

ISB Newsletter

February 2009

New ISB is the gateway to cultural interaction

The mission of the newly established International Student Bureau (ISB) is to unite incoming exchange students with the local students of Regents College.

ISB is a part of the International Partnership Office (IPO) and its body consists of local as well as exchange students. Currently there are 5 members who were carried over from last year and there are 2 positions open to whoever is interested in joining.

The aim is to support the IPO with its activities, to facilitate integration of incoming students with the local students and to encourage learning about each other's cultures, countries and languages through social and cultural events.



Photo: ISB committee

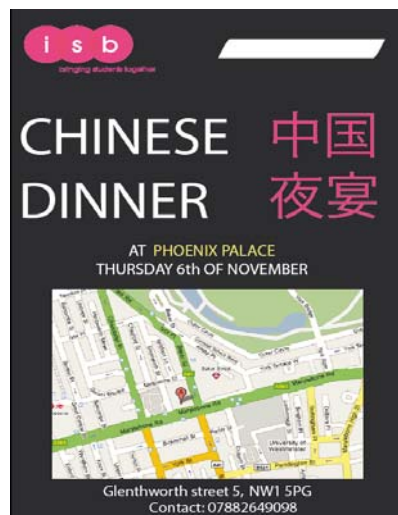
One of its initiatives is the Buddy Scheme, in which students help incomers familiarize themselves with the school system as well as coming to terms with London life, right down to the daily necessities such as buying phone contracts, opening a bank account or simply explaining

the most efficient way to use London's transport system.

The bureau pairs up incoming and local students according to the language and origin of the incomer and the language the local student is studying. For the buddy, it is a great opportunity to improve the language they are practicing and to learn more about the culture of the country where they have decided to spend their SPA.

It also runs a mentoring scheme in which returning SPA students assist those who are about to embark on their SPA, explaining what the experience was like by giving advice and answering any questions their might have. This advice is as invaluable for the outgoing student as it is for incoming students coming to London.

The first ISB event:
The Chinese dinner

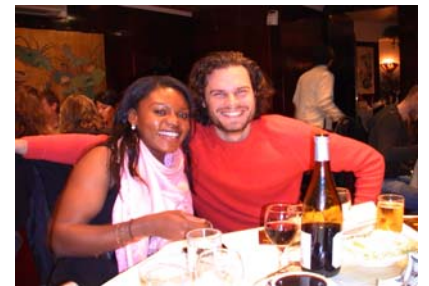


On the 6th of November ISB held its first cultural event at the Phoenix Palace. We arranged a Chinese dinner which was attended by 24 students both Regents College students and exchange students. Everybody paid a certain amount and they thought they got a great value for money.

We strive to arrange fun and diverse events and we will continue throughout the spring semester of 2009 to hold cultural and other types of socialising events.

Photo: Chinese dinner at the Golden Phoenix

Studying in London
- A Canadian view -



Being a third year undergraduate student is hard enough, but doing the final year abroad, even tougher. Coming from a small University in Gatineau, Quebec Canada (Université du Québec en Outaouais), I didn't know what to expect by coming to EBS London. I must admit what a culture shock! A different style in teaching, a different style in exams, I didn't know what exactly I got myself

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into. But now being at the end of the fall term, I can see my hard work paying off.

But being in London hasn't been all about the education; it has been a chance to soak up as much of the English culture as possible. There is so much to do here and if anyone says they are bored in London, that's because they want to be!



Photo: Veronique at Edinburgh Castle

I have been very active in the cultural side of what London (and England) has to offer. Daytrips to Bath, Canterbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, Oxford (just to name a few!) and the amazing shows such as *Wicked* and *Les Misérables*. I find myself looking at the calendar and realizing that there are not enough days in a week to do everything that I would like to.

But I think the thing that amazed me the most was a week-end trip to Edinburgh, Scotland. Having the chance to

visit Edinburgh Castle was an experience that I will never forget. Amazing views and so much history, I could have spent days in that place. That's another thing that is very new to me; the easiness of travelling through out Europe...amazing!

It's a good thing that I am coming back to Regent's College next term, I just have way too many things to do and see!

Veronique, Canada

Studying in Switzerland - EBS Student -

I started EBS in February 2006 and chose to study two languages – German and Spanish. Based on this I have spent my first SPA in Madrid, Spain and the second in Zurich, Switzerland. Switzerland is an amazing country in the heart of Western Europe. I chose Switzerland, because I was advanced in German and have been there many times before, meaning I knew what I was going for. Swiss punctuality and accuracy is well-known world wide, so arranging documents was not an issue. The semester started in February, which was in the middle of skiing season. Switzerland has amazing ski resorts and because the country is so compact one can reach them within couple of hours. The university is in Winterthur, which is approximately 20 minutes by train from Zurich. Therefore one could chose to

live either in Zurich or Winterthur. I chose to live in Zurich, which offered very nice socialising opportunities, although it restricted the possibilities to spend time with other exchange students, who rather lived in Winterthur.

Induction week at the university was well structured and many events were organised by the existing students to make one feel welcome. Of course, having a “buddy” helped a lot the integration process at the university. A buddy is a full-time studying student who is an exchange student's “guide”, helping one to familiarise with the new university. The buddy system used at Winterthur has been the model of ISB's newly formed buddy system.

Swiss people usually speak Swiss German with each other. Therefore, it can be quite a challenge to understand them, since this dialect varies, depending on the part of Switzerland you are currently in. It happens sometimes that during the classes teachers start speaking Swiss German. It is very typical and it is important to ask them to speak High German.

The classes began very early (8am), however the intensive schedule was worth it at the end since one could always have a long weekend off.

Overall, my experience in Switzerland was amazing. I met new people and visited many new places.

Anna, Ukraine