

Just a chat – with a member of staff

FRANZISKA SCHNELLMANN – Switzerland

What previous jobs have you had?

Many jobs! I've worked as a waitress in a café. I was a trainee in a news agency for a month. I worked as a receptionist in a doctor's practice for two and a half years, and I've worked as a receptionist in other places, too.

Why did you choose to work as a receptionist?

For the flexibility, and because you have more responsibility as a receptionist than as a waitress, and it looks good on your resumé or CV. Also, I like working with people. I chose to work at English Center Basel because I want to speak English and learn English a little better.

Do you find it easy to manage your time between work and your studies?

Although I'm working about 16 hours a week right now because of holidays, I usually work about 9 hours a week and I don't have to spend a lot of time at school: I don't have many lectures, but I have many things to read, and you have to give talks and write papers.

Since your mother is from India, do you speak Hindi?

No, I don't. I am often asked this question when I go into Indian food shops. Actually, my mother is from northern India but was adopted when she was 5 years old and grew up in Switzerland: she was the only Indian girl at her school when she was little. Many years ago, she didn't want to know about her heritage, but now she's interested. I'm interested, too. I'd love to know my Indian family, but it's too difficult to find them in such a big country like India. I feel Swiss, but there's also an extra feeling, which I can't describe. I would like to learn Hindi some day.

Have you ever been to India?

Yes, I have been there twice. Actually, I have been to a lot of countries: Scotland, England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Turkey, The Netherlands, Canada and the United States. I was in New York last year. I really love New York! I always wanted to go there: there are so many people there!

Would you like to live in another country?

I would like to live in America, in a warm area of the USA. I like India, but I think it would be too hard for a single woman like me to live in India.

From my point of view

In last month's issue of What's Happening? Claudia Järmann offered her opinion about facebook. Below is a letter from another reader, offering his view. If you would like to share your opinion about this or another topic, please don't hesitate to send in your letter to me.
June Winterflood, Editor

Dear Claudia,

While reading the article you wrote about 'facebook', I was thinking that it could have been written by me, because I agree with you on so many points. I have been a facebook user for two months now, and I spend time on facebook each day, not for a long time but to check the news. I'm always happy to discover anything funny – I've got many friends with a good kind of humor!

Even though I agree on many of your points of view, I have to say that there's one point missing in my opinion. I realized that a lot of information goes over facebook. That means that if you're not a member, you can miss a lot of information about parties, exhibitions and concerts.

I had never thought that facebook could make my life richer, but it actually does. Of course, life without facebook is liveable, too! But facebook is not only an impersonal kind of communication but also a place of information.

Best wishes with or without fb,

Mitch von Büren

Write for WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Possible topics for the September issue

- The weak euro: is it a good idea to go shopping in Germany or France at the moment?
- What will inventions of the future be like?
- Review an English book, play or film.
- What's your view of astrology/esoteric/parapsychological phenomena?
- Learning strategies: what's your top tip for learning English?
- How do you feel about your national day?

DEADLINE for your writing: **21 AUGUST 2011**

Please e-mail

JUNE_WINTERFLOOD@YAHOO.COM



MOTOR CARAVAN HOLIDAY

by **Guido Kuhn** – Switzerland

On Friday at 3 o'clock, my brother, my sister-in-law and I began our driving tour in my brother's motor caravan. At 10.30 p.m., we overnights in a carpark 10 Km from Calais. The next morning, we took a ferry from Calais to Dover over the English Channel. Then, we drove along the east coast of England to the villages of Sizewell and Leiston. I rode my bike on the left side of the road for the first time to Aldeburgh and Thorpeness. Quite a lot of people were taking their Sunday stroll there.

On Monday, we drove 400 km to Old Hartley midway through Newcastle. We took our bikes to St Mary's Lighthouse near Whitley Bay. After that, we drove to Tynemouth Priory and Castle, and we visited Cullercoats.

The next day, the route was long to get to **Hadrian's Wall** and Housesteads Roman Fort (previously Vercovicium). These buildings between England and Scotland from the Roman Empire have lasted for almost 2000 years. Near Glencleap, we visited Caerlaverock Castle. We stayed overnight by a river in Glencleap and we saw seals.



On Thursday, we went on our way north to Edinburgh. We visited the village of Moffat and drove in the Dumfries and Galloway region. We stayed four nights with camping friends at a caravan site in South Edinburgh. On Saturday evening at 10 o'clock, we visited the **Edinburgh Military Tattoo 2006**. It presented drum and pipe bands, military guards and Highland dancers, and The Basel Top Secret Drum Corps played that year, too. We went to the city by bus and visited shops and pubs. On Sunday, our friends flew home.



In the second week, we drove to village of Ballater in the Cairngorms National Park in the Highlands. We visited the small village of Braemar, Queen Elizabeth II's summer residence, Balmoral Castle, and the church. Our overnight was at the outskirts of a wood, 8 miles from Balmoral.

Though the Highlands up hill and mountains, forest and grassland, we visited Dunnottar Castle with our bikes. This overnight was in the little town of Turriff.

Mid-way through our holidays, we drove to Lossiemouth in the northern part of Scotland. We visited two small villages Rosehearty and Pennan.

We visited the **Glenfiddich whisky distillery** in Dufftown. The next day, we drove to Leiston. The cathedral in Elgin was destroyed 3 times over a period of 800 years.



On our drive south, we visited the Highland Capital, the city of Inverness. The next day, we took our bikes to Urquhart Castle beside Loch Ness. There were a lot of people from all over the world there. On Saturday, our journey took us to Fort Augustus which has a series of locks (as part of the Caledonian Canal) and along part of the loch to the town of Fort William next to Valley Station Ben Nevis.

After parking overnight, we took a cable car up Ben Nevis mountain. It was Sunday: time to depart for the south. We came past **Castle Stalker**. Here, a great many people were visiting the castle.



In Oban, we stayed overnight for two nights. We visited the distillery in Oban city while looking up towards McCaig's Folly. In the evening, we ate fish and chips in a restaurant at Port Oban. The next day, we drove further to interesting Inveraray Castle owned by the Chief of the Clan Campbell. In the evening, we rode our bikes to Balloch Country Park and Castle. We overnights in the Balloch campsite. By the end of the journey the next day, we were in the market town of Dumfries, and we overnights by the river in Glencleap again. It was evening, and the fishermen were standing by the fence.

The next day was a very long drive along the M58, about 600 km to Wallingford at river Thames. We drove 30 km in stop-and-go traffic near Manchester and Liverpool.

It was Friday the third from last day: we drove to Pevensey northeast of Eastbourne in southern England. In the afternoon, we visited Brighton, The Pier at Brighton and the beach, **The Royal Pavilion**, Libraries and the Museum. Our overnight was on Pevensey beach. In the evening, we strolled along the Sovereign Harbour in Eastbourne.



We did the last long drive from England to St. Loup in France, again taking the ferry from Dover to Calais over the English Channel. The last overnight was at a campsite in St. Loup. Finally, we travelled the last three hours on Sunday arriving at 2 o'clock, and we were at home after a three-week road-trip holiday.

To sum up:

The weather was British: it rained at night or during the caravan drive.

We drove about 3500 km or about 2200 miles. 1 £ = 2.30 sfr. (Aug. 2006)

It was an extraordinary, free trip in three countries without any time pressure.

The British people were amiable and friendly.

We saw quite a lot of sheep and wild rabbits but few Scottish Highland cattle.

The appearance of the Highlands is really like the postcards!

All of the photographs, except for Hadrian's Wall and the village of Pennan, were taken by Guido during his trip.

Just a chat – with a student

GANIMETJA JASARI – Switzerland

Are you a student or do you work?

Both: I'm a student at the KV Basel. I'm studying social actuarial science in parallel with working in a hospital as a diagnostic radiology specialist. Next year, I'm going to study economics to understand the economy. I haven't got any qualifications for studying economics; that's why I'm taking actuarial science now.

Why do you want to take economics?

To get a higher position, a management position, at another company.

How important is your career to you?

Other people around me have studied something, and I want to stay with them. My father's a mathematician and he's independent. My brothers work with him.

Your father runs his own business. Are you and your brothers interested in working in the family business?

I'm interested, and so is my second brother; but my other two brothers aren't. They don't want to take on that kind of business. They like their hobbies and their free time. I would like to do the jobs in the office and my brother loves to be outside with the customers and employees. He likes to touch the things, to build something, to see the result. I'm a computer nerd, and that's what I'm doing now.

What does your family business do?

We build small houses – not big ones. We renovate houses. We put buildings up and we take them down, too. We do the cleaning of the buildings during renovation. Our customers love us because we are very quick and efficient; we have young employees who do good quality work – and our prices are not very high compared to other companies.

I like this job because we work, most of the time, with men – we don't have women who are bitchy. And that's another reason why I want to change my current job: 70% of the hospital staff is women. But, I have other reasons, too.

Why are you learning English?

Since I was a child, it has been a dream of mine to learn English. Before now, I didn't have time. Now, it's a good time because I have finished one course of studies and I am starting a new one in September. I need English for my next step. But, I underestimated how much time I needed to learn a new language!

Do you like having your life well planned out?

Yes, I feel more comfortable. Sometimes I ask, "Is this a good way or the correct way for me?" I ask myself what would happen if I didn't pass an exam. If I had time, I would sleep, go shopping, do things that don't match with a career, but I often do things which are good for my career.

How do you think the current economic situation will affect your plans?

I think it is very important for a woman to have a high level of education in the future. More women will get higher positions, and I want to be such a woman.

You are in a TV commercial for our school. How do you feel about being asked to participate?

I feel good. It was funny to be in front of the camera, and the other student, Domenico, was funny, too. I had a little sentence to say: "I'm Laura. Nice to meet you, Steve." I'm not a person who normally likes standing in front of the camera.

Your parents are from former Yugoslavia, so what's it like for you, being Swiss?

My father immigrated to Switzerland before I was born. I was two years old when my father picked us up from Serbia and brought us to Switzerland. It was the first time for my mother, too. My brothers and I have taken the culture of Switzerland: we are at home here. It feels strange because when we go to Serbia, they look at us as outsiders, because we look at things differently than they do, because the cultural habits are different. Our thoughts are Western. In the south, people's thoughts are not the same, but I think that many people in Serbia want to get the same lifestyle in the Balkans as here.

I have many Swiss friends. The new generation is very open, but the old generation is a bit more distant. Some people have said to me, "it doesn't matter if you have a Swiss passport, you aren't a Swiss woman," and that's one of the reasons I want to have a higher education, to show that a foreigner can also be a powerful personality.

Dear Reader,

Tell us what you would like to see in your broadsheet. For example, would you like a crossword puzzle or a grammar point explained in What's Happening?

Also, please write for the broadsheet. We need articles! The purpose of this publication is to help you to practise your language skills, so please help us to make What's Happening? better!