

English Bahá'í Summer School

Wellington College, Crowthorne

8 – 15 August, 2009

Programme Notes – Afternoon and Evening Activities

This summer the only place to be in August is the Bahá'í Residential Summer School in England. With our programme of activities for young and old covering an amazing array of topics and activities, we promise a time of great fun and spiritual upliftment for all.

Afternoons –

Each afternoon from Sunday – Friday we offer two sequences of short talks aimed to deepen our knowledge and entertain at the same time.

Early afternoon, between 3.00pm and 3.45pm:

Being a Brilliant Junior Youth Animator – two sessions from Clare O'Brien, our national coordinator, helping us to understand what makes these groups so precious and how to develop our skills in this area.

Being a Brilliant Children's Class Activator – Julia Haviland, our national coordinator for children's classes will be joining us for two sessions, sharing her experiences and knowledge in this wonderful area of service to the faith. Both of these sessions are open to everyone, whether you have experience or not. If you feel that these may not be for you we strongly encourage you to listen to these wonderful people, and pick up some of that enthusiasm!!

Around the World in the Baha'í Faith – Yeah, I know, we stole the idea from the BBC television series, but instead of just giving the faith two minutes at the end of the programme, we have 45 minutes with Mahnaz Alai-Villaincourt and other special guests, sharing some of their experiences as Baha'is in various parts of the world.

The Baha'í Council for England – We all know who our wonderful BCE are and have some idea of what they do, but this is a super opportunity to get a real feel of what The Council have been doing around the country to support the growth and deepening of the faith.

Later in the afternoon, between 4.00pm and 4.45pm, we launch the start of a series of talks which look at how faith should and does influence all aspects of human life and

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endeavour. All sessions take a personal look at faith and its place in various areas of our lives:

Faith in Architecture – with Q Love

Faith in Politics – with Collis Tahzib and Dan Wheatley

Faith in Healthcare – with Phil Sutton

Faith in Sport – with Clare O'Brien

Faith in Music – with Charles Phillips

Faith Literature – with Rod Duncan

All speakers are active in these areas, either in their professional lives or through personal interests, and the sessions will reflect their own feelings of these area and give us a deeper awareness of the wonderful gift of faith and how it influences every area of our lives.

Special afternoon activities – for those of us not feeling like sitting down all afternoon, who feel the need to challenge their own skills and abilities, we have arranged a number of wonderful activities running each afternoon between 3.00pm and 4.45 pm. We offer the following;

Wellington Vocal Harmonics Group – a chance to improve your choral skills, with a range of the spiritual and the general. The group will be working towards a sung devotional each morning to further uplift us every day and wow us at the end of the week at the concert show. This group is open to everyone over 11 years old.

The Wellington Dance Troup – get ready to shake your funky bodies, or find that funky body you never knew you had! Each afternoon the group will be developing their routine ready for performance at the end of the week. Open to everyone willing to find their rhythmic boots and 'have a go' we guarantee a brilliant week. This is open to anyone over 10 years

The Sports Programme – last year we launched the Baha'í Olympics, well this year isn't Olympic year, so we bring you the one and only Baha'í swimming gala. Anyone can take part whether they can swim or not, whether younger or older. And the fun doesn't end there, we also offer a fantastic range of sporting activities including:

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Circuit training, basketball, football, lightning cricket, swimming, fun and games, team games and challenges and more.

Also on offer as part of the programme, we have rock climbing on two evenings. This needs to be booked in advance and there will be a small fee to cover cost of instruction. Instead of driving everyone else up the wall you can try climbing it instead!!

Evening –

If you thought the afternoon was amazing, get ready for the evening programme!

We start the week with Speed Greetings – get to know your co-schoolers ready for making new friends and reacquainting yourself with old ones.

Quizzes we've done before, but never before like this, we open the first night with the interactive snakes and ladders quiz game. It's not just about knowing things it's about getting the roll of the dice to be first. Just when you're doing well, along comes a snake and you slide right on down. We guarantee laughs and fun for all ages.

On nights two and three we offer a wonderful chance to share stories of Bahá'í activities from around the world and at home. But these are not just presented in the usual way, we'll be using new themes and fun ways to present the sketches to you, incorporating the Eurovision Song Contest and Little Britain, now we bet you never thought that would fit into summer school. And to top it off we'll also be using these nights to launch not one but two summer school anthems. So loosen your vocal cords and get ready to raise the roof.

We then follow the week with 'God Loves Laughter' a series of comedy sketches and routines open to everyone.

We then move on to question time with an expert panel, not sure yet what the panel is expert in but we're assured they're all experts anyway. Questions from the floor on all topics welcomed, but must be presented before the event to ensure the right mixture can be achieved.

On the Thursday night, Kishan Manocha, secretary to the NSA will be presenting his one-man show 'Another Side of Kishan.' Only joking, Kishan, but this does promise to be a wonderful evening, not to be missed.

And then there's the final night – including the best bits of the week, the choir, the dance troupe, the bands, open mic wonder singers and contributors and topped off with a disco incorporating music for all tastes and types.

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Did you think it ended there? – No chance!

Every evening, before the programme begins, our team of BBC (Baha'í Broadcasting Corporation) roving reporters will give us a quick news update on what's been happening at school.

We also offer one evening a ghost walk, looking at the weird things in Wellington's history and the spooky goings on in the area before the school was built. This school has a haunted past full of mad monks, headless horses, love-lost ladies and more. So just for the younger ones (between 6 and 9 years) we take you on a walk through the haunted world of Wellington.

On the other side of ghostly, Wellington's grounds are truly beautiful at dusk so we are proud to be able to offer a devotional walk in the grounds as darkness falls, using prayer, meditation and silence as the perfect accompaniment to a wonderful school.

Did you think this was everything? – Nope!

Every night between 9.30pm and 11.30pm we have two amazing sessions for young people aged between 11 and 25 years. Running at the same time every night we offer an Open Mic session coordinated by Darius Rashidi, who's been very active recently with his Water Rats group and various DJing events, Darius is just the man to get the best from you all. Open Mic sessions will take place in the new V & A cafe a truly wonderful venue to try out your performing skills in front of a small audience.

Then we have the Chatterbox sessions, open to all young people, some sessions are structured, some just free conversation in the 'Soul Pancake' mould. Each night is open to all between these ages, come along and see where the conversation goes. And remember it's not just the destination it's also the journey that matters!!

This promises to be a wonderful summer school and we're even promised the weather we deserve as well. So come along for the week and be refreshed and energised for your year to come.

Anyone wanting to contribute to any of these sessions is very welcome, please contact Chris Oak on 01438 354848, 07522 057743 or kipperpoak61@btinternet.com as soon as possible to discuss how you can help. We're looking for actors, writers, singers, scene shifters etc. etc. to make this a truly memorable summer school.

'Awaken the spirit'