

IT'S SOMETHING MORE THAN AN EXCHANGE YEAR

Sometimes I wonder if choosing to come here to England has been a really hazard choice: as if I gambled a year of my life and a threw a dice on it.

But then I come back home after a school day and I realize how great the experience I'm living now is, and I get it just meeting my host parents, my host sisters, my friends. Or maybe I realize it only watching the English houses, so beautiful at the sides of the streets... it seems they are checking what I am doing, where I am going.

I live now in one of the richest district of Tunbridge Wells, in a so ancient, tidy, classic and great house that it touches me. For ten years Bernadette and Gerry had host students coming more or less from the whole world, and I do believe that this is absolutely extraordinary: they usually end up with telling stories which bring them to far years, talking about these students with a hint of homesickness.

Sometimes I wonder if also we – my two host sisters and me - will be remembered with the same smile. I grab on to the moment in which my host mother asked me to paint a canvas for her, as it was a guarantee, a certainty that for something they will remember me as well.

Bernadette and Gerry are wonderful. They are so strange, in a way, I mean, they are so different but absolutely so close, and similar. They live a same life watching it from angles which could look opposite.

She's unquestionably marvelous: pretty, precious... her eyes always blink and bright when she talks. She dresses taking always care of the details of every single item she wears: she matches the best relevant particulars of every shirt, the cross point or the pattern of a button.



My host sisters and me



This is us! Such great internationality!

Gerry looks to be less meticulous, and he's so great. He has always a nice word to dedicate to us, and his enthusiasm is such a great influence which colours the whole family. Sometimes I think I wouldn't be able to be so often that happy if it wasn't thanks to the charisma he has.

I attend at the Beacon Community College in Crowborough, and I notice how different this school system is in comparison with the Italian one I grew up with. I can't say that it's worse than the one I know best... simply, dissimilar. There's a great relationship between teachers and students and there's no shadow of that kind of panic I used to deal with when I had lessons in my country: scared to not be prepared enough. At some lessons learning becomes a real enjoyment.

I didn't really have a social life since Christmas: I used to dedicate most of the time to my host family, whose company I love so much.

Anyway, few days ago I started to attend three times a week to different courses: on Tuesday I meet a group of people to discuss about the Bible and all that kind of mystery related to God – a topic I have to confess to being really interested in - on Thursday I go to Tonbridge to debate about Philosophy topics while on Wednesday I join a scout group.



Campden Market, London. My Brazilian mate finds his origins also there!

It has been quite interesting to understand how hard and how great starting to design a new routine is.

I do love believe that this experience is giving more than what I expected: I mean in terms of growing up as a person, as an aware person, an aware teenager.

I do believe that this experience shapes my personality, my way to think, to learn, to notice beauty in life and to make it mine, to also wish to become one of those who make things beautiful.

I do believe that this experience is forming my ideas through a complex and extraordinary work of exchanging beliefs and opinions between all these people I knew since I'm here.

We can fall in love with all our ideas, our ideas can make us ALIVE!

I'm so grateful for how lucky I am to have had the opportunity to take that flight and be here now.



London, Trafalgar Square. Some exchange students and me!