



BREZEL-NEWS

Fifth Edition, July 2013

Newsletter of the German Saturday Schools Islington and Hackney Wick

Dear Saturday School Families and Saturday School Friends,

Another Saturday School year is ending, my 15th! It's hard to believe that Klaudia, Inge and Yasmine have been with us for even longer. Their older children are among our alumni and Yasmine and Klaudia are outstanding teachers in Islington. Inge is one of our active parents who support us with their voluntary input and, for example, decorates our hall for Christmas or orders the bouncy castle for our summer party. After former students and teachers, Martina (another one of our very supportive parents) introduces our fantastic volunteers in this edition.

This is also a hint to everyone that our Saturday Schools depend on families taking an active part in the school. We don't just want parents to drop off their children and use us as a service. Obviously not everyone is able to help out all of the time, and many are always willing to step in. But some happily seem to leave everything to others and don't even do their parent rota or contribute all of three satsumas to the buffet. Please keep in mind that your children also enjoy their break times and the food at the buffet.

In this newsletter we also report on our fairytale activities and the bilingual Judith Kerr School which starts teaching in South London in September. Plus some other successes/news:

Ulrike Hensel-Burg has been the new school director at Hackney Wick since June 15th. Ulrike has been supporting me with the school administration since January 2011. Without her I would have thrown in the towel long ago. Ulrike

knows the job really well and has been involved in Hackney Wick since the school's foundation. Many thanks, Ulrike, and all the best!

Christine Pleines was recognised for her outstanding work at the Islington Saturday Schools as a runner-up for the German Teacher Awards at the "Sommerfest der Deutschen Sprache" in the German Embassy on June 25th. We congratulate Christine and are very happy about this acknowledgement by the Embassy.

Our Summer School, which is to take place from August 27th to 30th at Drayton Park School, has proven incredibly popular this year. We were fully booked within five days and had to engage a fourth teacher. The Summer School, too, will have a "fairytale" theme.

Our two adult courses in Islington had a joint party, and last but not least we have about 150 children in Islington 50 in Hackney Wick, altogether three adult courses, 25 teachers and assistants and many fantastic families – which makes for two wonderful Saturday Schools. Many thanks to all of you, happy summer holidays & we look forward to seeing you on September 14th! Cathrin xx

Cathrin Cordes, School Director

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Ulrike (red jumper) at the Hackney Wick parents evening in June. Ulrike grew up in Hamburg and has lived in London for 20 years. She produced documentary films before the birth of her children Liamara and Timmy. She values the benefits of Saturday School for her own children. Ulrike is excited about her new job in Hackney and has set to work with plenty of zeal: summer fair organisation, planning for the new school year from September, and we are urgently looking for one more new teacher in Hackney Wick!



Ulrike Hensel-Burg with parents from Hackney Wick.



Photo: German Embassy

Christine at the "Sommerfest der Deutschen Sprache" in the German Embassy

On June 25 our "very own" Christine Pleines was recognised for her outstanding work at the Islington Saturday School as a runner-up for the German Teacher Awards 2013. Through her varied and interesting lessons, Christine has motivated students to stay loyal to Saturday School over many years and has prepared them very well for GCSE and A-Level exams. The picture shows her (2nd to the right) with other winners, German Ambassador Georg Boomgaarden and Elizabeth Truss MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare and keynote speaker at the event.

Party Time for Adult Courses in Islington

One June 8th it was party time for the two adult courses at Saturday School - complete with drinks (soft ones only, to the disappointment of some) and nibbles. It was a great opportunity for all of us to refresh basic introductions and practice "small talk" in German, all under the gentle guidance of our teacher/hostess Carola. Much fun was had mingling with the members of the other adult class and even those of us with a less than perfect grasp of German avoided acting like complete social imbeciles.



German Summer School 2013 from 27-30 August

The late August date seems to be even better: Our summer school was booked up within five days. In line with our activities last term, this year's motto is "Fairy Tales", and our summer school teachers have lots of great ideas already:

- **Martina Schwarz** is a musician, accordion player and songwriter who believes that music is an excellent vehicle for language learning. Her popular song-books "Learn German with Songs" were created in collaboration with the Goethe-Institute London
- **Yasmine Burnett** often works with theatre and puppets. She has also run German after-school clubs at Primary Schools in Stoke Newington and is passionate about learning through storytelling and encouraging creative learning approaches.
- **Sonja Bucherer** is a designer who mainly works with textiles and has been dubbed our "undisputed arts and crafts queen". She also runs crafts and sewing classes at North London Primary Schools.
- **Frauke Ehmke** has been a very popular teacher at the Hackney Wick Saturday School since its start in 2011. She is an artist in "real life" and intertwines her artistic approach with her classroom work, playfully drifting from art into teaching language.

Kai Dawson will be assisting us at the summer school. Kai is a former pupil of the Islington Saturday School and is starting university to become a Primary teacher in September. He has been a classroom assistant at the Hackney School for the past year and a half. Ulrike Hensel-Burg will be in charge of the daily running of this year's summer school, while Cathrin is still in charge of the overall management and coordination of the summer school. The summer school team are working together closely to make this year's summer school as successful as during the past three years. We are looking forward to have fun with the children in the end of August!

Voluntary input wanted -

Community spirit is the key to our success

With more than 150 children in 12 classes, their families and two adult courses, the Saturday School Islington has become quite a large operation. In addition we offer a range of “extras” each Saturday, for example our coffee kitchen or the video table. Parents are on duty to set up and clean the hall at the end as well as watch out for the children during break time, and every year we celebrate various parties like carnival, our summer fair and our Christmas party. All of this would not be possible without our many volunteers, some of whom have been enriching our Saturdays with their input for many years.

“The Saturday School started as a small parent initiative. We are now very large and registered as a limited liability company in January 2011. On this level unfortunately not all the administrative and management work can be done on a voluntary basis anymore, and of course we have to pay our teachers fairly. But we are registered as a non-profit enterprise and try to keep our fees as low as possible. All parents should be aware that without the many voluntary contributions – big or small - we would not be able to keep our fees so that they are still comparatively reasonable for London standards”, Cathrin explains.

Among parents who regularly contribute their time and energy in Islington is our “video team”: Alexander Hug, Georg Holthausen and Alexander Schmidt. For many years, the trio have been providing us with films. Audio books are about to be added and they have also kindly taken our LÜK-booklets on board.

The name reveals just how long our video table has been in existence. Its veteran is Alexander Hug, who has been part of the team for more than ten years. “As a family we joined the Saturday School in the autumn of 2001. At the time we had about 50 videos, and Olaf, a dentist from Walthamstow, was very grateful when I offered my

help”, Alexander remembers. “We lend the films for a small fee, and out of our earnings we buy new films, nowadays in DVD format, obviously. Georg joined the team in 2007 and Alexander Schmidt in 2009 and we often have a lot of fun together.”



Alexander Hug and Georg from the video team

“We have about 200 DVDs and for the past two years we have also been lending the LÜK-booklets,” Alexander Schmidt explains. “The table has to be set up every Saturday. The DVDs are roughly sorted by subject matter (for the younger children, for teenagers and grown-ups) and loans are made with the help of index cards for a 2-week period.” “Everything is quite informal”, adds Georg. “Whoever is here, looks after the video table. If more of us are present, the better for us. Then we can have a chat, too.”

New purchases are a team decision. “We place two to three orders per year or bring back films from trips to Germany,” says Alexander Hug. “From time to time we take stock. Films that are not popular are usually sold at the book table. We keep an eye on the film scene in Germany, have a wish list in our cash box and are always open to suggestions. We try to have something for everyone – from “Sendung mit der Maus” and “Wilde Kerle” for younger children to complete crime series such as “Tatort”. We know our stock very well and are able to make suggestions to those who like to be inspired. What we don’t like are borrowers who forget that other people enjoy watching films, too.” Alexander Schmidt agrees: “Really annoying are the overdue fees and the discussions involved.” Apart from that the well-coordinated video team enjoys its tasks very much.

The same goes for Michela and Andreas Staab who look after our coffee kitchen. “We have been doing this for four years and enjoy doing it. Obviously, we need enough coffee, tea and milk. Before Saturday School we always load everything into two solid boxes and transport them to Drayton



Summer School 2012

Park School (which is why we have permission to park in the school grounds). After school the cups end up in our dishwasher before disappearing into our shed for a week. For a cup of tea or coffee we ask for a small donation of 30p or 50p, and the coffee money is used as a contribution towards our parties or teaching materials. Obviously, we don't look after the coffee kitchen on our own. Our daughters Sophia and Luisa help with the packing and unpacking of the boxes and other parents also help out. In case of an emergency or when we're busy, Manfred Hummel usually steps in."



Andreas mit one of his helpers, daughter Louisa.

Our current "chief inspector of break time supervision", Connie Dickgreber, has been a volunteer for several years. All parents, who are not involved in any other function, are assigned a Saturday per term where they are "on duty". And Connie makes sure no-one forgets. "As a rule I phone people on a Friday evening or send a text", says Connie. "Some are totally surprised when I call them, others already have the date in their calendar."

"The task includes setting up and taking down the tables, wiping tables and sweeping the school hall. Also, you have to keep an eye on the playground, to make sure that the children are playing in a reasonably civilised manner, and to make sure the gate to the main road stays closed." Connie doesn't see her job as a chore. "I enjoy doing it. It's my contribution to the school. The school only functions if everyone contributes something."

"In about 2001 we noticed that we were having problems with our parent rota", explains Klaus-Dieter Rossade, our very first chief inspector of break time supervision. "When you phone people the day before, it works much better. I took on the

job and chose the wonderful title, too." Sandra Heistrüvers fulfilled the honourable task from 2004 until 2007. "I stopped right in the middle of my twin pregnancy", Sandra remembers. "The nice thing is that because you need to phone people, you get to talk to many Saturday School parents."

You probably all know Carlos, who has held a sort of caretaker position for the past 15 years: "I make sure that nobody is on the premises who doesn't belong here. That's why I talk to anyone whom I don't know. External visitors who have come to buy from the baker are not allowed inside the building. I also greet new families and give them the necessary information. My children laugh about my "Five minutes of fame" when I make the necessary announcements after the communal singing. I coordinate with Gary, the caretaker at Drayton Park School, and sometimes give the baker a hand. I still quite enjoy it. Otherwise I wouldn't be doing it."

Our treasurer Ursula Yates has also been with us for some time. Her main task is to ensure all fees are paid and that our teachers get their wages. "Once a year I have to prepare our accounts for the accountant. Everything has to be in order and everything has to be verifiable. I have been doing it for 13 years and in that time the Saturday School has obviously grown a lot. The biggest step change, however, as far as work volume and responsibility were concerned was our transition to becoming a "limited company". Through my job I have contact with everyone and gain a good insight into the group. I am honoured to have been entrusted this job."

Cathrin and Ursula had both been working on a voluntary basis for many years until the extent of their tasks burst the boundaries of a voluntary post. Cathrin is being paid since the school year 2008/2009, and Ursula since the founding of the limited company in January 2011. A large part of their effort, however, remains unpaid. "Sometimes I work all week to make sure our Saturday mornings run smoothly. This time of year especially is a peak time. All the classes have to be coordinated for the new school year and the right teachers have to be chosen for the right groups. I still enjoy it," says Cathrin. "The greatest reward is to see all the children and how well everything works."

Besides Cathrin and Ursula, Charlotte Schulze and Andreas Staab are the two other directors of our Limited Liability Company. Andreas often supports Cathrin at the parents evening and during difficult conversations throughout the school year, while Charlotte, together with Cathrin, represents our school at the Saturday Schools' umbrella organization VDSS, at the German Embassy and other institutions and also helps with the coordination of teachers' activities. Charlotte, however, is full of admiration for the video and coffee teams: "Lugging all those boxes is real back-breaking work, and they've been doing that

for years.”

Also worth mentioning is our book table, currently looked after by Oliver Bärwald and Constanze Schweda. Once per term this gives our Saturday School families a great opportunity for a clear-out at home. Mostly German books, films and games are sold for the benefit of our Saturday School. “It’s really no great deal to look after the book table,” says Constanze. “And I feel that I’m contributing something useful.”



Connie and Andreas in action

After many years in charge of the book table Katrina Scior currently organises – again with Oliver – the “Kaffeeklatsch” (coffee morning) for new parents. “The coffee mornings take place once per term,” Katrina explains. “We send an email to everyone and invite especially the “new” parents and offer something sweet from the baker. Then we just chat about all sorts of things: how long ago we joined the Saturday School, how many years they spent on the waiting list, how long we’ve been living in London, which German-speaking country we are from or why we speak German, etc. The coffee morning is meant to welcome people and to give them an opportunity to meet other parents and make new friends, and of course to find out about our volunteering ethos.”

Maren Meinhardt is in charge of culinary supplies at our parties. “When I heard right at the very beginning of my time at the Saturday School that everything works thanks to the many volunteers, I asked – purely rhetorically – if there was anything I could do. Cathrin immediately mentioned the buffet. Since then I have been doing the rounds twice a year – before the Christmas party and before the summer fair - equipped with a list of names, and remind everyone to make a

contribution. I have to make sure that we have enough of everything: sweet, savoury and something to drink. I’ll continue to do it, because even after four years of Saturday School I still haven’t learnt all of the names.” The actual buffet is then organised by Martina Malone. “She is somehow much more assertive than me and makes sure that the first people arriving at the buffet don’t eat everything.”

Another tradition is for someone to make available their house for the annual parents evening. This year it was Kim Dietzel and Becket McGrath who – very kindly, for the second time already – invited us into their home. Sebastian Borger or Dirk Vetter (with his daughter Annika on the accordion) step in when Hildegard can’t make “Singkreis”, and others who need to be mentioned are our webmaster James Bridgman, Judith Brocklehurst who every year designs the template for our Saturday School reports, and Maugan Hague, who is responsible for the layout of the Brezel News.

Ulrike Hensel, the new director of our school in Hackney Wick, also counts on the voluntary support of the parents at Hackney Wick. There, too, we will have 60 children in five classes and an adult course from September. Here we would like to mention Nina Böger who supported us with many invaluable coordination tasks during the first year, as well as Kristina Butschbacher and Petra Lazarek, who have been running a coffee stall for the past year. Susanne Dietz, Julia Simon and Heike Langenbach also help regularly. Susanne found the Gainsborough School for us, which her daughters also attend during the week, and Katrin Homer has just taken over the coordination of the parent rota. Stefan Bottenberg (Buffet) and Thorsten Gritschke (Games) are organising the summer party.



Communal singing at Hackney Wick

As you can see, there are many and always new possibilities for your input, from occasionally helping out to regular volunteer jobs every Saturday. We rely on our volunteers who help out, introduce new ideas and take on responsibilities. A loud, resounding and heartfelt thank-you!!

by Martina Koepcke

Bilingualism without Saturday School - Judith Kerr School to open in September

Bilingual schools have long become a normality in countries such as Germany or Spain. Like all of us at Saturday School many families recognise the advantages of children growing up multilingually even if their parents don't speak any other languages themselves.

Great Britain seems to struggle with this concept, but in September the first Anglo-German primary school is set to open its gates in South London. Following the opening of an Anglo-Spanish primary school in Brighton in September 2012, the Judith Kerr School will be the second bilingual primary school in the country. The aim is not only to learn the second language, but to develop both languages across the whole curriculum and to achieve equal competency in both languages.

In Germany there are, for example, the state-run and fee-free European Schools (Europaschulen). The first European Schools in Berlin started in the early 90s. Second language in approximately 20 primary and secondary schools are – here besides German, of course – English, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, (Modern) Greek, Portuguese and Polish.

These schools are very popular with our former Saturday School students. Families who move to Germany from London often turn to them for their children. Sebastian Öhlert, for example, moved to Berlin with his children in September last year. Elisia and Konrad now attend the Quentin Blake European School in Dahlem. When enrolling the children are grouped according to their mother tongue. Elisia's and Konrad's mother tongue is English and their partner language is German. In Maths and Music all children are taught in German; English, Sciences, Geography and History are taught in English. During German and English lessons, native speakers and non-native speakers are split up and taught accordingly. Elisia thinks it's great that her two best friends are from Great Britain (Sheffield and Scotland), just like her.

Two years ago, Max Jerschke and his family moved from London to Berlin. "Our daughter, Jolanda, was 11 years old at the time – it would have been tough for her to go to a proper German school. But at her bilingual school she quickly made friends because she had many English-speaking classmates. The core issue for her was her written German, and she succeeded in gradually improving it at this school."

Jolanda attends the state-run international Nelson Mandela School. Here, lessons are taught in English or German, depending on the student's mother tongue. This means that subjects such as

Geography, Biology or History are taught in English to native German speakers. For native English speakers it is the other way round. In these subjects, the foreign language becomes the working language and is supposed to be used by teachers as well as students. Homework set in the partner language is less difficult than that set in your mother tongue and individual learning support is offered.

The school ranges from primary school to Abitur. The Primary syllabus is a mixture of the German curriculum, the International Primary Curriculum and the English National Curriculum. For example, Jolly Phonics and the Oxford Reading Tree books are being used. The International Baccalaureate is offered as an alternative qualification to the Abitur.

While lessons are conducted in a foreign language, students also acquire intercultural competencies and are able to adopt the perspective of the country whose language they are learning. This encourages a greater understanding of the students' own culture as well as others'.



School fair in Berlin

One should think that all this should go fit in well with multicultural Britain. However, anyone who has ever googled "Anglo-German schools in London" knows that apart from our Saturday Schools there is only one result: the German School in Richmond. Now all that is about to change. In September 2013 the Judith Kerr School is opening as a Free School in North Dulwich. Children aged between 4 and 11 will be taught there, from Reception Class up until Year 6. Lessons will be taught in German and English.

The project Judith Kerr Primary School was started 2 years ago by six parents who wanted to found a bilingual Anglo-German primary school. They got together with the RDA Schools Trust, which in turn

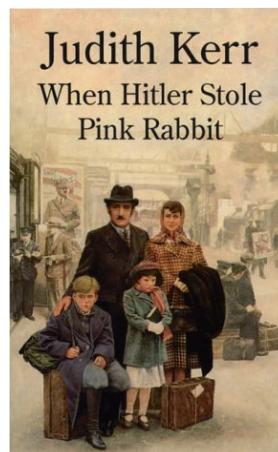
is sponsored by the Department of Education. Most of the parents have younger children and are enthusiastic about the opportunities bilingualism offers. The initiator Peter Johnson says: "Bilingual schools achieve very good results. The children often reach similar writing and reading competence to those achieved by children in normal schools, in both languages. The children are given great opportunities, whatever their linguistic background. Not only will they gain personal and intellectual benefits from this type of education but they will also have greater professional opportunities."

Peter Johnson grew up bilingually himself, in London with a German mother. Just like one of our Saturday School kids as a grown-up, so to speak. He is bringing up his own children bilingually in 2nd generation. Thus he is the perfect example that our bilingual children can act as multipliers far beyond their own family. It also shows that studying languages is a worthwhile pursuit. Pete: "Our hope for our pupils is that they are able to live and learn in two or more cultures and thus become socially active and broad-minded citizens."

The Judith Kerr Primary School is the first publically-funded primary school in Great Britain to offer tuition in English and German. Like all Free Schools it is not allowed to be selective but allocates places according to the usual admissions criteria. Parents have to apply for a place in the same way they apply for other state primary school. Judith Kerr School will undergo the same Ofsted inspections and SATs tests as any other school in the country.

Lessons are set up so that from Reception class onwards both languages are used for teaching the whole curriculum. In the beginning, children are

supported in the speaking and comprehension of English and German, later reading and writing in both languages is added – the same principle that applies to our Saturday School, really.



the job: She herself grew up bilingually in English and Polish, and she has successfully set up other bilingual schools already – in Prague and in Spain

And why the name Judith Kerr School? Judith Kerr was forced to flee to England from Nazi Germany, because her father – a writer – was persecuted by the Nazis. She describes her experiences of fleeing from the Nazis and arriving in London in "When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit" and "The Other Way Round". Her children's books such as "The Tiger Who Came to Tea" and the Mog series have also become classics. Judith Kerr (OBE) and her work are a symbol for the magic of childhood and the hope for peace and understanding between cultures and peoples – quite similar to the objectives of bilingual schools.

by Ulrike Hensel-Burg



School enrolment at the Nelson Mandela School

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A little Mouse, a little Bird, Bratwurst and Porridge

A Fairytale Initiative by the Goethe-Institute and our Saturday School

“As if spellbound we stared at the pot and saw the sweet porridge rise and rise, in our imagination we saw it flow across the floor, down the stairs and fill the whole school yard. Whosoever wanted to enter the school had to eat his way through it...!!!” That and much more could happen if you let your imagination run wild or... if you study fairytales, which is what we teachers from Islington and Hackney Wick did on the afternoon of Saturday, April 27th. Roma Schultz, teaching expert at the Goethe Institute, took us on a magical trip and had us try out some of her ideas straight away: Which fairytale character still gives you goosebumps? Who can sort the Bremen Town Musicians according to size, volume and speed? Knock on the table top once each time you hear a word with a double consonant. Put phrases taken from the fairytale “The Nail” in order and consider, which situations similar to those of the merchant’s could arise today. Figuratively speaking: Our bag of teaching ideas was being filled to bursting.



Christine Müller with her class

Usually, teachers from German Saturday Schools all over Great Britain meet up once a year for a seminar. This afternoon’s event, however, was held especially for us! Many thanks to Frau Schultz for the interesting presentation and thanks, Cathrin, for the organisation and the delicious lunch – much better than porridge! Only one question remained unanswered: What would Gary have said to a school yard filled with sticky porridge???

Visit to the Fairytale Exhibition at the Goethe Institute

“Once upon a time there were a little mouse, a little bird and a Bratwurst who lived together in a little house!!!” Ever heard of this fairytale? All the adults in the room sat with knitted brows and the children’s mouths dropped open when Katharina, a storyteller from Munich, carried us off into this new story. On Saturday, June 8th, we joined the throngs

of visitors making their way to the South Kensington museums or Hyde Park when about 20 Saturday School pupils from Islington and Hackney Wick travelled to the Goethe Institute to visit a fairytale exhibition. With the help of video clips of some heartwarming new ARD fairytale films (strongly recommended..., very funny) the children filled in work sheets, played fairytale memory, listened to the aforementioned storyteller and explored the fairytale exhibition: a forest with treasure chests and a variety of hidden information. Sure enough, the girls gathered around the “heroines” treasure chest and the boys were attracted to the video clips of “modern heroes”, while the older children shared the headphones of a box containing the scariest noises.

Fairytales... are they just for small children? Really?

“What would you do if there was a bratwurst adorning your wife’s nose and you only had one more wish left???” This provocative remark was addressed to the fathers of our group. “Why did the miller choose to believe his goat rather than his sons?” “Why didn’t Cinderella’s father intervene and help his daughter?” These questions were asked during our discussion, while the teaching material encouraged us to consider the possible consequences of Golden Mary’s and Pitch Mary’s experiences on their future lives together. Or “What can we learn from the girl in The Star Money? Who is in need today and requires our help? How can we help responsibly?”

Therefore: “Fairytales are for Grown-Up – Children!” or “And they lived happily ever after, retelling fairytales even today: 200 years after the Brothers Grimm published their first collection of fairytales!

by Christine Müller



The Storyteller with her enchanted audience