

Ickford News

The office has been reclaimed rather easily Miss Vukomanovic, rather like the Battle of Agincourt against the French, you have had your moment in the sunshine and normal service is resumed!

Yes, the children of Ickford have returned from France having maintained an entente cordiale and enjoyed the hospitalité of the Château Du Broutel and several other French venues that welcomed us with open arms with no mention of the 'B' word! In fact, I can recommend travelling on any day that Armageddon is forecast as we certainly sailed through Dover and Calais much faster than I have ever done in the past.

I have made over 20 school residential journeys more than half of which have been abroad but this year's French trip was probably the best I have ever experienced. They can be tiring and they are certainly a responsibility but, because of my fantastic colleagues (without whom a school journey would not be possible) and the behaviour of the children, this one was tremendously rewarding and enjoyable.

Having no family, it is easy for me to accompany the children but Mme Basnett, Mrs Snell and the seconded Zeita Scott, all have families and on behalf of the children, I would like to thank them sincerely for their support throughout the week. Without them, the children would not have enjoyed it as much and I certainly would not have been so relaxed (well, relaxed for me anyway).

The children were fantastic and I hope that they will remember the trip for many years. It was certainly a full and varied week but they had plenty of opportunities to use their French language and to discover lots of new things. We managed a French market where,

though some saw fit to purchase berets, and French 'bling', others were strangely drawn to an array of lurid baseball caps with American place names.

The day spent at the Museum of the Somme and the battlefields was not only interesting but also very moving. We walked the trenches and we awed at the thousands of names on Edward Lutyen's Memorial for the Missing. Our expert guide for the day was superb and I think that every child came away having learned a great deal and with a certain respect for the sacrifice made by those who fought in the first World War.

The Somme exhibition was thought provoking but the beach at Le Touquet on a sunny afternoon was a chance to let off steam and enjoy the sand and sea between the toes. My favourite excursion however was to the French dairy farm where everyone got to milk a cow and to make butter. Mme Basnett may not be as enthusiastic as me about this excursion and seemed more at home in the chocolate factory but give me the starting process rather than the finished article any day!

Those of you who had children on the trip will, I have no doubt, been regaled with lots of stories and far more detail than I have included here and I hope that your children will understand how grateful I am to them. It is not every day that the youth leaders on a residential argue with each other to join a party of children or that every other school teacher commends one for the behaviour of the children.

My main reason for the newsletter though is to ensure that I have made public my gratitude to the adults who came with us and to Miss Vukomanovic for holding the fort!

Mr Ronane

