

What can you do with Esperanto? A One-Day Summer School Friday 3 August 2018

Chris and I offer a single day on Esperanto. *Not* on learning the language but rather on what you can do with it (if you had learnt it) and how the world has reacted to what Esperanto has to offer. So the working title is, "**What can you do with Esperanto?**" Would there be any takers?

Such questions might invite rude responses, but hopefully not until Chris and I have been given a hearing and been adequately cross-questioned. We look for participation. It cannot just be us two talking, even though the timing of the sessions could be difficult to anticipate.

First Session – The Esperanto community

This session looks at how the Esperanto world is organised today. We start with *illustrating* the activities Esperanto has to offer, from clubs, national associations, congresses, international friendships and marriages, holidays to magazines, literature (original and translated), websites, radio stations, films, videos, music, penpals, etc. Has Esperanto 'native' speakers? – is Esperanto used in the family? Esperanto has specialist organisations catering for activities such as blindness, medicine, philately, politics, railways, religious faiths, rotary, science, scouting, twinned towns, vegetarianism, etc.

Second Session – The Esperanto language

This session explains how Esperanto works as a language. It has some striking features, which make it both look like another European language, yet with properties only found in languages like Turkish or Chinese. However Esperanto has to admit that in terms of its sounds and vocabulary, it **is** a 'European' language. It gives Asian people the same kinds of problems they meet in other European languages. Where it differs from other 'European' languages is in its Lego-like approach to building words. We would not seek to go into technicalities like that, but just give an illustrated description of the present-day language.

Third Session – Esperanto's role in the world today

This session looks at the place of Esperanto in the world today, i.e. Esperanto's present status in the world, e.g. in public education (only really a few countries score anything at that), in organisations like the EU, UNESCO (Unesco courier) and PEN International, in the Esperanto world's own institutions, in systems like CEFER (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and with phenomena like Google (translating, Esperanto keyboard), YouTube, Facebook, Duolingo, etc. Role of public campaigns. There is also the 'little' issue of why Esperanto has not yet taken over the world! Is it just because of the current dominance of English? Or are there other factors? Suspicion of the unknown? Lack of commercial or charity patronage? What has the Esperanto community learnt about the harsh realities of the world in its 130 year history? As Esperanto was initially a planned constructed language, can it really do the equivalent of what a 'natural' language can do?