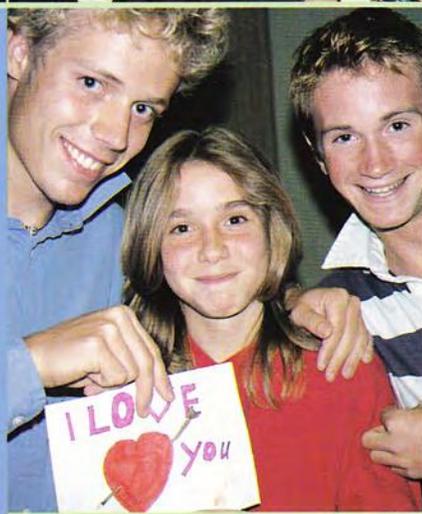


ENGLISH INTERNATIONALLY...



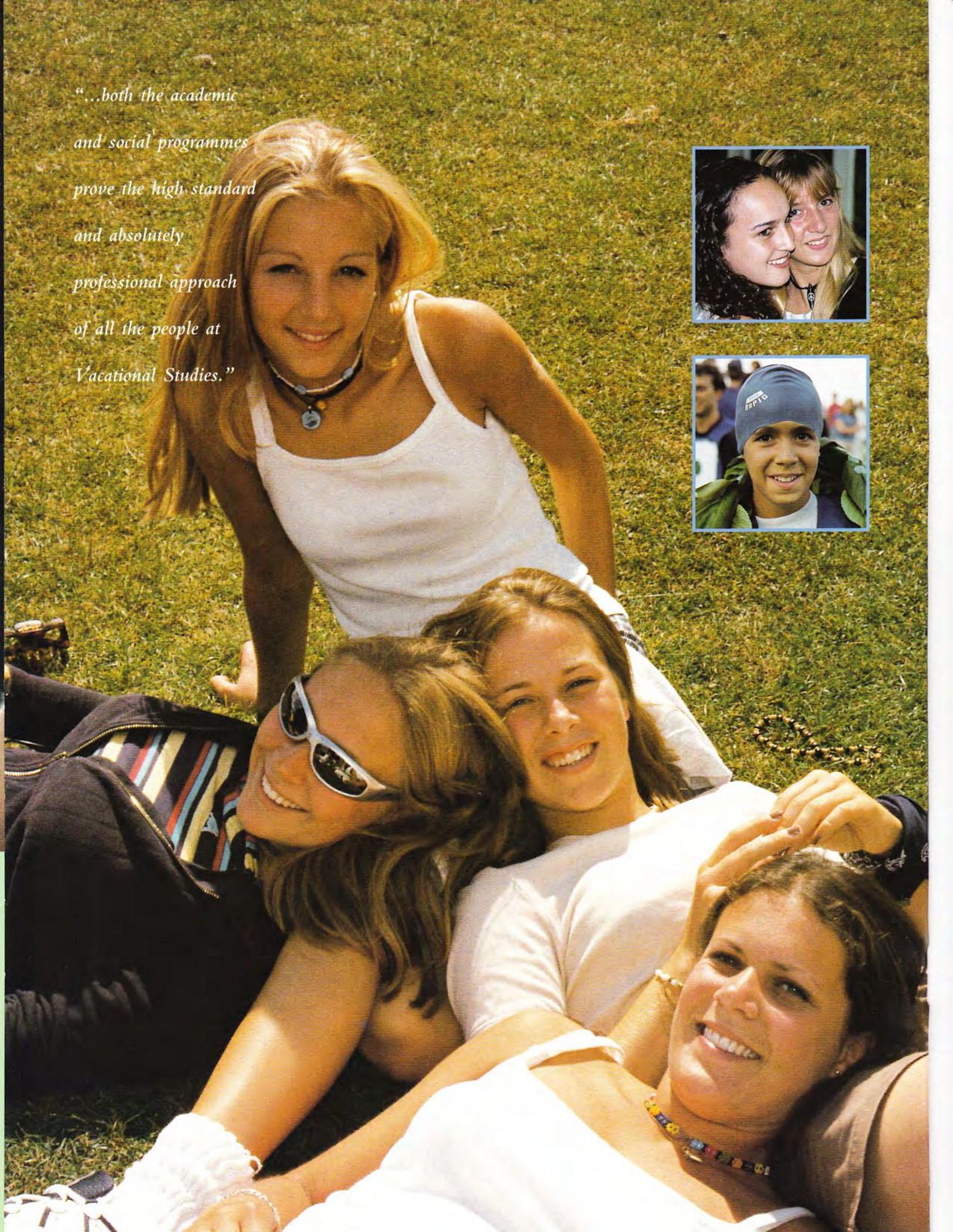
“
...thank you for giving
me the best month
of my life.
”
And it really was...



**Vacational
Studies®**

11-17 YEARS
SUMMER 1998

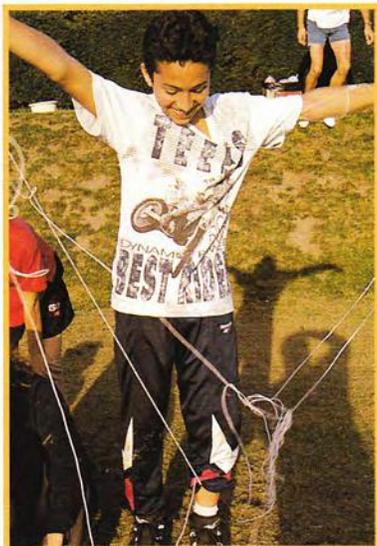
*"...both the academic
and social programmes
prove the high standard
and absolutely
professional approach
of all the people at
Vacational Studies."*



THE COURSES

RESIDENTIAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES

Vacational Studies Courses have been running for 25 years. We have tried in this time to develop an enjoyable balance between 'vacation' and 'study'. Here is our programme for Summer 1998.



WHAT WE TRY TO DO

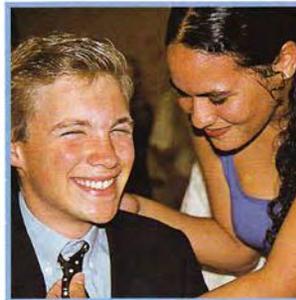
Vacational Studies tries to create a totally international Course with students from as many different countries as possible. We avoid accepting a large number of students from any particular country. In this way we try to ensure that English is the main medium of communication among the students. By 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....'

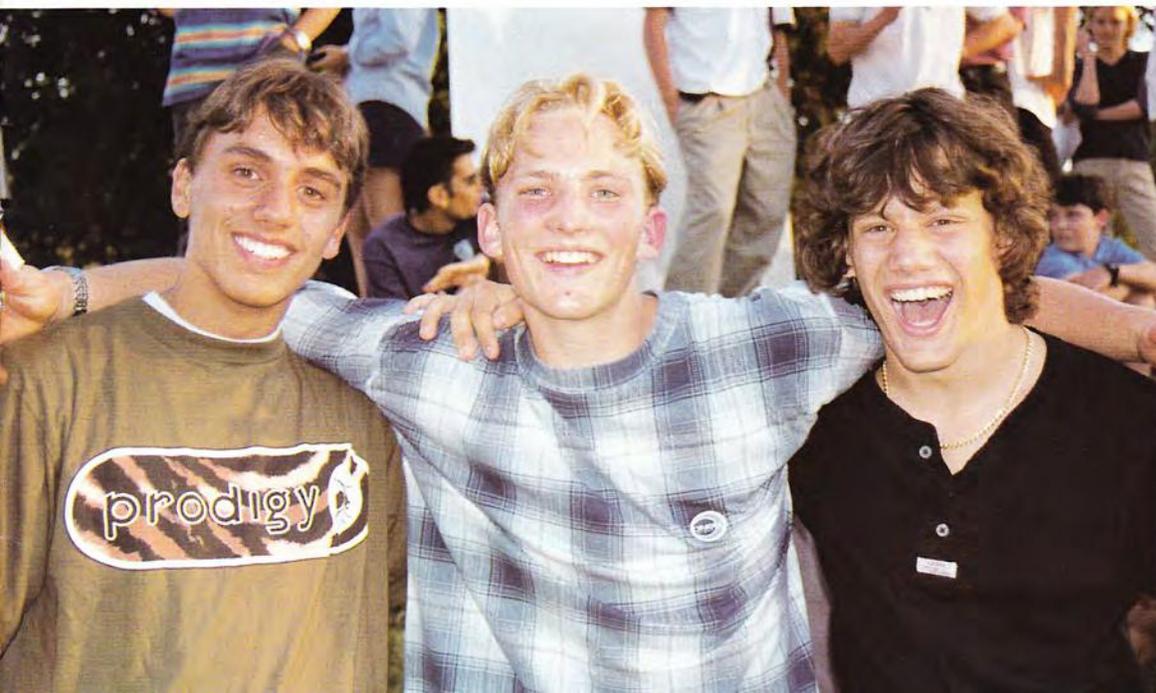
But it is more than this....

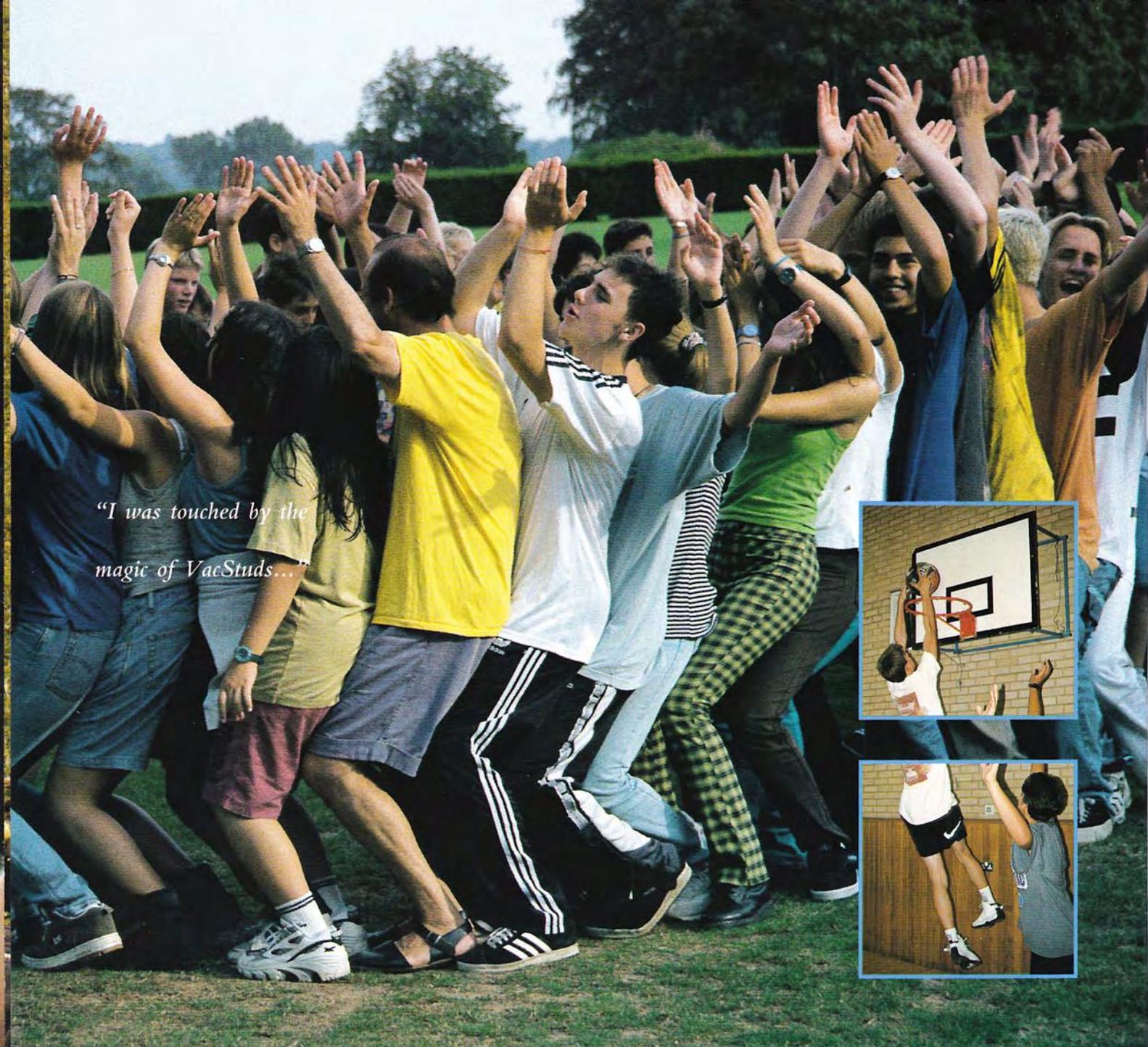
RECOGNISED BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL

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 1996.

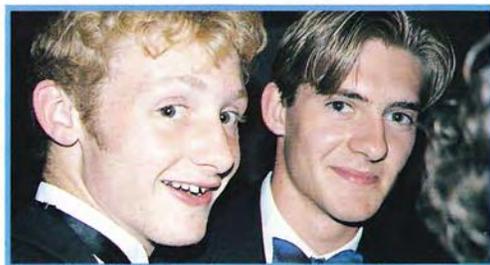
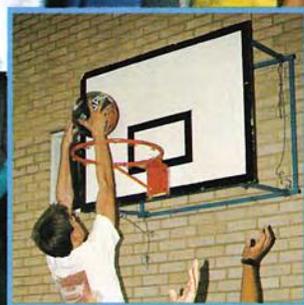


*The one thing
that can never be
taken away from
your children is
the investment
you make in
their education...*





*"I was touched by the
magic of VacStuds..."*



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 1997-8') is written in a

different style so you have an idea of my personality which necessarily influences the atmosphere on the Courses. It gives a more detailed rationale of the 1998 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 sections are essential reading. 'Unrealisable Expectations' in the second section deals with fundamental issues.

THE COURSES



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, gregarious and able to function independently. 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 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.



CHOICE OF COURSE

The Courses all have the same format and last 4 weeks. The only differences are location and dates. 1998 dates are:-

DOUAI

2 July – 30 July 1998

MARY HARE

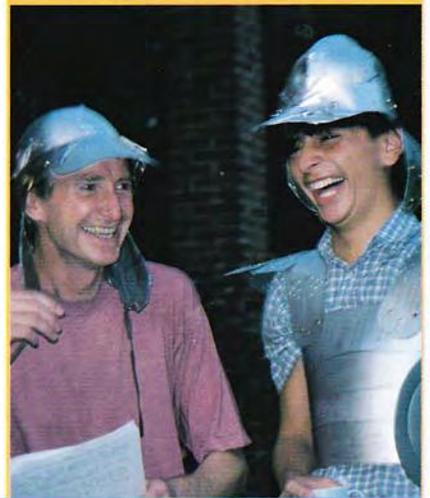
10 July – 7 August 1998

CHEAM

14 July – 11 August 1998

ELSTREE

16 July – 13 August 1998





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

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.

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.

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

THE PROGRAMME



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.

THEATRE VISITS (OPTIONAL EXTRA)

'Cats', 'Phantom of the Opera', 'Jesus Christ Superstar' 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 £20-40. Parents are asked to indicate the number of shows requested and inform the child of this. £25 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.



INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTS SHORT COURSES EXAMINATION (OPTIONAL EXTRA)

The Institute of Linguists has been recognised by the British Government as examiners since 1910. Specially for us, they have devised an Examination in Spoken English which will be externally marked by their examiners. This examination will be on 3 levels, according to the ability of the student. At each level, the procedure will be:- (1) a general conversation with the examiner during which the student is giving information and (2) a structured task in which the student is requesting information. Including preparation time, the examination will last about 20 minutes. It will be held in each school at the end of the Course. The Certificate in English as a Spoken Language is an officially validated qualification awarded in each level at one of three grades – Pass, Merit, Distinction. The cost charged by the Examiners is £20.00. We add no charge for our administration.

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.

FOOD SAFETY

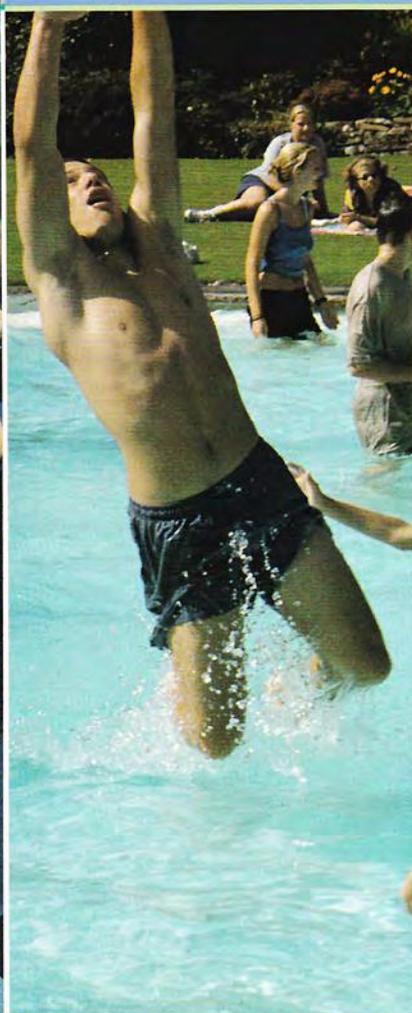
Vacational Studies policy is not to serve any food that is banned in any country or about which there is any concern for any reason. We serve only what we believe parents would feel safe to serve their own children in their own homes.

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.





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-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

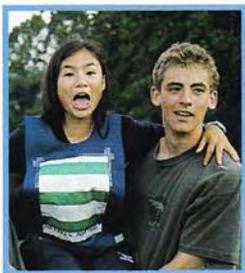
There are four days out. One is a sightseeing tour of London, followed by shopping; the second is a visit to Cardiff in Wales and, optionally, to the Welsh Folk Museum; the destination for the third excursion will be Oxford, Southampton, Winchester or another visit to London or a similar city of historical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



THE PROGRAMME



“ I take my hat off to you for creating an environment where young people felt confident enough to do this using a language that was not their own. ”



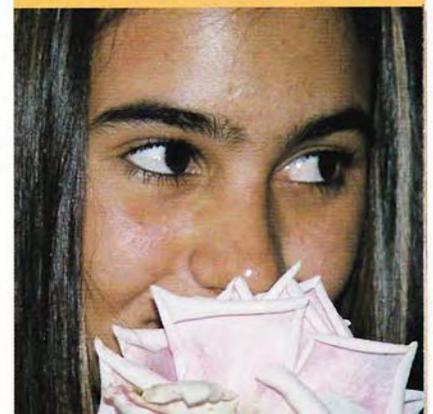
THE TEACHING

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 'World Class', 'Compact', 'Upper Intermediate'

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 and task-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. They will be expected to complete certain tasks. In this way, we aim to 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.



THE SCHOOLS

THE SCHOOLS AND SURROUNDINGS

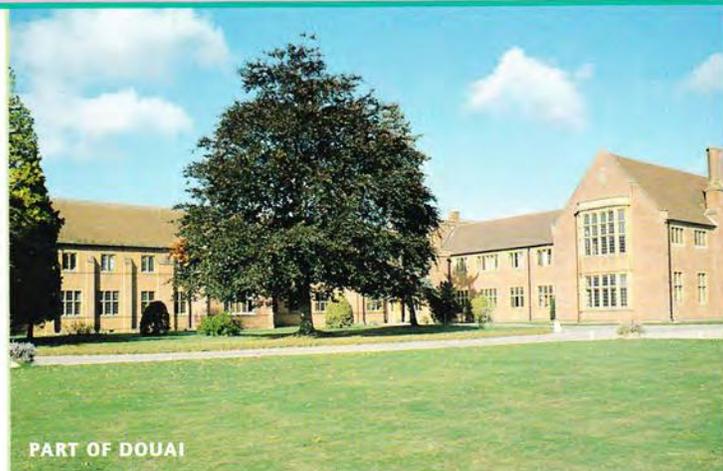
For 1998 we have four Courses at Schools near Newbury – Douai School, The Mary Hare School, Cheam School and Elstree School. Newbury is a small country town in a pleasant part of southern England in the hills of the Berkshire Downs. It is 70km west of London and 45km south of Oxford. The Schools we use are among the best in the area.

DOUAI SCHOOL

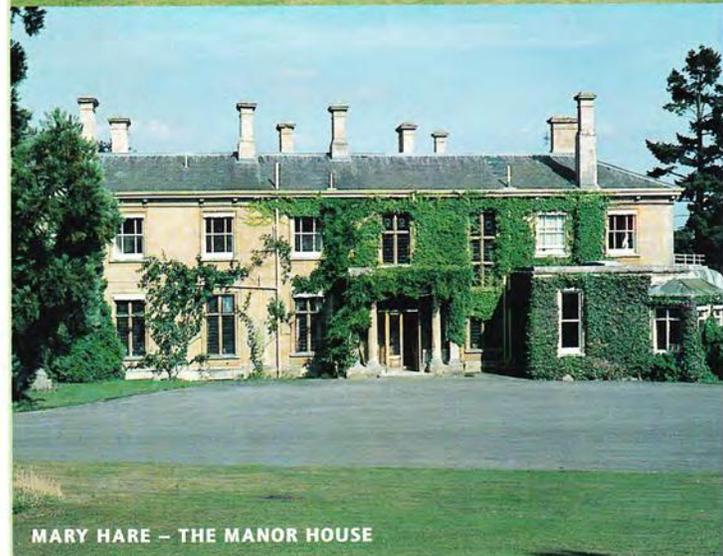
Douai School dates from the mid-nineteenth century with many later additions. It is set next to Douai Abbey in 80 acres of its own grounds and woodlands. It has extensive playing fields which adjoin Elstree School and a range of tennis courts. It has a large indoor swimming pool, a gymnasium and a 'multi-gym'. Some dormitories were rebuilt in 1996. A planned maximum of 90 students will be accepted.

THE MARY HARE SCHOOL

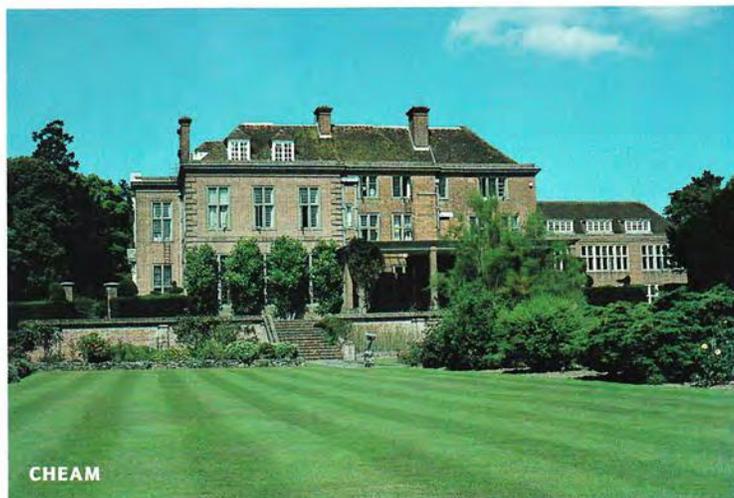
The Mary Hare School is a large mid-nineteenth century manor house with many later additions. There are formal gardens and woodland and extensive grounds which include several playing fields, a range of tennis courts, a gymnasium and a large indoor swimming pool. A planned maximum of 90 students will be accepted.



PART OF DOUAI



MARY HARE – THE MANOR HOUSE



CHEAM



ELSTREE

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 80 students will be accepted.

ELSTREE SCHOOL

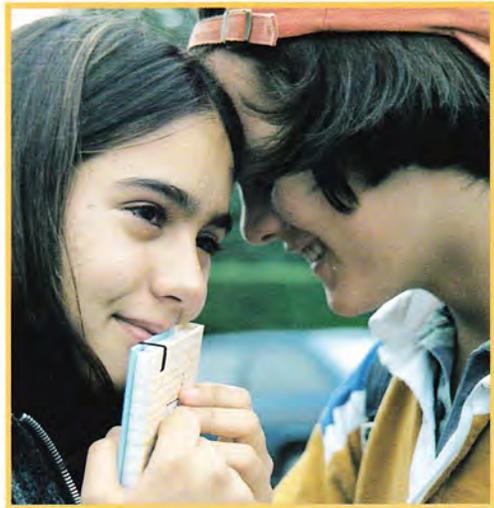
Elstree School is a large eighteenth century country house set in 40 acres of grounds with playing fields, gardens and woods which adjoin Douai Abbey. It has a modern gymnasium and the dining room, kitchens and some dormitories were rebuilt in 1991. There is an open-air swimming pool and a range of tennis courts. A planned maximum of 80 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.

THE PROGRAMME



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. We request that children with food allergies come with a 1ml. Adrenalin (Epinephrine) 1:1000 injection pen – an 'EpiPen'.

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.

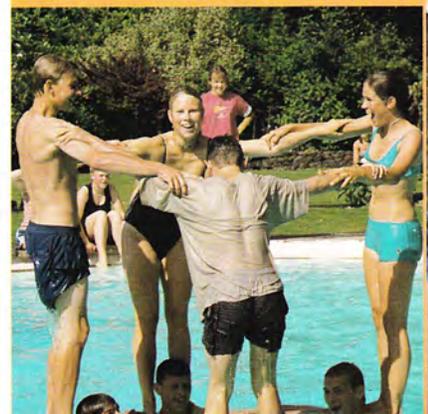
IF THERE IS A PROBLEM

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. Students must read and know the rules before they come.

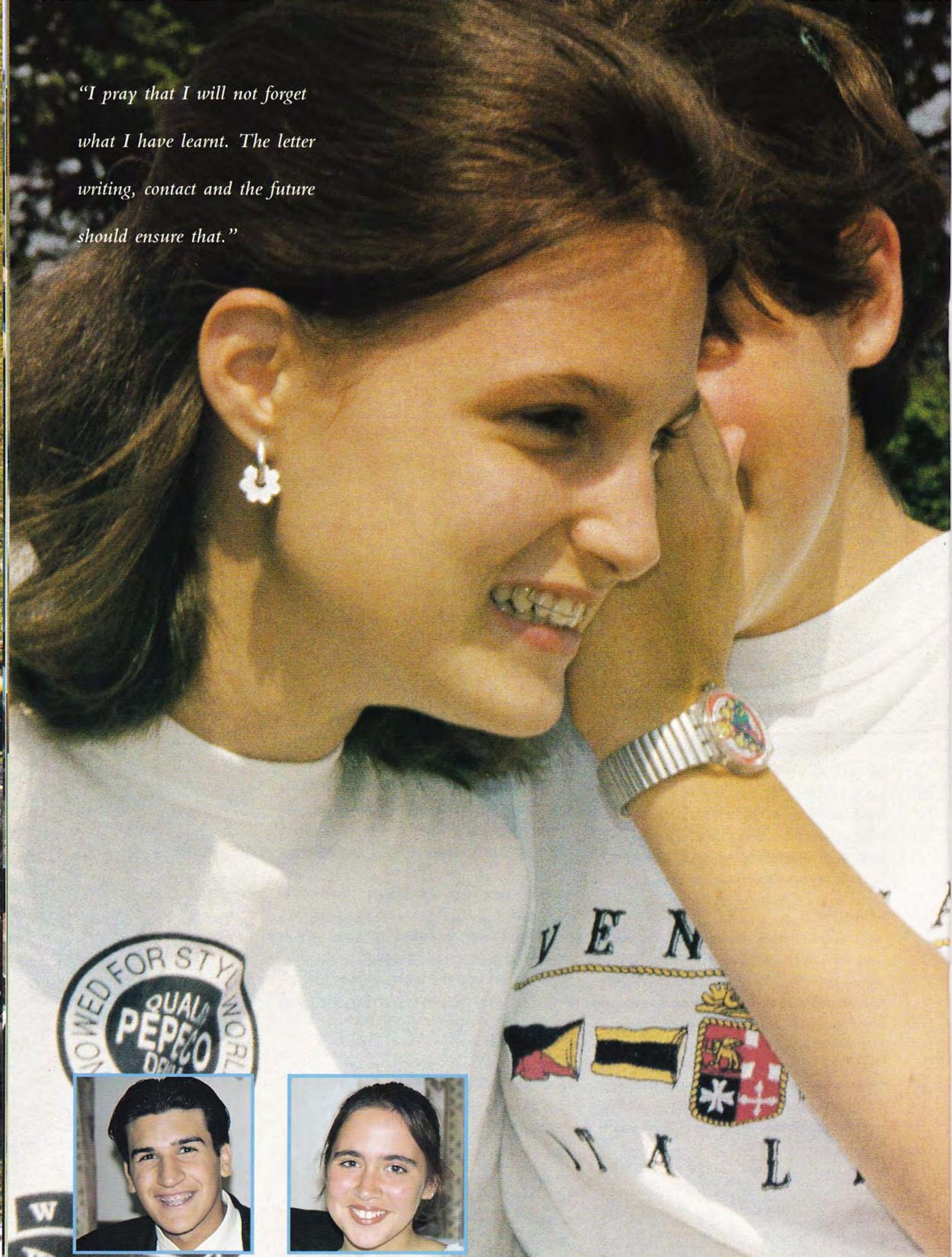
If a student is correctly motivated (see section on 'Students who will benefit'), there should be no discipline problems. If any should arise, we reserve the right to contact parents and, if we consider it necessary, require that the child be taken home at the parents' expense without refund of Fees.



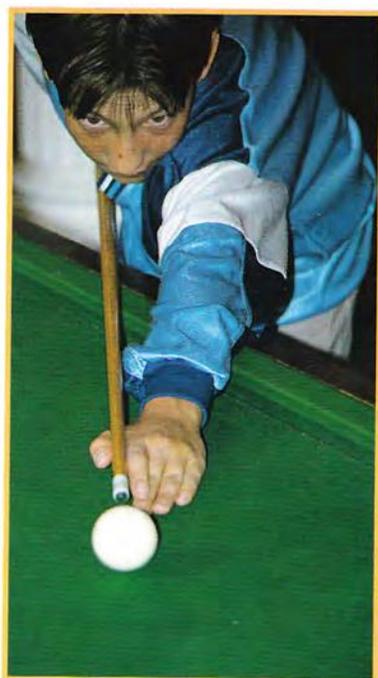
*...you succeeded
in creating this
international
community where
people from all
over the world have
a unique chance to
meet each other,
learn about
different cultures,
traditions, etc.*



*"I pray that I will not forget
what I have learnt. The letter
writing, contact and the future
should ensure that."*



HOW 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

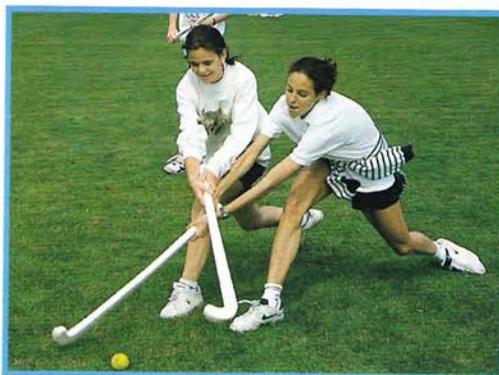
Please see the 'Course Fees 1998' slip.

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 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.



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

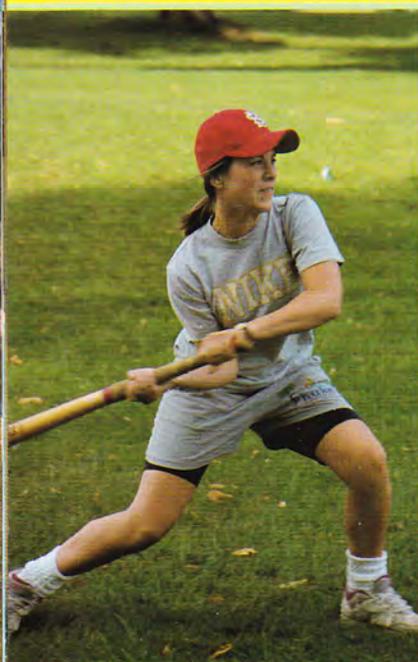
⁵ If not sensitive to bulk washing/drying and at your own risk

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





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 £50 and to Gatwick about £70. 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 'Vacational 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.

VISITS TO THE SCHOOLS

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

TRAVEL



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.

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 500m. 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: (0118) 971 5262

International: +44 118 9 71 5262

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) 244231

International: +44 1635 244231

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: (0118) 971 2725

International: +44 118 9 71 2725

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 on the back cover.

DIRECTIONS BY RAIL

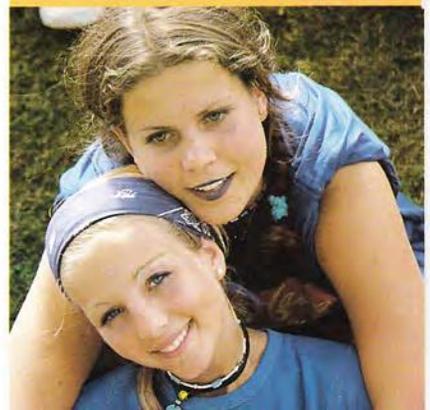
By train from London, leave from Paddington Station. For Mary Hare and Cheam, arrive at Newbury Station. For Douai and Elstree arrive at Reading Station or Midgham Station. There are normally taxis at Newbury Station. If not, there are taxi numbers in the phone box near the Station. There are always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



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. It is essential reading for the parents of 1998 Course participants and is not only a résumé 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 and past students themselves (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 are confident that we can combine the learning of good written and spoken English with an unforgettable and enjoyable holiday.





spectators spectated and the culmination of all the preparations was a huge success. Once again, the high point was the Spectaculars. They have developed since I introduced the idea to some rather unconvinced Sports Organisers a few years ago. Every student performs. Every student has a chance to be centre-stage (or I should say 'centre field'.) Each Spectacular appears in the main body of the School's video. So popular were they with the students, that they carried on being performed at some schools after Sports Day, even on the last day. Most were double-acts. All were superb. Douai and Mary Hare chose a combination of dance and song, the latter directed against the other schools, needless to say. Cheam became an RAF formation team. Elstree did Riverdance. Sports Day itself is preserved on film and appears at the end of each video. So tempting has it been to play safe and take the first fine day before the designated Sports Day that from now on three days towards the end of July will be set aside as possible Sports Days. The first fine day will become Sports Day. No dry day = no Sports Day. This is highly unlikely. Thank you Francis McIvor for this suggestion.

TALENT

I feel that the 'Folies Bergères' and the lead-up to it at each school are as important as Sports Day. The preparatory work of the committee ensures that English is used as a natural and essential communicative medium. Every student is able to play a part, whether as a performer, an organiser or a helper. The richness of talent present among the students can be brought out. And what talents there were! Juggling, tap-dancing, singing, piano playing, conjuring, acting are just a few. In a year when I filmed each 'Folies' and saw so many echoes of Mary Hare '93, yet again the Elstree 'Folies' was definitive. The theme was a café. The audience sat at tables. Some students were waiters, one on roller blades, serving drinks. The spirit of the real 'Folies' was captured. A lovely touch was the entry of two match-girls who were chased out by the waiters. The acts took place both on stage and among the tables. It is captured on video and will be essential viewing for the Sports/Social staff at all the schools who can provide ideas where these may be lacking.

CATERING

Again, this was in the capable hands of Mrs Jean Monger at Mary Hare and arranged at Cheam and Elstree by Mr Graham Troughton of Gardner Merchant. On Elstree's catering staff we had two former students, Remco Bogerman (Netherlands) and Ramon de la Torre (Spain). At Douai there was a change of caterers. Ray Chapman of Harrison Catering was in

charge. A combination of past experience, day-to-day contact with Course Managers and feedback from Food Committees ensured that standards were maintained. Some of the Food Questionnaires were decidedly complimentary this time. The only ones really dissatisfied were those who considered that a choice of 3 hot main dishes + 4 cooked vegetables + 14 different cold dishes + 1 hot dessert + 5 cold desserts = no choice at all. I am afraid we cannot cater for them. In general, those in the east of Europe gave the highest marks. Those from the south gave the lowest. The overall average satisfaction rates (combining 19 different questions) are as follows:- Douai 63%; Mary Hare 62%; Cheam 71%; Elstree 65%. The responses to the questions were so subjective that the differences are hardly relevant. No discernible trends can be detected, except that the satisfaction rates are higher than last year and, considering how difficult it is to please children's tastebuds, commendably high. The caterers have been given the forms and asked to take note of the comments. Once again, we served no beef from any country. Our policy remains that if we consider a parent would decide, for any reason, to consider a food item unsafe, we shall not serve that item. We shall err on the side of caution in this as in every other regard.

EXCELLENCE

Just as we are able with our talented students to produce shows of high quality, so we encourage excellence in the academic sphere. Winners of the Prize for Academic Excellence were: Mercé Marti (Spain) at Douai; Suzanne Bonnevie (Norway) at Mary Hare; Stefan Binder (Germany) at Cheam; Andreas Wiescher (Germany) at Elstree.

ESSAY COMPETITION

The Jörg Weise Association sent a representative, Bas de Sonnaville, to stimulate understanding about its work and suggest membership to our older students. One the themes Bas developed in his talks at the schools was that of internationalism. It is very easy for our students to make international contact with their peer group while they are with us. So easy that they may take it for granted, fail to recognise how special this opportunity is and not take



collaboration. Staff and students played their part. I was struck by the sense of purpose that prevailed. One of my correspondents sums it up neatly: 'As I recall all of the happy and unforgettable times, I can only wish that we had longer than four weeks.'

Quite what it is about the Elstree Course that brings out the talents in our students, I cannot fathom. One high spot followed another. The 'Talent Show', the 'Revue' and the 'Folies Bergères' all showed just what a group of intelligent and resourceful people could achieve. David Johnson spent his fourth summer with us as Course Manager, because – as he said at the final dinner – 'I love it'. I can see why. His excellent sports/social crew was headed by the redoubtable Jessica Hurles once again, most ably assisted by Louise Walker (she of the dulcet tones), Matthew Robinson (invigorated by two years' experience as a student) and Chris Noll (whose loyalty to the ethos of the Course knows no bounds). The much loved Manel Vericat (Catalonia) returned for a second summer as Staff Helper and Anniken Mjaaland (Norway) was a debutante. The superb teaching staff were led by the undiminished Dominic Higgins as Course Tutor, now in his third year, and comprised returnees Peter Blood, David Klappholz, Ian Lain, Alison Payton and Julie Pugh, Liz Milne was the enthusiastic newcomer. Beany Beanlands and her canine companion, Petra, took up their customary posts as Matron and ACM. Many of the students showed leadership skills of the kind generally associated with Staff Helpers. Their wholehearted participation ensured that even the youngest and quietest ones were caught up in the excitement of what was a splendid and unforgettable Course. As they sing (to the tune of 'Milord'), 'I've got an Elstree dream, if you know what I mean; I want to stay right here even if it takes all year. The staff are really great. The students integrate....' They were. They did.

A few people have, like me, the rare chance and cross-cultural experience of going from school to school. Fred Gooch, accompanied by his wife, Lesley, and children, William and Rachel, was back again for his tenth summer as Director of Studies in overall charge of teaching at all four schools. His

topic and task-based programme of work ensures that, as far as possible, the teaching our students receive with us is different from lessons in their own classrooms and capitalises on the international nature of the Courses and the English environment. There will be some re-working of the programme and replacement of Course books for 1998.

Miles Beale was the ubiquitous and effective Support Teacher, taking over lessons in the absence of the regular teacher. As he put it, 'the most interesting, challenging summer job I have had'.

My PA, Jonathan Riggall in his blue Clio, was a familiar sight to-ing and fro-ing. He never knew quite what his day held in store for him as he awaited the vibration of his pager, always at the disposal of Course Managers, existing only to serve.

Mark Thatcher, undiminished after all these years, mixed 'raves from the grave' with the latest heavy metal in the weekly discos. 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. For the 19th year, Liz Fidler was i/c tennis coaching at all the schools.

And there was me, combining several roles – administrator, computer operator, ultimate deterrent, photographer, cameraman, counsellor and writer of cheques – and, given the speed at which everything happens, occasionally all at the same time. I write to every student before the Courses inviting them to let me know if anything is



wrong so I can put it right. Several took me up on this offer with problems ranging from 'I'm not meeting people from other countries' (on day one) to 'When is my tennis lesson?' A strange, but enjoyable life, albeit one that does not get easier with the passing of the years. My mobile phone was on constantly and calls to my office were automatically diverted to this phone, so theoretically I was reachable 24 hours a day. In fact, so poor is mobile phone coverage in the Woolhampton area, that I was unreachable when I was at Douai and Elstree. Vodafone promise improved coverage for 1998.

SPORTS DAY

The scheduled day, Saturday 26 July, was the wettest we have ever had during any summer. Rain fell like stair rods. Fortunately, I had taken heed of the 08.00 weather forecast on Friday 25 July and brought Sports Day forward by 24 hours. To their credit, Bennetts Coaches re-jiggered their schedules to provide transport at an hour's notice and the indefatigable Mrs Monger, as if by magic, created in four hours a buffet lunch of hotel quality for 400 people. The Mary Hare crew leapt into action, accelerating the programme by 24 hours. The schools' T-shirts were delivered direct to Sports Day by courier and, yet again, the chants echoed round the sportsfields. The players played, the





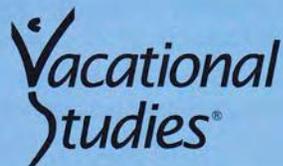
After a year's Sabbatical, Francis McIvor came back to us as Course Manager for our eighth summer at Douai, following several years at Mary Hare and a total of 12 years with VacStuds. The sports/social crew were almost all returnees. In charge of the crew was Steve Bratt, back from last year, with a clear idea of how events should proceed. Old favourites, unique to Douai, like 'Win, Lose or Draw' reappeared. While there is something to be said for keeping to the tried and tested formula, innovations are necessary with so many students returning year on year. 'Ultimate Frisbee', 'Unihock' and a rotating 'Crazy Sports' showed that the crew knew how to create a programme that was varied, fast-moving and kept the students' interest. Assistants were Seth Bolderow (back for his third year) who threw himself into events and succeeded in not demolishing anything, Victor Lopez (after two years as Staff Helper) who worked his customary spell on the children and capable debutante Adrienne Ferguson. (Colonel) Carola Lakeman (Netherlands) and Marcos Linés (Spain) were new Staff Helpers who used their knowledge of the dynamics of the Course to good effect. In charge of the teachers, as Course Tutor, was the experienced and efficient Katie Brown. She learned quickly how it all worked and oversaw a team of teachers who were almost all new, fresh from teaching abroad and keen to make the most of the international environment. Alison Payton was back from Mary Hare '93 with Jonathan Blackburn, Michael Cantlon, Pierre Gerrard, Robert Hart, Sasha Marie and Kirsty Ray. The medical and domestic side was looked after by Matron, Pam Walker, she of the soft voice and gentle touch, fondly known as Pamzilla. Her life-saving skills were not called upon this year,

but it was reassuring to know that she was on hand to spring into action. One of the highlights of the Course was the play, 'Ernie's Incredible Illucinations'. It is clear that we have some very talented young people with us. And not just young ones. 'The staff were brilliant. Talking to other students, I found out that, unlike any other learning establishment on the planet, they thought the staff were very cool.'

The Course at Mary Hare is now in its fifteenth year. This is the School that has inspired the songs that have now been appropriated elsewhere. It is a tribute to their creator that this has happened. The music is original and catchy; the words go straight to the heart, even if the grammar is suspect. 'And remember only friends will be friends'; 'the best time of your life you had it here'; 'you were a child – you wonder how can be this kind of feeling, this paradise.' New songs were created this year by a very positive and contributory group of students. No-nonsense Richard Rawlins had his second year at Mary Hare as Course Manager and, it is rumoured, had a lovely time. The ever-reliable Vincent Purdue was his ACM and Course Tutor. Most of the excellent teaching staff were returnees – Judith Black, Stephen Brown, Alexandra Carn, Duncan Dally and Stephen Suddick. Katharine Short was the only debutante. A united, hard-working and happy sports/social crew was headed by David Wijeratne, back from two years as an Assistant, with Jon Mawer, after two years as the British presence among the students, and Andrea Paoletti, after his apprenticeship as Staff Helper. They welcomed Samantha Fawcner as the newcomer Assistant. Staff Helpers were Amparo Puig from Spain (returning) and Adriaan Commandeur (Netherlands.) Bas de Sonnaville

(Netherlands) had been recruited as the roving ambassador for the Jörg Weise Association and Giotto (see below), but enjoyed a de facto role as an additional Staff Helper. Back again as scourge of absentee cleaners and Matron was Barbara Sykes, whose unflappability was undaunted. The students were enthusiastic and participatory, taking advantage of a well-organised and varied programme, every part of which was either innovative or an improvement on a tried and tested recipe. As a correspondent writes: 'The feeling of the family was extremely strong this summer, reinforced by the fact that we had so many returning students, brilliant newcomers and again the geriatric aspect, definitely the secret of Mary Hare'.

Our 23rd year at Cheam School saw a staffroom almost unchanged from last year. That the staff get on together is all well and good, as long as the students benefit, too. And they did. Co-operation and camaraderie distinguished this Course – the only one of the four in which the Office doubles as the Staff Common Room. In his 'real-life' role, our long-standing Course Manager, Richard Wijeratne, is a Housemaster at a school for young children where kindness and sensitivity are all-important. Several of the staff work during the year with students younger than our own and the result was a Course that was very aware of the needs of young people who show a superficial maturity, but in reality depend on the support of adults. In charge of the teachers was Ruth Pettingale, back for her fourth year. Also back for a fourth time was punctilious ACM, Graham Rumbelow. Returnee teachers Sara Evans, Liz Morris and Stephen Sugden were joined by antipodean Stephen Deering. 'General' James Olsen, again in charge of the Sports and Social programme, was more skilled in organising events than filming them. Most of his splendidly prepared Casino was preserved as a record of the walls and floor in close-up. The reflective Neil Johnson and stalwart Catherine Tucker returned as Assistants and Eline Post (Netherlands) and Mons Dahl (Norway) made their mark as first-time Staff Helpers. Matron was Enid Beckett. The whole Course revolved around meticulous organisation and



Vacational
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NEWS

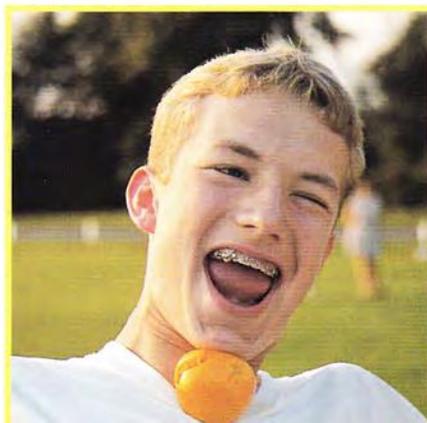
1997 - 1998

Imagine, if you will, the tranquillity of a summer's dawn. The churning noise of a diesel engine breaks this silence briefly and then stops. A few minutes later, faint sobs can be heard, then weeping interspersed with the occasional howl as those who have been thrown together for four weeks and have formed the hoped-for relationships are parted, sometimes for ever. The arrival of the green Bennetts bus is the prelude to this 6 a.m. drama at each of the four schools. Red-eyed, tear-streaked young people whose nerve-endings tingle close to the surface, cling to each other for one last hug, one last emotional experience before the jets that brought them together, speed them apart. So it has been for 25 years and so it may be for a few more years to come.

'Thank you for giving me the best experience of my life. I never dreamed that my time would have or even could have been so good. I congratulate you for the running and organisation of all four schools: you have found the perfect formula for a summer of fun' – (from a British student.) Another writes: 'I would like to thank you

for giving me the best month of my life. And it really was. I felt so different at the end of the Course. I can't thank you enough for giving me the opportunity to have so many invaluable, brilliant experiences.' From a Dutch student: 'I had the time of my life.' From a member of staff: 'Another fantastic month and a wonderful time.' From a parent: 'We noticed your professional standards are high and we want to pay our compliments to you and your staff... He enjoyed every minute of it.' From a student: 'Now I can say that I feel no more only an Italian girl, but something more, exactly like all the other people of this beautiful world. And this has been possible only because of you and your organisation.'

So many letters; such heartfelt sentiments. Modesty prevents my continuing. Suffice it to say that when a parent decides to send a



in that child's future. It is an investment, the dividends from which can never be taken away. The benefit will always be there – linguistic, social, emotional. 'I was touched by the 'magic' of VacStuds,' writes one of the staff. And magic is there. I have never worked out quite where it lies, but it is around and it touches everyone. As with all magic tricks, it does not do to look too closely at how it all happens, but what caused all these emotional reactions in west Berkshire in the summer of 1997? Read on....

We have had dry summers; we have had summers with some rain, but I think we have never before had a summer that combined the torrid heat of the tropics with the downpours of the monsoon season. While the weather of the first few weeks was typical of the summers of the north Atlantic, as July turned into August, the air became still and sultry. Even the warm rain was no escape from the sticky heat more suited to the jungle than the English countryside. Whatever the weather threw at us, the fun went on.

*"For those four weeks,
I had a second home
and a second family
that I treasure just
as much as my
real ones."*



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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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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.

PRICING AND THE £

Our prices remain the same as in 1997. The £ has been a target for the speculators with a rapid and irrational rise against some other currencies. At the time of writing, it is coming down just as quickly. If the effect of the ups and downs of our floating currency is likely to compromise the all-important international mix of our students, we shall respond by combining Courses and advise parents before mid-February.

STAFF HELPERS

Traditionally, we have two former students on each Course as unpaid helpers, providing a link between staff and students. They tend to be 18-21 and to have left a gap of one summer after being a student. SHs are chosen at the end of the year. Potential SHs should contact me in November. If we use the expression 'leadership potential' or similar, in the report, this is the clue that an application may be fruitful. Occasionally SHs may graduate to Assistant status, but this is not generally the case as we look for native English-speaking staff.

AFTER THE COURSE

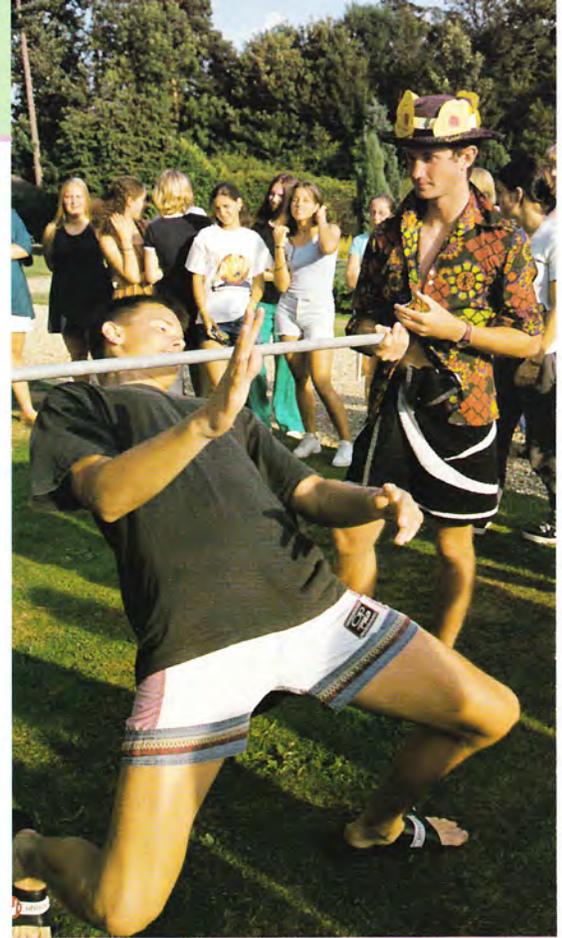
Please feel you can contact me about anything connected with Britain. For example, parents ask for my advice on continuing their children's education in Britain. I am happy to help. No charge! I see this as a natural extension of my work with young people. Students ask for information, sometimes ten or twenty years later. No problem! In the four weeks between the end of the Courses and writing these lines one of this year's students is already at boarding school in England as a direct result of coming on the Course and two others will be starting in September 1998. It has been said before and it is not an overstatement – coming on a VacStuds Course can change your life. Andrea Paoletti's letter to me (published with his permission on our Website) is an example

of this. 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 (JWA) was born. It is a now a charitable Foundation, registered in Germany, for the advancement of international understanding. It meets annually and has a well-organised social programme. For those who would like to know more, the Chairman is Ed Bergsma (Krabbendijk 14, 7591 AX Denekamp, Netherlands. Tel: +31 541 355780; Fax: +31 541 351929.) The next JWA Meeting will be in Leipzig at Easter 1998.

The Jörg Weise Trophy is no longer awarded annually as it tended to promote too competitive a spirit, but has been awarded occasionally for 'an outstanding contribution to the international ideals of the Course'.



THE JÖRG WEISE SCHOLARSHIP

We continue 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 1998 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 JWA.





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. 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.

THEATRE VISITS

These proved as popular as ever. The choice system adopted in 1996 was used again. Students are asked to choose which shows they wish to see in the order of preference on a form which shows the Invoice number. I try to give each student the chance to go once, if possible to the first choice, if not to the second choice and so on. For those who wish to go to a second show, I look at the forms again in Invoice number order. Those who book early and have low Invoice numbers stand most chance of a second or even third visit. There are always more students wishing to go to the theatre than there are tickets available. A few parents told me they had 'booked three theatre visits'. Not so. They had requested that their children go to three shows. Whether or not that wish is possible depends on the Invoice number. 1998 Invoice numbers start at 10114. For 1998, I am replacing some of the old favourites with new choices. A 'Theatre Visits' choice list will be sent out in March.

PROPERTY

Once again, we asked that items over £40 in value be listed on the 'Valuable Possessions' form. At the end of the Courses, we sent back every item of property left behind that was named. A number of parents and students have contacted me with descriptions of named items that have not been located. If parents discover in their child's luggage something that is not theirs, will they let me know, please? It seems logical to me that, if a child has something that is not theirs, it must be someone else's

and that this someone may want it back. I know they do! Such items include a black 'Cinquième Element' raincoat, a brown 'Marlborough Classics' belt and a pair of blue/grey 'Simple' shoes size 9.

VACSTUDS VIDEO

This has been edited and sent to those requesting it. This year each school has its own E-180 'VacStuds '97 All Over Again'. For those students wishing to relive the summer and for those parents trying to find what made it 'the best summer of my life', here is instant nostalgia, tangible atmosphere, the magic weaving its spell. Parents of 1998 students who would like a preview can request a copy. It is absolutely not a promotional video. It is a collection of the events I saw as I went from school to school over the summer. If something does not appear, it is because the SSO either did not tell me when it was on, or arranged it so it clashed with another school's event.

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. Just before the Course, I send each parent 'last minute' information with my GSM phone number. This mobile phone never leaves me, so I can almost always be reached – sometimes in surprising places. If there is a problem, I can take immediate action – as long as I know about it. During the period before



sufficient advantage of it. The JWA decided to hold an Essay Writing Competition at each School. The topic for the essays was chosen to stimulate thought about the concept that lies behind the Courses – international friendship through international understanding. The resulting essays were deeply moving, so much so that I decided after reading the first few from the first of the competitions that I was quite unable to judge them with any objectivity, let alone see through the mist that filled my eyes. Marking was by a team from another school who produced a short list which was then considered by staff from the candidates' own school. Winners of the JWA/Vacational Essay Writing Competitions were: Antonio Serrano (Spain) at Douai; Andres Arnaldos (Spain) at Mary Hare; Thea Misvør (Norway) at Cheam; Manuela Magliulo (Italy) at Elstree.

RAFFLE

Tickets awarded on English Only Days were drawn at the Final Dinner. The lucky winners of a VacStuds watch, redesigned for 1997 with our splendid new logo, were: Brigita Zifermann (Lithuania) at Douai; Julia Estelles (Spain) at Mary Hare; Sonia Hals (Norway) at Cheam; Nicolai Stavnes (Norway) at Elstree.

IOL EXAMINATION

For some years I have been concerned that the ARELS/UCLES 'examination' we offered was really just an assessment test and that its results were meaningless to most parents and students. Too late for inclusion in the 1997 brochure, I came to an arrangement with the Institute of Linguists that they prepare an examination to be known as the 'Certificate in Spoken English for Short Courses' which would be a real qualification for all those who took it and were successful at it. The examination would be unique to us. No other organisation would offer it. The precise format was decided in January and offered towards the end of each Course. The examiners were sensitive to the pressures on young people in an examination situation and made the proceedings as informal as they could. No matter how unsure they had been beforehand, not one student regretted taking the examination. Several who had

previously expressed doubts as to their ability passed with Distinction. The examination will be further refined and offered again in 1998.

EUROTUNNEL

This was offered as an optional visit. The general feeling was that it was rather a long way to travel and that, although the actual journey under the English Channel was an experience in itself, the insight into the Tunnel's construction and administration was too theoretical. The bureaucracy surrounding entry into France was complicated and, had it not been for the skills of some of the staff able to negotiate in French, several whose parents had not followed my instructions regarding travel documents would have been denied entry. I was given a preview of the trip last April in my car, seeing the control centre, the radio station and some of the security areas which I had been assured would be on the itinerary in our bus. None was. I have fed these reactions to Eurotunnel's Education Department. In the absence of a reply, the Eurotunnel trip will not be repeated. If our concerns are addressed, it may be reinstated as an option and a memo sent out.

TRIPS

The sightseeing tour of London was generally successful, although the drivers at Douai decided to dispense with it. The bus company compensated us by arranging a tour of London's sights by night at no cost. Surprisingly none of the groups chose to visit the National Motor Museum. For 1998, we shall repeat the London trip. The second trip will be to Cardiff (an excursion out of England to Wales) across one of the world's longest suspension bridges over the

River Severn with an optional detour to the Welsh Folk Museum. 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 (or their parents') expectation of what they will like. There is no point in expecting every student to be interested in the same things. We shall arrange for students to be informed about what is possible at each of the venues and they can decide what they would like to do. On the Cardiff trip, for example, some may wish to use it for shopping; others may wish just to visit the Folk Museum; some may wish to combine the two. 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. The trip to Chessington World of Adventure, for example, has become an Elstree tradition. Most schools now arrange a bowling trip and a visit to a new release at the cinema. If a large enough group wishes to go somewhere, we shall make the arrangements and send accompanying staff.

Whether or not we allow children on excursions to be unaccompanied is subject to our discretion as well as the parents'. A student (and sometimes a parent) may have a view on supervision which is more relaxed than ours. Our view must, of course, prevail as we have to take the responsibility.





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 huge. 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 1998 Giotto Book (to be published in January 1998) will be its 12th

Edition and will contain over 2000 names, suggests to me it is succeeding. The Book is provided at no charge. It is totally financed by Vacational 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. There is an 'International Work Experience' page in the 1998 Giotto Book. I know that various contacts have been made via Giotto. Giotto is constantly updated on our Website. The concept lends itself to this medium. Names and e-mail addresses appear there. As with the Giotto Book, for reasons of security, full addresses are not provided.

GIOTTO TOURS

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. It fell into desuetude, but has been revived by Chris Noll (Heidestraße 23, D-60316 Frankfurt/Main, Germany. Tel: +49 69495408; Fax: +49 69 447024.) A meeting is planned at Easter 1998 in Berlin. This has been chosen deliberately for its proximity to the JWA meeting. I should like there to be permanent links between the two concepts. For the latest news about this and other information about Giotto (and VacStuds), visit us in cyberspace (<http://www.vacational-studies.co.uk>.)

WEB SITE

Please visit! It has been designed by Ole Johannessen (Mary Hare '95/6) in Norway and can be found at <http://www.vacational-studies.co.uk>. The old CompuServe number has been cancelled. E-mail sent to it will not reach me.

MY THANKS...

to all those who entrust us with their children. I firmly believe it is the best investment you can make for them and I shall continue to do my utmost to make it so. As a parent said to me once: 'It can all be taken away – house, job, possessions. The one thing that never be taken away is the investment I make in my children's education.'

Ian G. Mucklejohn – Autumn 1997



A FOOTNOTE

I am writing this letter to express my condolences for Diana's death. The bad news arrived at every single part of the world.... I'm really sorry. Remember your pain is ours in this moment.'

Pedro Grangeia, Angola

5 September 1997

It is kind of you to write to me about the death of our beloved Princess Diana. Even now, no one can believe she has gone and that what was so beautiful and vibrant is no more. As a nation we are suffering the grief that one suffers at a family bereavement, so well did we feel we knew her.

It is such a pity that she will never know that she was, indeed, the Queen of people's hearts that she had wanted to be. Her children will miss her warmth and humanity. The institution of our monarchy will be the poorer without her human touch.

Your letter brought the tears back. Thank you so much for your condolences.

Ian G. Mucklejohn

11 September 1997