

As we now approach the holiday season and our thoughts turn to exotic destinations in far-flung corners of the world cwg has received a copy of a holiday journal kept by one of our u3aSEL members who has recently returned from a trip to Greece with her friend.

Two Old Girls Do Rhodes

April 17th

Arrived at Gatwick and could not remember if I was to meet my friend Shirley at North or South Terminal so took a chance and went to South, figuring out that if you are flying from London to Greece you would be going south so go to South terminal. Makes sense to me but apparently it doesn't always work out like that. I would feel very disorientated if I was flying say to Australia via North Terminal but it seems you can. I must remember to write to Gatwick when I return to point out this anomaly. However met my friend whilst we were standing two feet away from each other texting to find out where the other one was. Hilarious!

We negotiated the 'self-serve luggage drop' by enlisting a member of staff to help us so it wasn't really self-serve at all. My friend was carrying walking poles so it was assumed she had mobility problems and we capitalised on this for the rest of the holiday. I have also found that if I say I cannot see very well I usually get a very courteous and helpful response. I was once offered what I thought was a guide dog for the duration of the holiday but it turned out it was a police sniffer beagle who was not very good at his job and thought he had found some cocaine on me. Which he hadn't. I stopped short of adding my deafness to the list of reasons why I couldn't self-serve my own luggage but we got through a treat while younger people seemed to be struggling a bit in some cases (f you excuse the pun).

I was 'chosen' to empty out my hand luggage because a scanner had detected a small bottle of hand sanitiser in my bag. I ask you. (I must remember to write to Gatwick when I get back to point out that they should make an exception to their 'no liquids rule' where anti-bacterial gels are concerned.) Anyway, I was carrying an autobiography of a famous actress (please note-a serious Shakespearean actress and not Stormy Daniels) to read on the plane and the book had a picture on the front of the actress concerned and the security officer *asked me if I was the woman on the front cover!* What a way to start a holiday, being confused with a famous actress (not Stormy Daniels). I knew the holiday was going to be a success from that moment on.

April 18th

We decided to 'reconnoitre' the town in order to find the restaurants recommended in the guide book. Of course most of them were gone 'because of Covid' it seems but we found one of them and returned that evening. The proprietor explained that the place was virtually empty because the season 'really starts next week'. The food was good but we had to listen to a monologue from Yannis about the state of the world and particularly the UK. He clearly did not like Boris Johnson for some reason and seemed to think BJ was still our Prime Minister. His English was adequate but not fluent so I was surprised that he knew the word 'buffoon'. And it turns out he was not Greek anyway but Italian! I ask you.

April 19th

Went on a boat trip to a nearby island. Shirley rightly complained because as we set sail the safety instructions broadcast on the ship were drowned out by the roar of the engines as we left the harbour so how safe was that? I think my friend had a point.

She also rightly complained that evening when we visited a restaurant listed as an 'authentic taverna experience' and they were playing Ed Sheeran in the background. Now don't get me wrong, I have nothing against Ed Sheeran but in Greece? I ask you. And the owner of the restaurant had the nerve to request that we put a nice comment on TripAdvisor when we got home. What is TripAdvisor?

April 20th

Shocked by the amount of waste at breakfast. Someone left 2 fried eggs on their plate. That is probably why the hotel cut all the bananas in half.

It took us most of the holiday to work out that our bathroom had a door. It was a sliding affair and not obvious that it was a door at all. I ask you. And the shower flooded the bathroom floor every time and you had to use the slip mat as a sort of 'dyke' to prevent water gushing out, resulting in no slip mat. Dangerous. Shirley rightly complained about this and we received an extra slip mat and about time too. And a notice in the bathroom in big print so I was able to read it told us 'not to waste precious water'. Does not make much sense does it? And we had a fridge. In the bedroom! That's Europe for you.

April 21st

Took a trip into Rhodes Old Town, a Unesco Heritage Site if you please and very seedy if you ask me. I was stopped by a Greek man (I had sunglasses on and probably looked 20 years younger than I really am) who asked me where I was from and when I said England he asked me if I was single and would I like to have his number. No I would not. Is being English some sort of green light for Greeks to try it on? Doesn't happen at home thank you very much.

We spotted that the Colossus of Rhodes spanning the harbour was not there. At first I thought it might be out on loan to the British Museum in return for the Elgin Marbles and then I thought it was there but with my eyesight I just couldn't see it even though it was supposed to be approximately 155 feet in height. It just 'snapped at the knees' apparently in an earthquake in 226 BC. Shirley's walking poles would have come in handy at the time. She is going to put in a complaint to the Greek Tourist Board about the absence of that statue. Whilst she is at it she could send a complaint to Iraq about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. They are not there either. But the pyramids are still standing so it shows it can be done.

That night in a restaurant we saw a man walk smartly by carrying his crutches whom we had seen begging earlier. It crossed my mind briefly that some sort of miracle had occurred but Shirley thought not. You can never be too careful it seems.

to be continued.....

