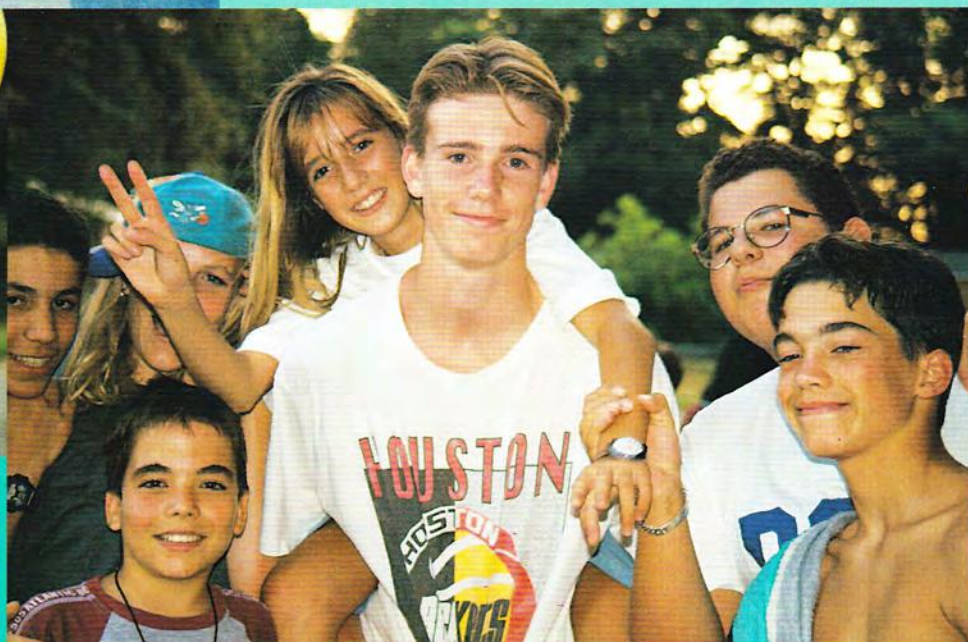
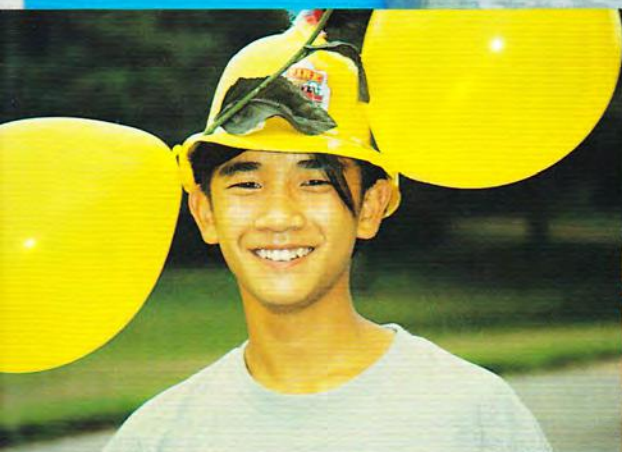




SUMMER

1996

*Everything you
will want to
know...*



Vacational
Studies®

...is inside

English internationally

11-17 years



The Folies
Bergères gang

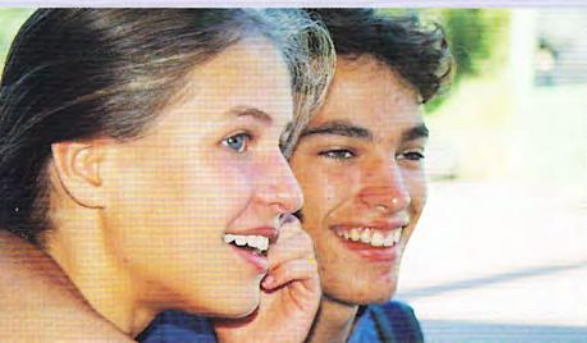


Rolanda (Angola) and Debby (Netherlands)
say 'cheese'



Angela (Spain)

Magda (Switzerland) learns
English from Jon (England)



THE Courses

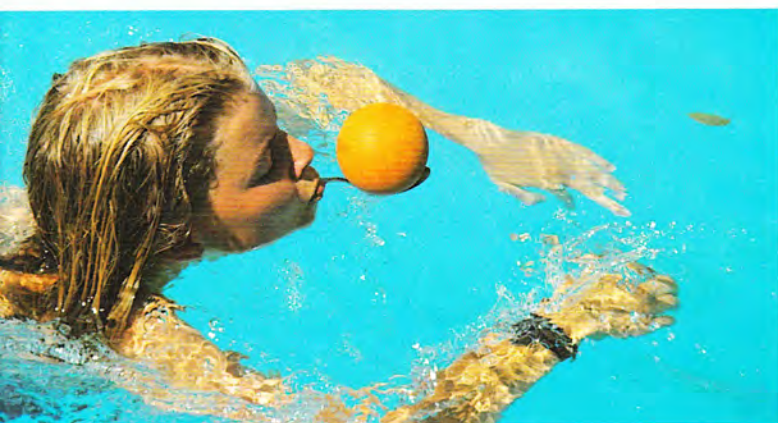
RESIDENTIAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES

Vacational Studies Courses have been running for 23 years. We have tried in this time to develop an enjoyable balance between 'vacation' and 'study'. Here is our programme for Summer 1996.

WHAT WE TRY TO DO

Vacational Studies tries to create a totally international Course with students from as many different countries as possible. We avoid accepting a large number of students from any particular country. In this way we try to ensure that English is the main medium of communication among the students. By using English not just as a school subject, but as a living language, we hope our students will realise better its importance and value. When young people want to use English to make friends, this element of self-motivation greatly increases their fluency.

This emphasis on the practical use of English is combined with a full sports, entertainments and excursion programme helping young people to learn 'English internationally....'



RECOGNISED BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Vacational Studies is 'Recognised for the teaching of English by the British Council' and is a member of ARELS (The Association of Recognised English Language Services) - a professional body, membership of which is granted only after thorough inspection and re-inspections every three years. We were last inspected in 1993.

ABOUT THIS BROCHURE

This is an Information Book. The first section gives you a factual overview of the work we do, so you can decide if we are right for your child. The second part ('News 1995-6') is written in a different style and gives a more detailed rationale of the 1996 Courses and what has shaped them, so you and your son or daughter will be fully informed and can prepare for the

experience. If your application is accepted, both parts are essential reading.

RESIDENCE

The Courses are all fully residential. Students eat, sleep and receive classes in the Schools.

THE STUDENTS

We accept boys and girls - near-beginners, intermediate and more advanced students - aged 11 to 17. As they cannot participate in an international community, complete beginners are not accepted.

The Courses are sports-orientated and encourage good social development in a community situation.

STUDENTS WHO WILL BENEFIT

Please make sure that our Course is suitable for your child and that

he/she wants to come. Those who will benefit and we enjoy having with us will be internationally-minded, interested in English, outgoing and gregarious. They will also be willing to accept the constraints of community living. We consider it so important that our standards and expectations are understood and accepted that we ask parents to confirm that they and their children have read the rules and that they agree to abide by them. A slip sent with the rules is provided for this purpose.

HOW THEY WILL BENEFIT

We hope that our students will learn a great deal of English, make good friendships and develop a positive international feeling. As well as formal study, we concentrate on the holiday aspect of the Course. While

Tennis lessons with Liz



we try to involve students in all activities, we naturally respect the wishes of those who like to read quietly or be with friends. Over the years, we have built up an excellent reputation with parents and young people all over the world. Many boys and girls spend several summers with us renewing old friendships and making new ones. Most students come to us on personal recommendation. The numbers on the Courses are deliberately kept small so that the staff can get to know everybody and treat each child as an individual.

Mary Hare croupiers



THE *Schools*

THE SCHOOLS AND SURROUNDINGS

For 1996 we have four Courses at Schools near Newbury - Douai School, The Mary Hare School, Cheam School and Elstree School. Newbury is a small country town in a pleasant part of southern England in the hills of the Berkshire Downs. It is 70km west of London and 45km south of Oxford. The Schools we use are among the best in the area.

DOUAI SCHOOL

Douai School dates from the mid-nineteenth century with many later additions. It is set next to Douai Abbey in 80 acres of its own grounds and woodlands. It has extensive playing fields which adjoin Elstree School and a range of tennis courts. It has a large indoor swimming pool, a gymnasium and a 'multi-gym'. A planned maximum of 95 students will be accepted.

THE MARY HARE SCHOOL

The Mary Hare School is a large mid-nineteenth century manor house with many later additions. There are formal gardens and woodland and extensive grounds which include several playing fields, a range of tennis courts, a gymnasium and a large indoor swimming pool. A planned maximum of 100 students will be accepted.

CHEAM SCHOOL

Cheam School is a late nineteenth century mansion. A particular feature is the sunken formal garden. The School's large grounds with playing fields, lawns and woods, back onto Watership Down. There is a recently built sports hall/gymnasium and a range of tennis courts. It has an open-air swimming pool. A planned maximum of 85 students will be accepted.

ELSTREE SCHOOL

Elstree School is a large eighteenth century country house set in 40 acres of grounds with playing fields, gardens and woods which adjoin Douai Abbey. It has a modern gymnasium and the dining room, kitchens and some dormitories were rebuilt in 1991. There is an open-air swimming pool and a range of tennis courts. A planned maximum of 90 students will be accepted.

All the Schools have swimming pools, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, football fields, sports hall, recreation rooms, colour TV and bathrooms.

RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

At all Schools, students sleep in dormitories. Girls are in one part of the house, boys are in another.

CHOICE OF COURSE

The Courses all have the same format. The only differences are location and dates. 1996 dates are:-

Douai

3 July - 31 July 1996 (4 weeks)

Mary Hare

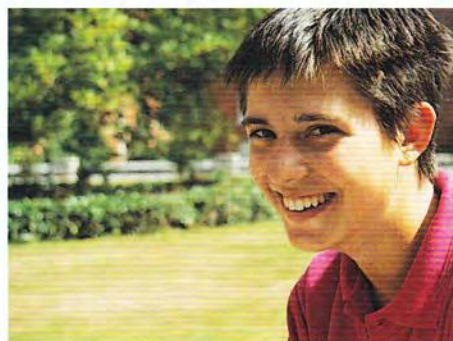
7 July - 4 August 1996 (4 weeks)

Cheam

11 July - 8 August 1996 (4 weeks)

Elstree

17 July - 14 August 1996 (4 weeks)



Part of Douai



Mary Hare - The Manor House



Cheam



Elstree



THE Programme

THE TEACHING

A staff of qualified, professional teachers, experienced in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language give 4 lessons, each of 45 minutes, every day except Sunday and excursion days. In addition, there is a 30 minute 'supervised study' period each afternoon. Classes are graded according to age and ability in English. Students are placed first in an 'assessment group' and complete a range of oral and written tasks, including a formal multiple-choice placement test. The combined results of these tasks together with the teacher's opinion eventually determine placement in a class. Class placements are constantly reviewed and students may be moved to more or less advanced classes, according to their performance. The teacher:student ratio is approximately 1:13. Maximum class size is 16. We provide all books and teaching materials. Coursebooks include 'OK', 'Compact', 'Upper Intermediate' and 'Intermediate Matters' and 'Vista'. Our teachers are encouraged to work with a wide range of lesson materials and to utilise newspaper and magazine articles, selected TV and radio excerpts, short stories, poems, songs and advertisements.



The emphasis in lessons is to help develop the students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills through a topic-based approach. This involves working with students on a variety of activities centred on a particular topic and helping them with the language needed to complete the activities. In this way, we aim to



Bottoms up at Elstree's aerobics

develop our students' confidence in using English to communicate what is important to them and to stimulate their interest in English as the world's common language. We try to give students materials and activities that are different from those in their own countries. Oral and written English are taught and there is an emphasis on conversation practice. A prize is awarded on each Course for academic excellence.

SPORTS

Sport is an important part of the Course. Our Sports/Social Organiser arranges a regular programme including football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, tennis, table-tennis, swimming, etc. Competitions run throughout the Course. There is also a 4-School 'Sports Day' when the Schools meet for friendly competitions in the major sports.

We take all practicable safety precautions - for example, students using the swimming pool are always supervised by a teacher.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

We try to create a relaxed and friendly 'family' atmosphere in which young people will feel 'at home' quickly and make good social contacts. There is a variety of activities on the programme - discotheques, films, barbecues, folk-



Sarah and Daniel - Casino Couple

singing, concerts, games, optional theatre visits, etc. The programme is a full one. There is always something to do and students are encouraged to participate.

EXCURSIONS

There are four days out. One is a sightseeing tour of London, followed by shopping; the second is a visit to Windsor; the destination for the third excursion will be Oxford, Bath, Winchester or another visit to London or a similar city of historical importance; the fourth excursion is to 'Sports Day'. Travel and staff supervision on these excursions are included in the Course Fee.

SHOPPING AFTERNOONS (Optional Extra)

In addition to the organised excursions above (which are included in the Course Fee), there are two optional shopping afternoons which are not included in the Course Fee. These are in Newbury or another town near the School. We think it safe for young people to shop in these towns unaccompanied by staff, if parents have indicated their agreement to this on the Application Form. This helps them achieve a measure of independence. Younger students can be accompanied by staff if parents or we so wish. There will be

several staff in the town while our students are shopping. Travel is by private coach from the School with accompanying staff. The cost of transport (payable by students if they wish to go) is in the range from £1.50 to £3.00.



Ottar (Norway) blowing his trumpet



Neville in the classroom at Elstree

THE Programme



THEATRE VISITS (Optional Extra)

'Cats', 'Phantom of the Opera', 'Grease' and 'Les Misérables' - all these smash-hit West End musicals are booked out months in advance. Tickets for these and other shows have been requested and we will be allocated a limited number. We shall allocate tickets to students so that they can see at least one show of their choice, up to a maximum of three shows. How many shows will be possible depends on the availability of tickets. The cost of each (show + travel to the theatre) will be in the range £30-40. Parents are asked to indicate the number of shows requested and inform the child of this. £35 or so for each show requested should be added to pocket money. If it is not possible to provide the number of shows requested, the money will be returned with the student at the end of the Course.

ARELS/UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE EXAMINATION (Optional Extra)

The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in conjunction with ARELS (the Association of Recognised English Language Services) has developed a special examination for students on English Language Courses in the summer. The examination (testing listening, reading and language use) is taken at the end of the Course and is standardised so that it can be marked internally according to a predetermined marking scheme. Certificates will be issued immediately



after the examination so students can take them home with them. It is not competitive. The Certificate takes the form of a Record of Attainment with a score and a stated recommendation that the candidate is ready to prepare for an examination which will be specified on the Certificate. The University of Cambridge will charge £8.30. ARELS will charge £1.70 for the Record of Attainment. We add no administration or marking charge. The examination is suitable for students at lower-intermediate level and above. We decide on suitability for entry. Those wishing to sit the ARELS/UCLES examination are asked to add £10.00 to pocket money. Parents are asked to inform their child that entry to the ARELS/UCLES examination has been requested.

TENNIS LESSONS (Optional Extra)

Tennis may be played at any time, but we can arrange professional lessons, if required. These are available for beginners or near-beginners only. Six one-hour lessons are given in groups of no more than four students. These must be requested in advance on the Application Form. If tennis lessons are taken, a tennis racquet must be brought.

As these lessons are prearranged, it is

not possible to refund the cost of lessons booked, but not taken. Parents are asked to make sure that lessons are really wanted before booking them. If tennis lessons are requested, the cost (£30) should be added to pocket money.

MEALS

Food is an important part of the Course. Meals are prepared by professional caterers to a high standard. Our specification for lunch and dinner is a choice of hot dishes (including one vegetarian) or a cold dish, a salad bar comprising about ten different items, a choice of desserts and fresh fruit. Students can have the first choice they want and can return for another choice as 'seconds'. If they cannot find anything they like, they can ask us to ask the caterer to prepare something special.

Here is a typical menu for guidance:-

Breakfast:

Choice of cereal
Choice of various breads, meats, cheese
Jam, marmalade, other spreads
Tea, coffee, milk, fresh orange juice

Lunch:

Choice of one cold or three hot dishes
Buffet-style salad bar
Choice of desserts
Fresh fruit

Dinner:

Choice of one cold or three hot dishes
Buffet-style salad bar
Choice of desserts
Fresh fruit

Before bedtime:

Hot chocolate and biscuits

There is always a vegetarian option. Other special diets can be catered for. Cold orange juice or other drinks are available at no charge. There is a small 'sweet shop'.

At times throughout the Course, the menu will be varied to include, for example, barbecues (spare rib, sausage roll, jacket potatoes, coleslaw dip, crisps, ice-cream, etc.) There will be also be a traditional British 'Christmas Dinner' (roast turkey with stuffing, roast potatoes, Brussels sprouts, cranberry jelly). There may also be 'national meals'. If they wish, students from various countries can advise the kitchen staff on how to prepare and serve a meal consisting of dishes from their own country. There is a students' Food Committee which meets the Caterer regularly to discuss all aspects of the catering.

A TYPICAL DAY

08.15 Breakfast
09.00 First class
09.45 Break
09.55 Second class
10.40 Break
11.10 Third class
11.55 Break
12.05 Fourth class
12.50 Break
13.00 Lunch
13.45 Supervised Study
14.15 Break
14.45 Organised sports and games
18.00 Evening meal
19.00 Games, films, etc.
21.00 Hot chocolate and biscuits
21.30 'Club'
22.30 Bedtime (or 22.45)

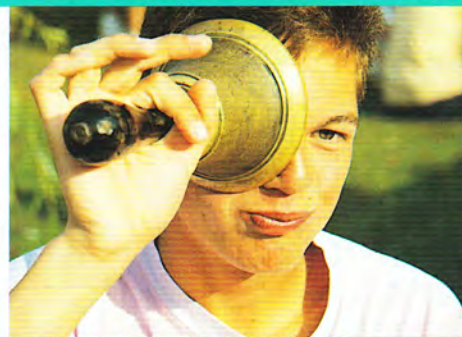
Pocket money and stamps are obtainable from the Office every day from 13.20 - 13.45 and 14.15 - 14.45.





The Thinker

Hiding behind the bell



Telephone Sunday



HOW WE ENCOURAGE THE USE OF ENGLISH

On each Course there are students from many different countries. We try to ensure a mixture of nationalities in classes and dormitories. We aim to stimulate the speaking of English socially in various ways. Members of staff constantly encourage English-speaking around the School.

Another 'encouragement' to speak English is the 'English Only Raffle' with a valuable prize for the winner. Students who have spoken English much more than their own language are, at the end of each week, entitled to one raffle ticket. Throughout the Course, there are also 'English Only' bonus days. If a student is noticeably using English and is not caught more than once using any language other than English on that day, an extra ticket is awarded - a 'bonus'. At the end of the Course there is a draw for the lucky ticket. The more tickets, the greater the chance of winning the prize. We hope that the prize will be a positive inducement for students to use English.

HEALTH

Minor illnesses are treated by our own staff. There is a Matron with a special surgery/sickroom in each School. We also use the services of doctors in the locality. The St John's Ambulance Service provides training for all our staff at the start of each Course in the latest methods of basic first aid and resuscitation. We ask parents to give us full health information on the Application Form.

RELIGION

The Courses are interdenominational. If parents so wish, we shall arrange for students to attend an appropriate service. Please indicate this on the

Application Form. Transportation to and from the church is payable by students.

INSURANCE

Every student is covered by a special Insurance Policy while they are with us. Details are on the enclosed information sheet. Briefly, the Insurance includes refund of full Course Fees if certified serious illness or accident during the month before the Course prevents attendance on the Course; private medical treatment to the value of £10,000; personal possessions and luggage cover to the value of £500; personal money cover to the value of £200; return air fare or repatriation to the value of £10,000 if an APEX reservation is lost because of delayed or advanced departure through illness or accident while the student is with us. Personal accident insurance is included.

There is no extra charge for this Insurance. Every student is automatically covered (subject to the stated conditions) when the application is accepted.

HOW WE LOOK AFTER STUDENTS

We understand the concern felt by parents when their sons and daughters are away from home. They are under constant supervision, as far as is practicable, both in the School and on excursions. Our total staff:student ratio of about 1:8 ensures that our students are well looked-after.

In addition to the staff, on each Course there are two older ex-students, 'Staff Helpers', to assist with the sports and entertainments programme.

During the Course, progress reports are sent to all parents describing performance in class and also social behaviour. At the end of the Course, all parents are sent a final report and leaving certificate together with a report from the Director on the student's general progress and behaviour.

IF THERE IS A PROBLEM

We shall contact you. Parents must ensure that we have a telephone number through which they can always be reached. If it is an emergency and we cannot reach you, we shall contact the person named in section 8 (our 'emergency contact') on the Application Form. If we cannot contact either of you, we shall assume your authority to act 'in loco parentis' and, in a medical emergency, for example, give consent to appropriate medical treatment. We send students a list of rules and standards of behaviour expected before the Course begins. These are straightforward. Basically, we expect students to respect the buildings, equipment and the feelings of other people and to show good manners.

If a student is correctly motivated (see section on 'Students who will benefit'), there should be no discipline problems. If any should arise, we reserve the right to contact parents and, if we consider it necessary, require that the child be taken home at the parents' expense without refund of Fees.



TO *Apply*

HOW TO APPLY

Answer all the questions on the Application Form and return it to us with (if this is a first application) a letter of recommendation from the school on behaviour and attitude to study. Retain your copy for reference. We shall tell you immediately if the application is acceptable and for which Course. A 'waiting list' operates when the Courses are full.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

To ensure that all our students are well-motivated and keen to participate, we ask that a brief letter of recommendation from the school accompanies all applications from new students. This should mention behaviour and attitude to study. No such letter is needed for students we already know or when this might cause conflict with educational authorities.

WHEN THE APPLICATION IS ACCEPTED

We shall write to inform you of this and include our Invoice for the Course Fees. The Invoice can be settled in full immediately, or 50% can be paid immediately and the balance by the date shown on the Invoice. The place is confirmed when the full Course Fees have been received by us. We shall also request travel details.

HOW TO PAY

Please see the 'Course Fees 1996' slip.

THE COURSE FEE INCLUDES:-

- residence at the School
- travel Heathrow-School/School-Heathrow¹
- all meals²
- tuition
- the sports programme
- the use of facilities
- excursions³
- insurance⁴
- the laundering of clothes⁵

¹ At specified times and terminals - see 'Travel'

² Except lunch on excursions, but including lunch on Sports Day

³ Travel and supervision, not entrance fees

⁴ As described in the 'Insurance' slip

⁵ If not sensitive to bulk washing/drying, at your own risk

There are NO EXTRA CHARGES except for optional church, theatre or shopping visits and professional tennis lessons. A small (£3) deduction is made from pocket money to provide indoor board games and records, tapes and CDs for the 'Club'. £20 'caution money' will be retained in the student's pocket money account until the last day when it will be returned less deductions for damages (if any.)

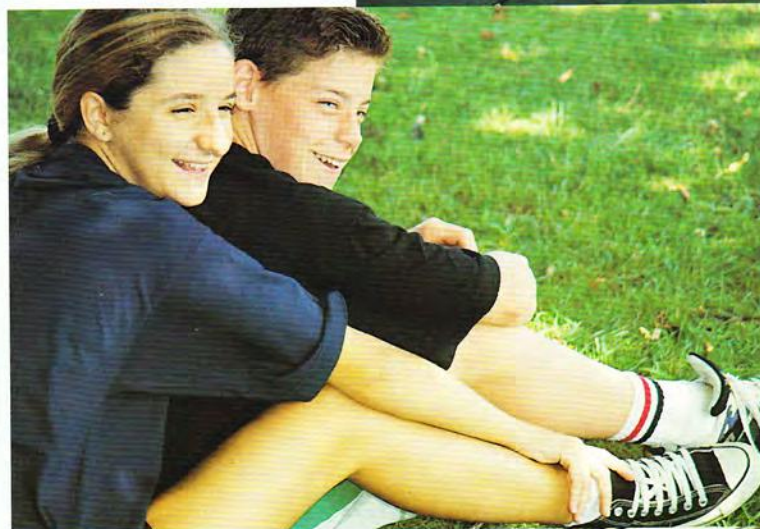
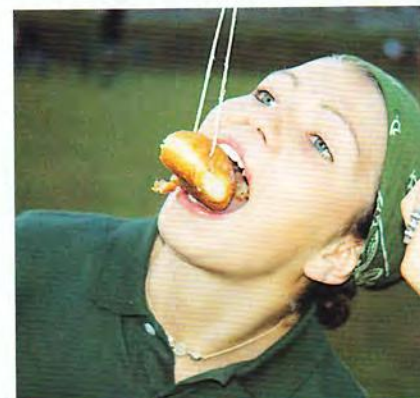
THE COURSE FEE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- pocket money
- optional church/theatre/shopping visits
- travel to and from England

POCKET MONEY

Pocket money can either be brought by students (as a £ & Eurocheque under £700 in value, or as a £ cheque drawn on a British bank, payable to 'Vacational Studies Pocket Money

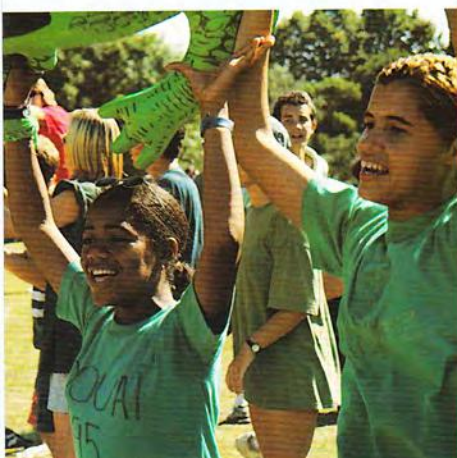
Eating a doughnut the hard way



A/C') or sent in advance to the National Westminster Bank, 30 Market Place, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5AJ for Vacational Studies Pocket Money A/C 65400100. We also have a Girobank account for personal money. The number is 255 7444. Students will tend to bring about £250. Optional tennis coaching fees and the cost of theatre visit(s) should be added (if applicable). Do not send more money during the Course.

CLOTHES AND POSSESSIONS

Notes and advice on what to bring and other information will be sent to parents and students in advance.



'His name is Charlie...'



Travel



TRAVEL

It is quite usual for our students to fly alone. 90% of our students arrive and depart in this way. There are many cut-price air ticket offers - for early booking, for young people, or for travel on particular flights. We operate a collection and return transport service between Heathrow Airport and the Schools on arrival and departure at no charge, subject to the conditions on our 'Travel Details' form. Our staff can meet students arriving at Heathrow Terminals 1 and 2 (only) and check-in students on outgoing flights from Heathrow Terminals 1 and 2 (only) on the stated dates. Our staff are at Heathrow from 12.00-16.00 on arrival days and from 09.30-13.00 on departure days. If flights arrive earlier than 12.00, students wait for our staff near the Information Desk. If flights leave after 13.00, we explain the procedure and take students to wait in the correct area.

For young children (under 12), airlines operate an 'Unaccompanied Young Persons (UYP)' or 'Unaccompanied Minors (UM)' service on request and look after them. As airlines insist on a named person meeting and returning a child and that the person remains until the flight has departed, parents should note that if they request UYP or UM service, all UYP or UM arrivals and departures must be by taxi at cost. The driver is known to us and has been working with us for many years.

He will meet students and check them in personally. It is normally unnecessary for students to be booked to fly UYP or UM. Airlines (especially British Airways) are very helpful with young passengers at any age.

Our free standard service cannot be used when arrival is later or departure is earlier than our stated dates or times, or if the flight is via Gatwick Airport, or if a student is booked UYP or UM, or is on a flight which arrives at or departs from Terminal 3 or 4, or is outside our requested times. We can make special taxi or minibus arrangements on your behalf. We do not charge for making these arrangements, but the cost of the taxi or minibus is payable by the student. (As a guide, a one-way taxi for one person to Heathrow is about £48 and to Gatwick about £63. For two people, the cost is shared). Special requirements should be indicated on the Application Form and details sent separately.

AT THE AIRPORT

Before travelling, we send an identity badge and luggage tags to ensure quick recognition. Our representatives will carry blue Vacation Studies' folders and will meet students at the entrance to the Arrivals Hall after leaving the Customs Hall. If you do not take our standard collection/return service, but we make other arrangements for you, the same procedure applies.

IF YOU COME BY CAR

Road directions are given after the Schools' addresses. Parents bringing students are asked to arrive at between 12.30 and 14.30. Parents collecting students on the last day are asked to arrive before 11.00.

ON ARRIVAL AT THE SCHOOL

All money is handed in at the Office for safe keeping. Students can withdraw money every day. We keep passports and tickets safely. We cannot accept responsibility for pocket money or valuables not handed to us.



Mary Hare v Cheam girls' football

Cheam 95



Travel



ON THE FIRST DAY

On request, students will be allocated to a returning student who will act as a guide, explaining the layout of the building, the way the Course runs and answering any questions.

SCHOOLS' ADDRESSES AND DIRECTIONS

DOUAI SCHOOL

From London, follow M4 to Exit 12 (Theale). Leave M4 and follow signs 'A4 Newbury' for 9km to Woolhampton. In Woolhampton, turn right after Falmouth Arms at the 'Upper Woolhampton/Douai School' signpost. (Elstree School is 1km along this road on the right). Continue for 0.5km. Turn right at 'Main Entrance' sign and then immediately left.

Address for students' letters:

Douai School
Woolhampton Reading RG7 5TH.
Telephone (to contact Course Manager):
National: 01734 715262
International: +44 1734 715262



THE MARY HARE SCHOOL

From London, follow M4 to Exit 13 (Newbury). Leave M4 and follow signs 'A34 Newbury'. After 1km take slip-road on left signposted 'Curridge/Winterbourne/Donnington', then left signposted 'Mary Hare'. The Mary Hare School is first on the right.

Address for students' letters:

The Mary Hare School
Newbury Berkshire RG16 9BQ.
Telephone (to contact Course Manager):
National: (01635) 244274
International: +44 1635 244274

CHEAM SCHOOL

From Newbury, take the A339 road (signposted 'Basingstoke') for 10km. Cheam School (Front Entrance) is signposted on the right.

Address for students' letters:

Cheam School
Headley Newbury Berkshire
RG19 8LD.
Telephone (to contact Course Manager):
National: 01635 268803
International: +44 1635 268803

ELSTREE SCHOOL

See directions to Douai.

Address for students' letters:

Elstree School
Woolhampton Reading RG7 5TD.
Telephone (to contact Course Manager):
National: 01734 712725
International: +44 1734 712725

The telephone numbers and addresses given above are only for use during the Courses and only the Course Manager can be obtained on them. During the rest of the year, please use our Newbury Office address and telephone numbers below.

VISITS TO THE SCHOOLS

Visits to the Schools outside the Course dates may be made only by appointment through our Newbury Office.

FINALLY....

We have tried to describe the Courses fully and frankly. Please also see the section 'Unrealisable Expectations' in the News Section. The News Section following contains more detailed information on various aspects of the Course and is not only a 'sum' of the previous summer. We hope this brochure contains all the information you need to make your choice. Any further details you may require can be obtained from the parents of our past students (the addresses of some of these are on the enclosed list) and the Director. We suggest you contact our parental references as they may offer useful advice.

Our Courses are designed with the benefit of years of experience and we



Sports Day - Cheam

DIRECTIONS BY RAIL

By train from London, leave from Paddington Station. For Mary Hare and Cheam, arrive at Newbury Station. For Douai and Elstree arrive at Reading Station or Midgham Station. There are normally taxis at Newbury Station. If not, there are taxi numbers in the phone box near the Station. There are always taxis at Reading Station. There are no taxis at Midgham Station. Walk to A4 road, then follow road directions.

are confident that we can combine the learning of good written and spoken English with an unforgettable and enjoyable holiday.



NEWS 1995-6



Sports Day - Mary Hare



Jorge and Bas again



Secrets



Christelle (Monaco) and 'memory book'

The last of the students have stumbled, bleary-eyed, from the bosom of their new-found family to the cold reality of a Bennetts bus in the early morning; the last of the staff have exchanged addresses; my PA has wrapped up and posted the last item of named lost property; the 387th report has been written; the final frame of the VacStuds Video has been viewed and slotted into its appropriate place; the letters of thanks have started to arrive. VacStuds 1995 can now be laid to rest. The memories live on. 'She came back absolutely thrilled and overwhelmed by the atmosphere at the school and is determined to attend it again next year. We are impressed since her English has improved beyond our expectations' - a Swiss parent. 'I'm sure that this was the best month I've ever had in my life. I will never forget it and I write to everybody because I don't want to lose my wonderful friends' - a Dutch student. 'It was the experience of a lifetime and I will never forget it' - another Dutch student. 'We can also say she was very pleased with the food, which I know you took a special concern for' - a French parent. 'Never before have I made so many friends in one month. You were right to say that after VacStuds I'd have more international contacts than anyone of the same age in the country - I'm sure I have!' - an English student. 'The staff and teacher were, in one word, terrific' - yet another Dutch student. 'Her stay was in every way a success' - a Danish parent. 'Thanks again for another splendid summer' - a Course Manager. 'I think this year was as good as last year and I know the kids had a lot of fun. I hope you'll consider me again for next year' - a teacher. 'Every year is different, but every year is the same. You meet

NEWS 1995-6

people who are very interesting, perhaps a little different from what you are used to, but they are just as easy to talk to, to love and to miss as the people you know back home' - a Staff Helper. As always in this section, modesty prevents further quotes - or further comment. I sometimes think that the brochure need only be made of photocopied letters, They say it all, far more eloquently than I can. Indeed, this is our only advertisement. It is parents, students and staff who spread the word and ensure that each year we have young people from all over Europe - and, increasingly, from beyond - who must be among the most active and internationally-minded of their age. So what of the summer of 1995 in west Berkshire? Read on....



SUMMER 1995 REMEMBERED

It was the longest hot, dry spell since the 16th century. Day after day of blue sky and brilliant sunshine toasted the playing fields to golden brown. The tropical feeling was only enhanced by an hour of rain we had in the early part of July when, like a monsoon, it stopped the traffic and knocked out the electricity and telephones. For the rest of the period, the relentless heat swept over the grounds and through the classrooms. Knocking wasps out of the way became as instinctive as blinking. Students from the south found their suntans deepening. Those of us used to the cold of the north-west of Europe turned lobster red. Some years are wet; some are dry. Whatever the weather, the learning

carries on and the events take place. And every year, there is something new....

Our sixth year at Douai saw an almost entirely new staff led by Chris Fitzgerald. The students commemorated his tenth year as Course Manager with a suitably enormous cake presented to him at the Folies Bergères. Douai is the most recent jewel in our crown and, even with such charismatic leadership, it has taken some time for a Course 'feeling' to develop. A positive hard core of returning students, including several 'characters', has emerged to stamp an identity on the Course. This was particularly evidenced by the group feeling at Sports Day and the well-organised 'Folies'. Father Dermot and the community at Douai continue to be as supportive as ever.

As part of their on-going improvement plan, the work of the builders means that the boys' dormitory accommodation next year will be enhanced. Their presence became a feature of the Course. Also featuring were the staff. Chris described them as the best staff he had ever had and announced at the final dinner that there was not one he would wish not to have back. He is not given to eulogy. It is the first time any Course Manager has ever said this and is the greatest tribute that can be paid to a staff room. I shall share some of the glory in choosing them in the first place. The line-up was Callum Robertson as our no-nonsense Course Tutor with five years under his belt. He took over as Course Manager for the first few days in Chris's absence. He was supported by newcomers Dominic Higgins (another larger-than-life character), Kieran Gilmurray (ex-Cheam 1994), Stephen Knowles (he of the non-hairstyle hairstyle), the mature and capable Amanda Harlow, honey-tongued Sara Evans and the vivacious Melanie Miller. Phil Kefford returned for a sixth bite at the cherry as Sports/Social Organiser and was a



spectacular success. Pamela Walker was our new disabled matron - well, she had disabled herself by the end of the first week. She shot around in her wheelchair while students scribbled messages of affection on her broken leg and obliged her by not falling ill. Assistants were Chris (CB) Noll, a newcomer to the paid staff after two years' apprenticeship at Elstree and the pub as Staff Helper. Brand newcomer Emma Riggall proved to be a stalwart - one of my most complimentary adjectives - and had a great time. Caroline Wijffels, new to Douai, but in her second year as Staff Helper set a positive lead in atmosphere-creation. Co-Staff Helper, Victor Lopez has a natural way with children and was in his element



working with them. All-in-all, an excellent and professional staff. It was a privilege working with them.

Mary Hare always goes with a bang. This year it went with a splash, too. Some of the boys brought the house down - or at least part of a ceiling - when they left a tap on in a

bathroom. Now in his eleventh year with us, long-suffering Course Manager, Francis McIvor, commented on how co-operative the students were. They certainly had a full programme to occupy them. It is unusual that I have a non-British Sports/Social Organiser. Former student, Sylvia Haltermann, having served her apprenticeship as Staff Helper in 1991/2 and Assistant in 1993/4, was awarded the ultimate prize this year and did a splendid job, ably assisted by SHs Ana Cuenca, tried and tested and back for her second year, and newcomer Andrea Paoletti. On the teaching side, Richard Rawlins returned as Course Tutor and was such an efficient Course Manager for the first few days in Francis's absence that we hardly noticed he was not there. Vincent Purdue (still a Richard Gere lookalike, but I am sure a much better teacher) came back, as did loveable Suzette Wells, antipodean Martin Butts and wide-boy Paul Abrahams. New this year were Helen Shapter, Nicola Horsfield and Patrick Wilson. Matron was Juliette Elson. I hope it was not all too much for her. Assistants were David Wijeratne - more famous for rescuing a damsel in distress than for his powers of observation in church - and Kate Francis, much loved from afar. Mary Hare Bursar, Guy Rogers, provided help and support, especially with the computerised complexities of the telephone system. The new number for 1996 will link us with the school's own system and will make us easier to contact. The builders were in, too - demolishing the conservatory that used to be our hot chocolate serving area. Fortunately, we had hardly a drop of rain so we were able to use the front of the school. As a reward for

putting up with the inconvenience this time, next year will see quite a few improvements to The Mary Hare - a new conservatory as well as changes to the bedrooms. Many of the older students were impressive and the Course had its fair share of strong characters. While there were some remarkable individual and small group performances (the alternative awards at the final dinner being a memorable example), overall cohesion of the students was not apparent. The once famous Mary Hare 'Folies' - the original student-generated entertainment, preserved for posterity on the 1993 video - became an ersatz 'Revue' in occasionally dubious taste. It needed

Spanish siesta



participation all-round. Richard Turner was back as firm-handed Course Manager for his last month as a bachelor. He married Lis the weekend after the Course and will be working for the British Council in Spain. Course Tutor par excellence was Vanessa Hiett. Now that the schools are non-smoking, the staff had to bounce their ideas around on a smokefilled loggia. Many were old hands. Liz Morris was back for a fourth year, Bridget Walker for a third. Returning for seconds were Ruth Pettingale and Graham Rumbelow. Newcomers were Stephen Sugden and Ray Bryant. Marco Bonetti arranged the sports and social activities again and could count on the support of the rest of the staff. James Olsen was outstanding in his second year as a multi-talented Assistant, coffee maker and scourge of local criminals. Nerissa Krantz was admirable as a new recruit. Rose Marie Ceno was a hard-working Staff Helper. Co-SH, Peter Filipowicz, could be relied on to dispense philosophical analysis. Matron, Rita Waters, provided comprehensive medical support and a well-turned ankle - and heel. Cheam is our oldest established Course. We have been in residence for the last 21 summers. To an extent the



atmosphere is influenced by the building as well as its occupants. Cheam's nuclear layout ensures that everyone can meet everyone en route to anywhere. Relationships gel quickly and intensely, transcending linguistic barriers and, occasionally, the bounds of common sense. The staff need to be on top of such situations. At Cheam this year, they were. An interesting Course on which their personalities were stronger than those of most of the students.

Elstree has become the Course with the broadest spread of nationalities. This year the range was from Iceland to Macao via Syria. Students who would have been singing with the 'Rest of the World' a few years ago now have their own acts in the 'Eurovision Song Contest'. Talent sparkled among them, exemplified by the inspired 'Café' format for the 'Folies'. David Johnson was at the reins again. His calmness and ability to defuse situations is always an asset on a Course where young people can become carried away by the 'Elstree dream'. Returning teachers were Brendan Agnew with a swansong performance and the now much-loved Neville Carley. The rest of the staff were new to us - Judith Black, Julie Pugh, Jo-Anna Duncalf, Simon Smith and Nigel Davidson. The most daunting task was that faced by brand new Sports/Social Organiser, Amanda Warren, who had to acquire within a few hours an understanding of the events and activities that have been developed during seventeen summers at Elstree. She put her heart and soul into making it a success, assisted brilliantly by Polly Cameron and Michael Chance - the closest I have

come to an entertainment show on legs. Our new and highly competent Matron, Kate Reilly, tended the sick and generally had a lovely time. SHs Kathrine Hoppe and Pieter Wijffels provided the continuity that our Courses rely on. Once again, leadership potential emerged which, the last night activities of a handful ensured, will not be fulfilled.

As always, in addition to the staff based at a particular school, there were several who travelled between them. Fred Gooch returned as overall Director of Studies, ensuring similarity of teaching standards everywhere, providing a half-day induction for teachers at the start, liaising with Course Tutors and even becoming one. He oversaw the report-writing, too. He has now devised a new topic-based 'Programme of Work'. The idea is to provide our students with the sort of teaching they will not get in their own countries and to capitalise on their being in a multinational environment in which much material can be obtained from the other nationalities and in which the obvious and natural language of



a firmer controlling hand. Quite a contrast were the events arranged by the Sports Crew. These were innovative and tightly organised.

Although Cheam lost five of its leading older boys in the first week - expelled for activities unbecoming to a community like ours - these were forgotten surprisingly quickly and the gaps were filled with up-and-coming personalities. The dynamism from the students reasserted itself in a positive, less selfish way, resulting in some remarkable performances in the 'Folies', the best impromptu international carol-singing at the Christmas Dinner I have ever seen, several outstanding acts in the 'Eurovision' and the 'Talent Show', a splendid magazine and good



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communication is English. We had two 'Support Teachers' who took over classes when the teacher was indisposed or otherwise occupied. Carla Loak and Gareth Barratt had the flexibility necessary to adjust easily to the different schools. My PA, Rupert Springfield, fetched and carried with a crisp efficiency which outshone his ability with the camera and camcorder. En route from Mary Hare, his white Seat Ibiza was demolished by a massive branch sent flying into his path by a lorry (luckily with minimal injury to him) and was rejuvenated overnight into a lustrous, rented, lipstick pink version.

Disco nights are a surefire success with Mark Thatcher again in charge. Out come the old favourites - 'Leaving on a Jet Plane' and other such raves from before our students were born - along with the latest 'techno' hits. Christine O'Callaghan and her colleague from St John's Ambulance Service provided basic First Aid instruction for all the staff before each Course began. If I keel over, at least they will have some idea what to do. Liz Fidler was i/c tennis coaching at all the schools. She told me it was the first time in all her years that not one drop of rain fell on a lesson.

And there was me. I write to all the students before the Courses begin to urge them to come and see me if they think something is wrong. Several did. I am able to intervene and help immediately, but only if I know there is a problem. Every year, there are one or two who write home or wait for the first 'Telephone Sunday' to tell their

parents who then tell one of the staff who then tells me, delaying by a week or two action would could have happened at once. While I have a disciplinary rôle (as several students discovered), this is not my main function. All the students are my responsibility. I want them to have a great time. If there is anything coming between them and their having this great time, I need to know about it. As I visit every school practically every day, they all have the chance to talk to me.

SPORTS DAY

In that it happened on the scheduled



day, it lacked the surprise element of last year. As Sports Day is the event everyone is preparing for - teams, cheer leaders, banner-makers, songwriters - and as it is such a photo opportunity for me, it just must happen. With the vagaries of our climate in a normal summer, there is a good chance that the heavens will open on just the day I choose. I chose three possible Sports Days this year - the preferred day and the day each side of it, depending on the weather

forecast. Saturday 29 July was bright and clear, perfect conditions for a good chant - which is what most of the students particularly enjoy about the day. The usual matches were played and, although one of the chants goes 'We come to Mary Hare to win the Sports Day cup', there is no cup, there is no official list of results and there are no recorded winners or losers. It's just for fun. For those not into sports, there is the Garden Fête during the afternoon. For everyone, there is the School 'Spectacular' and the word is well-chosen. This year's were superb. Douai's 'Douai Warriors', Mary Hare's Scottish Dancing, Cheam and Douai's formation aerobics and Elstree's 'Choo-Choo' stick in the mind and are fortunately preserved on videotape. The sun beat down, the suntans deepened, the students cheered themselves hoarse, the excellent buffet lunch and barbecue dinner were eaten in the welcome shade of the trees, farewells were exchanged, the few temper-tantrums were forgotten, the buses departed in a blue haze and the unforgettable day ended with happy young people singing 'la, la, la, la' in utter exhaustion.

The amount of work that goes into it all is considerable. All the Sports Crews are involved, but there is an inevitable extra burden on The Mary Hare. Everyone, without exception, rose to the occasion. I must single out two for special mention. Mrs Jean Monger, Mary Hare's caterer, provided a buffet lunch and a barbecue dinner for 400+ people with no more fuss than if it had been a family picnic. That the students and staff of four schools could come together with everyone knowing what they were doing and when they were doing it is a tribute to Sylvia Haltermann's organisational skills.

Sports Day 1996 is scheduled for Saturday 27 July. The Optional Trip is scheduled for Friday 26 July. If the



weather is forecast to be bad on the Saturday, Sports Day will be brought forward to the Friday and the Optional Trip will be put back to the Saturday. If the weather is bad on both days, Sports Day will be postponed until the Sunday (in which case a message will inform parents that 'Telephone Sunday' at Mary Hare and Elstree will become 'Telephone Monday') and if it rains on the Sunday, Sports Day will happen on the Monday. I wonder if I have covered all eventualities.

CATERING

As regular readers will know, this is a particular concern of ours and is, I think, the single most important aspect of the Course. Unless the students look forward to mealtimes and feel well-fed, they will not enjoy the Course. Last year, I introduced the 'Catering Questionnaire' and promised to include the results in this year's 'Catering' section. The questionnaire lists each meal and requests (i) overall impression, (ii) whether there was enough to eat and (iii) whether there was sufficient variety. Respondents can choose a number from 1 (= bad) to 10 (= good) for each section. The questionnaire goes on to ask similar questions about the cold table, the barbecues, orange juice and hot chocolate. The questionnaire can be answered anonymously and there is a section for suggestions. It is clear to me that some of the responses are not well thought out (giving a '1' for 'variety' tells me there was no choice at all, for example, and this is just not so) or are illogical (giving a score markedly different for the general overall impression of the food from the impression for the separate meals), so all it tells me is what the general perception was. Perception is often different from reality, so the results are of limited use. The scores





range from 84% satisfaction with Douai's barbecue to 51% satisfaction with Cheam's orange juice. For what they are worth, the overall average satisfaction rates combining 18 different questions are as follows:- Cheam 68%; Mary Hare and Douai 67%; Elstree 66%. The minimal difference can be ignored in the margin for error, so the catering can be seen to be perceived the same in all our schools. Bearing in mind how conservative and difficult to please young people are - especially for food that is completely foreign - the scores are commendably high.

The suggestions boxes on the questionnaires are valuable. Feedback I have received indicates that the Food Committees (which I announced in last year's 'News Section') were viewed as a good idea. They seemed to work. There were four requests at one of the Meetings I observed. All of them were valid and were implemented. This was at The Mary Hare School. I am sure the effective working of the Food Committee there resulted in the 'overall satisfaction with the food' rating rising by 15% over 1994. The equivalent rating at Cheam where the system was also successfully implemented rose by 3%. I discovered that there was just one Food Committee meeting at Douai. The staff perception was that, because of last year's high rating and the absence of complaints, the students were satisfied. Douai's equivalent rating fell by 13%. I discovered too late that the Food Committee system was not introduced at Elstree. The equivalent rating there fell by 6%. In the two schools with fully-functioning Food Committees, the scores were higher than last year. In the two schools without, the scores were lower.



Given that so many psychological factors are bound up with young people's enjoyment of food, I am quite sure that the Food Committee idea provides a useful insight into their preferences and helps them appreciate that we and the caterers exist for their benefit. In 1996, there will be a Food Committee which meets at least weekly at each school, even if the Course Manager thinks that all is well and (to quote a staff reaction on one of the questionnaires) 'a Food Committee will only invent problems that aren't there.' The saddest comment was on an Elstree questionnaire 'I think it was unfair that only the staff got real English breakfast (egg and bacon) - hint, hint!' The point is taken and has been referred to the Caterers. I have always made it clear to our Caterers that there should be no difference between staff and student meals. As very few students have ever taken a traditional English breakfast when it has been on offer, the assumption was that they did not want it. The reality is that some do

Elstree 95



Karaoke time with Doria (Syria)

(or at least they want the chance to decline it) and that they resent what appears to be preferential treatment. This could have been expressed via the Food Committee if there had been one - hint, hint.

Catering this year was by Graham Smith (Douai), Jean Monger (Mary Hare) and Gardner Merchant (Cheam and Elstree.) I thought it was all very good - and I am not easily pleased. The new 'one choice at a time' system was perceived as fair and was found to be workable. It led to a reduction in wastage. Silvia Abello's idea to move Hot Chocolate to after the Club proved unpopular with the majority and it was moved back to before the Club. If something has existed for over two decades it must have something right about it, even if the original reason for it has been lost in the mists of time.

PRIZES

The prize for Academic Excellence was a VacStuds watch. Winners were Carola Lakeman (Douai); Annabelle Schulz (Mary Hare); Eline Post (Cheam); Hiroki Takahashi (Elstree.) Watches also went to the winners of the 'English-Only' draw:- Olivier Fabre de Morlhon (Douai); Kazuyuki Daijo (Mary Hare); Brita Lillipuu (Cheam); Mamiko Shigemasa (Elstree.)

'ARELS/UCLES' EXAMINATION

The University of Cambridge devised with the Association of Recognised English Language Schools a special examination for short summer courses. This was its third year. As usual over half our students were entered. It gave them a clear idea what their English is like and what the next Cambridge examination they might take should be. Each successful entrant received a certificate. We charged the examination fee charged to us per candidate and added nothing for administration. We produced and supplied certificates at no charge. ARELS has decided that we

are no longer allowed to produce our own certificates and from 1996 will have to supply (and charge for) an ARELS 'Record of Attainment' for each candidate. Again, we shall supply the examination at what it costs us to run it and add no charge for invigilation and marking, but the ARELS decision means that the price will rise from £8.00 to £10.00. It is a suitable examination for those above 'lower intermediate' level, but it is not a suitable examination for near-beginners. We reserve the right not to enter those for whom we consider the examination unsuitable. Although I asked last year that parents should make their children aware that they will be sitting the examination, one or two students were taken by surprise when they found themselves listed for it. I repeat my request for 1996. The 'Record of Attainment' has value only as an indication of the next University of Cambridge examination which can be taken. It is not a qualification.

DATES

Our dates are always chosen to coincide with most European school summer holidays. This means we must finish by the middle of August. We have tried to offer as wide a choice of dates as possible within these confines.

TRIPS

The sightseeing tour of the whole of London was generally successful. Stratford upon Avon was a long way to go shopping. The few who decided to see the Shakespearian places were on the whole unimpressed. For 1996, we shall repeat the London trip. The second trip will be to Windsor where students can see the Castle and, for those who wish, the brand-new Legoland. The third trip will be optional. The fourth trip will be Sports Day. There will be two additional shopping afternoons locally. We shall try to accommodate individual preferences rather than expect our young people to conform to our expectation of what they will

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like. There is no point in expecting every student to be interested in the same things. We shall arrange for students to be informed what is possible at each of the venues and they can decide what they would like to do. On the Windsor trip, for example, some may wish to see the various 'Royal' exhibitions, others may prefer the attractions of the theme park. What we shall include is transport and supervision. We shall obtain group booking rates where possible, but all entrances will be payable from pocket money. If students wish to go somewhere else, or do something special, we shall try to make the arrangements. We had groups this year going to 'Miss Saigon', Madame Tussaud and Chessington World of Adventure, for example. If a large enough group wishes to go somewhere, we shall make the arrangements and send accompanying staff.

THEATRE VISITS

I tried a new system in 1995 whereby those who made early application benefited. On a special 'Theatre Visits' form, students expressed their choice of show in order of preference. The form was handed in on the first day and tickets were allocated on the basis of preferences expressed in order of the date on which the application for a place had been accepted. I should have made it clearer that the form was to be handed in, not folded inside the passport for me to fail to notice. Otherwise the new system appeared to work well. One aspect which will be changed is that occasionally students decide not to go to the theatre if their choice of show is late in the Course

and they are low on pocket money. As parents add to pocket money so that their children can see a top West End show rather than just have money to waste on 'shopping trips', from 1996 money for theatre visits will be debited from pocket money accounts right at the start in accordance with information supplied on the 'Theatre Visits' form. In 1994, I chose matinée performances so a start before lunch had to be made. This resulted in the loss of some teaching periods, so the teachers asked me to change to evening performances. In 1995, I chose evening performances which resulted in some late (01.00) returns and the duty staff asked me to change to matinée performances. I can't win. For 1996, there will again be a choice of four or five shows. As far as possible, I shall arrange for these visits to be on no more than three days on each Course (compared to five in 1995.) Some shows will be on the same day so this will limit the choice, but it will go some way towards satisfying the different demands of the academic and the duty sides of the Course. I shall try to include at least one new show. Tickets for 'Phantom of the Opera' are already booked. The other shows will not be booking for July/August until early 1996, so the 'Theatre Visits' form specifying which shows will be available when and at what price will be sent out in March.

EXPULSIONS

Sadly, these proved necessary. We all asked ourselves why these people did what they did. The straightforward answer is that they wanted to and they thought they would not be caught. I suppose some young people cannot cope with the elation of sudden freedom from the restrictions of school and home. We start out by making it clear that our entire organisation is based on trust. Parents trust us to look after their children; the children trust us to arrange for them to have a great time. It is the staff's responsibility

professional responsibility.

Within this framework of trust, considerable freedom is permitted. We are not so naive as to believe that young people will not test the parameters of what is tolerated. We check that our trust is not being abused. Sometimes, for example, we search shopping bags. I have asked Course Managers to make this a regular practice. Sometimes, staff patrol in the early hours. I believe that students on our Courses are given a wonderful privilege by their parents. They have the responsibility to use this freedom responsibly. As most of what can go wrong has already happened in the past 22 years, our 'Notes' are specific as to what will happen if certain norms are not adhered to. Everyone signs that they have 'read, understood and agree with' the Notes. It could not be clearer. Yet some transgress so grossly that expulsion is the inevitable result and are horrified when the full consequences of their actions unfold before their eyes. So important is the outline of our expectations in the 'Notes', that the word 'understand' has been changed to 'know'. Our students must know, by heart, the rules. We ask parents to go through them. There is no time to acquire them by experience. They have to be fully absorbed from the start. They are all based on common sense and our long experience of young people. They are utterly logical and are essential for the functioning of our multinational community.

POSSESSIONS (AND SAFEGUARDING THEM)

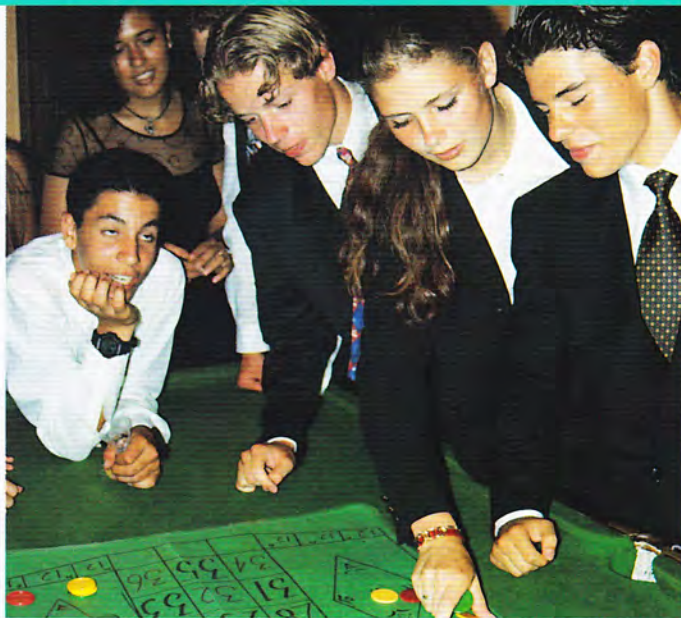
All named property left behind, regardless of value, has been sent back. We ask that valuables are not brought. In a dormitory environment, such articles are bound to be mislaid, if not taken. We can understand the need for a camera. We cannot understand why an item like a gold bracelet is brought. The office is almost always manned. Cameras and

similar items can be handed in there for safe-keeping and taken out when they are needed. If they disappear while we are in charge of them or are stolen while on a trip, they are covered by our Insurance Policy. If they are left in a dormitory or classroom, they are not. The reason we have a safe, a pocket money book and a Course Manager on hand to dispense pocket money is to prevent money being kept in the dormitory. The sight of a sum of money unsecured in a dormitory may be a temptation too great to resist. In a sense, someone leaving money lying



around makes someone else a thief. The ill-feeling that stealing arouses is damaging to the spirit of a community. We do all we can to prevent this. The same applies to valuables and consumer goods. A number of high-value items disappeared this summer:- a Camel watch, a distinctive electronic Kodak Motor EX camera, a Nikon Zoom 500 camera (serial number 5024115) and the gold bracelet mentioned above, for instance. Some high-value items are sitting in my office unclaimed, among them a Konica camera, a Canon camera, a Sony Walkman and a Technics Diskman. Items that 'disappear' must be somewhere. If a child arrives home with an expensive article that he or she did not possess at the beginning of the Course and could not have afforded to buy, we





would expect parents to ask questions. If an article like a Canon camera is not brought home, we would expect parents to ask us about it. Few do.

We discovered the whereabouts of a 'Diskman' that disappeared. It was buried under a tree to be retrieved and taken home later. We removed the child responsible. Although the owner and his possession were reunited, the 'Diskman' had been left in a room, unattended. The investigation took a long time and was upsetting for everyone.

From 1996, each student will be issued with a 'Valuable Possessions' form. On it, the student will list the model names and serial numbers of all the possessions they bring which are of more than £50 in value. This will help us to establish who owns what if it is necessary to make a search for 'lost property'.

MONEY FOR CHARITY

The gum-chewers have contributed about £200 for 'Childline'. I shall be handing over the customary cheque to 'Childline's' founder, Esther Rantzen, at the BBC shortly.

GUESTS

It is a compliment that former students should wish to visit the Courses if they are holidaying in Britain. A day visit is not a problem. In general, for reasons of space we do not offer overnight stays, but can provide information about accommodation locally.

STAFF HELPERS

This is the best way for our ex-students to visit the Courses. They have a rôle and a raison d'être. It is

hard work and not always easy to tread the fine line between students and staff. Every year I receive a number of letters from aspiring SHs. Some of these are heartfelt, coming after a summer of being 18 and not being with us. 'This summer has been really empty. I felt something strange. I have lived the most marvellous experiences at Vacational Studies and I would like to show them to the students....' - writes an applicant for a SH post in 1996. I send out the 'Notes for Staff Helpers' in November and make my decisions early in January. Sometimes the 'right' people do not contact me. Maybe they should read my final letter (the one I send with the Certificate) more closely. When I mention 'leadership potential' or words to that effect, I am thinking in terms of a future SH. Being a SH is an honour. Having such an experience of being in charge of people at an early age looks impressive on a CV. Really excellent SHs can request a testimonial from me. Those with 'leadership potential' should not be shy about writing to me the moment they read these words. The first approach must come from them. That's part of the suitability test. There will certainly be vacancies for new SHs in 1996.

TALENT SHOW

My hunch that we have the 'crème de la crème' of young people with us proved correct. Several accomplished students have found their way onto the VacStuds Video. Almost all the Talent Show at The Mary Hare was overtaped (by Rupert, not by me, I hasten to add.) I learned the need to separate tapes two years ago when



almost all of Cheam was lost. The ten seconds of talent in The Mary Hare section does not reflect the quality of the Show there. Students who have a particular skill, interest or talent that requires costume or equipment are asked to bring these items and hand them to us on arrival. We can store them safely until they are needed.

THE VIDEO

'VacStuds '95 All Over Again' is now available. It has been offered to all those who were with us in 1995. Parents of new students who wish to see what the Course is all about can request a copy. It is not a promotional video. It is a compilation of various events that I filmed on my travels around the schools during the summer. It conveys, more than words ever could, the all-important 'atmosphere'. For those who will see each other again only through this medium, I have subtitled it 'Friends will be Friends' after the final line of the song written at Mary Hare, the words and music of which are being adopted at all the schools. I call it 'Do you want to go with me to the Casino?' and it has to be sung with a Spanish accent. It appears, *passim*, in the video and sums up the students' feelings quite brilliantly.

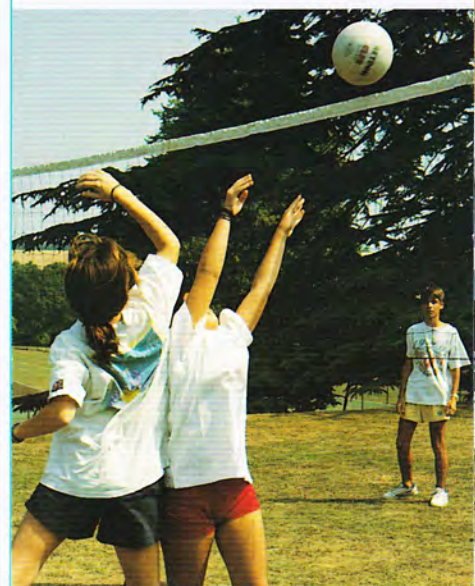
THE ADULTS' COURSE THAT WASN'T

Why don't you run a Course like this for older people? is a question I have often been asked. Eventually, I ran out of excuses for not doing so and offered an Adults' Course for 1995. Just two months after the 1995 brochure was released, I decided to cancel the idea. My decision was partly because the take-up was not particularly great or particularly international, but mainly because the creation of our sort of community requires a degree of control that I felt adults would find surprising. Without it, the Course would just be a hotel. I came to the conclusion that I did not want to go through the arduous

process of creating the Course only to be proved right.

UNREALISABLE EXPECTATIONS

Those who know our work will understand why we include this paragraph - and why it is relevant to those sending children to us for the first time. We do what we can to encourage students to learn and use the Course to advantage. We do our



best to look after them. We make no other claims. We cannot force a child to integrate. While we provide encouragement, they must help themselves. They will find others who speak their language and they may be tempted to take the easy way. They may come with friends from home. We cannot keep friends apart when they are at the same School. They must decide to broaden their international horizons, mix and use English. Parents may make requests, but we reserve the right to place students in what we consider to be appropriate classes and dormitories. The Course is a communal experience. Individual freedom is restricted. Our school buildings are boarding schools - not hotels.

NEWS 1995-6

Accommodation, washrooms, etc. are shared. Bedrooms are boarding school dormitories and these may be sparsely furnished. Our schools become co-educational only in the summer, so bathrooms may be away from dormitories and boy/girl rotas for their use are sometimes needed. Clothes storage space may be limited. All sorts of compromises have to be made, but for most young people this is part of the fun. We also ask parents to accept that telephone contact with their children, especially in the first few days, is not a good idea. We are not being difficult, just putting into practice what we know from experience works. In effect, what we are requesting is a partnership between us based on our expertise and parents' trust in us. What we provide and the parameters of what we permit are in our literature. We act on the assumption that parents and students read it all.

DORM PLACEMENT

It needs to be said that the overriding consideration in placing students in particular dormitories is age. We try to mix the nationalities in the dormitory, but it sometimes happens that a few who speak the same language are in the same dormitory. This is not a 'problem'. I mention this only because it is occasionally mentioned by parents who may not fully appreciate the dynamics of a Course for 11-17 year-olds who are inter-acting constantly during the day. The dormitory is for sleeping in rather than for the exchange of

language skills and children spend little time there apart from bedtime. Relationships are made in the classroom and on the sportsfield as well as in the dorm. Occasionally we place friends from home in the same dorm if we feel that this will help acclimatisation.

BEFORE AND DURING THE COURSE

Parents are welcome to contact me on any matter. In July and August I tend to be at my desk from 08.00 (English time) until 10.00 and then I travel around the schools. For practical reasons, therefore, it is best to make contact with me during the Courses via the Course Manager. If there is a problem, I can take immediate action. During the period before the Courses, letters are replied to immediately. I shall probably not be able to reply to letters received during July and August until after the Courses, however. If parents could telephone children only on the two specific Telephone Days mentioned in the 'Notes for Parents', this would be appreciated.

AFTER THE COURSE

Feel free to contact me about anything connected with Britain. For example, parents ask for my advice on continuing their children's education in Britain. I am happy to help. No charge! I see this as a natural extension of my work with young people. Students ask for information, sometimes ten or twenty years later. No problem! This year, for

example, through my contacts, five students are at school full-time in Britain and another is at University in Scotland. It has been said before and it is not an overstatement - coming on a VacStuds Course can change your life.... There are two other extensions to my work - The Jörg Weise Association and Giotto.

THE JÖRG WEISE ASSOCIATION

Briefly, the history of the JWA is that in 1979 one of our first students, Jörg Weise, who was with us in 1971, died at the age of 21 in a motorcycle accident. It was particularly sad as he had shown promise as an actor and was already involved in international work. His father was on the Board of Directors of Bayer AG in Leverkusen, Germany. In the name of his son, I invited Prof. Dr. Weise to nominate a young person for a place on one of our Courses. He agreed, but went further. He asked that he be permitted to nominate and pay for a place in his son's name in perpetuity. He also agreed to the sculpting of a trophy that would be awarded annually in his son's name to a student or students making an outstanding contribution to the international aims of our Courses. The recipients of the Trophy were invited to a gathering each year and, in time, the group grew to a sizeable number. Such a collection of talented young people from many different countries needed more of a reason for being than just an annual get-together, I felt, and in 1985 I put to them the idea that they could form themselves into an Association that would work towards giving other, less privileged young people the opportunity to cross frontiers. The Jörg Weise Association was born. It is a now a charitable institution, registered in Germany, for the advancement of international understanding.

The Jörg Weise Trophy is no longer awarded annually as it tended to promote too competitive a spirit, but

it is still awarded occasionally for 'an outstanding contribution to the international ideals of the Course'. It was awarded at The Mary Hare School in 1995 to Bas de Sonnaville who will be invited as a guest of the Association to its annual Meeting at Easter. The 1995 Meeting was near Milan. The 1996 Meeting will be in Anjou in the



Julius (Lithuania)
hiding in his hat



Mons (Norway) and Marissa (Netherlands)

Loire Valley, France. Older (16+) students who wish to be considered for membership of the Association can contact me for information.

THE JÖRG WEISE SCHOLARSHIP

We are also proud to be associated with the Jörg Weise Memorial Scholarship. The Scholarship is a place on any of our Courses, return air ticket from anywhere in the world, pocket money, theatre tickets and tennis lessons. The recipient of the Scholarship will be the sort of student outlined above who will benefit from attending the Course, but who is unable to apply for a place in the normal way for financial reasons. The Scholarship Committee will take steps to verify the financial situation of candidates. We welcome nominations for the Scholarship in 1997 which should be sent in confidence, and without informing the projected recipient, to Vacational Studies. I shall forward nominations to the Scholarship Committee of the Jörg Weise Association.



GIOTTO

Giotto was started in 1986, the year of Halley's Comet. It seemed to me a pity that the strong international contacts made by our students in their teens should disappear with the passage of time. It is not that they did not wish to keep up the contacts, it is just not easy to continue correspondence after the shared experience of the Course has faded from the memory.

Nevertheless, I felt that these contacts, good in one's teens, could be even more beneficial later on. I decided to contact all our past students to see how they felt. It was my biggest-ever mailshot and the response was overwhelming. I named this organisation Giotto after the collaborative European space-probe, Giotto, which was sent up in February 1986 to observe Halley's Comet. No one knew at that time if it would succeed or fail. In fact, it succeeded. The probe Giotto was so named because Halley's Comet features in a work by the Florentine painter, Giotto. When I decided in 1986 to collate the names of our students from 1972 to date and create this international organisation, I did not know if it would succeed or fail. That the 1996 Giotto Book (to be published in January 1996) will be its 10th Edition and will contain nearly 1700 names, suggests to me it is succeeding. The Book is provided at no charge. It is totally financed by Vacation Studies as an adjunct to our work in helping make the world a smaller place. Some now in the Book are rather young, but time will put this right.

In a few years, the Giotto Book will include many more interesting and useful people in various fields who are willing to be contacted. Indeed, Dr Michael Nowak in Germany, who was with us in the early 70s and is now a 37 year-old vet in charge of an equine hospital, has suggested an international scheme whereby those 'oldies' (as he puts it) who are in particular fields offer the chance of work-experience. I have written to all

our other 'oldies' and an International Work Experience' page will be in the 1996 Giotto Book.

'Oldies' (or let's say those in responsible positions) who are reading this and would like to offer the cream of European youth the chance of work experience in their firm, please let me know before the 1996 Book goes to press in December 1995.

For those who are visiting or need help in another country, here are contacts. For those who wish for a more personal social contact, Giotto Tours was created by a group of students in 1992 to arrange holidays and get-togethers for its members. Information can be obtained from Gabriella Hoffmann (Italy). Her address and phone number are in the Giotto Book.

There is a downside to Giotto's success, however. I discovered that a commercial organisation has used the 1994 Book as the source for

names and addresses for a mailshot to publicise a Spanish Language Course. My permission was not sought, nor would it have been granted. All of us have enough 'junk mail' to contend with. I would have permitted a free advertisement, though, if I had been asked. To prevent this sort of exploitation, the first line of each address has been omitted from the 1995 Book and may be omitted from the 1996 Book. I can provide specific addresses on request. The telephone number given is a point of contact.

MY THANKS

- to the vast majority of parents, students and staff who go to the trouble of reading what is written, abide by our modest requests and enable us to organise something so international with so little difficulty. The few who send their children without pocket money, who change the flight the day before travelling, whose children's clothes are all un-



'Memories are made of this'

named and who phone me at 5.30 in the morning will, I am sure, have looked at the pictures only and not read this far. I can only state and re-state our requests in the 'Notes'. I am grateful that most parents act on our advice most of the time. We could not function otherwise.

Satisfied parents and students are our only advertisement. I appreciate the trust placed in us and hope to continue to give our young people the time of their lives.

Ian G. Mucklejohn - Autumn 1995

PHOTOS IN THIS BROCHURE

If parents or students would like to have the original slides used in this brochure, please ask. First come, first served.



*So now you know
Vacational Studies
back-to-front.*



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Studies®

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ian Mucklejohn - who, as the Director, co-ordinates the Schools - was born in London. He is a graduate of the University of London with an Honours Degree in English Language and Literature, is an Associate of the College of Preceptors and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He has had many years experience in teaching. He is the founder of Vacational Studies.

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