

HOST *Matters*

Welcoming International Students

Issue No.21 Autumn 2011

Welcome to the Autumn issue of the HOST newsletter. It is rather later than usual, due to the efforts we have been putting into publicising HOST in the hope of gaining a good number of new host recruits. This has already started paying off. So if you are reading HOST Matters for the first time – WELCOME TO HOST!

We hope all our hosts will enjoy their international guests in the next few months. We are confident that many students – currently applying at the rate of 150 per week – are going to count their HOST visit as one of the best experiences they had during their study period in Britain.

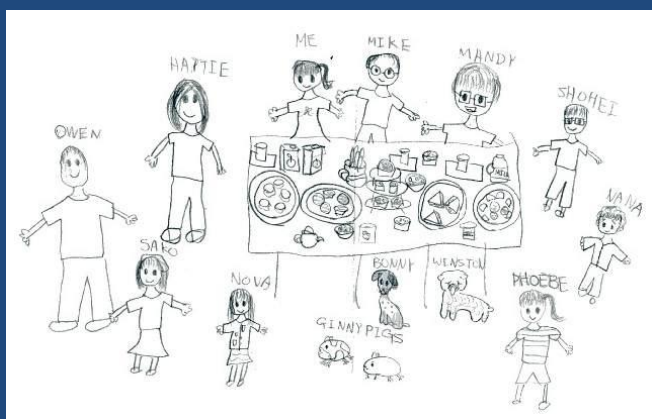
We look forward to hearing your stories and seeing your pictures.



Jinnie with Teddy, the youngest of the Millward family

Mandy and Mike Talbott, HOST's Regional Organisers in Lincolnshire, write:

This picture was drawn by Kaz, aged 10, when her family stayed with us while on holiday from Japan.



They first visited us in 2003, when Shohei was doing his PhD in Civil Engineering and Sako her Masters at Leeds. They came to us five times and we often met them in Leeds too. When we were in Japan for another student's wedding, we were thrilled to be able to see this family again.

Sako used to say, 'Why do people laugh at my children's names?' We explained who Casanova was and how like his name 'Kaz and Nova' sounds. She really saw the funny side of it. We know that we will be friends with this special little family for life.

Dear HOST

I am writing to tell you how fantastic it is to be part of HOST. I am one of eight children and it's a little bit of a squeeze at times, so we wondered if we would have room, and were a little worried about whether our guests would be able to cope with lots of mucky children causing trouble.

Our first guest was Na Yang from China, and she became one of our sisters. She came back many times, for a few days to a few weeks, so it was very sad to say goodbye to her when she finally went home, but we keep in contact with her.

From there, we have had Stephanie from Indonesia, Liisa from Finland, Francesca from Italy, and Jinnie from Korea. Every visit has been very special, they are all brilliant company. We enjoy our food so we try to do lots of baking with our visitors.

Francesca came back to see us last weekend, Jinnie came again this weekend, and next weekend we are expecting Stephanie. Thank you for giving us this chance to make new friends.

Yours sincerely, **Alice Millward, Derbyshire**



HOST stays afloat

Congratulations and thank you to everyone who rose to the challenge and collectively raised just over £3000 for HOST this summer.

We are delighted to tell you that with your help, plus a few grants from award-making trusts, and with the amount we have earned from administration fees by placing lots of students (thank you again), HOST has kept its head above water in the last financial year – despite the withdrawal of our major funders and the economic climate.

So we enter our 25th anniversary year with our heads up and still breathing!

Another little earner

<http://www.hostuk.org/fundraising-links.html> You can choose from a wide range of greetings cards, and recycle old phones and cartridges at this page. Every transaction results in a small donation to HOST. We would also urge you to switch your online shopping browser from Google Homepage to one which actually remits the money it owes us. <http://www.easfundraising.org.uk>

Anniversary Cookbook

Another Thank You is due to all who responded to our request for recipes, photos and anecdotes, for the cookbook we are planning to launch next year as HOST's answer to Delia, Nigella, Jamie, Heston Blumenthal and all the rest.

We have recipes for some of the things students cook up for you, vegetarian dishes to help you with those tricky diets, and some regional specialities for the students too.

Next, the recipes will be tried out by our Tester, so this one on the right has not been tested, but we can't resist giving you a little foretaste.

A student from Saudi Arabia brought us lightly roasted coffee with cardamom, which was boiled for ages and served in tiny cups only half full. To fill the cups would be an insult – implying that you did not want your guest to stay for a refill.
Liz Hudson, Essex

Something different to do with a bottle of Coke

This is more widely known now, but back in 2007 we had two students staying over the new year, one from Japan and the other from Taiwan. They wanted to cook us a 'traditional' Chinese meal. They placed a large chicken in a very large pot on the stove, and cooked it in Coca Cola. It was the most delicious chicken we have ever eaten. One day I am going to try this myself!

Caroline Holmes, Highland, Scotland



Fare exchange

My hosts are such a lovely couple, very approachable. Through them, I learnt the value of caring, loving and supporting each other in a marriage. On Friday evening, we made Chinese spring rolls together, and they turned out really tasty. I was so glad when they told me they would want to make the spring rolls again. Then I mentioned that I have not tried fish and chips since I came to Manchester, and they took me to a nice fish and chips restaurant in Bolton on Saturday for lunch.
Jade, Taiwan, was staying with Jean and Derek Turner, in Lancashire

Anne-Marie Ringler in Scotland, with Gulandom from Tajikistan, enjoying a cooking session together

For one day only

Not all students want to spend a whole weekend on a HOST visit. Some may feel shy of staying overnight with strangers; many others worry about the time away from their studies. Equally, we are sure there are friendly people in this country who would love to welcome international students, but don't have spare overnight accommodation, or perhaps the time to devote a whole weekend to entertaining.

Some universities try to run local hospitality schemes, but often these involve a few hosts inviting groups of students to a meal at the start of the year, and that's the end of it.

Spotting a gap in the market, HOST is developing DAY VISITS as an addition to what we already offer. We envisage that guests will arrive in the morning (normally on a Saturday or Sunday), having travelled for no more than an hour to reach their hosts, and stay until the early evening.

The student application fee for a day visit will be lower than for a normal visit (even though our costs in recruiting hosts and arranging visits will be exactly the same).

We hope to see the following benefits:

- More students able to profit from meeting UK residents
- More new hosts enjoying the pleasure of meeting them – perhaps some who start off as day hosts will gain confidence and become weekend hosts too
- Our existing hosts might consider offering the occasional day visit in between their weekend and Christmas invitations (but please, not instead! there are still plenty of requests for overnight stays)
- Some students may find a 'home from home' relatively close to where they are – not all students and hosts want this, but we know some do

You could help!

If you have friends and relations living within one hour of a university, please could you tell them all over again about HOST, because those who have been saying 'great idea, but not for me' might change their minds if it can be just for a day.

As soon as we have the potential to offer day visits in any area, we will publicise the suggestion to the students there. So we would really appreciate your help in getting this venture off the ground.

Are they coming?

'My student is supposed to be arriving tomorrow, but I haven't heard anything from him.' These words are calculated to cause a Regional Organiser's heart to descend rapidly to a Regional Organiser's boots.

When you receive your guest's details, your student has received your details too. It doesn't matter which of you contacts the other first – although it will encourage the student to have a few words from you – but you should hear from your student within a week. If you do not, please either write again, or ask your RO to do so.

Students ARE very very busy, and so after the first contact, there may be a long silence (although no reason why you shouldn't keep in touch), but if you have not received definite travel plans a week before the visit, please remind them that you need to know their arrival time, and if they do not respond within 24 hours, let your RO know while there is still time for action. Then your RO's heart will stay where it should be!



If it doesn't move, snap it!

For peace of mind

Without wishing to be alarmist, we would advise hosts not to allow students unsupervised use of your laptops and PC's. Ultimately, you are responsible for any material downloaded on to your machine.



My first two host students, Wenyi and Qingyi, have become my borrowed Chinese daughters for life. I adore them both. For me, HOST has been life changing in the most positive way.

Dawn Pallant, Somerset

Dear HOST

I hope my blog helps the organization develop and thrive.

The trip to Devon was like a pearl on the way to pursue my study in the U.K. My hosts, Ray and Jenny Burd, live in the countryside. The first sight of the couple gave an impression that they might be a little bit quiet. My daughter could be a noise maker as she likes talking and singing all her way around. But when she saw all the toys and books that she could play with and the tiny bed next to our beds she was thrilled. "Mum, it seems we're staying at a 5-star hotel, no, much more comfortable than a hotel."

My husband and I appreciated all the meals. It's a great chance to understand English food culture. We have never tasted as much jam, sauces and different cheeses. The rhubarb pudding we had was an exclusive treat.

The next day's trips left the impression I had returned to 16th or 17th centuries. High hedges on both sides of the narrow road seemed to evoke horse drawn carriages in which a gentleman or a fair lady might have elegantly sat. Were the ladies on horseback Elinor and Marianne, described under the pen of Jane Austen?

Chatting after every meal we picked up knowledge about countryside life, and built up a bridge for Jenny and Ray to get to know bits of China. Topics varied from food to housing; to hobbies; to their jobs and to our jobs. Thanks Ray and Jenny for making this weekend a fond memory of life in England.

Carrie Zhang, from China, studying in Reading

Festive visits

Nobody likes to think of people being alone at Christmas, and a university campus is not a good place to be on 25 December, with everything shut, and no transport to take you into town, where nothing is open!

We understand that your own plans may still be unconfirmed, but however close it gets to Christmas, please do contact your Regional Organiser (or the HOST office if you do not have your RO's contact details to hand) and let us know if you find yourself able to take one or two students. Sadly, we nearly always have to disappoint some who would love to spend Christmas in a welcoming home.

Thank you.

From climbing frame to walking frame - anyone can be a host!

That's why we are trying to make HOST as widely known as we can. This year we have sent items for publication to hundreds of school notice sheets; to parish and community magazines; to the newsletters of local groups of the University of the Third Age. We have paid to advertise in a few magazines, even in *The Oldie*! If you have spotted us anywhere, good! If you can think of an unexploited spot for us, please let us know. Our publicity officer, Margaret Stevens, would love to hear from you: mstevens@btinternet.com



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