

Blimey,
it's Le Jeudi
in English!



WHY

What on Earth got into the Jeudi team to break away from an all-French framework after eleven years? It's because the world's a revolving place, because new communities using English as a lingua franca are moving into the hood at a fast pace. Le Jeudi, without disavowing its francophile origins, proceeds to another level. Every week, two pages will sum up national news in English, will attempt to bring the Grand-Duchy closer to the English-speaking communities, wherever they are from. A «special relationship» of the cooler kind.

How I Fit Into The World

Christopher Bowman, Director of the International School

Since July 2007, director of a staff of 167 at the International School of Luxembourg.

ERIC NETGEN

Christopher Bowman and his wife arrived in Luxembourg after a long stretch of intensive travelling and numerous posts held in the educational systems of different countries around the globe. «For the love of Europe, we made that decision», says the man from Down Under, who started off as administrator in the South Australian government educational system before serving three years as District Superintendent of Education. What makes a man travel almost sixteen thousand kilometres to live in relatively sleepy Luxembourg? «I spent three and a half years in Papua New Guinea before coming to Luxembourg. It's nowadays ranked as possibly the most dangerous spot on the planet», says the former head of the Port Moresby International School there. Living in compounds behind razor-wired fences puts things into perspective. «If you want to live in a beautiful green environment, you'd better stop complaining about the rain», he adds with a smile. Point taken.

His list of academic battlefields is long. He was director of the International School in Copenhagen, and afterwards in Bavaria. During this time he also served on the European Council of International Schools for six years. He spent two years as Associate Superintendent with Educational Overseas Services Ltd in Egypt. His mission there was to orchestrate the establishment of two new schools in Cairo and Dubai. When his

friend and predecessor Clayton Lewis packed his bags as director of the ISL after nine years, Christopher Bowman made his move and got the job. «I like the way the Luxembourg government understands the importance of having an international school», he says, adding some praise for the orderly fashion in which the locals seem to go about things: «From the construction of football pitches to the collection of rubbish, everywhere you can spot signs of the taxpayer getting something in return for his money.»

GLOBAL ISSUES

ISL folk do seem a truly democratically inclined bunch. The board of governors is elected by «the community» (i.e. the parents) and in turn evaluates even the director's performance on an annual basis. The ISL can adapt to a changing situation faster than a big national educational system, can appoint teachers and change the syllabus from one moment to another, simply because that's what seems best for the kids. The board meets every month and a five-year strategic plan is reviewed every year, while sub-committees continuously feel the pulse of the outside world. Small wonder the international Baccalaureate curriculum dispensed here is the fastest growing in the world. At the ISL, student numbers are soaring, from 724 in 2007 to 910 today. The school's ambitions venture beyond the token job at the end of the line. «It's all about young people finding their position in the world, about what makes them valuable and responsible members of society. To trigger that process, we must stimulate kids as much as we can, without driving them until they fall over», the director explains, pointing a proud finger



Photo: Isabella Finzi

Says the director: «We want to be part of the Luxembourg community, even though English is our language of instruction. The curriculum is not bilingual, but we definitely value languages and the education simply has to be transportable. The plan is to educate the whole student... it's ultimately about social responsibility»

at the Global Issues Network (GIN). Designed to empower students to work together with their peers on an international level, figuring out solutions to global problems, the network was inspired by former World Bank vice-presi-

dent Jean-François Rischard – and first distilled in the International School of Luxembourg. So they may sometimes wrongly be perceived as outsiders here, but the fact is: they are citizens of the world already.

Going Nuts in Vianden

Local Quirks and Customs Explained: The Country's Annual Walnut Market

Local customs cause bewilderment. A little less so once they pass through the taste buds.

ERIC NETGEN

The quaint city of Vianden, fifty kilometres north-east of Luxembourg, is a town of nut-

ters. Literally. And proudly so. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a fifth of the country's walnut trees were located around the picturesque town, still counting under sixteen hundred residents today.

Every second Sunday in October (every first in a year of local elections), the walnuts, after having been «geschutt,

gepeelt, geweesch a gedréchent» (shaken off the tree, peeled, washed and dried), end up on one of the stands of the «Veiner Nèsssmoort» where a myriad of culinary delights are sold. Forty-six and a half tons of them in the year 1901, the local chronicle tells us. All of them grown on 2.551 trees that then flourished along the peaceful river

Our. After years of bad harvests, war and lack of interest, the renaissance of that fading tradition occurred in 1970.

PLAY IT SAFE!

Walnuts are everywhere: they end up inside cold meats, sausages, terrines or pies, tower self-consciously on cakes or lie in ambush between the

crusts of pastries. Walnuts play peekaboo in breads and loaf in rolls, inhabit opinionated cheeses or foment evil plans in wine and liquor bottles. The responsible visitor is kindly requested to check the bus timetable before he hits the town lest he might break his neck hitting one of the trees with his car on the way out.