

HOST *Matters*

Welcoming International Students

Issue No.19 Spring 2010



Transatlantic Experiences

These days, HOST receives many applications from students from the USA. The majority are undergraduates, and many are here for just a few months at one of several American universities in London. Here is a compilation of some appreciative comments from American students and their hosts.



Having only seen London in its foggy, rainy glory, I was surprised when the sun broke from the dark clouds, shining on the ocean the

fields, the hills and the valleys. The stars at night were amazing.

There were many small things I hadn't expected - like egg cups, and how to feed hens, and hot water bottles. The biggest and best thing was the hosts' attitude about America. I was surprised that they thought American foreign policy generally has good intentions behind it.

This is the BEST thing that I did (so far!) in England. I was at ease the whole time

HOST is buoyant!

We have had a very successful autumn and winter season, with a good number of new hosts joining. For the first year for a long time, the number of new hosts greatly exceeded the number retiring. Even so, we had so many students applying - up to 185 a week in February - that we had to call a halt to further applications for a few weeks.

Hosts (Sept 2009 & March 2010)	1464	1605
New hosts 12 mths to Sept 09	148	
New hosts 7 months to Mar 10		228
Visits 12 months to Sept 09	1964	
Visits 7 months to Mar 10		1279

because my host made it easy for me. And the food. The amazing food. The whole visit was BEYOND AMAZING. Back in college I raved about it. Even my British flat mate wants to sign up for this!!



Differences in culture and language can be very amusing. We learnt some American terminology and more

about the traditions and meaning of Thanksgiving. Our student was a very gentlemanly young man and the perfect guest. He showed up my children's faults in manners for sure!

The American girl was fascinated by my coal fire and other primitive living arrangements. The young are so brave launching themselves alone into an unknown home in an unknown country. If we meet the young in our homes it must surely help world peace for the next generation.

An Iraqi family sees the sea

It was such a privilege to host an Iraqi couple and their three delightful children. They had been in Plymouth for two years but never been out of the city. We took them to Looe beach and it was the first beach they had EVER seen. We had a unique insight into Iraq and they asked many questions about our culture. It was so worthwhile and we learnt so much. I wish the university had done more to help them settle in two years ago. Well done HOST!

Ian and Jane Richards, Cornwall



*Jane Richards and a Japanese guest
limbering up on the cliffs*

The things they say

To me, it was little things like mannerisms, phrases and even everyday kitchen objects that made this visit memorable. [USA]

My hosts introduced me to *Fawlty Towers*, which I thoroughly enjoyed. [USA]

Most of all, having meals together and having conversations with host family were really good because I, as a lonely international student in Britain, could feel 'family'. [Korea]

I am very grateful to have been accepted and to have met my host and fellow guest. [Chile]

Apologising profusely that she had to cancel her visit, a student wrote: 'Thank you. Sorry for all incontinence caused.'

You asked HOST....

As you are short of invitations, why not restrict the number of visits a student may have? Some seem to have several.

This looks like a very sensible idea, but... We now depend very much on application fees for our income. Many universities pay the fee for a student's first application, and then the students pay for any subsequent applications. No university has unlimited funds to support HOST visits: they will cap the number of applications each year. If we put a stop on second applications, this would not necessarily increase the number of students able to apply for the first time. Student-funded application fees for second visits are a small but important source of income for HOST: if we give lower priority to second visits, this will soon deter students from applying again. This in turn could jeopardise the future of HOST for all.

Why don't you tell the students....?

Sometimes this question follows a slightly disappointing weekend. If you want to know what we do tell students, you are welcome to take a look at all the student pages on our website. The problem is that we cannot force students to read, let alone remember, everything we tell them. Most of us sometimes blithely tick boxes saying we 'accept all the terms and conditions', without reading them. The advice you give your guests in your pre-visit messages is much more likely to be heeded. But please bear in mind that every student is different, and advice doesn't usually result in a personality change!

Sometimes I notice that students of opposite sex who are not living together at the university offer to share a room on a HOST visit. Am I just giving them an opportunity for a romantic weekend?

Not necessarily. Long gone are the days when Halls of Residence were single sex with no visiting! Many students offer to share rooms just because they feel they will have a better chance of an invitation.

Lasting benefits

In 1999, Mrs. Vasanthi Saduri was one of our first HOST guests. She invited me back to visit her home and family in Bangalore, S. India. Whilst I was there, her husband, Rev. J. Saduri, a priest in the church of South India, asked me to become a patron of a home they were starting for street children. This began an interesting, long term relationship to visit and support this project.



Jenny and her friends are welcomed back to the Sneha home

The interfaith home called SNEHA (meaning 'friend') can house up to 40 children who come from the poorest slums around Bangalore. Some are completely destitute; others have families who are too poor to feed them. The children are housed, clothed and fed. They attend local schools, are then encouraged to go to college and are helped to find jobs when they leave. We have two students at college now who will hopefully show the way for the others to follow.

They are in a loving environment looked after by a very caring staff. I have visited them four times since that first HOST visit to us - a very rewarding relationship which is now being shared by other members of my church in Haddenham.

I hope this will give you a little idea of how HOST does more than just introduce you to some wonderful new friends.

Jenny Bullimore, Bucks

Expenses

May we please remind those hosts who wish to claim towards their expenses after a HOST visit that these are payable for 2 nights only at weekends; 3 nights at Christmas. Thank you.

Host hide and seek

Our search for new hosts never stops. Last autumn we found quite a lot from the readership of parish magazines; we also had a grant enabling us to do an unusual amount of paid advertising, which paid off.

Currently we are engaged in a big project, asking state schools to publish a short item for us in the newsletters children take home every week. This has already brought in a good number of mostly younger families, and we have many more counties to do.

We would like to get into the national newsletters of many businesses and organisations - and this is where you could really help us. If you work for, or retired from, any employer which has a staff newsletter (whether printed or intranet) would you act as the go-between for us? We could send you the item - you could personalise it a little if you wish - and then you would send it on for us. Or, just give us the contact info, and we will do the rest.

Please email Margaret, our publicity officer, mstevens@btinternet.com, if you would like to help promote HOST in this way..

..or any other way! Thank you.



We have ways of making them laugh

Is our information correct?

If you have received this copy of HOST Matters by post, this is because either we do not have an email address for you, or you have asked us not to use it.

If, in fact, you do now have an email address, could we please ask you to give it to us. This information is stored on HOST's secure database, and outside the HOST office is given only to your RO and to any students you have chosen to invite to your home. HOST does not sell email addresses to anybody.

Similarly, it would be very helpful to know if there have been any changes in your household which might affect a HOST visit – in particular, with regard to pets.

You can update our information by emailing hosts@hostuk.org, giving your name and county, or by contacting your regional organiser.

Thank you for your help.



Happy summer HOSTing
to all our hosts!

<http://google.hostuk.org>

You can set this as your homepage, or put a shortcut on your desktop, and it will cost you nothing to add to HOST's income every time you Google.

Hosts host Hosts

When we visit new hosts we often come away thinking: 'I wouldn't mind an invitation there myself!' There are some hosts who do have holiday accommodation, and we are pleased to pass this information on to you.

Lower Pitcalnie Guesthouse, on the shores of the Cromarty Firth beside an RSPB reserve.
www.niggbnb.com tel 01862 851445

Cloisters, halfway between John o'Groats & Cape Wrath on Scotland's North Coast. With assisted wheelchair access. Tel/fax (01847) 601 286

Kinloch, by Loch Torridon in NW Scotland. Stay in your own cottage, meals provided in the main house. 01520 755206 www.wester-ross.com/kinloch

Semi detached house, S Queensferry / Edinburgh, sleeps 5, ideal for city or touring. Can be viewed on website 02885548686 knockmanyroad@gmail.com

The Granary Guesthouse in the heart of the Cotswolds £35 pppn. 01451 821898
www.cotswolds-bed-and-breakfasts.co.uk

Stewards Cottage in semi-rural Hertfordshire, easy reach of Cambridge, London and airports. 01707 642091 www.stewardscottagebandb.co.uk

Middle Road, on 5-acre smallholding, run on green principles. Overlooking Black Mountains and River Wye. 01874 754407 www.uppermiddleroad.co.uk

If you are a host who runs a B&B or self-catering unit, and would like to be mentioned in our next issue, please contact Margaret. mstevens@btinternet.com



Unit 8 Water House, 8 Orsman Road, London
N1 5QJ

Telephone: 020 7739 6292

www.hostuk.org.uk

hosts@hostuk.org

Reg Charity 327592 Reg Company 2179430