
On The British Education System
and
The State Schools in Cambridge (Vol. XXIV)
—Activities Week 1987—

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In the preceding essays (Vol. XIX-XXIII), I mentioned, according to the school brochure and my son's notebooks and school letters, the school lessons my son received at the Manor Community College. And in Vol. XXIII, I mentioned one subject called "Personal & Social Education," which I left because of the limited space, and then also mentioned "Activities Week 1987," one of the school events. However, because of the limited space, I was unable to finish explaining the details of "Activities Week 1987." Therefore, in this essay, I will explain the details of the school letters and the trip to France.

As I mentioned a little in the preceding essay (Vol. XXIII), one day in November in 1986, my son came home with a booklet called "Activities Week 1987." The booklet says that "for the third time in 1987, we shall be running a week of fun and leisure during 'Activities Week.' The dates are Monday, 20th July to Thursday, 23rd July, although some activities may include some extra days. The whole school will be involved. All the staff and all the pupils from the first to the fourth years will take part in some activities for these four days. There will be no normal school timetable

during this week until Friday. Friday, 24th July will be a normal school day."

At first sight, I understood that it was like a trip for educational purposes in Japan, but that it contains something different from a school journey, such as "Jewelery Making," "Look Good, Feel Good," "Lost in the Wilds," "Mini-Music Course," "Eye-View," and something like that. Indeed I was much surprised to know that this project had eighteen courses, and that all the staff and all the pupils from the first to fourth years would take part in some activities for the four days! I think we cannot find such

a project in Japan, so I introduced to you, according to the booklet, information about all the groups that would be running. The booklet says about every activity what it is doing; the age group that may take part; the staff that are running it; a description of the activities and the cost.

In due consideration of my son's interest and necessary expenses for the trip, my son and I decided to choose No.13 'Home and Abroad' as the first choice. Here I will write down No.13 once again.

'HOME and ABROAD'

Age Range - All Years

Staff - Mr. Hunter, Mr. Murphy, Mrs. Kilburn

Description - Monday : Trip to France
 Tuesday : 1/2 Day (p.m.)
 Rounder on Field
 Wednesday : Trip to
 Woburn Abbey
 Thursday : Possible trip to
 Lakenheath Airfield
 (subject to confirmation)

Cost - £28 total approximately

Then my son handed in the form of No.13 Home and Abroad. In March, 1987, my son came back with a school letter. It was intended for narrowing down the pupils to take part in the activity. So we had to make a firm commitment to the activity by signing the slip and returning it with a deposit of £10. In the meantime, my son was told to be able to make a trip to France. And on 21st May, my son received a school letter concerning the activity. The letter said, "The final cost of the visit has now been fixed at £28 per person. This includes all coach, ferry and basic insurance costs and entrance to Woburn Abbey. As you have already paid a deposit of £10 we should

be grateful if you could let; us have the remaining £18 not later than Friday 13th June." So I had my son take a cheque £18 to Manor Community College.

In the meanwhile, a new problem arose about the trip. As you know, you have to get a visa on your passport to enter France. Naturally Mr. Hunter, head of pastoral care and one of the staff of the trip, asked us to get my son's passport visaed. However, when we applied for our passport in Japan, my son was ten years old and my youngest daughter was eight, so my wife had her passport made together with her above-mentioned children, partly because the cost of making a passport was cheaper, and partly because we did not think that the two children might make a trip by themselves. Therefore, my two children were unable to make a trip without their mother. For this reason, we consulted with Mr. Hunter about the matter, and he allowed my wife to accompany her son to France. I was much relieved to hear it because I was forced to go to Paris on 1st July according to the schedule by which the prior approval of the Ministry of Education had been obtained.

After I left England for Paris on 1st July as prearranged, my wife and son received a final school letter concerning the French day-return trip in July. For your information, I will show you the first school letter and the final school one at page 3, 4 and 5.

Thus on July 20th, according to my wife, my wife and son left Manor School at 5.00 a.m. by coach and started for Dover to get on the ferry. As the final letter says, when you go to France from England by ferry, English money can be spent on the ferry, but you will find it cheaper to purchase your French money in England before you leave; it is expensive to exchange money on the ferry or in France. The same is the case with your foreign trip.

Shigeta 1-1

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6th March, 1987

Dear Parents,

Activities Week July 20th - 24th - Activity No. 13 Home & Abroad.

You have indicated a willingness for your child to take part in the above activity.

At present we have over 60 pupils who are interested, but unfortunately we can only accommodate up to 49 pupils on the visits. Therefore we should now like you to make a firm commitment to the activity by signing the slip below and returning it with a deposit of £10 per child by Friday 13th March. Should more than 49 deposits be returned by this date we shall organise a ballot to decide who can go.

Cheques should be made payable to Manor School Fund, and slips and money returned to Mr. Murphy.

Please note that Accident and Medical Insurance is included in the cost of the activity, but we strongly urge you to take out a personal property insurance as well especially for the trip to France.

Further details of departure times etc., will be given later.

Yours sincerely,

F. Murphy
F. Murphy
Senior Teacher

B. L. Hunter
B.L. Hunter
Head of Pastoral Care

Y. Shigeta . 1.1

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MU/PAW

8th July 1987

Home and Abroad. French Trip July 20th.

Dear Parents,

Here are a few details which you and your child need to know to make our visit a pleasant occasion.

1. Timing is very important. Please note that the coach will leave Manor School at 5.00 a.m. on Monday and it essential that we get a prompt start so that we do not miss the Ferry ; we cannot wait for late comers.

We hope to return to school at approx. 11.00 - 11.30 p.m.

2. Food Children may take packed meals if they wish but breakfast can be bought on the boat and once in France we hope to organise a French meal for everyone at a cost of about £5 - £6.

3. Money As well as the cost of food, children need spending money and we shall be visiting a hypermarket where they will be able to buy foodstuffs, sweets and souvenirs. Please remember English money can be spent on the Ferry but your child will need to take French money for spending in France. You will find it cheaper to purchase your French money in Cambridge before we leave. It is expensive to exchange money on the Ferry.

4. Clothes Clothing for the day will obviously be governed by the weather; but remember even during warm weather early mornings and late nights can be cool.

We shall be visiting a beach and children will need bathing costume and towels if they intend to swim.

5. Other Equipment Some children may want to take cameras; please remember that equipment such as cameras is not covered by the school insurance scheme and you must arrange such insurance yourself.

Transistor radios, personal stereos and the like are not to be taken on this visit.

Cont'd...

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6. Please note also, the arrangements for other days -

Tuesday: Report to Lower School Playground 1.00 p.m.

Wednesday: Report to Lower School Playground 9.00 a.m. for day trip to Woburn Abbey - packed meal required : return approx. 3.30 p.m.

Thursday: Report to Lower School Playground 9.00 a.m. for visit to Lakenheath - packed meal required : return approx. 3.30 p.m.

Thank you for your cooperation, I am sure we will have a pleasant week.

Yours sincerely,

F. Murphy

B.L. Hunter

On the same day, the school party reached Calais, which is the nearest place in France from England across the Strait of Dover, and visited a hypermarket, where they were able to buy foodstuffs, sweets and souvenirs. By the way, Mr. Hunter bought some bottles of wine and asked my wife to use her tax-free right for his bottles of wine, and my wife was willing to accept his request, she says.

After enjoying themselves at a hypermarket and a beach, they headed for Dover on the evening of that day. When they were going to reach Dover after a few minutes, according to my wife, they announced an urgent message to the passengers on board; it was a message to inform them of an accident; they said that from another ferry, a man fell down on the sea, and that their ferry must go to his rescue. And their ferry stood out to sea to save a life. But it was unfortunate that they were unable to find out the man after searching for about an hour, and the ferry retraced her way. On their way back to Dover, they announced again that all the foodstuffs on the dining room of the ferry could be got for nothing. Of course, all the passengers were pleased with the announcement, and my wife and son ate some foodstuffs with pleasure.

To hear this accident, I thought that it was really British means of settling to value a man's life! Of course, all the passengers made no complaint about it! To such a conduct of the passengers, the captain of the ferry gave all the foodstuffs to the passengers for nothing! I wonder if that is the case with Japanese people if such an accident should happen.

Thus the school party reached Manor School at 11.00 p.m. safe and sound as scheduled. I am sure my wife and son had wonderful and memorable day.

The next day, on 21st of July, the school boys and girls taking part in the activity "Home and

Abroad" were gathered on the Lower School Playground of Manor for explanation of the trip and visit of the week, and the next day, they started again for day trip to Woburn Abbey with packed lunch. The next day, 22nd of July, they had a visit to Lakenheath, which I think is a zoological garden, with also packed lunch. I am sure my son had a really pleasant week with his friends, so I will show you some photographs of the trip at the following page.



The Street of Calais, France



My Son and His Friends in the Coach



Mr. Hunter, Head of Pastoral Care, and My Wife at Dover, England



My Wife and Son at Dover, England