

## The English Letter

May 5 2018

The gloves are off-literally.

I found a pair of leather gloves in an Asda shopping basket and had difficulty handing them in and thus kept them. They were as good as new and valued during the cold winter months.

I had to pop into a local shop to buy a paper and noticed when walking past the next day, that a glove was lying on the pavement. I started to notice the odd glove left here and there. I can understand this as one takes them on and off when shopping or handling things that need a delicate touch. Good news for the glove manufacturers.

The next time I used my leather gloves I found that I now only had one. Clearly the one I saw on the pavement had been my "lost" glove.

A week or so later there was another single glove at the Asda basket station, which I took, as it looked like a match to my missing one. So now I have two left hand gloves!

But it is summer-or is it? The British weather continues to draw one into believing that summer has arrived and then bashes you with a 10 o C drop. However, this note is being composed on a sunny patio.



**Has anyone been to Eltham Palace?** It started in the 15<sup>th</sup> C but the Courtaulds then dramatically renovated and added a new mansion with a 1930's style.



During the war the basement area was used as a very smart air raid shelter. We managed to look the parts as Courtney, Andrea, Bev and myself don the essential dress up items.

Once outside I could not find my gloves and it required a return to the Air Raid Shelter where they were recovered from the jacket I had used! Not surprising I lost them later.

One of the advantages of living as 3 different generations is that you find yourself being pulled into things that you might not normally do. With my legs so damaged I had given up on any impact activities but along comes Courtney with an interest in **squash**. And so, of course, I land up on the court at the Swanley sports centre. For now I am using Andrea`s racket.



It does provide Courtney with a break from her GCSE studies that come to the actual exams in a few days tome.

I hop and stutter around as I cannot run anymore and it is just a question of time before Courtney destroys me on the court. But not yet.



During a trip to London we took in the **Natural History Museum** (free entry) to check out the Blue Whale that has been placed in the

main hall. We had more to do that day and thus could only stop, this time, for an hour or two.



We wound our way from Kensington to Regent Street for a look at **Hamleys**. I was impressed as sales staff were all busy demonstrating the toys and magic tricks for sale that did provide a quite special atmosphere even for this 75 year old child.

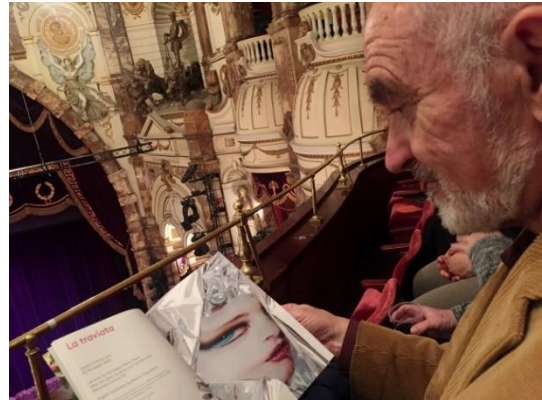
Theatre land and Leicester square were on our route with a quick glass of wine and snack at the **Moon Under Water**, being a Wetherspoon offering. This was a drinking spot really with limited space and the outside seating proved a bad idea when the rain started to fall. I recommend the pub chain but not so with this one if you want to have a meal.

Our main objective was to reach the London Coliseum in St. Martins Lane where we had tickets to see **La Traviata**. Courtney was there with a small school group and Andrea had bought seats in the Gods for us as Xmas presents.

The ENO (English National Opera) try to bring the opera to all people and thus it is subsidised and always short of cash. Seat prices vary from around £12.50 to £100+ but you need to book early to get the lower priced offerings.

This version of La Traviata was set in pre-war Paris being a different time frame to that intended when composed in 1853. It was the first time I had seen this opera and thus had nothing to compare it with. But I had to agree to the critic`s reviews that the scenery was sparse and the voices of the two main roles were a trifle weak.

However, a great evening at the Opera as one gets caught up in the atmosphere of enthusiastic theatre goers, the wonderful opulence of the interior and , of course, the performance itself complete with the full orchestra.



### **A change of subject matter.**

Things have been hotting up over here with **Syria and Russia** seemingly doing some really nasty things. It is a rather quaint idea that there should be rules and etiquette when undertaking wars. It may be ok to kill with weapon "A" but quite unacceptable to kill with weapon "B".

Whatever the true facts of the matter (some players have so muddied the waters with misinformation that it is difficult to know the true details), it produced enormous debate in Parliament.

Brexit, anti -Semitism and immigration issues have also occupied the minds of MP`s and the electorate. So too the media in all its guises.

How fortunate we are in the UK to have such open and **honest debate** as the 360 degree view is attempted by the likes of the BBC. Wonderful coverage of the Commons discussions with wise and considered views expressed by those elected by the people who are not tainted with corruption or nepotism and are there on merit. A quick look at RT illustrates the difference.

We found ourselves at **Brands hatch** the other week where we were attending a memorial lunch as the racing cars swept by. My first ever visit and on our doorstep!

I did not intend to go into another page but here it is.

**Cricket-** and that obscene penalty imposed on the Australians. Of course it “was not cricket” but have you seen all the cheating and fouling in soccer. There needs to be some balance and equality in the punishments being handed out.

I watched some **athletics** (Commonwealth Games and London marathon) on TV. It came as no surprise to learn that new medical conditions have been imposed to try and level the playing fields of athletes in the longer distances. I have no idea what the best solution is but it will probably adversely affect the career and earning potential of the likes of Caster Semenya.

Watched the **Arsenal Ladies** in the Cup Final. The men`s team have so disappointed that I hoped for something from the ladies. But it was not to be, as a below par match illustrated to me that standard at club level has some way to go before it justifies a Wembley showpiece. Mind you I do tend to set the bar rather high.

We will try and get to the **Royal Albert Hall** this season to attend at least one of the Proms but you might be interested to learn that a box is up for sale at the RAH that can seat 12 people. The price... a mere £3 000 000.

I have found myself (bottom right) on the **Old Camdenians** Committee as someone had to fill a vacant spot. The U3A activities continue as too does my volunteering at the **Citizens Advice**. Training is an ever present subject as I try to understand how



it all works. I also attended a 2 day course to be a **Trusted Assessor** which means I am able to assess the circumstances with regards providing free home care items supplied by the council. The objective is to help people and thus reduce their need to call on the overburdened NHS.

**Melanie** came down from Yorkshire to attend a Book fair over 3 days and has plans to possibly do something in this arena. We will see. The sofa in the lounge provided a sleeping spot. Alex has started with Morrisons.

Andrea had set up a visit to **The Planetarium in Greenwich** which was remarkably my first ever visit to any Planetarium. Take time to visit the museums and walk into the town and pass by the Cutty Sark. Have tea and cake next to Gagarin!

Ok that is about all this time round as I can see we are entering the really boring nitty gritty stuff.

Sorry to go on for so long.

Cheers for now.

Alan and Bev