



## English Language Learn the Individual Way

### *Dear Friends*

Many greetings for 2018. 2017 has come and gone. It was as usual a busy year, one in which Kate produced the book illustrated above. Although she ran a course for a delightful Japanese couple who had come to live in St Albans, her focus through the year has been on historical research.

Some of you will have visited the wonderful little watermill at Redbournbury on the river Ver. Just beyond is the village of Redbourn and in the Spring Kate was invited to lecture there on England and the village in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was a very interesting project and she has been invited to return this year to look at the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Redbourn, like St Albans, was on the route from London to the north of England, and so there were many inns and some fine houses. These attracted wealthy residents and this included ancestors of our present Queen. For the ordinary residents, farming was the principal activity but also straw plaiting to make the material for the hat trade in both Luton and St Albans.

This year was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning of the towns of St Albans and Worms in Germany and there was an exchange of visits by the mayors of the two towns. Kate and David joined the group visiting Worms in June and then helped to entertain the visitors from Worms on their return trip in September. This coincided with a Food and Drink Festival in St Albans and the mayor of Worms was treated to an English roast beef dinner. It is recognised that social links of this kind with other European towns are now particularly important to keep good relations in the light of Brexit. St Albans was notable in being one of the towns voting predominantly to remain part of the European Union, but sadly our vote was not enough to produce a positive democratic result.

At Christmas time this year we were pleased to have a visit from our Hungarian friends George and Marianna. Not many of our foreign friends have the opportunity to experience our particular Christmas customs and celebrations. We all had Christmas dinner together at the White Hart hotel on Holywell Hill and they discovered exactly what a rich English pudding can be! Only then did it become clear that the pudding is the cake and not the custard sauce on top which is so commonly in other countries referred to as 'pudding'.

Our families are all well and both Christine and Nora produced their babies in the Spring. Harriet now has a baby brother called Fynlo Iain Goldsmith and Emily and Helen have a sister called Matilda Eszter Morris. Fynlo's name is from the Isle of Man and Eszter is spelt in the Hungarian way, so we all maintain our international dimensions!

Kate's book came out in February. It traces the history of St Albans through the existing buildings, from the Roman theatre to the new Leisure Centre opened only a few years ago. She researched the lives of many families who lived in the town and so was able to include much which has gone on 'behind closed doors'. Many of the photographs were taken by David's daughter Kari. There is more information about Kate's books and articles on the website.

With our very best wishes

*Kate*

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