

Session 2007

BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

ANGLAIS

Langue vivante 1

Série L

Durée : 3 heures - Coefficient 4

L'usage du dictionnaire et des calculatrices est interdit.

Compréhension	14 points
Expression	
Traduction	6 points

Le sujet comporte 3 pages numérotées 1/3 à 3/3.

Howard Beamish became a palaeontologist because of a rise in the interest rate when he was six years old. His father, a cautious man with a large mortgage, announced that the projected family holiday to the Costa Brava was no longer feasible. A chalet was rented on the north Somerset coast instead and thus, on a dank August afternoon, Howard picked up an ammonite on Blue Anchor Beach.

He presented it to his parents. 'What's this?'

'It's a stone,' said his father, who was listening to the test match.

'No, it isn't', retorted Howard, an observant child.

'It's a fossil, dear' said his mother. 'That's a very old sort of stone.'

'Why?' persisted Howard, after a few moments. The single word embraced in fact a vast range of query¹, for which he did not have the language.

His mother, too, paused to consider and was also defeated, though for different reasons. She evaded the issue by offering Howard a tomato sandwich, which he accepted with enthusiasm while continuing to pore over the ammonite. During the rest of the afternoon, he collected five more fossil fragments, including one embedded² in a slab of rock weighing several pounds.

His parents expostulated. There were already the picnic basket, the folding chairs, the radio, the beach bag, the ball, the cricket stumps³. 'Any of those stones you want to take back you're carrying yourself, do you understand?' instructed his father.

'They're not stones,' the child protested. And he staggered up the cliff path with the fruit of his first field trip wrapped in his jersey and slung over his shoulder. Thirty years later, the large chunk displaying *Psiloceras planorbis* was to do duty as a doorstop in his office in the Department of Biology at Tavistock College.

Howard did not revisit Blue Anchor Beach until he was thirty-eight, and the trip was indeed intended as some kind of pilgrimage and nostalgic celebration. He had just been made a Senior Lecturer, and had recently published a book which had been received with some acclaim. But he was now accompanied by the woman with whom he was rapidly falling out of love and the whole afternoon went sour. Vivien complained about the steep and slippery path down to the beach and when she got to the bottom she looked around her with distaste. 'There's no sand. And the sea's the colour of mud. I don't see anywhere we can sit, either – the whole place is nothing but pebbles.'

'It's not the sort of beach you sit on,' said Howard. 'It's the sort of beach you wander about on, looking for things. And there is sand when the tide goes out. I have played cricket on that very sand.'

Vivien cheered a little when he found her a chunk of rose-coloured alabaster. She decided to take it home for the sitting-room mantelpiece. This inspired Howard to talk about the *Psiloceras* doorstop, a fatal move since it led with awful inevitability to a mention of the department secretary, a jolly girl with whom Vivien suspected Howard of carrying on some sort of liaison. Vivien was pathologically jealous.

'And why precisely were *you* moving the filing cabinet⁴ for Carol? Surely she could have got one of the students to do that?'

'There wasn't anyone else round at that moment. The point of the story is that I thought I'd lost the thing, but it turned up again, not the whys and wherefores of the moving of the filing cabinet, for God's sake. I'm fond of that ammonite and I was sad it had gone missing, Vivien'.

He turned over a pebble with his foot, and exposed another in which hung the neat curl of a small ammonite. He considered offering this to Vivien as a reconciliation present, and decided not to. Instead, he covered it up again and sat thinking not of her but of that other afternoon whose imprint hung here also, imbued with the anarchic and inquiring spirit of his own six-year-old self and the rejuvenated presences of his mother and father, setting out chairs and picnic things, no longer diminished and slightly querulous⁵ in retirement at Deal but with all the vigour and authority of young parenthood, omniscient and omnipotent.

Adapted from Penelope Lively, *Cleopatra's Sister*, 1993

¹ query: question(s)

² embedded: inserted

³ stumps: sticks

⁴ filing cabinet: piece of furniture in an office

⁵ querulous: irritable

COMPRÉHENSION – EXPRESSION

*Vous traiterez les questions **dans l'ordre**, en indiquant clairement leur **numéro** sur votre copie. Lorsque la réponse doit être développée, le nombre de mots sera indiqué dans la question. En l'absence d'indications, vous répondrez **brèvement** à la question posée.*

1. The text can be divided into two parts, corresponding to two moments in Howard Beamish's life.
 - a) How old is he in each part?
 - b) For each part, say what characters are present, mentioned or referred to.
 - c) Say how Vivien and Carol are connected to Howard.
2.
 - a) Give the exact name of the place where both scenes are set.
 - b) What did Howard find the first time he went there?
 - c) How did that discovery influence the course of Howard's life?
3. Read from line 6 to 20.
Contrast Howard's, his mother's and his father's attitudes and reactions concerning that discovery.
(60 / 70 words)

Focus on the passage from line 23 to the end.

4.
 - a) In your own words, give the reasons why Howard visited the same place again.
(30 / 40 words)
 - b) Say how Vivien felt about the place and justify your answer with three quotations.
5. Why did Howard's "present" to Vivien (line 34) cause more tension between them? Use your own words. (30 / 40 words)
6. Read lines 45-46 ("He considered...decided not to"). Explain Howard's decision. (20 / 30 words)
7.
 - a) What does "that other afternoon" (line 46) refer to?
 - b) What image did Howard decide to keep of his parents? (20 / 30 words)
8. Choose one of the following subjects.
(250 words approximately. Write down the number of words.)

Subject 1

You tell your parents that you have just changed your mind about your studies or your future job. They react to your decision. Write the scene.

Subject 2

Is there any place that means something special to you? Write about it.

TRADUCTION

Translate into French from line 4 [...] *Howard picked up...* to line 15 ... *several pounds*.