Newsletter

März 2025

Kultur, Sprache, Fußball

von Zen Rapley



Von der Grammatik bis zur Kultur, kombiniert mit zahlreichen Städtereisen, unzähligen Currywürsten mit Pommies, neuen deutschen Verbindungen und lebenslangen Erinnerungen, genieße ich meine Erfahrungen in Deutschland mit allen Sinnen.

Mit jedem Schritt tauche ich tiefer in die Kultur ein, indem ich weiterhin mehr über Deutschland lerne. Zudem entstand meine Leidenschaft für Deutsch in der Mittelschule. Bei meiner ersten Deutschstunde sollte ich ein Poster mit dem Titel „Ich über mich“ gestalten. Ich druckte das Bundesliga-Logo, die deutsche Fahne und eine riesige Brezel auf meine Arbeit und entschloss mich, dass ich nicht nur die Sprache lernen würde, sondern auch die Lebensweise und Kultur

Deutschlands entdecken möchte.

Vor einigen Jahren besuchte ich mit meiner Tante Köln, was meine Liebe zum Fußballklub 1. FC Köln entfachte. Zusätzlich hatte ich zweifellos eines der besten Stadionerlebnisse meines Lebens in Köln. Die außergewöhnliche Stimmung hat mich umgehauen und die Hymne „Mer Stonn zo dir“ hätte selbst jemandem ohne Interesse am Fußball Gänsehaut beschert. Seitdem wurde ich Mitglied des Vereins und war bei vielen Heim- und Auswärtsspielen dabei, um den „Effzeh“ zu unterstützen. Normalerweise interessieren sich ausländische Fans für die größeren Vereine in Deutschland wie Bayern München oder Borussia Dortmund, doch das einzigartige Gefühl beim 1. FC Köln ist „spürbar anders“ und so verliebte ich mich dabei in den 1. FC Köln.

Außerdem war meine letzte Domstadtreise mit einem Freund ein tolles Erlebnis. Wir standen zum ersten Mal bei den Ultras in der weltberühmten Südkurve, was großartig war!

Jedoch passierte der wahre Höhepunkt vor dem Spiel. Beim Auschecken aus dem Hotel entdeckte ich den Auswärtsmannschaftsbus und einige Gästefans. Als ich um 10.30 Uhr mit meinem FC-Schal um den Hals und einem eiskalten Kölsch in der Hand dorthin ging, machte ein Fan Witze darüber, dass ich das „falsche“ Team unterstützte. Als er merkte, dass wir Ausländer waren, fragte er, ob ich Niederländer sei,



worauf ich antwortete: „Nee, ich bin Engländer, aber ich kann ein bisschen Deutsch.“ Der Ausdruck auf seinem Gesicht war etwas, das ich nie vergessen werde. Er fragte verblüfft: „Also, du bist Engländer und bist FC-Köln-Fan?“ Ich wusste eigentlich nicht, wie selten es ist, ein englischer Köln-Fan zu sein, aber unser freundliches Gespräch auf Deutsch endete damit, dass er sagte: „Du kannst großartig Deutsch!“ Mit einem breiten Grinsen übersetzte ich dies sofort meinem englischen Freund, der zuvor kein Wort von dem Gespräch verstanden hatte. Zu meiner großen Freude sagte er mir: „Die Sprache sprechen zu können, hilft einem doch sehr. Ich werde anfangen, Deutsch zu lernen.“

Trotz meiner bedingungslosen Liebe zu Köln fand meine faszinierendste Erfahrung in Mainz statt. In der Oberstufe nahm meine Deutschklasse an einem Austausch mit einer Schule in der Karnevalstadt teil. Noch dazu prägte mich dieser Aufenthalt nicht nur sprachlich, sondern auch kulturell. Ich hatte mich schon lange auf den Austausch gefreut, nachdem ich beim Abend der offenen Tür davon erfahren hatte. Nachdem wir die Mainzer*innen einen Monat zuvor bei uns begrüßt hatten, flogen wir nach Deutschland und verbrachten eine Woche dort. Darüber hinaus lebten wir wie die Deutschen, wohnten in deutschen Haushalten, aßen typisch deutsches Essen, studierten an einer deutschen Schule und sprachen ausschließlich Deutsch. Die beste Erinnerung daran war mit Abstand der Besuch eines deutschen Weihnachtsmarkts, bei dem wir alle bei einem leckeren Glühwein die festliche Beleuchtung genossen und die gemütliche Atmosphäre auf uns wirken ließen.

All das sind meine Erlebnisse in Deutschland, bei denen ich auch meine Sprachkenntnisse verbessern konnte. Ich freue mich sehr auf viele weitere Reisen in dieses Land.

Studying German as a Beginner

by Lucy Reeves



One of the best opportunities you have as a language student at Newcastle is to start a new language from scratch in first year - I chose to start German, which gave me the chance not only to learn a new language completely different to my post A-level Spanish, but also to live in Germany for 6 months, practising speaking with natives and experiencing the culture first-hand.

I studied German for a couple of years in school, and although I enjoyed it, I didn't continue it and so had lost it. University was a perfect chance to start again, refresh my knowledge and reach a more advanced level quickly. So, in first year, that's what I did! In level A German we went back to the basics, covering the

alphabet and pronunciation of German sounds before progressing through grammar and vocabulary. The course goes in depth through all the essential grammar needed to understand German and be able to use the language. We had 3 hours of classes each week, which gave us a lot of opportunities to understand the grammar and have time to practise skills like speaking, reading and writing. Of course, there was work to do at home like learning vocab and listening exercises, but this was manageable and supported our in-class work well.

Because you start from knowing nothing, there is a lot to learn, and the pace is quite fast - by the end of first year you should be at a level to join level B the next year alongside students who studied up to A-level in school. I found that the clear teaching and extensive resources were great in helping to reach this level. One of the nice things about level A German is that the classes are relatively small. I found this great because the whole class got to know each other very well and I found some of my strongest friendships in this group. It also means there are lots of opportunities to ask questions, get feedback and support from the teacher, and practise speaking with each other. There was no pressure to get everything right, just to keep practising and the small class size made this easier.

For me the best part about studying languages was the year abroad! I spent six months living in southern Germany, working as a teaching assistant through the British Council.

This was the best opportunity to speak German and practise all I had learnt. I lived in quite a rural area where few people spoke English, so this pushed me to use German in all aspects of my daily life - and this was when I could really see how far I had come. To think that two years before I couldn't speak a sentence of German, and now I could have long conversations with native German speakers - it was rewarding and self-assuring. I had so much fun during my time in Germany and learnt so much firsthand about living there and about the culture. Living in Baden-Wurtemberg meant I often heard the Swabian dialect, went to various regional Volksfeste, ate a lot of Maultaschen (filled dumplings) and of course celebrated Christmas with lots of markets. I found a friendly and welcoming community at the school and made friends there that I'm still in touch with and have plans to visit!



Now, about to graduate, I'm so happy I decided to take German 4 years ago. Thanks to the wonderful teachers, who made it all worth it, I have gained not only language skills, but so many memories, a community and opportunities to travel!

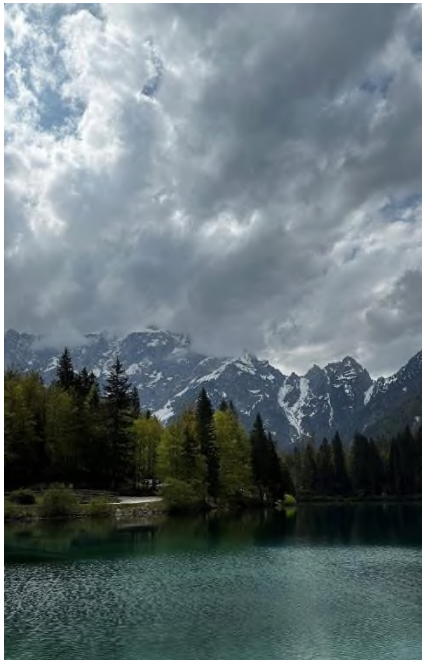
A Year Abroad in the Austrian Alps

by Jack Collins

Last year, I had the incredible opportunity to work with the British Council as an English Language Teaching Assistant in Austria. Beyond taking a break from studying through teaching, the experience allowed me to immerse myself in the stunning region of Carinthia. I explored much of the country, embracing its diverse traditions, dialects, and cross-border influences. Here I'll share some of the highlights from that year.

As a former A-level student of German, I had always assumed I'd end up in a place where Hochdeutsch was spoken, ensuring I could understand the language around me. Somehow, I found myself in Southern Austria. Initially, I was intimidated by the local dialect, but like with any new dialect, it eventually becomes familiar with exposure. One of

the most fascinating aspects was the array of words used here that many other German speakers might not recognize. For example, you might walk into a bakery and ask for a *Semmel* (Brötchen) and take it home in a *Sackerl* (Tüte). On the way back, you could bump into your *Hawara* (Freund) and greet them with *Griab di* (Grüß dich), but you'll have to leave soon, as it's already the middle of *Jänner* (Januar). At first, it might feel challenging, but it's a fascinating form of the language that you'll pick up more quickly than expected.



I was surprised to learn that parts of Austria also celebrate Carnevale, known locally as Fasching. The largest Fasching festival takes place in Villach, where, coinciding with the Catholic holidays at the start of Lent, people wear elaborate costumes and masks, parading through the streets. The festivities can last the entire day and night, creating a great atmosphere. Another notable aspect of Alpine culture is the (in)famous *Krampuslauf*. From mid-November to mid-December, crowds gather to watch the *Krampusse* march through the streets, wearing bells, masks, and carrying bundles of sticks used to whip those who come too close. While this event is most common in Austria, it also takes place in parts of Switzerland and Northern Italy.

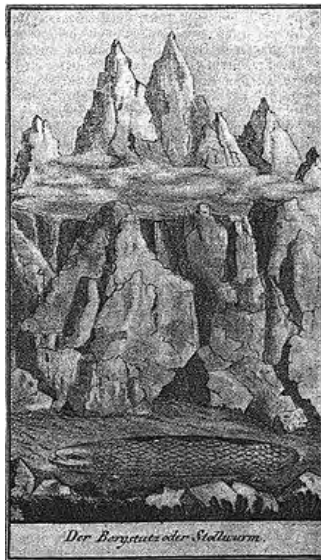
Early in my Year Abroad, I visited Tarvisio, just across the Italo-Austrian border. As an Italian student, I saw this as the perfect opportunity to practice the language. I mustered up the courage to order in Italian, rehearsing beforehand. After proudly placing my order, the waitress replied with, 'Gern. Sonst noch was?' This encounter, along with the food and architecture, underscored the region's transnational culture, where cultures harmoniously converge and intertwine.

All in all, my year abroad provided an eye-opening journey into an often-overlooked region. From distinct local dialects to fascinating cross-border influences, I gained a deeper appreciation for the rich diversity of the country, making the experience unforgettable and invaluable for my personal growth. It is an experience that I would recommend to all!

There be dragons!

by Dr Rich McClelland (Head of German)

I was recently watching an episode of the *Mandalorian* – the first episode of season two, in which Mando journeys to Tatooine to find another Mandalorian, but instead ends of uniting the residents of Mos Pelgo and local Tusken Raiders in battle against a Krayt Dragon that has been terrorising the population. The monster lives in a sandy cave out in the desert, emerging periodically to eat whatever it can find: banthas, Jawas, people... but wait, what does this have to do with German Studies, and with Newcastle?



I currently teach a final year module called ‘Place, Identity and Belonging in the German-speaking Alps’. In this, we look at the discursive history of alpine space to discover how people have talked about the mountains at different points in time. We link this to philosophy and aesthetics, and in turn examine how these ideas influence art, painting, film and literature. In the first few weeks we explore the idea of the alps as *locus horribilis*: a “terrible place” that is haunted by ghosts and monsters, and which good, Christian people best avoid. This idea dominated conceptualisations of the Alps before the Enlightenment (beginning around the start of the eighteenth century), but even after the Alps had begun to draw curious scientists and artists into the mountains, one folk belief was maintained: dragons!

Writing in his *Ouresiphioites Helveticus* (*Naturgeschichte des Schweizerlandes* or: *A Natural History of Switzerland*, 1706-08) Jakob Scheuchzer describes the existence of dragons that inhabit the Swiss mountains, as related to him by the people living there. (To his scientific credit, Scheuchzer did not believe in the existence of the dragons himself!). Legends recorded across the Alps speak of the *Bergstutz*, of the *Stoll-* or *Tatzelwürmer* that lurk in caves and crevices near villages, ready to swallow any livestock that strays away from the herd. In these stories, various methods are used to combat the Würmer:

magicians are called upon to cast spells, the villagers try to poison the monsters, and priests pray that God delivers the village from the dragon's torment. Sometimes this works, sometimes, however, the dragon remains, ready to strike out at any incautious people who venture too close.

Here in North East England we have similar stories of worms and other mysterious creatures that lurk in the moors, hills and denes that are scattered across the region. Near where I grew up in County Durham there is the story of the Lambton Worm. In this tale, the young John Lambton misses church one Sunday to go fishing in the River Wear but is warned by an old man not to continue. He catches a strange, eel-like creature but, warned again by the old man, returns his catch to the river. Many years later, the worm has grown, and livestock begin to disappear; John Lambton is fighting in the crusades, but local men try to destroy the worm to no avail. When Lambton returns, the worm has lain waste to his estate. He speaks to a local witch who tells him how to destroy the worm, but in the process he kills his own father, and the Lambton line is cursed for nine generations...

As a child I was always told that the Lambton worm was responsible for the strange shape of a hill near Seaham, which has ridges that make it look like it has been squeezed tightly by a giant creature. In the Alps, the dragons were held responsible for similar natural phenomenon: strange vapours that cause headaches and mysterious noises that emerge from caves, the shape of specific rocks, or the barrenness of a certain mountain pasture. We can understand such stories as an effort to understand the natural world in a time before modern scientific knowledge could explain the



presence of gasses, or the shape of hills and why some fields are more fertile than others. But they also connect us to our past, serving as a reminder that people have not always viewed the landscape in the way we do today. They remind us that we cannot take for granted how we see the world around us, but that it is a result of the philosophy, science and literature that influences our way of understanding the world.

In the Mandalorian, Mando, the villagers of Mos Pelgo and the Tusken Raiders slay the terrible Krayt Dragon whilst also overcoming their prejudices of each other by working together (a true modern fairytale). But next time you're out and about and notice a strange

rock formation, and empty glade in the trees or come across a lone sheep skeleton – maybe you should look out for the creatures that are lurking in the shadows...