

## **INGLÉS**

### **OPCIÓN A**

**Read the text and the instructions to the questions very carefully. Answer all the questions in English**

Michelle Obama was brought up in Chicago in a one-bedroom apartment. Her father worked for the city authorities and her mother, Marian, was originally a secretary who later stayed home to look after Michelle and her older brother, Craig. The family has been described as a closely united one that shared family meals, read and played games together.

Craig and Michelle, 21 months apart in age, and often mistaken for twins, slept in the living room with a sheet serving as their room divider. Their parents were not well off, but both children were brought up with an emphasis on education. The brother and sister learned to read at home by the age of 4, and in primary school both were put into classes advanced for children of their age.

By the beginning of secondary school, Michelle was attending special classes, where she learned French and took various accelerated courses. She then went on to attend a special high school for gifted children, where she continued to be an outstanding student. "Without being immodest, we were always smart, we were always driven and we were always encouraged to do the best you can do, not just what's necessary," her brother, Craig, has said. "And when it came to going to schools, we all wanted to go to the best schools we could."

Michelle graduated from Whitney M. Young Magnet High School in 1981. After high school, she followed her brother to Princeton University, graduating in 1985 with a degree in Sociology. She went on to Harvard Law School in 1988, where she took part in demonstrations demanding more places for minority students and professors.

After law school, Michelle worked for the law firm Sidley Austin in the area of marketing and intellectual property. There, in 1989, she met her future husband, Barack Obama.

### **Questions**

1. Write a summary of the text in English, including the most important points, using your own words whenever possible (Approximately 50 words, 1 point).
2. Find words or phrases in the text that correspond in meaning to the following (1 point: 0.25 each)  
a) care for                      b) intensive                      c) participated                      d) asking for
3. Complete the second sentence of each pair so that it has the same meaning as the first one (2 points: 0.5 points each)  
a) Michelle Obama was brought up in Chicago in a one-bedroom apartment.  
*Michelle Obama was brought up in Chicago in an apartment which .....*  
b) The family read and played games together.  
*The family not only .....*  
c) Their parents were not well off, but both children were brought up with an emphasis on education.  
*Although .....*  
d) Michelle took various accelerated courses. She then went on to attend a special high school for gifted children.  
*After .....*
4. Answer the following questions in your own words, as far as possible. Your answer must be based on the information given in the text. (2 points: 1 point each).  
a) Michelle's parents were not well off. What evidence is there in the text that indicates this?  
b) What was special about Michelle Obama's upbringing?
5. Write a short biography of someone who is important to you. (Approximately 120 words; 3 points).

## **INGLÉS**

### **OPCIÓN B**

**Read the text and the instructions to the questions very carefully. Answer all the questions in English.**

So, you want to plan a gap year between school and university? Here at Real Gap, we're bringing you a once-in-a-lifetime experience, so you can see and do whatever you want during your gap year. If you don't have a whole year off, don't worry, because our trips start from a one-week duration, so you can go on your own mini-adventure, whenever you want!

How much will it cost? Gap year adventures are as expensive as you want them to be. We also have the option to work abroad on your travels, so you can earn cash while you're exploring. For example, you could work in Australia and then move on to South East Asia afterwards, where the cost of living is considerably cheaper!

Planning your adventure is easy! There are many options available: volunteering, working, learning, travelling, and so on. If you want advice about where to go, give our travel advisors a call.

Will you be safe? If you're sensible, you almost certainly will be. Gap year adventures aren't 100 per cent safe, but neither is a trip to your local cinema. Sometimes things don't go to plan, but one of the things that gap year adventures teach people is how to deal with unfamiliar situations. If you're a first time traveller, our 'Experience' trips will probably suit you; they involve group tours around the country (with a guide), and this can definitely make people feel more comfortable.

Real Gap has programmes in over 30 countries - so there really is something for everyone! You could make a list of all the places that really interest you. Are you sporty, cultural, artistic, a party-goer? All of these elements of your personality will help us prepare the trip that will most suit you.

### **Questions**

1. Write a summary of the text in English, including the most important points, using your own words whenever possible (Approximately 50 words; 1 point).

2. Find words or phrases in the text that correspond in meaning to the words and definitions given here (1 point; 0.25 each).

- a) period                      b) in a foreign country                      c) ready money                      d) serve / be convenient for

3. Complete the second sentence of each pair so that it has the same meaning as the first one (2 points; 0.5 each).

- a) Our trips start from a one-week duration, so you can go on your own mini adventure.

*You can go...*

- b) You could work in Australia and move on to South East Asia afterwards.

*Before ...*

- c) Planning your adventure is easy!

*It's ...*

- d) "If you are sensible you will be safe"

*She told them that ...*

4. Answer the following questions in your own words, as far as possible. Your answer must be based on the information given in the text (2 points; 1 point each)

- a) What kind of company is Real Gap?

- b) What different options do they offer for a complete gap year?

5. Do you think taking a year off between school and university is a good idea? Why/ why not? What would you like to do if you could do this?

## **INGLÉS**

### **6. LISTENING TEST (1 point)**

**In this listening passage you are going to hear about two places. One of them is a village called Dull and the other a town called Boring. As you listen, you will probably come across some new words. Read and listen to them. Make sure you know what they mean.**

Abbey: abadía  
timber mill: aserradero  
Meadow: prado

**Here is the beginning of the passage.**

Do you know the English word “dull”? “Dull” is the opposite of “bright”. Often it means “uninteresting”. We can talk about dull weather, which means cloudy weather, probably some rain and certainly no sunshine. We can talk about a dull book or a dull lesson. And we can say that someone is dull – a dull person is probably not very intelligent, and has nothing interesting or lively or amusing to say.

**Here is an example of a question:**

Apart from “boring” the word “dull” has other meanings. It can mean:

- The same as bright
- Lively (when used to describe a person)
- Cloudy (when used to describe the weather)

.The correct answer is: “Cloudy (when used to describe the weather)

**Ready? Now read the rest of the questions and alternative answers before listening to the text.**

(2-minute pause)

**Now listen to the rest of the recording. You will hear it three times. Write the correct answer in your exam notebook (cuadernillo). WRITE THE COMPLETE ANSWER, NOT JUST A LETTER. You must not write more than one answer for each question.**

(Recording)

**Now you will hear the text again.**

(Recording)

**Now you will hear the text for the last time.**

(Recording)

**That is the end of the Listening test. Write your answers in your examination notebook (cuadernillo) if you have not already done so. Then you can go on with the rest of the examination.**

## **INGLÉS**

### **QUESTIONS**

1. English teenagers use the word “boring”
  - to describe activities like going to the cinema with friends
  - to describe activities which they do with their parents
  - to describe activities which they do when they are 15
- 2.. Dull
  - is a town in Scotland
  - has only one row of houses
  - has a very good school
3. In the past,
  - Dull was a very boring place
  - Dull was an early Christian settlement
  - Dull had a very interesting church
4. The speaker says that Elizabeth Leighton isn't dull because
  - She lives in Boring
  - She lives in Dull
  - She went cycling in America
5. Oregon is
  - In the North-West of the United States
  - In the North-West of Scotland
  - Very different from North-West Scotland
6. Boring is a place where
  - People commute to work by train
  - Many of the inhabitants are very dull
  - Guide dogs are trained for blind people
7. Elizabeth Leighton thought that
  - Dull and Boring could become twin communities
  - Dull and Boring's inhabitants have a sense of humour
  - People would pass by Dull and Boring and smile
8. Elizabeth's idea
  - Made all the people of Dull and Boring smile
  - Is being considered by the authorities of Dull and Boring
  - Came to her when she was passing by Dull and Boring
9. The name “Dull”
  - comes from old Scottish
  - comes from the name of an old soldier
  - comes from the name of a whiskey
10. Boring was named in honour of
  - William H. Boring, who founded the railway company
  - William H. Boring, who was born in Oregon in 1932
  - William H. Boring, a soldier in the American Civil War

## INGLÉS

### OPCIÓN A

**Read the text and the instructions to the questions very carefully. Answer all the questions in English.**

What you eat and the way it affects your body depend very much on the kind of person you are. For one thing, the genes you inherit from your parents can determine how your metabolism deals with particular foods. The tendency to put on weight rather easily, for example, often runs in families – which means they have to take particular care. But there are certain unhealthy eating habits which you can avoid. One of these is skipping breakfast.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but when you have to rush to work or school in the mornings it's easy to neglect it. Doing so not only drains you of energy, but also makes it more likely that you will eat snacks during the day. Skipping breakfast also confuses your metabolism, causing you to burn fewer calories. So, if you are trying to lose weight, skipping breakfast is not a good idea.

“Bingeing” or eating large amounts of food in one session is another unhealthy eating habit that you should avoid. Do you tend to skip meals, then eat a lot in the next meal to compensate? Do you fill yourself with junk food during the weekend after a week of dieting? Do you often continue eating even though you are full? These are signs that you are a habitual binger. Eating several small meals in a day helps you to avoid bingeing.

If you eat while watching TV, while working, or while reading then you are also developing an unhealthy eating behavior. When you eat while doing other activities, you become unable to measure how much you eat. As a result, you tend to overeat without knowing it. You should try to have a specific time and place for eating.

### Questions

1. Write a summary of the text in English, including the most important points, using your own words whenever possible (approximately 50 words, 1 point).
2. Find words or phrases in the text that correspond in meaning to the following (1 point: 0.25 each):
  - a) get fat,
  - b) not having, omitting
  - c) hurry (verb)
  - d) go on
3. Complete the second sentence of each pair so that it has the same meaning as the first one (2 points: 0.5 points each)
  - a) The genes you inherit from your parents can determine how your metabolism deals with particular foods.  
*How your metabolism deals with particular foods* .....
  - b) Do you fill yourself with junk food during the weekend after a week of dieting?  
*The author asks the reader whether* .....
  - c) Eating several small meals in a day helps you to avoid bingeing.  
*You can avoid bingeing if* .....
  - d) You should have a specific time and place for eating.  
*The writer advises us* .....
4. Answer the following questions in your own words, as far as possible. Your answer must be based on the information given in the text. (2 points: 1 point each)
  - a) In what ways can you try to avoid putting on weight?
  - b) Why is it a good thing to have a specific time and place for eating?
5. Is personal appearance important? Why? Why not? (Approximately 120 words; 3 points).

## INGLÉS

### OPCIÓN B

**Read the text and the instructions to the questions very carefully. Answer all the questions in English.**

Holly and Lauren, from Green School, Birmingham, spoke to Malala Yousafzai and wished her happy birthday after the Youth Assembly event at the United Nations. Malala was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen while returning home on a school bus in Pakistan, but recovered almost miraculously.

Their day began early, and after a walk to the UN, they were able to meet Malala. Soon after they arrived, they piled into the Council Chamber with over 500 other young delegates and were immediately seated. They had a panoramic view of the room and were almost opposite the main speakers.

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, spoke of his education as a child himself: "I didn't learn the importance of education from a book, I lived it." His school experience was similar to that of many of the other young delegates in the room. What surprised them was the lack of resources he had had. Pupils today have access to specialist technology but Ban Ki-Moon began with very little. It shocked them how a man of such power began with so little.

Then Malala spoke. They were astonished at how courageous and confident she was, and how strongly she believed in rights to education for all.

Holly and Lauren's trip to New York has been a source of inspiration and excitement. They flew for the first time, met lots of interesting people from around the world and saw some sights, but most importantly they heard how going to school is vital for so many people. The highlight of the trip for both of them was meeting Malala. She was so full of confidence. And although in some ways her life is so different to theirs, in others ways it is not - she now goes to school in Birmingham!

### Questions

1. Write a summary of the text in English, including the most important points, using your own words whenever possible (approximately 50 words; 1 point).
2. Find words or phrases in the text that correspond in meaning to the words and definitions given here (1 point; 0.25 each)  
a) got better    b) influence / strength    c) brave    d) most important part
3. Complete the second sentence of each pair so that it has the same meaning as the first one (2 points; 0.5 each).  
a) She was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen while returning home.  
*While she ...*  
b) "I didn't learn the importance of education from a book, I lived it." he said.  
*He said that ...*  
c) His school experience was similar to that of many of the other young delegates.  
*Many of the other young delegates ...*  
d) Pupils today have access to specialist technology but Ban Ki-Moon began with very little.  
*Whereas pupils today ....*
4. Answer the following questions in your own words, as far as possible. Your answer must be based on the information given in the text (2 points; 1 point each)  
a) How do you know that this event was important?  
b) What do we learn about Malala's personality and interests?
5. How do you think children's education will change in the future? (Approximately 120 words; 3 points).

## INGLÉS

## 6. LISTENING TEST (1 point)

**In this interview with Jane Couch, a girl who became a professional boxer, you are going to hear some new words. Read and listen to them. Make sure you know what they mean.**

Take up = dedicarse a

Bruises = mazaduras / magulladuras / moretones

Chill out = relajarse / relajarse

Ground = terra / tierra

**Here is the beginning of the interview.**

**Interviewer:** Now it's ten o'clock and time for "Where you work". Here in the studio is Jane Couch. Jane began boxing when she was 24, after years of drinking, drugs and street fighting. She was inspired to change her life by a TV documentary about women's boxing in the US.

**Here is an example of a question:**

0. Why did Jane take up boxing?

Because she was used to drinking and fighting in the street.

Because a documentary about women's rights inspired her.

Because she watched a TV documentary about women's boxing in the US.

**The correct answer is:**

Because she watched a TV documentary about women's boxing in the US.

**Ready? Now read the rest of the questions/ alternative answers before listening to the interview.**

(2-minute pause)

**Now listen to the rest of the interview. You will hear it three times. Write the correct answer in your exam notebook (cuadernillo). WRITE THE COMPLETE ANSWER, NOT JUST A LETTER. You must not write more than one answer for each question.**

(Recording)

**Now you will hear the text again.**

(Recording)

**Now you will hear the text for the last time.**

(Recording)

**That is the end of the Listening test. Write your answers in your examination notebook (cuadernillo) if you have not already done so. Then you can go on with the rest of the examination.**

## INGLÉS

### QUESTIONS

1. Jane won the world championship twice and was the first professional boxer in the US.  
Jane won the world championship three times and was the first professional boxer in the US.  
Jane won the world championship three times and was the first professional boxer in the UK.
2. Jane began boxing when women weren't allowed to watch documentaries.  
Jane began boxing when she saw women doing that in America.  
Jane began boxing because women weren't allowed to box in America.
3. When she was very young she used to practise a lot of sport.  
When she was very young she didn't have healthy food.  
When she was very young the only sport she did was boxing.
4. When she first took up boxing her friends thought she was crazy.  
When she first took up boxing her friends encouraged her.  
She first took up boxing when her friends told her to do it.
5. She starts going into full time training twice or three times a week before the fight.  
She starts going into full time training six weeks before the fight.  
She starts going into full time training eight to ten weeks before the fight.
6. Jane thinks that the most important thing to win a fight is to be skilled.  
Jane thinks that the most important thing to win a fight is to train well, be fit and get into shape.  
Jane thinks that the most important thing to win a fight is being strong mentally.
7. Jane thinks that boxing is more dangerous than football or rugby or any other sport.  
Jane has been injured playing football and rugby.  
Jane thinks that football or rugby are about as dangerous as boxing.
8. She usually relaxes doing media work.  
She usually relaxes spending her time on the farm.  
She usually relaxes watching TV or listening to the radio.
9. For her the best thing about being a professional boxer is keeping fit and healthy.  
For her the best thing about being a professional boxer is that you can make friends.  
For her the best thing about being a professional boxer is winning the world title.
10. Jane thinks that enjoying her life is very important for a normal girl.  
Jane thinks that being well known is very important for a professional boxer.  
Jane thinks that she has always behaved like a normal girl.

# Criterios de Avaliación / Corrección

## CONVOCATORIAS DE XUÑO E SETEMBRO

### Question 1. (1 punto)

Esta pregunta será puntuada segundo os seguintes criterios:

1. O alumno identificou as ideas principais do texto e resumiunas sen incluír información secundaria ou anecdótica (de 0 a 0.75 puntos).
2. O alumno expresou estas ideas en aproximadamente 50 palabras, sen copiar literalmente do texto, con coherencia, claridade, cohesión, razoable corrección gramatical e léxico axeitado ao tema (de 0 a 0.25 puntos).

### Question 2. (1 punto; 0.25 por cada palabra/ expresión correcta)

### Question 3. (4 x 0.5 = 2 puntos).

Transformación dunha parte ou o total dunha frase tirada do texto noutras palabras para que signifique o mesmo. Constará de catro partes, cunha puntuación de 0,5 punto para cada parte.

### Question 4. (2 x 1= 2 puntos)

Esta pregunta avalía a comprensión de detalle do texto e a capacidade do alumnado para expresar as ideas aí contidas nas súas propias palabras. Aínda que na contestación non será necesario que se repita o enunciado da pregunta, en ningún caso se poderá contestar con respostas curtas de tipo “*Yes, he does*” ou “*No, they haven't*”. Esta pregunta formularase con dous apartados. Cada un deles valerá 1 punto e avaliarase segundo os seguintes criterios:

1. O alumnado comprendeu a pregunta que se lle formulou e a súa contestación é axeitada e relevante (de 0 a 0.75 puntos).
2. O alumnado expresou as súas ideas sen copiar literalmente do texto, con coherencia, claridade, cohesión, razoable corrección gramatical e léxico axeitado ao tema (de 0 a 0,25 puntos).

### Question 5. (3 puntos)

Esta pregunta pretende avaliar a capacidade comunicativa do alumnado no ámbito da produción escrita. A nota final (máximo 3 puntos) outorgarase segundo a medida na que o alumnado cumpra os seguintes parámetros; cada un deles puntuarase de 0 a 0.5 puntos:

- a) **Alcance:** o alumnado aborda adecuadamente o tema proposto. Sabe comunicar as ideas que quere transmitir utilizando unha considerable variedade de recursos. Sabe utilizar o rexistro lingüístico adecuado á situación.
- b) **Riqueza e control do vocabulario.**
- c) **Corrección gramatical:** o alumnado ten un repertorio básico de elementos lingüísticos e de estratexias que lle permiten abordar o tema con comodidade. Non comete erros gramaticais básicos, como, por exemplo, omitir ou suxeito diante dun verbo, omitir o -s da 3ª persoa do singular do Presente Habitual (he writeS), utilizar adxectivos en plural, usar incorrectamente os adxectivos posesivos e demostrativos, non dominar os tempos verbais e outros.
- d) **Fluidez:** o alumnado posúe un dominio da lingua inglesa adecuado e suficiente para evitar cortes na comunicación ou malentendidos.
- e) **Cohesión:** o alumnado utiliza adecuadamente os conectores e demais medios de cohesión.
- f) **Coherencia:** o alumnado é capaz de organizar as súas ideas para redactar un texto coherente e ben estruturado.

**TOTAL = 9 puntos.**

**Segunda parte: LISTENING TEST (1 punto)**

## CONVOCATORIA DE XUÑO

### Opción A

- Michelle Obama's family was not rich, but it was closely united. It was also very interested in education, so Michelle became an excellent student, graduating from Princeton University and Harvard before she met Obama during her first job as a lawyer at the firm Sidley Austin.
- a) look after                      b) accelerated                      c) took part (in)                      d) demanding
- a) M.O. was brought up in Chicago in an apartment which had only one bedroom.  
b) The family not only read together, but they also played games/ The family not only read, but they also played games together.  
c) Although their parents were not well off, both children were brought up with an emphasis on education.  
d) After taking various accelerated courses, she went on to attend ....
- a) That they lived in a very small apartment, and that Michelle and her brother had to sleep in the living room, separated only by a curtain.  
b) What was special was that her parents were very interested in their children's education, so she went to a special school for gifted children and then to some of the best universities in the USA.

### Opción B

- Real Gap is a company that arranges journeys for young people who want to travel in between school and university. These journeys are made-to-measure; they are as cheap, long and adventurous as young people want and cover more than 30 countries and all sorts of possible activities and occupations.
- a) duration;                      b) abroad;                      c) cash;                      d) suit
- a) You can go on your own mini-adventure because/since/as our trips start from a one-week duration.  
b) Before moving / you move on to South East Asia, you could work in Australia.  
c) It's easy to plan your adventure.  
d) She told them that if they were sensible they would be safe / they would be safe if they were sensible
- Real Gap is a company that organises trips in over 30 countries during the gap year between school and university for all sorts of people, whether they are interested in sports, culture, art or parties.  
b) They offer the possibility to work, volunteer, learn and travel while you are abroad in many different countries. They offer all sorts of trips around countries with a guide, working and travelling, trips including sports, culture, art or parties.

**Listening:**    1. b;    2. b;    3. b    4. c;    5. a;    6. c;    7. a;    8. b;    9. a;    10. c.

## CONVOCATORIA DE SETEMBRO

### OPCIÓN A

- The text talks about unhealthy eating habits which make us put on weight. Although there exist genetic factors that influence how our bodies deal with food, we should avoid skipping breakfast, binge eating, or eating while doing other activities which prevent us from controlling how much we eat.

# Crterios de Avaliaci3n / Correcci3n

2. a) put on weight;      b) skipping;                      c) rush;                      d)continue
3. a) The genes you inherit from your parents can determine how your metabolism deals with particular foods.  
*How your metabolism deals with particular foods can be determined by the genes you inherit from your parents*
- b) Do you fill yourself with junk food during the weekend after a week of dieting?  
*The author asks the reader whether he/she fills him/herself with junk food during the weekend after a week of dieting.*
- c) Eating several small meals in a day will help you to avoid bingeing.  
*You can avoid bingeing if you eat several small meals a day.*
- d) You should have a specific time and place for eating.  
*The writer advises us to have a specific time and place for eating.*
4. a) **In what ways can you try to avoid putting on weight?**  
*By not skipping breakfast/always having breakfast, not bingeing/eating small meals during the day, and not eating while (you are) doing something else/ other things/ having a fixed time and place to eat/for eating.*
- b) **Why is it a good thing to have a specific time and place for eating?**  
*Because if you eat when you are doing other things it is difficult to control how much you eat, with the result that you/ so that you overeat without knowing it.*
5. Do you think it is important to pay attention to your personal appearance? Why? Why not?

## OPCI3N B

1. The text is about two girls from Birmingham who visited the United Nations. There they met Malala Yousafzai and were impressed by her confidence and courageousness. They also heard Ban Ki-Moon describe his education and were shocked at how poor it had been. The experience convinced them of the importance of education.
2. a) recovered;                      b) power;                      c) courageous;                      d) highlight.
3. a) She was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen while returning home.  
*While she was returning home, she was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen.*
- b. "I didn't learn the importance of education from a book, I lived it," He said.  
*He said that he hadn't learnt the importance of education from a book but (that he) had lived it.*
- c. His school experience was similar to that of many of the other young delegates.  
*Many of the other young delegates (had) had a similar school experience to his (one)/(had) had a school experience similar to his (one)*
- d. Pupils today have access to specialist technology but Ban Ki-Moon began with very little to specialist technology but Ban Ki-Moon began with very little.  
*Whereas pupils today have access to specialist technology, Ban Ki-Moon began with very little.*
4. a) I know it was an important event because it took place in the United Nations. The UN Secretary General was there and spoke. There were over 500 delegates, and some of them, like Holly and Lauren, had flown there from a long distance.
- b. She is brave, and confident in herself. She is interested in education for everybody and believes it is very important. She is strong, because she survived when she was shot by the Taliban.

## LISTENING

- 1-c;    2-b;    3-b;    4-a;    5-b;    6-c;    7-c;    8-b;    9-a;    10-c

# Criterios de Evaluación / Corrección

## TEXTO DA AUDICIÓN DE INGLÉS – XUÑO 2014

Do you know the English word “dull”? “Dull” is the opposite of “bright”. Often it means “uninteresting”. We can talk about dull weather, which means cloudy weather, probably some rain and certainly no sunshine. We can talk about a dull book or a dull lesson. And we can say that someone is dull – a dull person is probably not very intelligent, and has nothing interesting or lively or amusing to say. We have a saying in English that “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”. Do you know someone who works all the time and never relaxes and never goes out to enjoy themselves?

And I am sure that you all know the word “boring”. It means unexciting and uninteresting. It is a favourite word of English teenagers. If their parents suggest something to them, like “Shall we all go to the cinema tonight?”, the teenager will probably reply “boring”, because when you are 15 years old, any activity involving your parents is boring.

There is a village in Scotland called Dull. It is very small, with only a single row of houses. There is a church, but it has not been used for several years. There is a school too, but it is closed. In the past, Dull was quite interesting. It was an early Christian settlement, and there was an abbey where the church now stands. But nothing interesting seems to have happened in Dull for several hundred years, and today Dull seems to be a very dull place indeed.

Elizabeth Leighton lives in Dull. However, she is obviously not a dull person, because recently she went for a cycling holiday in America. And while she was there she discovered a town called Boring. Boring is in Oregon, in the north-west of the United States. The north west of the United States is a bit like Scotland – lots of rain, and snow in the winter. Boring has about 12,000 inhabitants, which means that it is quite a bit bigger than Dull. But is it any more interesting? It has a timber mill, and a place where they train guide dogs for blind people. But the railway line closed years ago, and I guess that many of the inhabitants of Boring commute to work every day to the city of Portland, which is not far away.

Elizabeth Leighton had the great idea that Dull and Boring should become ‘twin communities’. There could be a sign outside Dull saying “Dull, twinned with Boring” and a sign outside Boring saying “Boring, twinned with Dull”. And people passing by would smile and think that, even if Boring is boring, and Dull is dull, people in the two communities at least have a sense of humour. The local authorities in Dull and Boring are now considering Elizabeth’s idea.

Now I don’t want to spoil a good story for you, but I have to point out that Dull is not called Dull because it is a dull place. The name Dull comes from the Scottish Gaelic language, and probably means “meadow”. And Boring is named after an old soldier from the American Civil War who was called William H Boring. After the war, he settled in Oregon, and lived there until he died in 1932. Because William Boring lived nearby, and was one of the leading citizens of the place, it was natural for the railway company, and later the US Post Office, to call the settlement “Boring” in his honour.