

German event for schools at The University of Nottingham

launching Midlands German Network for pupils and teachers on 6th January 2016

Pupils said: 'Excellent day'; 'Brilliant! I loved the discussions in German and the degree level topics, e.g. history and literature.'; 'very useful for my school work'; 'really useful information about UCAS and uni in general'; 'The student helpers were really welcoming and happy to answer any questions'

Teachers said: 'This was excellent – pitched at the right level and brilliantly organised'; 'A great day'; 'Worked on many levels – basic info for Year 12's but also tons of stuff for teachers!'

'Über die Mauer (hinaus) ('About, over and beyond the Berlin Wall') was the title of a successful day for schools on German unification and its consequences hosted by The University of Nottingham (Dr Heike Bartel) as part of the Midlands German Network (MGN). Over 70 enthusiastic year 12- and year 13-students with their teachers from seven schools in the area came together on the main campus on 6th January 2016 to engage in the topic, participate in workshops, visit an exhibition, practice their German, get a taste of university life and explore the imposing Trent Building on a themed treasure hunt. Workshops run by specialists in their field from the MGN, Nottingham Trent University (Dr Malcolm Spencer and Dr Ruth Crawford), The University of Birmingham (Dr Sara Jones), Aston University (Dr Stefan Manz, Frau Yara Staets) and The University of Nottingham (Dr Josefine Dolle, Ms Nicola Thomas, Dr Heike Bartel), introduced 'Life in the GDR', 'Writers in the GDR: Why stay? Christa Wolf', 'Graffiti on the Wall', 'Death at the Wall: Mauergedichte', 'Trials, Stasi files and Doping in unified Germany', 'History of the Stasi' and the film 'Das Leben der Anderen'.

A specifically designed exhibition took participants on a journey from the Bernauer Strasse of 1961, split into two parts by the Wall, to the East Side Gallery of 2016 showing Wall art by international artists. Undergraduate students of German at Nottingham accompanied pupils during the day, took them on a themed treasure hunt and shared their university experiences answering questions about the topic and about university life in general. Together pupils, their teachers, Nottingham student ambassadors and academics from the MGN had a 'brilliant day' (pupil's comment) that showed there is great enthusiasm and appetite for learning German. Encouraged by the overwhelmingly positive feedback for this event in Nottingham the MGN is planning similar events for pupils and teachers in the future – so watch this space: <http://midlandsgermannetwork.org.uk/>

(Heike Bartel)



