

## **Impressions of recent Munsbachs : Carol Abel 1999**

Munsbach - what can I say other than 'wow' or 'waw' -what a week! This has to be the hardest working/playing week of my year ... and it was wonderful.

Participants arrived about midday on the Saturday and sat down to their first communal meal - it was hot and the noise level in the dining room was unbearable with 40+ bodies crammed in and no windows open (to limit the presence of the wasps and flies that 'bug' our week there).

The content of the course was divided into two. Each student chose one option from the Skills selection (sub-divided into a musical option, two different acting options, and one directing option) and one option from the Theme selection.

The slightly unreal atmosphere that always reigns at Munsbach surely has something to do with bringing together so many talented and fairly extrovert people. 'Abandon inhibition all ye who enter here' would be a good motto for the week.

We all probably breathed a sigh of relief when Thursday came and we went on our picnic. This provided a welcome respite from our vocal and creative labours.

Friday night was music night when tradition has it that participants sing songs, recite or otherwise perform. There is no pressure (other than self-imposed) and nobody thinks any the worse of you if you forget the words half way through as I did one year! You just start again.

Soon, too soon for the many who went to bed at 4am, Saturday dawned on our last full day. It was with a sense of impending sadness at parting that lent a certain piquancy to our last few hours and the desire to cram in as much as possible before time inevitably ran out. New friendships had been formed and existing ones strengthened by renewed contact with old and not so old friends (one of the benefits of returning year after year).

Sunday morning, we crawled from our beds and staggered off to be de briefed and then participated in a lively plenary debate on the week's proceedings [followed by] tearful farewells (it's always hard to say goodbye and harder still to say goodbye to people with whom you've really connected and may never see again). It's very difficult to go from Munsbach back into real life, harder perhaps for first timers for whom the experience may prove to be life changing. It's impossible to communicate what makes the week so special. Nobody should feel that they have to rush off to act or direct after attending one of these courses. The courses are designed to provide a source of experience from which you can draw at any time in the future. The benefits may not even be professional but they will certainly be personal.