

Tourist in your town

Episode description

In this edition of the bonus episode, Andrew talks about the trip he took without even leaving the city! Intrigued? Listen to find out the details. Plus in the vocabulary lesson, he teaches you about the idiomatic expression **to rub shoulders with someone**.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello, how's it going? My name is Andrew and you're listening to the Culips English Podcast. This is bonus episode number 62. And in our bonus episode series, I tell you some stories from my everyday life as a Canadian living in South Korea. In today's episode, I have two stories to share with you, which I hope you'll find interesting. They were very interesting occurrences for me, actually, this last weekend, I feel like I traveled the world, I feel like I visited some foreign countries. But actually, I never left Seoul. I was here the whole time. So, I'm going to tell you about why I feel like that. And then maybe after you listen to these two stories, then you'll be able to understand my perspective and know why I feel that way.

So, we'll get to those two stories in just a moment. But before we do, I want to remind you that there is a 100% free transcript for this episode. It comes in an interactive version that's great for studying with, with your computer or your phone or your tablet. But it also comes in a PDF that you can print out if you prefer to have the paper version. To get the transcript, you just need to click the link in the description for this episode. Or you could also visit our website [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com). And you'll be able to get the transcript there.

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And with that being said, why don't we jump into today's two stories. So, like I mentioned, I have some stories to share with you about why I feel like I've traveled the world this last weekend even though I just stayed here in Seoul. So why don't we get to the first story now? Here we go.

On Friday night, I met up with a couple of friends and one friend is from Korea and the other friend is from South Africa. And we decided to just meet up and have a drink together. But you know what you gotta do before you meet up is make a plan, right? You have to make a plan. Where are we going to meet? What area of the city? What place are we going to go to? What is the menu gonna be like? What time? All of these things you need to decide and determine together, right?

So, we have a small, little group chat on Kakao Talk, which is the chatting app that's most popular here in South Korea, the messaging app that you can use to text your friends and family. So, we have this little group chat room on Kakao Talk and we were texting back and forth, "Oh should we go here, or should we go there? How about this place? How about that place?" And one of my friends suggested that we go to this place called Broughton's Club. And so, I was like, "What's Broughton's Club? I've never heard of this place before." And he went on to tell me that Broughton's Club is the small little pub in the basement of the British Embassy here in Seoul. And it's like a pub that's fully British, like if you walk inside of it, then you'll feel like you're stepping into a British pub. So, when I heard this, I was very intrigued. I was like, "Wow, oh my god, there's a pub in the basement of the British Embassy? Why haven't I heard about this before?" And he went on to tell me that this place is members only. It's Invite only. You can only go and visit if you are a member. And it just so happened that he is a member. And as a member, you're allowed to invite two guests. So, this was perfect. There were three of us. He's a member, he was able to have a plus two.

And "plus two" is what we say when you are allowed to invite or bring others along with your invitation. So, for example, often if you are invited to a wedding, you're allowed a plus

one. It means you're allowed to bring a date, right? So maybe you're invited to a wedding, but you're allowed to bring, you know, your boyfriend or girlfriend or husband or wife with you to the wedding that is a plus one. So, he as a member of Broughton's Club has a plus two privilege, so he can invite two friends to join him anytime he wants to visit. So, I was very stoked upon hearing this news, I couldn't believe it. Wow, there is this secret hidden gem in the basement of the British Embassy. And I was down. So, I told him, absolutely, we must visit this place. And so that is what we decided to do is to go to Broughton's Club in the basement of the British Embassy.

So, it was a very interesting experience, to be completely honest with you. And it was a little bit more complicated than just meeting at the gate of the embassy and entering. No, there were some steps that we had to take even before we could visit. And the first thing that I had to do was receive an invitation from my friend, he sent me this link, and I clicked the link, and it brought me to a form, and I had to fill in all of my personal details, you know, my name, my contact number, my ID number here in Korea, and also his membership number. And filling out this form makes it so that you are on the list. So then when you go to the embassy, they have your name on the list, and they can check and see if you were invited or not. So that is the first thing that I had to do.

And then when we arrived at the embassy itself, then you have to go through security, right? Like, I think most embassies are like that. I recently visited the Canadian Embassy here in Seoul to renew my passport. And while I was visiting the Canadian Embassy, I had to go through a similar procedure very, very similar to like when you're going through security at the airport, you have to take everything out of your pocket and put it through a metal detector, you have to take your bag off and put it through a metal detector, you have to walk through a metal detector yourself and do this security screening. So that's what I had to do, I had to go through security. And I had to show my ID and they had to check and make sure my name was on the list. And of course, they had to do that for my other friends as well. But as soon as we went through security, then we were in.

We were on the grounds of the British Embassy, which is very close here in Seoul to City Hall. So, it's like right in the center of Seoul. And a very, very cool place indeed. I don't know about you, but I kind of geek out about these things. Like I love visiting embassies, there's something unique and special about them. And this was no exception, either. I was just really even excited to like go to the gate of the embassy. And then suddenly, you can see the Union Jack, the British flag. And even just the list of rules for entering into the embassy was really cool. Because it was a sign that just looked like it was something that you'd see in the UK, you know, visiting an embassy in a foreign country is just like going to that country, kind of. It's like a very mini version of that country in a foreign place. So yeah, we went through security, and we were in, and we made our way to the basement of one of the embassy buildings, which I believe is called Aston Hall, if I remember correctly. And then you go down a flight of stairs and you're in the basement and you open the door and then there's this little British-style pub right there in the basement.

So, the name of this establishment, like I said, is called Broughton's Club. And it's named after a British Royal Navy officer, who was one of the first to explore the coast of Korea way back in the day in 1797. So obviously, he wasn't the first European to visit Korea or anything like that. But I believe he was one of the first British people to visit South Korea way back in the day. And I think he was also instrumental in exploring some of the Pacific Ocean, maybe even the coast of the Pacific in Canada and around Japan and South Korea, way back in the day for the British. So, I guess he is honored in that way by having this little pub named after him. So that is where the name comes from Broughton's Club.

So, when we walked inside for the first time, I really enjoyed it right away. It had a totally British feel to the place. It was a little bit dark and a little bit cool. It was very quiet. There was no music playing or anything like that. And obviously it had a very different feel than just a regular pub or regular restaurant in Korea. There were many British expats there and some people from other countries as well. And it was kind of funny that the three of us, me and my two friends were there because one of my friends is Korean, the other is

South African. And of course, I'm from Canada. So, it's not like we're British or anything, but we were still able to visit this establishment.

So, it was very old school in a way, the way that things were done. It was cash only. So, you couldn't use your credit card or your bank card to pay for anything, you had to only pay in cash. And the bar was actually staffed by the staff of the embassy. And I learned that is not open all the time, this little pub is only open on Friday afternoons from about 5pm until, I think they go until 9:30, or 10pm. But we actually didn't stay until closing. So, I'm not exactly sure what time things wrap up there. But it's not like it's a everyday thing. It's just a special place that's open on Friday afternoons. And I think the idea is that the embassy staff, you know, they've worked hard all week. And then they can go down to this little pub, and maybe have a drink, socialize, blow off some steam, network, all of these things. So yeah, the bar is actually run by some of the staff members from the embassy. And I even recognized some diplomats there who I've seen on TV before. And some of the other people who I talked to there were also professors at different universities in Korea. So, it had that kind of feeling to it. It's the place where you could go, maybe to rub shoulders with a diplomat, or with a respected foreign professor. But it was a really cool experience. And of course, the people who I did talk to there were very kind and very nice. And it was just a great atmosphere overall. And I really enjoyed my time there.

As I mentioned, it had a very old school feeling to the place and old school just means old fashioned, guys. So, you can think of old school as being more like traditional, right? Like, for example, it was cash only, right? That makes it old school because these days, especially here in Seoul, you can pay for everything, just with your card or with your phone, you never need to carry cash around. And actually, it was very, very random, and very, very lucky that I actually had just a little bit of cash in my wallet that day. So, I didn't have to visit the bank before going there. But otherwise, I would have had to because it was cash only. It was old school in that regard.

And the way that you bought a drink and paid for a drink at the bar was also very interesting. What you have to do if you visit there is buy a little paper card. And that paper card comes in two options, there's a 25,000 won option, and a 50,000 won option, generally roughly 25,000 won is equal to about 25 Canadian dollars. And 50,000 won is equal to about 50 Canadian dollars. That's what I think in my head as a Canadian. But I think most people will agree that the global currency, if there is a global currency, is American dollars, right? So, it would be a little less than that in American, maybe the 25,000 won card would be like 22 American dollars and 50,000 would be around, I don't know 47, 46 dollars.

So anyways, it doesn't really matter about the currency. But there are those two options for cards that you buy. And I purchased just the cheapest card, the 25,000 won card. Of course, I'm not a member, so I can't go and visit again, unless I receive another invitation. So, I wasn't planning to, you know, visit again anytime soon. So, I went for the cheapest card option. And when you buy the card, then the bartender writes X's on the card with their pen, so they get the card and they write an X, each 5000 won gives you one X. OK, it's a little bit complicated. So, I bought the 25,000 won card. That means that the bartender wrote five X's on my card, and those X's act as a kind of currency. So, when you order something from the bar, you know, if you want to order a beer or a glass of wine, they also had a really extensive whiskey selection. I'm not much of a whiskey drinker, so I just went for a beer. But all of the prices for the drinks are listed in X's. So, it'll be like if you want a Guinness, for example, then maybe that would be two X's. So, I thought that was very old school. A kind of retro, unique way of handling the payment system at the pub.

So, once you've purchased your card and you have the X's written on the card by the bartender, then you're able to order a drink. And my friends and I, we actually had two drinks there because there was a summer special where you could buy two drinks for three X's, as opposed to having one drink, which would cost four X's. Actually, when I went to the bar to order, the bartender asked me, "Do you want one or two?" And I said, I only want one drink. One is OK. But she said, "Well, if you order two, then you only have to pay

in three X's. But if you order one, then you have to pay four X's." So of course, I said, "Well, it makes more sense just to order two then, doesn't it?" So, I ordered two drinks.

We stayed there for two drinks. And yeah, we just had a really wonderful time. It was standing room only, which means that there were quite a few customers there. Now it's a pretty small place. So, there was maybe only like 30 or 35 people there. But it was pretty jam packed and busy. Now there is a seating area, but all of the tables and the seats were taken. So, it was standing room only for us. We just had to stand and hangout, and we had a pretty interesting chat. Me and my friend from South Africa both have some Scottish heritage in our family history. And I think because we were in the British Embassy, and we both have this family history, we did spend a lot of time talking about our ties to the UK, and some different stories about our family histories and how our families back in the day left the UK. And obviously my UK relatives went to Canada, whereas my friends went to South Africa. So, it was kind of interesting to swap and compare stories in that regard.

So, it was just a great, interesting experience. And I really felt like for the couple of hours that I was in the Broughton's Club that I was in England, I kind of forgot that I was in the middle of Seoul, right in downtown Seoul. And then after we left, you know, we had to go up the stairs to go back outside of the embassy. And as soon as we walked out of the door, then boom, immediately you're back in Seoul back in Korea. And I thought, wow, that was such a unique experience that I got to have. And I felt like I was a tourist in my own town for a moment. I felt like even though I live in Seoul, I was able to travel and have an out of Korea experience right in the middle of the city.

So that's how I spent my Friday night. I'm hoping in the future my friend will invite me again to visit because I really did have a wonderful time. And I'd love to take my wife there one day. So, if my friend will be kind enough to invite me and my wife that would be awesome. Or maybe if anybody else is listening who's a member of the Broughton Club, you could invite my wife and me. But anyways, it got me thinking like, are there other embassies in Seoul or other embassies around the world that have a hidden secret pub in the

basement? I'm not sure. But if there are some other ones like maybe the Canadian Embassy here in Seoul, then I would definitely love to visit.

So, on Friday night, I felt like I traveled to the UK. I felt like going to the pub in the basement of the British Embassy was like a mini vacation to England. Well, on Saturday night, I had a similar experience. But this time it was to Japan. So, on Saturday night, my wife and I, we met up with a few of our friends. And we went to a neighborhood here in Seoul called Mangwon. And Mangwon is a really cool neighborhood. I don't visit there too often. But every time I do, I really enjoy it. There's a lot of young people. It's got a hip cool feeling to it, lots of great restaurants and cafes. And just in general, the vibe is really good. So, we met up in Mangwon, and we went to this really cool place for some food and drinks on Saturday night. And we went to a heavy metal themed Japanese izakaya, which is kind of like a small Japanese bar that serves some food and drinks.

So, we met up and as soon as we walked in, immediately, it was really dark and had strong air conditioning, which was actually wonderful because it was a very hot day on Saturday. So, we walked in, it's kind of dark, very cold. And there was some heavy metal music playing. Now one of my friends is kind of a secret metal head I think. When you look at him, it doesn't look like he's a heavy metal fan. But secretly deep down, I think he's a metal head. So that's why he suggested going to this place and a metal head is somebody that we call who really enjoys heavy metal music. Now I'm also a music lover, and I enjoy many, many, many different genres of music.

However, I have to be honest and say that heavy metal is not one of my favorite genres. I do enjoy a lot of music that you could probably consider to be metal, like Thin Lizzy, I love the band Thin Lizzy. They're kind of metal. I like Iron Maiden. I like some Metallica. I like a lot of the classic metal bands. But metal is a huge genre in itself. There are many different sub genres of metal. And this pub was themed, more like a death metal pub, so a more hardcore version of metal. And like I said, to be honest, I'm not a huge fan of that genre. I respect it. It's very technical, the music is very technical, with a lot of really fast playing, especially the drumming is very technical, and I really respect that. But I have never been

able to really embrace death metal and love it. But it's not like I'm not a fan. And it's not like I hate listening to it or anything like that.

So, I thought it was a really cool place to visit. And I have to be honest and say that I had very low expectations for the food at first. When my friends suggested going to this place, I thought, "OK, it's probably a place where you go to have a drink, and to listen to some metal, and it's not really an eating place." Well, I was totally, totally wrong about that. Because I had some of the best Japanese food outside of Japan that I've ever had there in that heavy metal pub. I was shocked. Even the staff at the pub look a little bit intimidating. They're metal heads also. So, you know, they're these big guys with shaved heads and beards, and like lots of tattoos and look a little rough. And so, when I saw the chef and the owner of the bar, I thought, "Well this place is a little bit scary, like what will the menu be like?" But it was amazing.

I should have written down what we ordered. But I didn't do that. My undercover metal-head friend who had been there before and recommended the place, as soon as we sat down, he just grabbed the menu and took control and just ordered all of the food for us. So, I'm not exactly sure what he ordered. There were a couple of noodle dishes. There were some skewers, some pork skewers, chicken skewers, there were some soups with noodles. And I wish I could provide you with the exact names of the dishes. But like I said, I didn't even glance at the menu. I didn't even get to check it out at all. But I can tell you that it was absolutely delicious. So, we had a wonderful meal there. We had a couple of drinks. And we listened to some death metal at the same time. And yeah, it was really fun. So that was how I spent my Saturday night.

And now I think you'll know exactly why it feels like I almost did a world tour here over the weekend without even leaving Seoul, right? On Friday night, I went to the British pub in the embassy. And then on Saturday night going to the Japanese pub, it feels like I visited two different countries without even leaving Seoul.

So, it was a busy social weekend. You know, most weekends, I don't even really socialize very much. I'm usually just hanging out with my wife. But last weekend was an exception. And I went out both on Friday night and Saturday night. So, it was great to see some friends and just do what you do with friends, right, which is to catch up and socialize and hang out and laugh and have fun. And I was able to do lots of that last weekend.

And now it's time for this week's vocabulary lesson.

OK, so for this week's vocabulary lesson, I want to teach you about an interesting idiomatic expression that you can use to make your English more colorful and to give it some pop. At the same time, it's also very important to know what this idiom means. So that when you're talking with English speakers, or watching movies or TV, then when you hear it, you can understand it. The idiom is "to rub shoulders." To rub shoulders. And maybe when you hear this idiom for the first time, you might think of like giving someone a massage, like rubbing somebody's shoulders, right? But it has nothing to do with that at all.

So, to rub shoulders means to interact or associate with someone. And usually, we use it when those people who you are interacting with or associating with are influential people, or important people. VIPs so to speak. Now I used this idiom a little bit earlier when I talked about visiting the Broughton Club and rubbing shoulders with diplomats and professors. You know, I want to rewind and go back and listen to that part of the episode just a couple of more times so you can get the context of how I used it when that idiom just came out of my mouth naturally. So, let's take a moment here, let's rewind, go back, and we'll listen to that part a couple more times. Here we go.

It's the place where you could go, maybe to rub shoulders with a diplomat, or with a respected foreign professor.

So, as I mentioned, when you rub shoulders with someone, it means that you are interacting or associating or in close proximity to somebody who is important or influential. Now, when you rub shoulders with someone, it doesn't necessarily mean that you are speaking with them, or that you have a relationship with them, it just means that you are in close physical proximity to them. So, for example, when I was at that pub, I didn't actually speak to any ambassadors or anything, but there were those kind of people around. So, I was rubbing shoulders with them, because we were in the same small physical space together. So now, you know, when you hear this idiom, rubbing shoulders, it doesn't mean that you're giving somebody a massage, OK? No, no, no, it means that you're in close physical proximity, maybe in the same room or at the same events or at the same party, something like that, as some influential, important people.

Now that we know the meaning, I have three example sentences that I would like to share with you that will give you some insights into how English speakers use this idiom in their everyday lives when they're having conversations. So, let's take a listen to the first example sentence right now. Here we go.

Example sentence number one.

One of my good friends went to a private school when she was younger, and that allowed her to rub shoulders with the children of business leaders, politicians, and even some movie stars.

Let's break that example sentence down. In that example sentence, we heard about a student who attended a private school, and it sounded like it was an elite school, because that student got to rub shoulders with the children of some very important people in society, with business leaders and politicians and even some movie stars. And again, remember that this idiom to rub shoulders means to be in close proximity to somebody important.

Example sentence number two.

Last weekend's fundraiser was a rare opportunity for regular people to rub shoulders with billionaires.

Let's break the second example sentence down. In this example sentence, we heard about a fundraising event that happened last weekend. And a fundraiser is what we call some kind of event where the goal of the event is to gather a lot of money for some charity. So, for example, some fundraisers will be like a dinner party, and the ticket to attend the dinner party is very expensive. And all of the earnings from that party then go to a charity. So, they're donated to a charity. And a lot of times some celebrities or important business leaders will attend fundraiser events, because it can help promote and bring awareness to a certain charitable cause. So that's what a fundraiser is.

And in that example sentence, we heard about a fundraiser that happened last weekend, and there were some billionaires who attended. And if you are just a regular person, usually you don't interact with a billionaire very often probably, like I never do. I never interact with billionaires. But perhaps you know, if there is a fundraiser and it's being attended by a billionaire, well, then you can just buy a ticket and then you can rub shoulders with them. So that's one other thing that I wanted to point out here as well is that we often use this expression with the preposition "with." So, you rub shoulders with billionaires, rub shoulders with rock stars, rub shoulders with politicians, OK? If you're spending time with these important people in society, then you rub shoulders with them. It's often used with the preposition "with."

Example sentence number three.

Even though I live in Hollywood, I don't get to rub shoulders with movie stars very often.

In that example sentence, the speaker says that even though they live in Hollywood, they don't rub shoulders with movie stars very often. So, this just means that they don't interact

or see, or get to spend time with movie stars very often at all, even though they live in Hollywood, which is the movie capital of the world in a place where many movie stars live and work.

So, that brings us to the end of another bonus episode, everyone. Thanks for studying along here with me today. I hope you enjoyed this lesson. And I hope you found it helpful for building your English language skills. Don't forget that we have our own Culips English Podcast Discord server, and we've been having just some wonderful conversations over there. It is a very active community.

And we would love for you to join us if you haven't already. It's a great place to practice your English speaking and listening and reading and writing. It's really a wonderful tool for improving your English. And we'll put the link in the description for this episode so that you can easily find us on Discord. And of course, it's totally free. So, you got nothing to lose.

OK, I'm going to take off now but have a great week. Happy English studies. Take care, and I'll talk to you next time, bye.

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