

Some go to England, some come here

UT/Cambridge program combines travel with cultural education

HOUSTON cultural spark plug Ann Brinkerhoff claims to turn herself into a sponge when she goes to England each summer for classes at Cambridge University.

"I listen and look and learn," said the veteran of four sessions, whose class-



Betty Ewing

mates have ranged between 18 to 80 years. "Never once do I think about what to plan for dinner."

She recalls snapping one group to attention.

"That's my house," Ann shrieked during one session on British country house architecture when the lecturer flashed a slide of an ancient villa at Pompeii. She later wrote a paper on classical aspects of a contemporary home.

She shares with husband/geologist Bob Brinkerhoff a fascinating house in the Memorial area that was inspired by Ann's doodles and the professional know-how of architect Jack Stehling.

The program is a co-venture by Cambridge and the University of Texas at Austin that involves two to four weeks of study July 9-Aug. 5 at Clare College, Cambridge.

It offers undergraduate and adult students the opportunity to walk the same streets and garden paths as Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, John Milton, William Wordsworth and many others. And for the adventurous there's a form of canoeing called punting. London's vast storehouse of entertainment is only an hour's trip by train from Cambridge.

The same program that took Brinkerhoff to Cambridge brought a British family to Texas this week. Ornithologist Michael Allen, British director of the UT/Cambridge program, is here to promote the unique program and to lecture on birds. His wife Marjolein and their two daughters also made the trip.

"That's the Alamo," chorused Elizabeth, 7, and her sister, Caroline, 5, as they got their first glimpse of the San Antonio shrine. The Allens have also toured the state capitol and the University of Texas in Austin.

The sisters had played a fascinating little game called "Texas Bingo" that Brinkerhoff had given them on her trip to England. The board in this game, instead of numbers, has photos of bluebonnets,



Gene Sherman

Ornithologist Michael Allen, British director of the UT/Cambridge education program, brought wife Marjolein and their daughters Elizabeth, 7, and Caroline, 5, on his third trip to Texas.

whooping cranes, Gen. Sam Houston, the Alamo and other sights indigenous to the sovereign state of Texas.

"My family and I spent the Christmas and New Year's holidays in Texas, and none of us missed the plum puddings," said Allen.

The family, headquartered at the Warwick Towers with Christmas at the Brinkerhoffs' villa, visited the nearby Houston Zoo and the Museum of Natural Science. They shopped the Galleria (Laura Ashley dresses are cuter here than in England, they decided) and motored to Galveston for beachcombing and ferry rides.

They spent three days on Mustang Island crabbing and combing for seashells and checked out Texas' famous whooping

cranes and other feathered friends at Port Aransas.

Allen, 47, says he's been a bird watcher for 42 years.

"My father taught me about birds," he said.

During the visitors' trip to Port Aransas, Allen saw his very first Crested Cara Cara, a bird generally seen only in South Texas and southern Florida.

"I recognized it from a photo," he said.

On Thursday at 7 p.m., Allen will address the English-Speaking Union at the Briar Club, 2603 Timmons Lane. His topic will be "Birds of Britain."

At 7:30 p.m. Friday he'll talk about "Birds of Southern Africa" at the Museum of Natural Science.

Allen will also be speaking this week to the Kiwanis Club in San Antonio and the Rotarians in El Paso about the UT/Cambridge program.

The registration fee for the Cambridge program is \$1,995 per person for a two-week course and \$3,795 for four weeks. The fee covers tuition, room, meals and field trips, says Gene Sherman, program coordinator.

"Every weekday afternoon we take time for tea and conversation in the Commons Room of the College Library," Sherman said. "That's one British tradition I wish we could bring home."

The first session is July 9-22. The second July 23-Aug. 5.