

CASE STUDY

Date: 19 November 2008

Contact: Simon Brian, PR Account Director: 01664 454511

The language of Esperanto was conceived in 1887 by a Jewish doctor, to help people from different countries communicate and to help foster understanding between different cultures.

A lifelong love of language

Ex documentary film maker Eric Walker, now in his eighties, is a keen speaker of Esperanto, the original world language. But as a self-confessed slow learner of other languages, he progressed quickly with Esperanto.

“I had always been hopeless at foreign languages - I could not pronounce properly, nor remember the grammar and irregularities,” said Eric.

But the path of his career and lifestyle was to take would change this. Eric’s career in the late 1960s as a documentary maker took him to Poland which is where he first discovered the language.

Eric travelled to Krakow with a friend, Sally, with local knowledge and she suggested that travelling around Poland with her, staying with families in the *Pasporta Servo* scheme -where Esperanto speakers open up their homes to fellow speakers.

“It was an eye-opener for me to hear Sally and Polish teenagers talking fluently in Esperanto as if it was their native language, and after a few days, I was picking up a few key phrases.”

“Being ‘thrown in at the deep end’ actually helped me to start picking up the language and I found it easier than languages in school...everything seemed so logical and easy to grasp,” said Eric.

He was told that with a bit more study, he’d be ready to take part in an annual international holiday for around 400 Esperanto speakers a few months later.

“Being among the only westerners at the time (around the time of the Iron Curtain) proved to be interesting - I was much in demand for discussions,” continued Eric.

The holiday was packed with various events tailored to both beginners and fluent speakers and Eric said: “I made a lot of friends on that trip and was asked to bring more westerners over the next time I came...which I did. It wasn’t long before I was bringing bus-loads!”

From then, trips abroad using *Pasporta Servo* were regular events for Eric and he became a well established figure in UK Esperanto speakers. He is now the editor of the Esperanto Association of Britain’s ‘Netnews.’

“Using *Pasporta Servo* has helped me in so many ways, from the language learning side through to developing relations and understanding with other cultures. Although I spent a lot of time in Eastern Europe, the Esperanto speaking world stretches a lot further, with a large number of speakers in China and Japan.

“Esperanto is more than just an easy language to learn - it’s a key which unlocks many doors permitting new experiences.”

Ends

For any further information, contact:

Simon Brian
Encore Public Relations
Burrough Court
Burrough on the Hill
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire
LE14 2QS
01664 454511
simon@encorepublicrelations.co.uk