



The General Meeting

After a long interval in which there has been no General Meeting, in fact since 1998, a group of over thirty members met on the 30th November 2002 at the Pallas Páholy on Alkotmány u. to discuss new developments and a way forward. Although the majority of members were from Budapest there were members too from Pécs, Miskolc and Eger.

The most important discussions centred on the "Board", the executive body which runs the ESU between General Meetings. It was clear from the discussion that there needed to be a new structure.

The "Board" - New Structure ...

Because of the new impetus towards regional development some thought that regional representation would be appropriate. Ultimately this, however, was thought to be impractical as there could be a "Board" with over 20 members, which would be impossible to manage. It was decided that there should be a three member body to include the Chairman, the Programme Director and a Secretary to deal mainly with membership. One member of the finance committee should sit on the board as an adviser and the meetings will be open to the membership.

It was clear that the Board and other committees had not



Members from Miskolc, Győr, Budapest and Pécs at the General Meeting

functioned effectively for some time. In resolving this difficulty there will be a need for an up to date membership list and a regularly updated mailing list. The process of creating a membership list from the mailing list is still underway as it is a massive task.

It is possible to co-opt additional members onto the Board, under the present rules of the ESU. It may be that members are co-opted from the regions if there is a need. The minutes of these meetings will be made public and members may request items to be placed on the agenda.

Meeting Adjourned ...

The nature of the Finance Committee was not discussed due to lack of time and the meeting was adjourned to allow time for those who wish to be considered for posts in the ESU to make their wishes known. The meeting will reconvene on January 11 at a venue to be fixed at a later date. Members who are interested in taking an active part in the organization and administration are asked to contact the Programme Director. We intend to ask those who express an interest to give some background about themselves, 100 words or so, not a biography, and what they have to offer. This information will then be circulated with the details of the re-convened General Meeting. If you feel you cannot write this well enough in English then I am happy to put it onto paper if you provide the basic information.

After the meeting ...

After the adjournment of the meeting there was a brief discussion of future events. Miklós Barabás provided a long list of possible activities. These are; the Burns Supper, Scholarships to attend the MacMillan conference (April 2003), attendance at the International Book Festival in Budapest (24-27 April), a workshop on public speaking, the Public Speaking Competition, participation in the ESU International Council Meeting in St Petersburg (28 June-2 July), Scholarship to attend the Britain Today conference in Oxford (July 2003), a music scholarship offered by the Kodály Foundation (July 2003), the Széchenyi lecture with the UK Embassy (Sept 2003), participation in Civiliada, a Turkey Party for Thanksgiving (27 Nov 2003) and assistance for regional groups.

Other ideas from participants at the meeting included support, requested by Ábrahám Károlyné, for a local theatre group, Brown Cow, who will be performing on 4 March in Budapest. Jolán Gáspár suggested we look at the talent we have within the organization which we can offer, in this case

dance demonstrations and lectures. Steve Jones even offered his services as a folk singer.

Finance

Critical to the work of the ESU is finance. Without support the organization can carry out only a limited amount of work. The membership fees are deliberately low so that we can encourage a variety of people to join us and become active. These fees will never cover the costs of running the programme. It will be vital for the meeting on 11th January to put in place the financial structure to enable the programme to be maintained year on year.

To put the ESU of Hungary on a sound financial footing it will be essential to cost everything we offer and budget carefully. It will be vital to organise events with the financial implications in mind. We must organize on the basis of what members want and we must be willing to work to get it.

One of the first tasks of the new finance committee will be to set up and publish a budget for the year 2003.

Pécs begins to organise

The meeting in Pécs, held in the Európa Ház is the first of what we hope will be several meetings to be held in different towns and cities throughout the country.

Introductions and the press:



Press conference Pécs, 26th Nov L-R: Two observers from Győr, journalist, Tarrósy István, Zsolt Páva.

Before the meeting began there was a press conference attended by local television and representatives from several

local newspapers. Mr. Zsolt Páva, Honorary Consul at the British Consulate, Mr. István Tarrósy, Director of the Centre for International Relations at the University of Pécs, Mr. Balázs Németh, university lecturer and the organizer of the meeting and Steve Jones, Programme Director of the ESU of Hungary spoke at the meeting outlining their commitment to the expansion of the organization in the regions.

The meeting decides:

After the press conference the four speakers addressed about forty people who had responded to the information sent out over the previous three or four weeks. The majority of those attending were from the University and the teaching profession. There were also several students studying English and a smaller number of administrators and professionals.

After the introductions there was a lively discussion in which the several topics were touched upon, including support and sponsorship, types of events and the need for the inclusion of the business community. The enthusiasm of the group to set up a programme of events was infectious and around thirty of those attending completed membership forms feeling some kind of commitment was necessary.

The working group:

Several people offered their services in forming an informal "working group" to begin planning and the University offered their assistance to help this process progress. They will be meeting shortly to start working on the practicalities. The teachers present organized themselves to develop their side of the programme and will be represented on the working group. The British consulate offered their full support as did the representative from the mother organization in Budapest.

If you are thinking of doing the same in your area please get in touch straight away and we'll get you some help and some information.

The Merlin Theatre, Budapest

After the Merlin had distributed the ESU of Hungary e-letter to its correspondents several people contacted the ESU either asking for further information or offering services. In addition the information from the Merlin which was sent out

to members was well received. Those who wish to attend performances might wish to contact others in the area and go as a group. Otherwise you might want to consider getting the Merlin to come to you.

Shows on the Road:

The Merlin is able to give you details of exactly what they require to put on performances. This includes technical details, which any local theatre could provide. Facilities will vary, depending on the particular performance, and ordinary premises might well be enough to support a performance. Under any circumstances, regional theatres should be able to support any performance and performances in a "studio" setting would not require a high level of technical equipment.

If you are interested in setting up a regular link with the Merlin, to discuss these possibilities the either e-mail myself or the Merlin direct and we will try to work out details. The most important thing will be your audience and ensuring that the performance is appropriate to their level of English. Advice on these aspects is available from *Csoka Timea* at the theatre who can be reached by e-mail at angol@merlinszinhas.hu. Amongst others, the Merlin is supported by the British Council and is very happy to work with other groups. We will be sending out information on their performances in Budapest for those who wish to experience English language theatre.

A story-teller – Andrew Wright

Hungarian Stories in English

I am an Englishman living in Hungary and I earn my living partly as a storyteller. Usually I do my storytelling in Austria or another Western European country where there is a little more money for such things than in Hungary. However, I do identify with my adopted country and would like to be able to tell more Hungarian stories.

So you can imagine how thrilled I was last night when I was given the web site of a second hand book search company and typed it in and watched it come up like a St Bernhard with panting tongue asking me what I would like to find. Advanced Book Exchange <http://www.abebooks.com>

I typed in, Story-Telling in a Hungarian Peasant Community and the author's name, Linda Degh. To my great glee a bar of colour began to push its way across a slim horizontal rectangle

and it said, Searching. It was searching the world's second hand book stores at 10 pm on a Sunday evening...for me!

A moment or two later it came up with 3 copies available second hand, world wide. I asked for the one which had an addition to the introduction and filled in a form. By this morning I had received an email from a bookshop called David's bookshop, which I think is in British Columbia... guessing from the legal agreement details, to say that the order is being processed and the book will be on its way to me very soon...20 dollars for the book and 11 dollars for the packing and postage.

I grinned for hours. I couldn't believe how beautiful and simple the event was. Modern technology allows us to do magical things. Although storytelling, storymaking and interacting is a key focus for many people in computer CDs and the internet and films and television offers amazing computer animation it does not seem to detract from the power of an ordinary person just telling a story with his voice and body. I sometimes think that it might be that I actually benefit from the contemporary commonplace experience of computer animation and film making! Perhaps the people (mainly students aged between 11 and 15) are flabbergasted to see and hear stories coming out of a real life person! Old fashioned oral storytelling can grip 100 teenagers and you can hear a pin drop! Now...all that is to say... if any of you can recommend to me any more collections of Hungarian stories in English I would be most grateful. What better way of marrying the English language and Hungarian culture and promoting the two of them together?

Andrew Wright

Andrew is an author, illustrator and storyteller. He has published books with Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press and Longman. He lives with his wife Julia and their two children in their school, International Languages Institute, Korosfoi utca 2, Godollo.

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A folk singer – Steve Jones

I have offered this service to those who might be interested. I ran a folk club in the UK for fourteen years and have been performing in public for over thirty five years, teaching folk

songs to adults and children alike and am happy to satisfy any specific need. Folk songs can just be very good to sing or may have a more educational value, particularly when looking at the culture from which they come. Whether it is topics like "The Industrial Revolution and the Cotton Mills" or "The Jacobite Rebellion" or simply songs for children it does not matter. Anyone interested should contact me at the address below. I'm not the only one either so there may be others to choose from too.

Have you anything to offer? Contact us?

Burns Night

The Burns Night in Budapest will be on January 27th, a joint venture with the St. Columba's Church in Vörösmarty u. At the same time there are lots of people who asked me if we could do the same in other regions. The answer is YES PLEASE!! When planning you might consider some of the following (We might be able to help):

- A venue which will allow music and dancing if necessary (Hall or large room)
- The meal with "Haggis" and someone to produce it
- The piper and bagpipes
- A singer of Burns' songs or poet to recite his poems
- A Scottish (not Scotch – that's the drink!) speaker to entertain and give the toasts
- A date and time to suit everybody?"
- A financial plan – attendance, financial support
- Advertising

Once you have accounted for all or most of these you have a viable evening. Then we can wish you "good luck".

An ESU of Hungary Web-Site

Recently, I was contacted by a young site designer, Eyal Zucker, who is interested in the ESU of Hungary and offered to build us a web site. In little over a week he was back with his ideas and they are FANTASTIC!

It was very important that the web site should be easy to access and use and that it should be easy to update. Well that is what we have. Provided we can find sponsorship for the costs, which will be really quite small and we can find someone to update it then we are on the web!

Wanted!!

Someone who can programme in *html* and has time and the facilities to do a weekly update of the web site. Eyal will give technical support if needed.

What if I don't have an e-mail address and access to a computer?

This is not a problem as all of the *Newsletters* will be published and distributed in *Hard Copy* if you are a member. We are not doing away with conventional mailing, only developing the use of systems which will enable us to reach our members quickly and cheaply to divert resources into developing our National and Regional Programmes. As our information will be on the net it will be accessible from anywhere in the world so members and non-members alike will be fully informed wherever they are.

CHECK LIST - WHAT WE DO

Promote *English in international public speaking and debate for the support of worldwide communication and dialogue*

Encourage *the enjoyment and constructive use of English through educational programmes*

Provide *a forum for international friendship through our support of the worldwide network of ESUs and the provision of secretariat facilities for the International Council at the headquarters at Dartmouth House, London*

Initiate *and administer international youth exchange and work experience schemes*

Focus *on key current affairs issues through regular international conferences, seminars and meetings*

Provide *and create cultural activities*

Facilitate *and assist the establishment and recognition of ESUs worldwide*

Ensure *the coordination and coherence of our activities through the skill and dedication of our staff and voluntary helpers*

Rely *upon the enthusiasm and support of all our members*

Work *in close and innovative partnership with our corporate members and sponsors*

Contact us using:

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