

Writing Back

An award-winning letter writing project matching School of English students as pen pals with older Yorkshire residents.



Are you an older Yorkshire resident?

Would you like to exchange letters with a University of Leeds student?

Our students say: ‘Thank you so much for sharing your experiences in your letter. I love reading it and I hope that I can have so many experiences in the future as well’.

The scheme is fully funded and participants are provided with stationery and stamps.

If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, please contact the project co-ordinator using the details listed below.

Project co-ordinator: Georgina Binnie

Telephone: 0113 343 6189 or 07398759479

Email: G.E.Binnie@leeds.ac.uk

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/writingback>



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Dear Anne-Marie,

I find myself a little unsure how to begin this letter, but I guess that I should start by telling you a little more about myself. My name is Joanna, I turned twenty-one years old last September, and I am a third year English Literature student at the University of Leeds. I am originally from West London and, though generally unfamiliar with the countryside, I plan to see much more of Yorkshire during my final year here particularly the Dales that my uncle (from Wakefield) habitually asks me if I've explored. I love to travel and immerse myself in new cultures, likely stemming from my multicultural background — my mother is Brazilian and I speak semi-fluent Portuguese. I am hoping to do a fair amount of travelling this year: visiting friends in France and Spain, returning to Brazil to see family, and going somewhere totally new, maybe Papua. The pictures I've seen look lovely, the architecture especially, as I've wanted to go for a while.

Looking at the list of interests I've been given, we seem to share many in common. I am an avid theatregoer, and living in London means that I have the opportunity to go fairly regularly. I play a few months ago that I enjoyed was "Our Country's Good" at the National Theatre, which follows a group of convicts transported to Australia in the late eighteenth century that put on a play

Mr J.
"Writing Back"
School of English
University of Leeds
Leeds
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Dear *Joanna*,

Thank you for your letter, post marked 27th Nov. 2015. Please accept my apologies for the delay in acknowledging. I need to reply urgently — I only a short note — before you go down for the Christmas vac. It is a busy time for you undergrads — partying, presents swapping, invitations to drinks in the Senior Common Room, etc. — as you prepare to leave for your respective homes. In your case Bromley, I read somewhere in a novel (possibly a George Orwell? Possibly someone else) there was a character from there who always gave his address as Bromley, Kent, because he thought it sounded better than "SE"!

Pleased to hear that you are reading History and, at present, specialising in the British Empire (ex). You asked what sparked my interest in it — well I did History at school in the '50's (a G.C.E. "O" level!) but strangely enough, considering that at that time most of the Empire was still intact, we did not touch on it at all. Our syllabus was British (domestic) and European (continental). This dealt, essentially, with the rise of Nationalism and Liberalism on the Continent in the aftermath of the Napoleonic era — the Unifications of Germany and of Italy, the problems in Austro-Hungary, the upheavals in France, and not forgetting Belgium. When I reflect on it, we did not bring in any other European empires — Spain, Portugal, Holland and the French, per se were not mentioned! Obviously (certainly in the view of the "Northern Universities" G.C.E. Matriculation Board" in the 1950's) imperialism was taboo! Other G.C.E. Boards may have covered it — possibly London University, as then London University used to set the G.C.E.s for the "Colonies". I would think that the average person in the street in the 1950s had little interest or knowledge of the empire — even if their lads did their National Service in Malta, Cyprus, Aden, Kenya, Malaya, Singapore, HK etc.! Though of course most lads did their service in Germany and were lucky to get a place in the sun.

Must close this now, for the time being, and look forward to continuing our correspondence in the new year. Have a good Xmas and new year with your family in good old Bromley. By the way, I forgot to ask what year you are in?

Kind regards,

M.J.



Our older participants say: 'It's such a great idea getting young and old ages staying up to date with how they're tackling life. Writing to my student friend change[s] my day-to-day way of living'.

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