

## **An Interview with Anita Berardi**

*Twenty-one year old Anita Berardi from Switzerland is the newest member of the BLS English team. She talks about her life back home, how she discovered BLS, and how she handled punting international students on the River Cam...*



### **What does your new role involve?**

Administration and activities including marketing, social activities and excursions with the students.

### **Why did you choose BLS?**

My dream was finding an internship in a school of language in the United Kingdom. After a long search on Google, and a lot of emails to many schools, I was close to giving up. However, one day during my research, I landed on BLS English's website. I decided to send an email to the Director of the school, which redirected me to the Principal, Ben Logan, who wrote back to me, and asked if we could have a Skype Video Chat. Our talk was lovely, and after a few days, I received confirmation that I could come to Bury St Edmunds for an internship of 6 months. I was so happy that I couldn't believe it!

### **Do you speak other languages?**

As I come from the Italian part of Switzerland, my native language is Italian. At school I learnt French, German and English.

### **Where are you from exactly?**

I live in Ticino, the Italian part of Switzerland. It's very close to Italy, and it's a very quiet and safe area. I live in a small village called S. Antonino which has a population of about 3'000 people. It's situated in the "Piano di Magadino", a plane surrounded by mountains, between Bellinzona and Locarno, which are two of the most important towns of the Canton Ticino.

In Bellinzona there are three magnificent medieval Castles, which are a UNESCO heritage site.

In Locarno there is a wonderful lake, the "Lago Maggiore", and the view from the mountains that surround the lake is great.

I like living in Ticino, but as it's a very small area, I often think about moving out and going to see the world. In fact, one of my dreams is to visit as many countries as I can in my life.



### **Tell us something about yourself:**

I'm studying tourism in Switzerland, and during the second year the school gives us the opportunity to do an internship anywhere in the world. This is the reason why I'm now in



Bury St Edmunds. I arrived here 1 month ago, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June, and I'm already in love with the place and with the people.

I love nature, and in my free time I enjoy reading, horse riding, watching films, singing, and chatting with other people from all around the world.

My favourite meals are my mama's lasagne and rice with curry sauce and chicken! I enjoy eating everything except Brussels sprouts and squid.

In Ticino the most traditional recipe is "Polenta e spezzatino", which is polenta with stew. In Ticino there's a wide production of wine, and the "Merlot ticinese", is the most famous red wine. I don't like wine, but everyone says that it's wonderful!

I'm always passionate about what I do, and I always do my best to make everyone happy. I love working around people, and I love learning things about other cultures. This is the reason why I love working with BLS English, as the mix of nationalities is great, and I get to meet very interesting people with different life experiences.

The things I miss the most while I'm here in England are my mama, my sister, and my dog Thea. She's crazy and kind of a monster, but I love her. And that description could go for all three of them!

### **How was leading your first trip to Cambridge?**

On Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of July, I went to Cambridge with a group of 13 Adult Students from BLS English. It was the second time for me in Cambridge, so before the departure I was a little nervous, as I had to lead the group in a town I visited only once before.

On Friday evening, I read the papers with the information about Cambridge over and over, and looked at the map of the town, to be sure that I wouldn't get lost with the group! As I'm a tourism student, I'm keen about organizing trips, and I always try to get the best out of visits to new places.



The usual programme in Cambridge with the adults involves a walking tour in the morning with the visit of King's College, free time for shopping, and a visit to the Fitzwilliams Museum in the afternoon.

As the weather was wonderful, however, I decided to give the students the opportunity to decide between the usual programme and a new one prepared by me! My programme consisted in going punting on the river Cam in the morning, doing the walking tour to see the colleges and learn things about the town, and climbing on top of St Mary's church tower to see the wonderful buildings from above.



The students decided that they would love to go punting, so as soon as we got off the bus, we went to the punting station and prepared ourselves for the trip on the river. We hired three punts and split into three groups. The punt I was on was sailing on the river without any problems, but for the other groups, the situation was a little different.

One punt was driven by a Spanish student named Adrian. As soon as they took off, they started moving to the wrong side, and it seemed that the wicked punt had a brain itself and had decided to bring the poor students to another dock, where other punts were anchored.

Luckily, the strength of the brave driver was able to defeat the punt's will, and save his companions, bringing the punt back on the right way. However, this punt seemed to love other boats, and whenever it found itself close to one, tried to sail against them, and there was nothing that our heroic students could do to avoid that.

The punt driven by some Arabic students, however, appeared to be afraid of the water. It wanted to embrace the walls of the riverside all the time, and the poor students had a hard time giving the punt some self-confidence to sail in the middle of the river.



After punting, I led the group to discover some history about Cambridge and its colleges, and we enjoyed looking at the magnificent buildings. When we arrived in the market we had one hour of free time to eat or to visit the market. We split in smaller groups. I was with a small group of Italians and we looked for a place where we could find some chairs to eat. The town centre, however, was so crowded that we couldn't find free places anywhere. Our final choice was going to McDonalds. And as we got there, we realized that we weren't the only ones to have the same thought. Inside, we met the rest of our group. Apparently, everyone likes McDonalds because it's the universal place where you go, when it's too hard to find something else in a moment when you're starving!

After our adventure in McDonalds, we went to St Mary's church, where I had booked the tickets to go on top of the church's tower. We had to climb up the stairs of the tower. It was very tiring, but once we were on top, the view was fantastic.

Later on we continued the walking tour and saw Trinity College, St John's College, the Round Church, Magdalene's college and bridge, and then we went to Jesus green, where we sat under a tree and chilled for some time. Yu-Ping, aka Grace, a student from Taiwan, amazed us with her funny questions and stories, and we had a great time just chatting all together.

After that we went to the Grand Arcade. And there, the most embarrassing thing of the day happened: the group leader, yes... me, got lost in the shopping centre! The students, however, were very understanding, and we just laughed about it.

When we finally got out of the Mall, we walked back to Queen's road, where the coaches were waiting for us to go back to Bury St Edmunds.

It was a very nice day, and I loved every single moment of it. I would like to thank my group, which was a great group! Very interesting and funny people of different nationalities!



**On the back, from the left:** Saoud from Qatar, Yu-Ping from Taiwan, Hadi from Qatar, Javier from Spain, Maria Alessandra from Italy, Norah from Saudi Arabia, Hayat from Eritrea.

**On the front, from the left:** Ali from Saudi Arabia, Carmela from Italy, Anita (me) from Switzerland, Adrian from Spain, Eunjeong from Korea, Adriano from Switzerland (not on the photo)