

HOST Matters



Welcoming International Students

Issue No 34



The kindness of strangers

'I had an incredible HOST visit in Northern Ireland,' writes Jennifer, a Canadian researching for her PhD in London.

'I hadn't asked to go there, but was thrilled when I was offered the chance, and the more so when I discovered my host lived in the very area my ancestors emigrated from 185 years ago.'

'Then, it got even better, as my kind host took me out to explore the area.'

Barbara, Jennifer's host, takes up the tale. 'We hit upon two very helpful people in different villages. One lady took us into her home and plied us with tea and biscuits while finding new information on her laptop about Jennifer's ancestors. Then, a man abandoned his afternoon gardening to drive us for 2 hours round various churches and graveyards. He was such a fount of information. A real Irish welcome.'

Would you encourage your offspring to do this? That's what Oxfordshire hosts Neil and Margaret Hancox have done—and all for the sake of HOST. See inside for the full story.



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THANK YOU SO MUCH to the hosts who between them have hosted 986 students in the last 6 months. What a lot of happy moments are going to be remembered all over the world!

HOST Matters—page two

In common with most small charities, HOST has always struggled financially. There have been better times, and worse times, but good housekeeping and retrenchment have seen us through. At the end of 2017, it became apparent that this is one of the worst times.

We have pared back staffing costs, and will be raising university subscriptions and application fees. We continue to apply for grants—not easy, as we don't tick the boxes of many funders—and we must fundraise too. We plan to survive!

How is HOST funded?

- **University subscriptions**—75 institutions (known as SIs) subscribe to HOST
- **Application fees**—an administration fee is charged for each application—students at SIs may have this fee paid for them by the university—the application fee for students at SIs is subsidised from HOST funds
- **Sponsorship**—some organisations cover the fees of certain kinds of students—these organisations include: Chevening and Commonwealth Secretariats, paying for their Scholars; Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, for Japanese students; Souter Charitable Trust, for students from areas in conflict
- **Grants**—occasionally HOST is awarded a grant by a Trust Fund
- **Donations**

money matters

What does HOST need money for?

- **salaries** plus the other costs related to employing people
Currently we have 4 part-timers and just one full-time member of staff (the CEO). This is probably the smallest staff HOST has ever had.
- the (very reasonable) **rent** for the office in Hatfield
- **hosting expenses** for those hosts who request a contribution after a visit
- **Regional Organisers' expenses**—very low indeed, except in a year when there is a conference—HOST has not been able to afford a conference for the last 3 years and there will be none this year
- a one-off but major expense in 2017 was the cost of building a **new database** which had become essential. The database is the engine of HOST—through it, students apply, universities authorise applications, which are then allocated to the regions, and ROs set up the visits; on it, finances are calculated and all records stored.
We received a £10,000 grant towards the cost, but after that, no more, with the result that it had to be paid for from our reserves and HOST is now in the situation of having no savings to fall back on.



application fees
(inclusive of vat)
for students at
subscribing
universities until 30
September 2018

weekend visit	£60
one day visit	£36

fees will have to rise
in October

what it costs

approximate
weekly cost of
running HOST

£3, 270



HOST Matters—page three

This is Duncan Hancox, who will be running 156 miles across the Sahara Desert in early April. Duncan says:

'I am running for HOSTUK because I'm raising funds to support its important work. My family has been involved in the charity for more than 20 years, and I have witnessed first hand the life-changing impact HOST UK's work can have. For students a long way from home, missing families and friends and struggling to make sense of a new culture, this can be a tough and lonely time. HOST UK's work can transform these people's experiences and their impressions of the UK by connecting them with real British families who can offer a welcome, kindness, and an opportunity to be part of regular family life for a short while. The results are astonishing, initiating enduring friendships that span continents.

Please donate to help them continue this great work.'



The *Marathon des Sables* is a 6 day running event across the Sahara. Competitors carry all of their own equipment and food (other than water), running a marathon a day in extreme temperatures.



To thank Duncan and to help him exceed his target of £5000 for HOST, please click [here](#).

Q: Running across a desert isn't quite my thing. Are there easier ways I could help?

A: Thank you very much for asking. Fortunately, yes!

- **host one more student**

If every host on our books would offer one more invitation this year—or one more than they would normally do—this would make a great difference. More visits—more students we don't have to disappoint and more fees we don't have to return—more chance that HOST will survive—so that more students and hosts can continue to meet.

- **introduce one new host**

Imagine, if we could double the number of hosts by the end of the year, what an enormous difference that would make

- **make HOST known**

We do our best, but need all the help we can get to make HOST known. Do the various local, national, work or social 'communities' you belong to have a newsletter or website or facebook group? Could you write a little piece yourself? Or ask us to provide something. Or make a suggestion. Just click [Editor](#) on the right. Thank you!

Please send your pictures, stories or questions for HOST Matters to the [Editor](#).

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HOST Matters—page four



Mariama & Mimi from Sierra Leone definitely felt they had hit the jackpot with their HOST visit to Devon. 'I loved the way everyone knows everybody; all the people we met were so friendly and kind. Thanks to Frances and Charles for such a memorable weekend!'



'A lovely afternoon at Loch Lomond with our student, Hidayah from Malaysia.' **Elizabeth Lambert, South Scotland region**

Please keep
sending your
smiley pictures to
HOST!

'Amber certainly gained a bit of an insight into British traditions, with a panto, village get together and fireworks on New Year's Eve, then bucket-rattling at our village wheelbarrow race, helping to fundraise for the local hospice on New Year's Day.'

Karen Overbury, NE region



Haleemah, Chevening
Scholar, Jordan

Olayinka, Nigeria



'Even though our mother tongue language is different, smiling is the universal language easily understood by all.' Anupon, Chevening Scholar from Thailand