

Caux, Monday, 29th July 2002

Dear friends,

Last Monday was billed as an 'Intergenerational dialogue on Globalization', and indeed, there has been a genuine dialogue all through the well-planned days, with audience participation, and an informality that I guess is unusual in 'business conferences'. Many were here for the first time, and expressed delight in the style, the place and the contents. A senior manager from Boeing who allows herself to attend only one business conference a year decided to come after accidentally discovering the Caux Initiatives for Business website.

Each day started with one participant offering something of their life journey under the title 'The Heart of the Matter'. A young Dutch financial controller talked of the teamwork and support that she had found through the Junior Round Table that began in Caux in 1993, and of the struggle in her business 'to treat people right'. For her, 'team' meant 'Together Each Achieves More'. The following day, we had a view from Africa, by a computer engineer who reminded us of the global gap. For most of his continent, IT (information technology) means nothing, and his own home village for instance does not even have access to electricity.

A important group from Indian industry presented the concept of a conference on 'Globalization, Embracing Opportunity, Creating Synergy' in Panchgani, India, in January 2003.

The final day had 'rapporteurs' who had followed each of the three 'tracks' of the workshops reporting back to us all, and so gave us an idea of what we had missed in the difficult choices that we had made, between 'Globalization at the personal level', at the business/community level and at the global level. The dialogues started in the Main Hall were continued in the dining room and out on the terrace. The dynamic new 'CIB' team are already planning for another conference here next year.

Then we have also enjoyed some of the finest evening entertainments that I've ever experienced in Caux – and this even before the *Renewal Arts* conference, but thanks to the talent scouts of their network. A Brazilian trio, Bambu (electric bass guitar, classical harp and a singer/ percussionist) electrified us all, and had us dancing, clapping and waving our arms to the rhythms of that great continent – and they return for another concert in the coming days. Their classical, traditional melodies had a warmth, a colour and charm that carried us away. Then the Banchieri Ensemble from Hungary showed us what six unaccompanied human voices can achieve by way of enchantment and magic, starting with sixteenth century madrigals, with increasingly expressive facial expressions, small gestures, elements of mime and drama, and ending to rapturous applause with an encore from Lennon and McCartney (Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da, for the fans of the Beatles).

Thus the Caux Initiatives for Business Conference closed on Wednesday, and the gap days have been filled with preparations and two intense days of preparatory meetings on Initiatives of Change communications, internal and external strategy, the Web publications and periodicals. The report will be available on request. Further press releases are up on the Web, and come with this letter, to give you a flavour of the rich days just finished.



Initiatives of Change

The weather report (it seems that some of our readers are almost addicted to this part of these letters!): fine, and set to last for some days now, and as the house fills further, its important to be able to spill out for tea and meals.

Andrew Stallybrass

While the House Scribe is travelling, here are some more lines to fill you in on the rest of the week:

From Elizabeth Tooms and team:

So we'll take over from here - so pardon the stylistic shift! The Road to Renewal Conference on the Arts opened with a bang Saturday with the first installation of a new work by Dr. Ahmed Moustafa in the Great Hall and an innovative performance of old and new music by Moa Sjögren and Erik Parsons. While Erik manipulated sounds on the latest filtering technology, Moa performed exciting and lively vocal improvisations drawn from traditional Swedish cow-calling songs. Participants dutifully appeared, unlike cows, and were asked to make difficult choices picking only one of the many interesting week-long workshops.

A full programme of evening performances, plenums and workshops has begun. There seems to be something different happening in every room - even tea time has competition as it is closely followed by the Arts a la Carte sessions of performances, discussions and presentations. For those who have the stamina, this summer sees the addition of the first ever late night Film Festival after the evening programmes (including the screening of 'Life is a Fatal Sexually Transmitted Disease' presented in person by celebrated Polish director Krzysztof Zanussi).

Many stimulating conversations - in speech, music and other art forms - will take place this week. And it is clear that everyone in the house will come away from this conference having experienced something unusual and unique.

From Christoph Spreng:

Alongside the rich unfolding of the Renewal Arts Conference, in the Salle du Lac a different kind of programme has been taking place. The Caux Dialogue on "Peace, Justice and Faith" was an honest conversation among 39 prominent Muslims and Non-Muslims from over 18 countries in South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North America and North Africa. Prince Hassan of Jordan, a firm supporter of the Dialogue, was prevented from taking part at the last minute. At the end of the event, a leading Middle Eastern academic said "Please convey my thanks to everyone in the building, because our meeting was carried and made possible by their good spirit." A report of the Dialogue is available on the web.

On quite a different matter:

The third floor corridor is temporarily divided by a white chipboard wall. This is to screen the creation of two new seminar rooms and to muffle the noise of the building work that is taking place in what used to be a great void above the main kitchen. They will be finished and ready for your use by next summer.