

# ENGLISH CENTER BASEL WHAT'S HAPPENING?

FEBRUARY 2012

News and Views from the Students and Staff

FREE ~ ISSUE 18

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Who's that?

## JULIE MUSER

Teacher

Julie is from Slough, Berkshire, which is in the southeast, west of London, not far from Windsor Castle. Julie is married to a German and lives in Lörrach. She has a delightful nearly 6-year-old daughter, Lilly.

Apart from a six-month break, Julie's been working at the school since 2001.

Julie studied German in England at Sunderland University and, as part of the course, she had to spend a year abroad, so she chose Karlsruhe. After her year there, she went back to the UK and finished her degree course. She decided to return to Germany in order not to forget the language. While in Karlsruhe, she saw that there were many people who seemed to speak English but not well, so she thought this could be an opportunity, so she applied to do a teacher training course in London and then returned to Germany after the course. She taught in Karlsruhe for seven years; and during that time, she met her husband, Christian.

When her husband moved to this area, she followed and that's when she saw an ad for a consultant at the school; but when she went to apply, she found that there was also a teaching job available, so she decided to stick to what she knew after all.

(See over for more about Julie)

### Top Tips

## RUNNING

by Lukas Scheuber  
-Switzerland

1. Wearing the right running shoes is the key to comfort and injury prevention.
2. A good warm-up signals to your body that it will have to start working soon.
3. Start with just 30 seconds or one minute of running and 3 minutes of walking.
4. You should keep your running intervals at a slow pace.
5. Find a short distance race, like 5 km, that you could be ready for.
6. Don't do too much too soon. New runners sometimes get too enthusiastic and anxious to get started and end up increasing their mileage too quickly which can lead to injury.

## I'VE MADE A START!

by June Winterflood - Canada

In the last issue of "What's Happening?", I admitted that I couldn't speak German, that I was a complete beginner. I had tried to learn German a few times, but I hadn't managed to stick with it.

I also declared my intention to start again, and I set some targets for myself, one of which was to learn at least 100 words a month. For the time being, I'm focused on High German, but I want to pick up some Swiss German, too, eventually. One of the ways I've been learning German is to meet with a friend once a week and ask him to check on my pronunciation, which is still abysmal.

Another thing I'm doing is reading a graded German book. I've bought two, but I'm still working on the first one. The good news is that I have realised that I know more words than I thought I did! Nevertheless, the book is pretty well covered in pencil where I've had to look up the words, but, hey! I'm a beginner after all!

In addition to the above, I've been using [www.babbel.com](http://www.babbel.com). It's taking me step by step through the basics. Like the learning system at the school, it gives me the chance to hear the words as many times as I want. I've got about 300 words in my words list now, but I can't claim to know them all off by heart, but I think I do know 100!

### What was it like?



## FIZZEN; A SHOP I LIKE

by Laura Almeida

-Switzerland & Portugal

Christmas time lies behind and all presents have found their way to friends and family.

Nevertheless, there are several opportunities throughout the year to make a close friend feel happy and give him/her pleasure by offering a little gift.

A shop which provides a wide range of products that are suitable for all kinds of occasions is Fizzen. It's located just beneath the English Center Basel at Pfuggässlein 1 - many of you may already know it. And if that's not the case, then it's worth going in and have a look.

As for me, I've recently discovered beautifully decorated and charming paper muffin cups there. Since I like to bring along baked muffins when I've been invited to an event or party, they caught my eye.

What's more, you'll find vintage fashion and items with retro charm there, too.

Additionally, you can visit [www.fizzen.ch](http://www.fizzen.ch) which contains the latest product lines as well as a blog and other interesting info. Have fun!

## HOTEL BALLUNSPITZE

by Barbara Hoffmann - France

The four-star hotel, Ballunspitze, is located in Galtür, Austria, near Ischgl. This hotel has a wellness center and also a childcare service, but unfortunately, it doesn't deserve its four stars.

The rooms are not so nice and clean, especially when you have a one-year-old child. The food was edible but had nothing to do with a four-star restaurant! The childcare center was small and very noisy. The two nannies didn't take very much care of the very young children. The children were crying and looking for their parents.

The positive thing was that you could borrow a buggy or a sled and take a walk.

We had no time to see what the wellness center was like.

The website of the hotel doesn't correspond to reality. I would suggest avoiding this hotel when you are going with a child who is younger than three years of age.



Elisabeth Gaskell - "North and South" (DVD Picture)

## A SHORT REVIEW OF MY LATEST FAVOURITE READ

by Elena Wuethrich - Switzerland

I'm an avid reader of well-written stories and, until recently, I had never read a book of Elisabeth Gaskell's. Before reading this book, "North and South", I saw the DVD film, an adaptation by BBC-London, produced in 2004.

I believe this book to be important to understanding how far we have come today. It's fantastic to read a book which shows how human nature has changed over the years. The book was written 160 years ago, but we still have rebellion and political change; people still love and despair; people are still proud and passionate: those things haven't changed.

This book has everything: class conflict, politics, religion, women's rights and passion.

In the first pages, the author starts with a little rosy description of the countryside in the south of England where Margaret Hale lives with her Pastor father, her mother and their servants. Her father decides to abandon the church - a decision which changes the family's life, because they move to "Milton" which is an industrial town in the north of England, with factories, smoke, noise and pollution.

The story is around the town of Milton and, along with Margaret, we discover this new world: the poverty and the suffering of the townsfolk, the huge difference between those who have and those who don't have, and the large character of an industrial town.

Margaret quickly befriends a local mill worker, Nicholas Higgins, and his daughters: Betsy and Mary. Betsy is gravely ill from "fluff" which Margaret observes was as a result of working in a factory and, at the same time, she discovers the living/working conditions of that family and others around the Higgins.

Another character is John Thornton, a self-made businessman, a "Master" of one of the cotton mills and a local magistrate, well respected by his peers and employees. He comes to Reverend Hale for tutoring in "philosophy and literature". During his visit, it is Margaret who captures his heart.

Mr. Thornton is very authoritarian, and when the workers start to revolt and strike, Margaret believes that Mr. Thornton has done wrong by these workers. He's a proud man and he's in love with Margaret, but he knows that he will never be good enough for her and he's aware of Margaret's dislike of him and his way.

Margaret, knowing that her mother doesn't have long to live, gets in touch with her brother, Frederic, a former officer of the Navy and wanted by the authorities for having been the ringleader of a mutiny.

His return to England - if caught - would cost him his life, but Margaret takes the risk. Frederic arrives and spends some time with his family but has to leave almost immediately, because he's terrified of being discovered. Mr. Thornton sees Frederic and his sister saying their goodbyes at the station and takes them for lovers.

Now you need to read it yourself to find out what is about to change his world, too.

This is a book for anyone who loves Victorian novels, social commentary and history - is it for you?

### What's on at English Center Basel

Please sign up at reception or telephone 061 269 41 41 to reserve your place at any of the following events:

#### WHAT'S HAPPENING? MEETING

A chance for you to suggest topics for the next issue of "What's Happening?" and to talk about new layout ideas.

Thursday, 23 February - from 12:00 to 13:00

Thursday, 22 March - from 12:00 to 13:00

#### SPEAKING PRACTICE APÉRO

A chance for you to speak English in a sociable and relaxed way.

Thursday, 16 February - from 17:00 to 19:00

Friday, 16 March - from 17:00 to 19:00

#### A Flexible Group Course

Time is at a premium, so learning English early in the morning might be an option for you.

Consider our Flexible Business English Group course on Tuesdays from 7:15 to 8:45.

If you have completed our blended learning system or have taken the BEC V or FCE exam and want to continue learning (but not preparing for an exam), contact your consultant for the details.

## WHAT'S THE SECRET TO A SUCCESSFUL, LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP?

by Lea Bargetzi - Switzerland

There are a lot of components which are important to make a good fit. But I'm sure the most important things are tolerance and commitment. I know what I'm writing about.

My best friends are two women. We are a group of three and it works (most of the time). Everyone knows that a three-woman friendship normally has a lot of problems and that it doesn't work most of the time, but we have been friends for about 7 years. Of course, we have had our problems, but there has never been an issue big enough to split up the group. There have been different problems, for example: one only spends time with her new boyfriend, the other one always says no to every idea, the third one hasn't got much time, because she is stressed and the time together is bad, or the classic one: she doesn't want to do things without their boyfriends. But for all these typical problems, there is one solution: "talking".

If you talk about all these things, you can find some solutions. In these conversations, you should be honest, respectful and open to criticism. But you can't make a conversation about everything you don't like or you're upset about; you must have patience and tolerance for each other. A good friendship needs commitment like every relationship or like a plant. It could grow to be a wonderful thing, but if you don't give it any water or sunlight it dies. That's all I've got to say on this topic.

### In my opinion

## SAVING OUR PLANET

by Gigi Thoppil - India

If the world's population increases, consumption of natural resources and demand for energy will also increase. This will result in more deforestation in order to provide for accommodation and cultivation. Burning of fossil fuels will increase the emission of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which will result in global warming, the melting of glaciers and then an increase in sea level. If the sea level increases, vast areas of useful land will disappear!

I think technology can save our planet to some extent. By developing high yield seeds and efficient methods of cultivation, future generations can produce more food grains and other crops from smaller areas of land. This will reduce deforestation and soil erosion.

By using renewable energy resources instead of fossil fuels, we could reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, thus decreasing the greenhouse effect. Somehow, we must keep the global warming issue under control.

Science and technology will help to eradicate poverty and other killing diseases from the planet. Proper development and planning will give the way to keeping our planet prosperous for our future generations.

## Why not write an article for WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### Possible topics for MARCH

- If you were on a deserted island, what thing couldn't you do without?
- What do you know about Thorium?
- In your opinion, what's the best word and what's the worst word in English, and why?
- Give us the recipe of your favourite dish.
- If you had a book, a magazine, or a newspaper, which would you choose to read, and why?
- Tell us a joke.
- A leader is supposed to be ultimately responsible for what takes place in his or her organization. When something goes wrong - whether it's corruption, an accident, or abuse - what should the consequences for that leader be?

#### Regular Topics

- A City Worth Visiting
- A Book, Film, Theatre, Music or Art Review
- A hotel, restaurant, or shopping experience
- My favourite App or Website
- Top Tips
- Quotations

DEADLINE: 21 FEB 2012

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