

Sarah Perceval / Sage in Residence:



I absolutely loved staying at the Dorney Centre while I was 'Sage in Residence' 2015. I had a small room in the house to the far right with a bathroom and kettle. The first time I opened the window in my room, about a hundred hibernating ladybirds fell onto the window ledge. I thought they might die if I put them out of the window, and I didn't want them flying about the room. So I shut the curtains and listened to them all fluttering as they slowly decided to go back to sleep! When I needed air, I opened the door. Lily was the caretaker then, and she was so kind, often texting to offer to cook me a baked potato in the evening. I loved sitting in the kitchen chatting to her and her helpers. I also taught at the Dorney Centre as part of the Wisdom Project's summer camp, and have great mental pictures of the common room full of teenagers drawing their 'hero selves', girls in funky boots with magic powers, boys with amazing hair

and capes. I know that so many young people found their wings at the Dorney centre, it was a very special place with a very special atmosphere.

Julie Scammell (Woods) / Volunteer



The Eton Dorney centre first came into my life when I visited there on youth group weekends away. I was part of St Peters Church Earley and our youth group had weekends away every year. It was during one weekend that I spoke to Colin and Rosemary about volunteering and I never looked back. I worked there during my gap year before starting university and then every Summer. It was like being part of a family and utterly rewarding when working with disadvantaged children and those suffering the effects of the Chernobyl disaster. Working for the Eton Dorney

centre equipped me with many skills and values, scaffolding me for life and my subsequent career as a teacher. Colin and Rosemary were the absolute heart of the Eton Dorney centre and made such a difference to so many lives. The building itself was stunning and I would often walk from room to room imagining it as my home! Loved the sound of laughter coming from the rooms upstairs and the bumps in the night when children fell out of bed! In fact I can still picture me stood at the big ironing machine pressing the duvet covers (will never forget the pattern!) Some of the food we produced was legendary and we had some hilarious staff lunch times in the kitchen. Our visits out within the local community were all good fun and everyone knew that I would always volunteer for the Slough fire station visit rather than the ice skating. Sad to know that that it's all a thing of the past though but I know that countless lives were touched through the provision of the Eton Dorney Centre and that is priceless.

Michael Holt, St. Peter's, Earley

We had some wonderful weekends at Eton Dorney with excellent food and magnificent support from the residential team.

We always use to lecture the young people on Friday on arrival about keeping noise levels down but we never succeeded in giving you a peaceful night I seem to remember.

I recall that on one visit a girl fell and knocked her head

which proved to be of greater concern to the leaders than her but within a short period of time you had arranged a visit by the Queen's doctor to reassure everyone.

I also recall some hard fought football on the grass area where the girls were putting in much more robust challenges than the boys.

By our departure time on Sunday afternoon both leaders and young people were always exhausted but wished we could have stayed longer.

Many of the members of the St Peter's youth groups at that time had no family connection with the church but came to clubs because of school friendships.

One such girl was particularly challenging. By chance she was on the same bus as me about three years ago. I did not recognise her but she introduced herself and her young son.

She said "I know I was so difficult when I was a teenager but you will never know how much I appreciated being a member of the S.P.E.A.K youth group at St Peter's and being allowed to spend the weekend at Dorney."

I think that says it all !



Ludmilla's(Belarusian Interpreter) memories of her visit click **HERE**.

Wayne Brown, The Hutchins School England Cricket Tour 2012



Dinner at our accomodation was superb. The Eton Dorney Centre is a house over 400 years old and we were treated to a marvellous dinner with apple tart and custard for pudding.