

# SOL Sharing One Language



## SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

What a beautiful time of year to explore and travel!  
The birds are singing, the flowers are in bloom, the sun is shining,  
and new life and opportunities are growing for 2025.

We at SOL are incredibly happy to see all of this and to bask in the  
beautiful new energy that is present all around us.  
This is a fabulous time to show appreciation for all of our students,  
visiting teachers and the wonderful team that make SOL such a  
vibrant and dynamic environment to learn, develop and grow.

We are looking forward to all of our visitors!  
If you would love to be part of the SOL experience,  
get in touch with us at:

[sol@sol.org.uk](mailto:sol@sol.org.uk)

or with one of our in-country coordinators (see website)

# Kicking Off the 2025 Conference Season

We are excited to share that SOL has officially opened the 2025 conference season with our sponsorship and participation in several ELT events hosted by our partner associations. These engagements highlight our strong commitment to supporting English language teachers through professional development and meaningful cooperation.

## TESOL-Hungary's Spark Winter Warmer Conference - Budapest, Hungary



On 21-22 February 2025, we took part in the Spark Winter Warmer Conference at the IBS - International Business School in Budapest. Organised by TESOL-Hungary, the event brought together enthusiastic educators for a weekend of inspiration and practical learning. As part of our ongoing support, SOL held a raffle awarding a special prize: a teacher training course in Devon and **Ihasz Adrienn** was the lucky winner!



## British Council Forum - Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Also in February, we joined the British Council's Regional Forum on continuing professional development in Sarajevo.

The event gathered educators and policy leaders from across the country to exchange ideas and enhance teacher development systems. SOL contributed by organising a teacher raffle, again awarding access to our Devon course and the Summer Retreat in Serbia - reaffirming our dedication to helping teachers grow. The lucky winners were: **Azemina Habibic** (Retreat) and **Elvira Kutlovac** (Devon)!



## ATECR Conference, Prague, Czech Republic (22nd March)

Our journey continued at the ATECR Conference in Prague, a key event for the English teaching community in the Czech Republic. Through our cooperation with the organisers, we ran our signature teacher raffle, offering the same two exceptional prizes to lucky participants and the winners were: **Radka Jancova** (Devon) and **Sarka Opatova** (Retreat). It was a pleasure to support such a vibrant community of educators.



## P.A.R.K. Conference, Brno, Czech Republic (5th April)

We wrapped up this round of conferences at the P.A.R.K. Conference in Brno, where innovation in teaching and learner engagement was a central focus. Once more, we hosted our teacher raffle, gifting access to our Devon course and the Summer Retreat in Serbia, the luckiest teachers were: **Barbora Pejcharova** (Devon) and **Veronika Smatlakova** (Retreat). Events like this reinforce our strong belief in making professional development both accessible and inspiring.



"SOL has changed my life!"

Would you love to expand your teaching toolkit?

# Teaching is Entertaining

Dates: 6th - 13th July 2025

Location: Barnstaple, England

Cost: £575

This new course, run by **David Fisher**, director of The Bear Educational Theatre in Prague, will give participants multiple opportunities to explore their creative side.

The fact is, that the world of teaching has a lot in common with the world of entertainment. Teachers have a lot of skills that entertainers also use and, more importantly, entertainers have a lot of skills that teachers can learn and use to make their lessons more engaging and interesting.

Learning entertainment skills gives teachers a great tool for dealing with key issues like student motivation and classroom management.



[CLICK here](#)  
[for more information](#)



## During this course, participants will:

- Learn new drama techniques and get to practise them in a supportive environment.
  - Join an educational theatre team and become involved in helping to stage a show.
  - Visit the sea and different beautiful and historic locations
  - Use creative techniques to reflect on their experiences.
  - Become more comfortable with drama and the 'language' of theatre.
  - Learn practical activities that they can use in the classroom.
  - Learn principles of entertainment that they can apply to their regular work.
- Have a truly memorable, creative experience.



# Special Spotlight:

## Karla Mikešová

(Czech Coordinator)

### International

“Karla has been a special part of SOL for a long time, showing belief in our organisation and mission statement, being an incredible support for group leaders and a wonderful and inspiring advocate of SOL”

Today we celebrate her dedication to all SOL friends and colleagues!

I have been working as a coordinator for the Czech Republic since 2011. I support teachers who bring students to SOL. I help with course organisation, admin work, travel arrangements and money transfer. I regularly come to SOL with a group of 40 students. I promote SOL in my country, I give information, advice, I make new contacts. I attend conferences, I do school visits, and I arrange tours in my country. I also keep in touch and cooperate with regional coordinators (SK, PL) on regular basis. We help each other, cover places at conferences if needed, share information, updates. I keep in touch with the office and SOL teachers.

“As a teacher I believe that each child has abilities to learn many different skills and the teachers should provide learners with support, motivation, inspiration, resources and challenging learning environment and opportunities. In my opinion learners gain a lot by observing, listening, sharing, learning from each other, by doing projects, fieldwork, drama and SOL courses provide all that and fulfil my idea about inspiring place for learners not only of the English language”.

# Special Spotlight:

## Karla Mikešová (Czech Coordinator) International



When I was 16-year-old student I got an amazing opportunity to take part in an international scout's jamboree, Intercamp 1990 in Mechelen, Belgium. I would say it was a turning point of my life as I was able to travel to western Europe very shortly after the fall of communism in my country (November 1989), to meet people from different countries, to use the English language outside the classroom for real-life communication. I enjoyed each minute of the Intercamp, felt like that Intercamp was the right place for me and decided to pursue my career in learning English and then teaching English and working with young people.

Later, when living in the UK for a few years I found myself very comfortable in English culture and found England as my second home.

I have enjoyed working for SOL since my first day in Barnstaple. I am glad I could cooperate with many fantastic people as Yvonne, Josie, Mark, Matt, Klaudia, Karen, Zoe, Tim, Tom...people who are not an active part of SOL now, but for me they are forever members of SOL family, the same goes to a very special person, Grenville, who established SOL and run the organisation for more than 30 years. I enjoy working with everyone at SOL and I believe the cooperation, strong bond and friendship I have with Anna Haverova and Iryna will be extended to more SOL coordinators and members.



Sharing One Language

# English in Action: Group Bookings and Support



SOL is very pleased to announce the first two school bookings as part of our 50% course subsidy partnership with English in Action.

Our first two schools to benefit from our partnerships are Uzice Grammar School, Uzice, Serbia and ELTE Trefort, Budapest, Hungary.

We hope that the students enjoy their experiences 😊

If your school is interested in SOL subsidy for an English in Action course in your school find out more here:

<https://www.englishinaction.com/#read-on>

## More Opportunities for Teachers

### ‘Giving Words Wings’ by Fiona Mauchline

A course in language teaching ideas and techniques, focusing particularly on sharing, interaction, collaboration, creativity, student-led and learner-centred techniques, and, above all, vocabulary development. £575



[MORE info here](#)

# Host Family Event



On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February our host families got together to show support for one another, to meet up with new host families, to share good strategies for communication and to discuss areas of development when it comes to hosting.

A great time was had by all over a lovely cuppa and cake and advice was shared, games described and the joys of hosting and matters arising were enthusiastically divulged. SOL is always keen to support our host families and will continue these events to contribute to a friendly and encouraging team spirit.





# Devon Arrivals



We have been excited to welcome many groups to SOL this spring. We love to celebrate our students and value our experiences with each and every one! This was **I Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Stanisława Staszica w Lublinie** lead by **Beata Raczkiewicz-Piądłowska** that joined us this March. A returning school that always bring us wonderful students who are supported by friendly and enthusiastic teachers.

## First barbecue of the year!!



Thanks to our lovely host family **Simon and Louise** and the glorious Devon sunshine, we were able to hold our first barbecue of the year for students in Rock Park Barnstaple. We had an excellent turnout of students and host families who enjoyed gloriously grilled hot food, sweet treats and fun games and activities. The atmosphere was further enhanced by the celebration of student and host family birthdays where happy birthday was sung in both English and Polish and lovely cake was shared. Time when host families and students come together is truly valuable and enhances the connection, we all share.

# Catherine @IATEFL

Catherine has been exploring up north, meeting friends old and new at **IATEFL Edinburgh 2025**. A conference of extensive size and with so many options to explore and connect was certainly a fabulous way to kick off a creative year of teaching. Catherine continues to support and inspire teachers at SOL and will use her extensive experience in imparting the best of her time at Edinburgh to enhance and develop methodology and practice within our team.



## Special Spotlight: **Lilias Hill** (Lead Teacher) U.K.

**Lilias is an experienced educator, travel enthusiast and inspiring friend and colleague.**

**Today we show appreciation for the impact that she has had on students across Europe with her creative methodology, relaxed and welcoming classroom manner and wonderful wit.**

## Special Spotlight: Lilias Hill (Lead Teacher) U.K.



I've had an interesting life so far, always been interested in travel and languages and teaching and helping people (probably as my mother was a teacher). The urge to travel rather took over when I left school and the 'gap year' before university turned into working and travelling and sort of never went back to study until I was much older, when, about 15 years ago a friend suggested doing an Open University course. At this point I had 'early retired' from work as my husband, Steve, suggested we took a couple of years break from work to do some travelling in Europe and Australia.

The idea was brought on by the purchase of a Motorhome (Camping Car), in which we'd had some good holidays and thought a longer time might be fun. It was during this time of travel, the 2 years extended into 15 years of living full time in the motorhome, that I decided my brain needed more to do and I took on the idea of getting a degree through the Open University. When I started this, a lot of work and assignments were book based and some on the internet. Book based was hard, getting books sent to remote places and doing assignments and getting these in on time with no internet signal proved quite a challenge, but as I had chosen 'International Studies' and was interested in all the areas it covered (except the politics unit) I managed to keep going, despite, a few times in Australia when it was so hot, windy and with flies around, studying in a small van or in a campsite kitchen was not easy, Steve bore the brunt of my frustration. When I finally got my degree 4 years later, at the presentation the 'Dean' said, "There is only one thing harder than being an OU student - and that is living with one". There was a lot of applause from the audience.

# Special Spotlight: Lilias Hill (Lead Teacher) U.K.

Why the travel in Europe and Australia?

Australia because I have a brother there and the conditions for windsurfing and diving are some of the best in the world and these being 2 of the sports I enjoy it was a logical choice. Europe because there is so much to see and we have only scratched the surface and intend to do much more over the next few years, especially as winter in England is not a favourite time of year!

Work wise, well, I have been with SOL since 2016 and every day has been a pleasure, it suits my personality and way of working as I enjoy helping people to improve their skills and to engender interest in different things, not just improving their English. Before SOL I worked for Summer Schools, with mainly Italian and Russian students (an interesting mixture of personalities) and helped to design the courses and run centres as well as mentoring other Centre Teaching Managers. Prior to this I worked in IT Training, it was never the actual IT which interested me, (and I'm still not very good at it, students often solve problems for me) but the training side of designing and delivering courses.

I've learnt a lot about people while travelling, mostly that if you are nice, they are nice, if you smile, they smile. I've travelled mostly with my husband, who is a cautious person to my more trusting nature, but also with my brother who is more trusting even than I am and I learned from him that as soon as you smile and talk to people, they respond in kind.



# Special Spotlight: Lilias Hill (Lead Teacher) U.K.

We were in Moscow once, trying to find our hotel for the night, it was getting dark, we had no idea (even with our phones we were struggling) and I asked in a shop (they spoke German otherwise we had no hope), not only did they know where it was, they also said we would not find it and walked with us to make sure we got there (through a gate in a high fence, so yes, we would never have found it!) Kindness of strangers.

So much of my life has been and is, about the people I am with and the good and bad times I share with friends and colleagues. I've been lucky to always have friends and family around me and to have a house to live in as a base from which to continue to travel, in a place I love close to the sea on the North Devon Coast.



If you would love to meet Lilias and many other dynamic and creative teachers, check out our student courses below:

<https://www.sol.org.uk/courses/for-students>

<https://www.sol.org.uk/courses/course-prices>

