

E - Talk!

What a nice gesture!!

We are often asked what type of gifts are appropriate for students to bring for their host families. We always think that this is a lovely gesture so we have some ideas for you from other participants:

Food: spices, sweets, chocolate or dried meat or cheese from your own country

Drink: Coffee or tea

Souvenirs: Placemats, fridge magnets, little statues or tea towels.

Music: A CD of traditional music from your area.

Shop til you drop.....

In Britain you usually cannot wear jeans and sports shoes in the office. If you need more clothes for work, or you just want to go shopping, the best places (and closest) are TK Maxx and Primark in Wrexham. They are in the city centre and only a short walk from the bus station. You can find directions online or ask the ectarc staff.

It's not top secret.....

Many ectarc students ask us why they cannot have the information about their work placement before they come to Llangollen. The answer is because we want to speak to you about it in person, to discuss your tasks in detail and also listen to your English level as many jobs depend on your language skills. You won't have a choice of different work placements but if the placement we have found is not right we will discuss it with you and maybe change it. We want the best job for you so you have to trust us!!

What a busy year so far! From January to the end of May ectarc have welcomed groups from.....France (2 groups), Barcelona, Germany (4 groups), Spain (3 groups), Italy and Denmark. As usual, it has been wonderful meeting lots of new people but most importantly we have been overwhelmed at how well everyone has done here. Language levels have improved for everyone and work placements have been a big success!



ectarc students enjoying a sunny day on the River Dee in Llangollen

Not only have we been busy finding the best work placements and host families for all groups received so far, ectarc have also completed the renovation of the new student common room. Here students have access to a 50 inch TV with DVD player, films and Wii (including games), a CD player and an i-pod docking station, board games, a pool table, a football table, air hockey and a dart board. If this doesn't sound like fun and you prefer to simply catch up with family and friends on Skype or email, you could just sit back and relax on your laptop on our fabulous leather seats or use our computer room whenever you have free time. We like to make sure our students have some fun in-between those language classes!

Social evenings and cultural days have also taken place this year—all to make things a little more fun and interesting for students but you will have to read on to find out more about these!

We ask for lots of feedback from students, host companies and host families. By listening to this feedback not only do we see if the programme was a success for you, but most importantly we have the opportunity to continue improving the experience for future students. So, thank you to everyone who has given feedback so far this year. You are helping us to make this programme even better!

It's not all about work, work, work and learning while you are here in Wales (although this is a big part of the experience), it is also about the overall experience here. ectarc want to make sure that you enjoy every aspect of life in Wales so we are always here to help in any way we can. We continue to work with students to improve services here and will never stop making improvements wherever possible.



Students enjoying some 'play' time in the common room

It's learning but not as you know it

The language course at ectarc will be very different than what you are used to. At ectarc we mainly concentrate on 'everyday vocabulary'. We will try to teach you 'Real English' as it is spoken every day, socially and in the work place. This is called colloquial English. To get you to speak we use different FUN techniques such as presentations, quizzes and holding interviews with people in the streets. We also have audio visual facilities to use such as a camera and video editing equipment and often get involved in making short films where the students are the stars. Speaking, speaking, speaking, it's the most difficult thing in any language, but the only way to really learn.



A star in the making?

Xavier Ramírez Canivell (Xavi) was an **ectarc** student here from 7th February to the 24th May and came from Barcelona. As Xavi's background is production, his placement took him to Cardiff where he worked at a film production company called It's My Shout Productions Ltd. In the past, Xavi has also worked as a TV extra so we were not surprised at all when he called to tell us that he has just been offered a job as a TV extra in a very popular Welsh programme called Pobl Y Cwm. This TV series has been on Welsh screens for over 30 years and is as popular to people in Wales as Coronation Street or Eastenders is to people living in England. We will be setting our Sky+ to record Xavi's debut on Welsh TV at the end of May—maybe we will even ask him for his autograph when we see him next!!!



Xavi proudly standing in front of the company van

Fun times!

So when students aren't studying or working hard, where do they go and what do they see? Here are some pictures taken by students of the places they have visited....



London (Houses of Parliament)



Liverpool (Liver Building)



Conwy (Smallest house in the UK)

Party time...it's not always work, work, work!



On March 14th and April 4th, ectarc organised social evenings in their new common room for all groups currently in Wales either in work placements or on language course. 4 German, 1 Hungarian and 1 Spanish group joined us, and also some of our Spanish and French students already working came along. Both events went very well and the groups had all prepared traditional foods from their home countries such as sauerkraut with spicy sausage and German-style ravioli. The Hungarian students had brought their

local wine and schnapps for all of us to taste and cooked pasta with fried bacon and sour cream. Even ectarc staff stopped work to prepare Welsh foods such as leek and potato soup, Bara Briith and Welsh cakes with beer and wine to wash it all down.....our favourite! Local musicians, Cam Brereton and Morgan Thomas, provided live music and we were even treated to some Hungarian dance lessons courtesy of the students—all fun but we are sure there were some broken toes by the end of the lesson...ouch!



Dancing Hungarian Style



Stop the press!



Call Miss Jones in Rossett: from left are Andrea Murtagh, Jane Hunt, Julie Hopkins, Claire Bennett, Phil Smith, Simon Overthrow, Leira Mascarrilla, Louise Tabor, Peter Belton and David Toner., (SWT230211D)



We were very proud to receive this photo which was printed in one of the biggest newspapers in this area. The company, Call Miss Jones, is a new host company working with ectarc and they specialise in providing a phone-answering service for small to medium companies. If a company is too busy to answer all their calls but does not want to lose new business, Call Miss Jones can take the calls on their behalf. They offered a placement to ectarc student Leira, who is currently working in their marketing and PR department. Leira has a Master's in marketing and communications, so we thought who better to promote this new company to potential customers? At first Leira was a little unsure about this placement as her background is more in product marketing rather than service, but she agreed to work there and try it. We are so pleased she did, as it has proved to be a very successful placement and she even has her picture in the press! Can you spot Leira? Who do you think she is in this picture?

A delicious British Tradition

We British people have a tradition called **Pancake Day** so this means that we have yet another excuse to eat some very tasty food!!! This year we were able to share this with some of our students.

Shrove Tuesday is not just a British tradition but it is more commonly known as Pancake Day. This day is always on the Tuesday before **Lent**, this year on March 8. During Lent, Christians remember the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert, without food being tempted by the devil. During this time eating fat, butter and eggs is not allowed so people made pancakes with these ingredients to empty their cupboards. The word Shrove comes from 'Shrive', which means 'to confess'. This day you can confess your sins in church and ask for forgiveness. Now almost everybody eats pancakes on this day, whether they are religious or not. British pancakes are usually eaten with sugar and lemon but can be enjoyed with syrup (enjoyed by the Americans) and chocolate (enjoyed by the French)



Don't just take our word for it!

So that future students get a really good idea of what there is to do and see here in Wales, here is a selection of first hand accounts from some of our current students...

A positive and unforgettable experience.

I remember the first day that I arrived in Llangollen. I didn't know anybody and I didn't know anything about my new life in Wales and the trip was very long. For this reason I thought I had made the wrong decision on the day that I applied to do the work placement abroad, but I was wrong.

As a group we came here to know a new culture, live new experiences, and furthermore, learn English and do a work placement and so far this is what we have been doing.

The first two weeks were fantastic. English classes were great and we were, of course, learning new things such as typical expressions here. The atmosphere in class was good and it was fun to learn. I learned more English here than in all my life.

Every day, after classes, we left to go see something of Llangollen. We visited the castle ruins, the Abbey, the aqueduct, and many other places. The truth is that there are many places here where you can spend some time with your friends.

At night we gathered in the pubs in Llangollen to talk, play billiards and table football....and drink some beer.

The weekends, we used to visit nearby towns such as Wrexham and Chester, the two cities are very beautiful and the shopping is good. However we stayed in Llangollen on Sundays to spend time on the river when the weather was good.

My stay here has been rewarding because it has exceeded all my expectations. The food is good, I always have clean clothes I need, the house is clean... all is perfect. Steve, the owner of the house is very nice, funny, kind and helpful.

How I am waiting to move to my next destination city, Cardiff. A big city, with many people, pubs and many other things, I hope to do.

Of course I'll miss the people in Llangollen.

This is an experience I recommend to everyone as you live new experiences and you also realize what you have and what you can get out of it.

I hope to see you in Cardiff.

Carol Jiménez Navarra, Spain working at Capita Sy-

As it is my first time in the UK, I have to say it was a very nice way to get to know the country and people. Lovely host families and nice people at the work placement accompanied me through this programme. All of them helped me to improve my English as well as you "Ectarcians" and teachers. So I think this is the most important thing I'll benefit from, language skills and new contacts / relationships with nice people. I liked the fact that we had 2 week's language course. because it really helped me to improve my language knowledge. I loved to be in the host families and join them in their everyday life.

Julia Németh, Germany working at Crichton Taylors in Chester

I have improved my English and that was the reason for my stay here. I also learned more about the structure in the companies and the culture. I think it was all good. Starting with the language course and the culture days, the accommodation and then the work placement. All the teachers were very funny and that's the reason why I enjoyed going to school. That's the best way for learning. I enjoyed it very much and learned a lot.

The whole organisation makes it a really great experience. I have to say thank you for it. I really enjoyed my stay in Wales and I want to come back.

Yuki Möricke, Germany working at Glyndwr University Careers Centre in Wrexham

I think that this experience has made me gain confidence to speak English, and not worry if I make mistakes because people can help me and I then learn more. All my experiences in the UK have been positive. In the language course I learnt many useful things for everyday life and in my work place I spoke a lot in English and saw another way of work, completely different from that in Spain, so I really enjoy my time here!

Nora Lacosta Plano Navarra, Spain working at Littlefriends Nursery in Chester

Actually, I was very lucky with my host family and my work placement. I definitely benefited from this programme. My English is better. I feel more confident speaking English with different people, meeting new people and getting to know a new culture. My work placement was interesting; it wasn't exactly what I want to do as a job later but I knew this was not possible with my English level. I learnt technical vocabulary and English methods to do a river study with the children, and I participated a lot in different activities. This programme enabled me to have a great personal experience, working in my field of activity.

Nina Dagens, France working at Erdlig House in Wrexham

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pictures and stories of current and previous participants

