



Issue 5 : January 2015

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Happy New Year !

Dear Friends

Greetings to you all from a cold but still very beautiful Méluzien. Having just spent the Christmas period back in England for the first time in four years it is good to have returned with our batteries recharged ready for a year of further fun and development of what we are doing here in France. The break certainly gave us a chance to reflect on what we have done since making our big life move from London to beautiful Burgundy and has reinvigorated us. (Not that we needed much of that anyway !!). We trust that the Christmas break was enjoyable and relaxing for you all and that you are now looking forward to a healthy and fulfilling 2015.



The year is starting in busy fashion for the buildings with some major work being done on the roof of the kitchen which sprang a rather large leak the week after the last school of our Autumn season left us (if ever there is a good time for a leak then that was it !) This has led to an entirely new ceiling being installed in the kitchen. David now has an even more appropriate space from which to provide his superb fare for all our visitors both young and old.

Not content with just doing that we are also giving the roof and windows of the top floor a much needed refurbishment in the form of completely stripping and rebuilding the whole structure. When discussing the work with the builder he was keen to suggest getting rid of the dormers completely. He thought that putting in Velux windows would be much cheaper but he quickly stepped back from this idea when he saw the look of horror on our faces. Right from the start our intention for the building has always been to preserve as much of the character as possible whilst improving its safety and comfort for all who visit us. We hope the work we do on the roof and dormer windows reflects this ambition.

As you can see from the pictures it is fairly big work but we are assured we won't be a soft top centre for the season ... If you want to track progress then you will be able to see updates on the MCF Facebook page.



Our last noteworthy change apart from the eternal painting of the dormitories that is our very own Forth Bridge is the installation of safety matting underneath the swings. It seems that there will always be budding gymnasts amongst our visitors and no amount of explaining the detrimental effects of a poor landing on their overall trip enjoyment will dissuade them from trying their latest acrobatic moves. As a result we are installing mats which do the happy double of providing a softer landing zone in the event of falls and also lets the grass continue to grow. It is just another one of those things that we feel we can do to improve the safety of a visit to us although we will of course continue to discourage our very own Beth Tweddle or Louis Smith impersonators.

Things haven't been quiet at Lac Sauvin this winter either with lots of painting and other maintenance work keeping the whole team there very busy. In addition we have been working closely with the catering staff and have made some adjustments to the menus, particularly for those with specific dietary requirements. We hope that schools going there this year will see the fruits of this labour and enjoy the stay even more than before.

This year is going to see us cement our educational core and really see us tie in all aspects of a week spent with us to ensure maximum educational effectiveness. This will take the form of further tweaks to the lessons and activities that we offer with a planned development of a supporting journal and booklet for each pupil tailored to the week they have with us. This is in development as we write and although certainly not completed this year (are resources ever complete?), we hope it will be possible to see where we are headed when we see you this coming year.

In another direction we are also expanding our engagement with French schools in offering English experiences to more local pupils after the gentle start we made down this road in 2014. We are massively enjoying this simple extension of our activities and hope that through this we can continue to give something back to the people of this most beautiful of regions.



So we look forward to seeing all of you in the coming year and can promise that there will be a warm and energetic greeting when you get here. We certainly hope it is warmer than the temperatures we are currently (almost) enjoying in the mornings !

A bientôt !

Alex, Mark and all the team

Autumn Team
2014

Staffing News

Of course one big change is that Elodie will not be with us at Méluzien this year having finally taken the plunge to try new adventures. Like us we are sure that you will miss her but we hope that the team we have assembled for next year will continue to provide the energy and engagement with our visitors that you have come to enjoy. We naturally wish Elodie all the very best for her new life, and whilst we will miss someone who has become such a great friend to us it would be far too hypocritical of us, given the big changes we have made in our own lives to come to France, to then believe that others shouldn't follow their dreams as she is doing. If she is lucky enough to meet someone who shows her the kindness and enthusiasm she has shown us then she will be truly blessed.



We are very pleased to welcome back both Aurore and Jonathan as our French teachers for the start of our season in February. They will be familiar faces for our Lac Sauvvin schools as well as some of the schools who visited Méluzien in the Summer and more recently this Autumn. We will have a variety of new and experienced staff joining them throughout the year.



The introduction of English students to our team continues to be a great success and we have been really pleased with the impact they have had as role models for your pupils. One parent wrote directly to us saying :

'Thank you so much for looking after the boys for the past few days. Daniel returned suitably exhausted but enthusing about everything he had done in France and the wonderful staff at MCF. Daniel certainly seems to have enjoyed himself and has come home feeling more confident understanding spoken French. He will have lots of fond memories of you - he's already mentioned the opportunities for GAP year/Uni students so you've had quite an impact - we'll see what time brings... Best Wishes and thanks again.'

We also heard that one pupil said **'je voudrais devenir un Ben'** in his oral examination. *(Ben was our gap year student this Autumn season).*



Summer Team
2014

GAP YEAR STUDENTS WANTED

We are currently recruiting for French language students to work with us for 2015 / 2016.

If you know anyone who might be interested please tell them to contact us as soon as possible.

MCF TRIP ADVICE BLOG

Since coming to MCF we have often been asked the question "what do other schools do when X happens?". This is particularly true in certain situations relating to the organisation of a trip or when particular events happen during a stay.

This has led us to think that a central resource of some sort would be useful for our clients to be able to reference. Of course it would also be of use to the wider school community who organise and run school trips of various types and styles. This is certainly not going to be prescriptive in its style in any way but we hope it can be done in such a way that trip running professionals are encouraged to share ideas and best practices for the benefit of all. We are going to give it a go shortly and see if it is of interest or not. We will be sending details of its location and invitations to join in and share your comments. It will be in the form of a blog and we hope it will form a valuable resource for everyone as it develops and matures.

Puzzlemania ...



In 2014 we saw some amazing puzzling skills with 2 schools beating the previous all time record from Bedford Prep School of 27 minutes and 10 seconds.

The Bruton School team of Lucy, Freya and Eloise posted an incredible time of 25 minutes exactly but even this was not enough to beat **Sally, Alysia and Emily from Churcher's College** who completed the task in **21 minutes and 55 seconds** - incredible !

Tir à l'arc...

Congratulations to Sandroyd School who top the archery league table for 2014. **Theo and Archie** achieved an all-time record of **49 points** - fantastique !

We must also mention Daisy and Pippa from Churcher's College who ran them a very close second with 48 points.



Who will top the tables for 2015 and can you beat your school record we look forward to helping you try !

DIARY DATES

January 17th : ALL London January Event at SOAS

January 31st : ISMLA Annual Conference at St.Paul's Girls' School

