

EA invites agents to Perth

English Australia (EA) held its annual Agent Workshop in Perth, Western Australia, for the first time this year, welcoming over 40 agents from 20 countries. The agents met with representatives from just over 40 English language schools from around the country and were invited to attend fam trips to visit some of the institutions in Perth and Sydney before the workshop, and also in Brisbane and Adelaide afterwards.

"We always try to ensure that there is a good mix of institutions of different profiles and from different locations as well as agents from a range of countries," said Sue Blundell of EA, "that way we can ensure that everyone's needs are being met."

The event was officially opened by Anthony Fernando, Manager of the Market Development Branch of AEI, the Australian government's international education network. Mike Ryan, Chief Executive of Perth Education City, and Seamus Fagan, Chairperson of EA, joined him in welcoming agents to Australia. Information sessions were provided prior to the workshop, from various government departments.

Agents attending the workshop seemed to be pleased with the proceedings. Ishwora Rajbhandari from Hariyali Travels & Tours in Nepal commented, "My opinion of the workshop was that it was



Great weather greeted agents

well organised and managed. This kind of workshop will definitely increase students [going] to Australia. The range of schools was also good."

The social programme, which is always taken seriously by EA, saw agents tasting Western Australia's best food and wine, and visiting the historic Perth mint – where gold ingots were poured from molten gold – and the WA Maritime Museum at nearby Fremantle.

Next year's event will be held in Melbourne, enabling agents to become more acquainted with the capital city of the state of Victoria.

For more pictures from the EA workshop, turn to page 12. ●

PHOTOGRAPH: EA

QE visits Moscow and Madrid

Quality English (QE), the consortium of English language schools with a top-of-the-range ethos, has been spreading the message to agents around the world about the value of working with the group. QE now has 16 members encompassing schools in the UK, Ireland and New Zealand.

Members of QE went out to Moscow in March to meet with 25 Russian agencies. Carolyn Blackmore at QE explained, "The day was structured around the two main presentations, in which the brand was introduced and the choice of schools and their locations [were] described. The most important message was one of quality standards, and how QE measures and monitors this."

Blackmore said that interest from agents was high and new business resulted for some of the eight QE members that took part in the mission. Zoriana Klimenko, Executive Director of Interlogos in Moscow, said, "I was glad to take part in the Quality English workshop. It was a very good opportunity to know more about the international language schools and the programmes they can of-

fer to our students. The agents could discuss different important questions directly with the schools' representatives."

In April, QE schools also attended Salon de los Idiomas, a series of student fairs organised by Spanish agency association, Aseproce. "By offering a selection of courses as prizes in the competitions at each of the fairs, QE branding was included in the invitations and pre-event advertising," related Blackmore. "The event also provided an opportunity to meet many of the key agents in Spain. ●

Agency of the month



This month, the **English Language Academy** in Malta nominates Nomad Swedish Language Travel Agency, in Sweden. Louiseanne Mercieca at the school explains why:

In a series appearing each month in *Language Travel Magazine*, we ask a different language teaching institution to nominate one of their preferred agencies or agent partners, and to explain why this person/company is worthy of their nomination.



"Nomad Swedish Language Travel Agency is a very efficient and professional agency. I first met Viktor Sundberg at a workshop a few years ago and liked him immediately. He is open and direct. His first interest at all times is his clients. Instead of aiming to make as much profit/commission as possible, Nomad aims to get the best deals/service for

their clients. This is the kind of agent I like to work with! Another very important factor that makes me recommend Nomad is because booking forms are always very clear and detailed. The information is always correct and there are rarely any changes. Viktor and his staff are very cooperative. Should we have any queries, these are cleared up immediately.

Because Nomad is such an efficient agency, clients are always satisfied since they know exactly what our school offers, what they have booked, and what to expect. As a result we have never had complaints from students or the agency. This makes our working lives so much more pleasant! Nomad promotes our school extensively and effectively in the Swedish market. We have enjoyed working with Nomad and are looking forward to successful future cooperation."

Industry issues - agents speak out

January February March April May June July August September October November December

Q Is your website becoming more important to your business?



Joan Lott Carlsen, Alott Work & Travel Company, Denmark

"We have had a website since the founding of the company in 2001. Where approximately 50 per cent of our clients came through the website in the beginning, we now have about 80 per cent finding us via the Internet. We have offered an online booking service for the last couple of years, but have only had a very limited number of students apply online. We can have changes up and running immediately [on the website], such as new deadlines, info meetings, discounts, departure dates, etc. And when we receive travel tales from our clients, we put them on the website and add photos, to make the site alive and proactive. We absolutely depend on being present on the web to reach out to our clients. Our clients come from all over Denmark."

Ida Melchionna, Steps, Italy

"We've had our website for over

eight years. Previously we used our brochures [to promote our services], which we handed out via our teachers and via offices in all the universities in Naples – we are still working with them. [However], our website has really become very important to us. From the moment we had a website we have been receiving requests from adults and from people who want to work and study abroad. As a consequence of this the queries and the enrolments have doubled."



Mónica Romero Camps, SpanishExpress.co.uk, UK

"Originally I ran my business via word of mouth and putting it on the Internet has really allowed it to take off. The Internet has allowed clients regionally, nationally and internationally to be able to see what services are offered while email has opened up the opportunity for clients to send work more quickly than the traditional 'snail' mail and also enables much more client liaison while the work is in progress. Having a website is not only a decisive step

into the future, but a necessary move to stay competitive."



Adriana Cantu, Cursos de Idiomas en el Exterior, Argentina

"I used to have a website some five years ago. We stopped having this support two years ago. While we offered this service I received a number of enquiries from abroad and never had an application. Our main clients come from Mendoza, some from other provinces in Argentina, they are recommended by word of mouth. People from Mendoza are still traditional in many aspects, they seek direct contact. They can always check on the web for institutions' own sites. The good news is that we are recycling our website and will soon have a presence once again. It is an important marketing tool to complement our business with visual and updated information."



Liz Cajas, Intercambios Globales, Guatemala

"We have had a website

for about three years, and it has generated a lot of interest. We have had enquiries from several different Spanish-speaking countries. But the truth is that most of the enquiries have not resulted in bookings. I feel that it is more difficult to give a lot of information in an email than in person – be it face to face or by telephone. People want to know about many different programmes at first, so it takes a while to include all the information. And so many questions can come up – everybody thinks in a slightly different way."



Marcelo Cansini, World Studies, Brazil

"We have had our own website since 1997.

Around 10 per cent of our students come to us from our site. Our new revamped site is under construction. Students will be able to register online and receive newsletters. The [online] sales [facility] will not be considered at this time but in the near future it will be active."

Q&A



Beta wants to get the UK's youth and student educational travel sector on the government's radar. EMMA ENGLISH answers our questions.

Fact box

Full name:

British Educational Travel Association (Beta)

Year established:

2003

Number of members:

100

Type of members:

youth, student and educational travel producers and suppliers

Association's main role:

to raise the profile of the sector and lobby government on issues affecting our industry

Government recognition:

yes

Code of practice:

no

Complaints procedure:

no

Agents workshops/fam trips:

no

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Beta is two years old. What are its best achievements to date?

By becoming established as the youth and student travel sector's umbrella body, Beta has coordinated a previously fragmented sector. By doing so Beta is able to present to government and other bodies a unified and cohesive voice. We have raised awareness of the important, yet previously under-represented sector and created an environment that encourages enhanced trading between organisations and better access to government departments and other public sector bodies. Beta has published a manifesto, reinforcing the many benefits youth and student education travel brings to the UK and the global economy. Beta also holds an annual parliamentary reception at the Houses of Parliament, bringing the industry to the heart of government.

Why do you believe UK organisations choose to join Beta?

Beta has established a reputation as an association that actively and enthusiastically helps its members grow their businesses – in a number of ways; professional lobbying; regular communications, industry seminars, networking events, and B2B opportunities. Beta also appeals to companies based overseas who are eligible to join the association's International Members category; Beta is one of the few organisations able to offer overseas companies the opportunity to belong to a prestigious UK association with strong inbound and outbound educational travel links.

How do you interact with the international industry?

Beta has close working links with similar organisations in Germany, France and North America. Beta will be present during WYSTC in Toronto, Icef in Berlin and the World Travel Market 2005.

How much of Beta's efforts are focused on ELT?

Beta works closely with English UK and fulfils an important complimentary role. Beta's second largest segment of membership is represented by language schools and educational establishments that benefit from our supplier services and growing international network.

On the move

Regent Language Training in the UK has appointed Rob Duncan to the position of Regional Sales Manager. Mr Duncan, a European Business Studies graduate who is fluent in Italian and French, will be responsible for the markets of Italy, Portugal, Spain and South America. Previously, he has worked as a sales representative in a number of industries, including ELT. He brings with him experience of customer service, sales and relationship building.



International school chain, Global Village (GV), is very pleased to announce that Robin Adams will take over the day-to-day marketing responsibilities for the Japanese market. Mr Adams comes to the position with many years of experience in the industry in both marketing and school operations. He will be based at GV Vancouver in Canada.



Brian North, Head of Academic Development at Eurocentres, has taken over as Chair of the European Association for Quality Language Services (Eaquals), moving up from his previous position of Vice Chair. Mr North is co-author of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and developed the European Language Levels (A1-C2) that it is best known for. He has worked for Eurocentres for 30 years and developed its curriculum, language assessment and quality management systems.



Many agents will be familiar with Geoff White as he is a long-standing member of the Study Group team. Mr White started with the company in 1992 and has worked in a variety of roles over that time, both in Australia and the USA. He is now responsible for leading the sales and marketing team within Brisbane, Australia. This new role will allow Mr White to work with agents to help drive sales for Embassy CES Australia and New Zealand. "This is an exciting move for me, I am looking forward to building our links with agents and profiling Australia and NZ," he said.



Don Back is the latest President-Elect of AAIEP. Elected in May, he will become President in May 2006. A district director with ELS Language Centers, he has previously served as AAIEP's Vice-President for Advocacy. Mr Back was a former Peace Corps volunteer and he has been active in international education for almost 20 years and has worked in managerial capacities in English language programmes for nearly 15 years.



Grapevine

MEI-Relsa in Ireland held its ninth annual agent workshop in April. Taking place at the Radisson Hotel in Dublin, with fam trips either side of the event, the

workshop welcomed 77 agents from 64 companies and 15 countries. They met with 39 Irish language schools. David O'Grady at MEI-Relsa related that "a convivial

atmosphere pervaded the proceedings" and that reaction from both agents and schools was positive. "An equally successful 10th workshop is now the goal of all members," he said.

Pictured here (top) from the University of Limerick, are Siobhan Murphy (left) and Caroline Graham. And (below) organiser Orla Lehane, from MEI-Relsa (left) having fun with Pat Mackay from Limerick Language Centre.



The Australian Quarantine & Inspection Service (AQIS) sponsored the English Australia (EA) Agents' Workshop in April, bringing along a sniffer dog to entertain visitors and educate agents about what students are allowed to bring with them into the country and receive by mail. Sue Blundell at EA explained, "Sniffer dogs are used at the airport to sniff out illegal products in bags [above left]. AQIS did a demonstration to make the presentation more entertaining!"

Meanwhile, pictured above right doing business at the EA Workshop are Silvia Borges (left) and Babette Furstner (right) from Pacific Gateway International College in Brisbane, QLD, talking with Juliana Tries from Network Educare in Indonesia.

If you have any lighthearted news, photos, or stories of industry interest, please contact amy@hothousemedia.com and ask to appear in the Grapevine section!



Ireland work-rights. Students in Ireland can actually work part-time if they are enrolled on an approved course of a minimum of 15 hours of tuition per week that lasts for at least 25 weeks. Despite the wording of the ruling that all courses must be recognised and at least one year in duration to ensure enrollees are eligible for work rights, the ruling in fact dictates that courses of 25 weeks or more are also eligible.

Next issue - August 2005: Special Report investigates what makes the perfect agent • **Market Report** charts trends in France • **Direction** looks at what makes a good workshop • **Agency Survey** canvasses Korean agencies • **Regional Focus** visits Tuscany in Italy • **Spotlight** profiles Spanish and dance in Spain