



JOYEUX NOËL FROM MAISON CLAIRE FONTAINE



Thank you for an enjoyable and successful 2011

Firstly we want to send very warm festive greetings from Méluzien to everyone in the MCF "family" and say a huge thank you for the amazingly kind and supportive welcome that we have received from you all as the new owners of MCF. It has been a huge pleasure to meet those of you that have visited since May and we are very much looking forward to also getting to know those of you that we haven't yet met who will be coming down to visit us in the earlier part of our 2012 season.

In the relatively short time that we have been owners, we have come to regard MCF as a unique and very special place that simply comes alive with the energy and enthusiasm that your pupils bring when they visit us. We have been hugely impressed with the commitment, care and passion that you show when bringing your



pupils on their visits to us. This has meant that we have come to see very clearly that what we do is a partnership between us and as a result we want to share with you all of our plans. We would also encourage

and welcome you giving us feedback and getting involved with what we are doing as much as possible.

Staffing News



Perhaps one of the largest changes we have made so far is to look at the way that the staffing of MCF is organised. We believe that it is difficult to align the quality and continuity of our teaching with the seasonal recruitment of the entire teaching team.

To address this key issue we are delighted to announce that we have convinced Elodie to join us on a full time permanent basis. Those of you that know her will understand the significance of fully securing her enormous energy and enthusiasm for life, coupled with her fantastic rapport with all the young people that come here. She will be directly responsible for providing us with a continuity on the teaching side of our operation that we believe will make a very great difference to the quality of our language teaching goals.

The same quality issues are true for those schools amongst you that visit our Lac

Sauvin centre. To address this we are also delighted that Fadila will be running the teaching team based there for the forthcoming year and we hope that this will become a successful arrangement well into the future.

In our September and October season some of you will know that we experimented with the use of a student called James to help around the centre. This turned out to be very successful, particularly in freeing extra time for our teaching team to spend with the visiting pupils, which at the end of the day is our primary focus. We found James at short notice through personal contacts and we know from feedback that he added significantly to the trips that took place when he was with us.

Following this successful trial we plan to try and recruit two helpers. Our aim is that these will be language students who will gain personally from their own language immersion whilst with us at the same time as helping us give even greater focus on language learning for your pupils during activities, excursions and meal times.

We are currently advertising these positions for March through to July and also for the September to October season of 2012 but we would also be delighted if you know of any of your ex students or family friends who might enjoy working in the Burgundy countryside either this coming year or even into 2013 and beyond.

Website Update

Part of the charm of the Burgundy countryside is its feeling of being away from modern life but sadly even here it is impossible to ignore the call of technology. As a result we have initiated a complete redesign and rewrite of our website.

Our aim is to inform all those interested in what we do from trip leaders and teachers through to the pupils and their parents. Included in this redesign will be some interactive elements that we hope will help with trip planning and greater resources for use both before and after your trip. We will let you know when this goes live sometime in the New Year.

We have also registered a Facebook page, *Maison Claire Fontaine*, where we have begun posting some website links and activity suggestions that you might find interesting.

In addition, we have responded to the pressure that we have observed some trip leaders and their staff are under to update websites and keep parents back home informed about what is happening during your time in Burgundy. We have now registered an MCF twitter feed @Maison-Fontaine, which we can use together with our blog on the new website to keep parents up to date on safe arrivals and daily activities. We hope that this will take some of the pressure off having to spend too much time on the computer when you are with us and perhaps giving you more time with your pupils.

Merchandise 2012

Another very frequent request from trip leaders was for us to organise a company to produce MCF merchandise, in particular clothing for your trip. We have done a great deal of investigation into this and have finally found a supplier that we feel will give us the quality we want at a reasonable price. We will be offering hoodies, polos and t-shirts, all with the MCF logo and personalised for each individual school.

If you would be interested in making an order, please do let us know and we will send you more details in the New Year so that we can organise everything in plenty of time for your trip.



Additional items will be available to purchase when you visit including caps, water bottles, pens, pencils, postcards and small gifts to take home.



MCF Fait Peau Neuve

Following a well earned week off for everyone at the end of the October season, work began in earnest on repainting and decorating the centre at Méluzien. We are giving the place a top to toe going over, and we hope that when you next visit you will see the fruits of our labour, especially with some of the extra touches we are planning on putting in.



Perhaps most obvious will be the two extra swings we are currently getting made by a local company to meet one of the most requested changes of last season.

We are now taking bookings for 2013 and 2014. Please let us know preferred dates as soon as possible.



In our previous life in London we were both involved in helping a new company called *The Day* to get started. *The Day* is an online news service for schools and colleges with a mission to 'encourage teachers to get students engaging in the big ideas and events that shape our World.'

www.theday.co.uk

Although we don't have any financial involvement, we both remain linked to the company, especially Alex on the educational side of what they do. With the help of Elodie and Fadila we have begun to translate some of the news stories which are now available on their website.

We continue to support *The Day* as we believe it is a fabulous resource to help teachers from all subject areas lead discussions and debates on daily issues that are important for young people to understand and have opinions about. In addition, we hope that by translating these stories we can help to provide an invaluable resource for language teachers in particular. Please do have a look at the website and share the link with your colleagues, families and friends. If you would like to find out more just let us know and we can arrange a free trial as well as an MCF discount on your first subscription.



Merci beaucoup pour le temps que vous avez consacré à lire ce bulletin et aussi pour toute votre aide et votre soutien dans notre nouvelle entreprise. Nous sommes très enthousiastes quant à l'avenir et sommes impatients de faire de MCF un endroit encore plus spécial dans les années à venir. Nous vous souhaitons un très Joyeux Noël et une année 2012 prospère.

Alex et Mark