

Heartbeat



Monday, March 11

Issue 24

Students get to Czech out Prague on History trip

At 6am on 15th February, 61 students and nine staff set off on our annual quest to learn more about the history of the mid 20th century, *writes Head of History, Mrs Garner.*

It is also an opportunity to pay our respects to the millions who lost their lives to persecution as well as to learn about the cultures of Central and Eastern Europe.

We made it to our hotel in Prague earlier than expected at 10.30am the next day. On our first afternoon, we took a tram to Prague Castle and then went on a walking tour which took us across the Charles Bridge and into the Old Town square.

After some free time for shopping, we took a tram back to the hotel from Wenceslas Square for some much needed rest before enjoying a meal at the Hard Rock Café.



The next morning we visited Josefov, the Jewish quarter of Prague which was preserved by the Nazis to be a museum to an extinct race. We visited several synagogues to learn more about Jewish beliefs and culture. The most thought provoking of these was the synagogue with the names of all the Czech Jews who were murdered on its walls (more than 70,000) as this helped us appreciate the scale of the atrocity. After lunch, in the border town of Litomerice, we visited the concentration camp of Terezin which was mainly used for political prisoners and was where thousands died due to the appalling conditions. The huge cross and Star of David in the memorial cemetery brought home the fact that Nazi persecution was directed at many different groups. For our last night out in Prague, we went to a bowling centre to let

off some steam after an emotionally challenging day.

The next day, we travelled to Poland and arrived at our hotel in Krakow at about 6pm. After dinner, we went for a walk around the old town square before returning to the hotel for an evening in the games room.

The following morning, we visited the concentration and death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Many in the group were overwhelmed by the mountains of human hair, shoes, suitcases, glasses and other personal belongings on display in Auschwitz 1, every item representing a real person who had been murdered (many of them children). We also visited the punishment cells where Maximilian Kolbe, amongst many others, lost his life.

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The snow and intense cold brought home to many of us how difficult it would have been for prisoners to survive in only pyjamas and clogs. We finished our tour by holding a ceremony of remembrance at the Birkenau memorial. We were all given a survivor's prayer to focus on during the ceremony. We laid 5 candles in the shape of a cross as well as two red roses. Several students read prayers written by survivors & then we said the eternal rest.

After some quiet time for reflection about how the things we had seen could change our daily lives, we watched a DVD about the origins of Auschwitz whilst embarking on our journey to Wroclaw, arriving at our hotel in the early evening. After dinner in the hotel, we held a disco in the function suite and all had an absolutely brilliant time with many songs getting almost everyone on the dance floor (teachers included).

The next day, we travelled to Germany, stopping off at a Polish service station for lunch. We arrived in Berlin mid-afternoon and took some time out to relax in our rooms before visiting a restaurant next to the Brandenburg Gate for dinner. After dinner, we walked through the Gate to symbolise our freedom to do so (it was formerly in No Man's Land between the two walls).and to admire the Gate all lit up. We then went bowling again and a fine time was had by all.

The next morning we had a guided tour of Berlin visiting the Reichstag, the Unter Den Linden and spending a fortune in the famous chocolate shop. We also stopped off at the Holocaust Memorial where, as always, our students were extremely respectful. After free time for shopping in Berlin city centre we visited the House of the Wannsee conference where top Nazis



and industrialists met in 1942 to discuss the logistics of murdering Europe's 11,000,000 Jews. We also had some free time in the town of Potsdam. Our last night in Berlin was spent at another Hard Rock café followed by yet more bowling! On our final morning, we took the train to the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, which is all about the escape attempts across the Berlin Wall. A great deal of bartering was done to buy gas masks and other memorabilia from the street sellers before we got the train to Zoo Centre for lunch and free time. In the afternoon, we visited Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp where thousands of German political prisoners were incarcerated in the 1930's followed by prisoners from over 40 countries during WW2. One such prisoner was Pastor Martin Niemoller who made the following statement from which we can learn a great deal:

'In Germany they first came for the Communists and Socialists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist or a

Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.

Then they came for me – and by that time there was no one left to speak up.'

Before departing for our journey home we reflected on the statement by Edmund Burke that 'all it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing'.

After spending a night on the coach, we returned to Crosby just after 1.30pm on Saturday, exhausted but elated. The behaviour of our students has been exemplary throughout. They have been a real credit to themselves, their parents, the College and Merseyside and have made the week away a real pleasure for the staff involved. The trip has definitely been a life changing experience for many



Read what the students thought of the trip - p3

News in brief

Year 10 work experience continues this week, finishing on Friday.

Year 11 Science Intervention takes place on Monday and Thursday.

Tomorrow, there is an AS Drama Night from 7pm in the Drama Studio.

On Wednesday, Year 9 Homework Club meet at 3.30pm in G8,

while on Thursday, the Silver Surfers meet at 3.40 in G8 and there

is the Year 7 Parents' Consultation Evening, which starts at 4.30pm.

What the students said...

This trip has made me think about how lucky I am to have a comfortable life and has encouraged me to think about the people who are forced to struggle through no fault of their own. We had loads of laughs too.

Emily Bird (10S)

The Prague trip made me realise how lucky I am to have all the things I have. I will now start to appreciate these things more than I did before.

Laura Kelly (10A)

Truly the best trip ever! From walking around new cities like Prague or camps like Auschwitz, every place has been eye-opening making us enjoy and appreciate the trip in equal measure. The staff were great and we had a lot of laughs

David McGivern (12H)

Even though this was my second time on the trip I have found that I've still learned new things which can help me prevent another event like the Holocaust from happening again.

Ruairi McConaghy (12H)

Makes you realise how privileged we are when you see how others were treated.

Sean Carron (10S) & James Murphy (10A)

I realised when walking through Auschwitz that anyone could have been shot or beaten right on the spot where I was standing.

George Brinkley (10S)

We have learned that reading stuff from a textbook is one thing but going to see it for yourself makes a big difference.

Charlie Boulton (10S)

Jonathan Quillan (10H)

It has made us realise how lucky we are to go to the school we go to and to have the things we do and we are grateful to the teachers for showing us this. We realise how much we take things for granted.

Taite Waring (10R) & Morgan Swain (10S)

I have been on most school trips offered but Prague is supreme. If I'd known what was coming I wouldn't have slept for months. I am grateful to have made new friends from different years and got to know the teachers. After hearing about other people's ordeals, our relationships have become stronger. Our Prague 2013 family is the best.

Elle Molyneux (12C)

The trip was really eye-opening. Not only were the prisoners treated badly and killed for no reason, the conditions and routines they had to live through on a daily basis were horrific. It makes me feel lucky not to have to worry about my family and friends.

Alex Farrington (12A)

I have had an amazing time on the Prague trip. It has brought on many emotions such as the sense of awe felt from the architecture in Prague, Krakow and Berlin to the grave sadness felt in the concentration camps. Trying to imagine the heartbreak, isolation and sorrow is really hard. Checkpoint Charlie and the Berlin Wall showed us the determination and spirit of those who escaped and who helped others. A real eye-opener.

Andrew Broderick (12S)

The trip has been an amazing experience and I learned lots and enjoyed every second. The amount of planning and behind the scenes work for everything has been incredible. It's been an unforgettable time Thank you so much.

Matthew Morris (12D)

An amazing trip as I've learnt so much. Also had a great laugh with my friends. Teachers have been great as they made the trip possible.

Jack Chrichton (12S)

I had such a wonderful time on this trip. I loved visiting the cities and Berlin is just the best. I can't wait to return to see them all again. The camps were emotional and made you realise how lucky you actually are in respect to safety and freedom. An amazing experience I will never forget. Thanks so much to everyone for making it so amazing.

Ellie Haines (12H)

This is my second time on the Prague trip and I never thought it could be better the second time around. Coming again has put everything into perspective as I understand it far more now. This week has been an eye-opener and I will never forget a second of it. Thanks to the teachers and drivers for all their hard work.

Jenny Nolan (12H)

I'm so grateful for the opportunity to come on this trip as visiting the camps makes you realise so much more than you could have imagined. I have learned things which I will never forget. I have

also loved visiting all the cities and would happily return to them in the future. Thanks to all the teachers for all the memories.

Alicia Burke (12R)

This trip has made me think about all of the things we have learned in lessons and how bad it all was. My favourite experience was Auschwitz. The saddest experience was at the Auschwitz memorial.

Joe Wyke (10H)

This trip has been one of the best I have been on because I have learnt a lot and the night activities have evened out the sad emotions we got when we went to Auschwitz. My favourite experience was Auschwitz because it made me realise how lucky I am and how badly treated the Jewish people were by the Nazis.

Sam Thompson (10H)

As well as the history aspects, I loved visiting new cities in Europe. I can't wait to go back to Berlin in the future. We had such a laugh. The people and the teachers made the holiday. I wish I could relive the whole week again.

Helen Redmond (12C)

This was an amazing week. Everything from visiting the gorgeous buildings in Prague to actually being in Auschwitz were indescribable. I would love to do this trip again. The coach and the people on it have become my adopted family.

Joanne Gardner (12H)

There was never a dull moment on the trip and it was clear just how much planning had been put in. This was definitely the reason behind all the fun and memories we shared.

Joe Hughes (12A)

The trip has been as enjoyable as it has been harrowing. The camps really make you realise how much we have and how quickly this can be taken away. Auschwitz was where we all felt this and is an experience I will never forget.

Tom Dillon (12A)

This trip has been amazing and interesting. I enjoyed every moment from the buildings in Prague to Auschwitz and Berlin. It was excellent. What I viewed in the camps is unforgettable and I'm filled with happy memories from the trip.

George Hughes (10R)

Teen Star Bethany wins through to talent final

Congratulations to Bethany Lythgoe who has won through to the live regional finals of a national singing competition.

Bethany (9H) saw off thousands of competitors at auditions for Teen Star, a talent competition which searches for the UK's best young singers, singer/songwriters, rappers and vocalists.

Her success will see her perform at regional finals in front of industry judges and a live audience, with a chance to win through to the national final at London's O2 arena.

Bethany said: "I am very excited about taking part and looking forward to the day. "I still need to decide on my song choice and sort out my outfit.

"I've been told there will be a photo shoot with a special guest star from X Factor. It's going to be great. Thank you to my mum, dad and family for always supporting me"

Bethany began taking dance lessons in ballet at the age of 3. At 4-years-old, she joined the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA) and is also a member of Procter Dance Academy and the Liverpool Empire Youth Theatre.

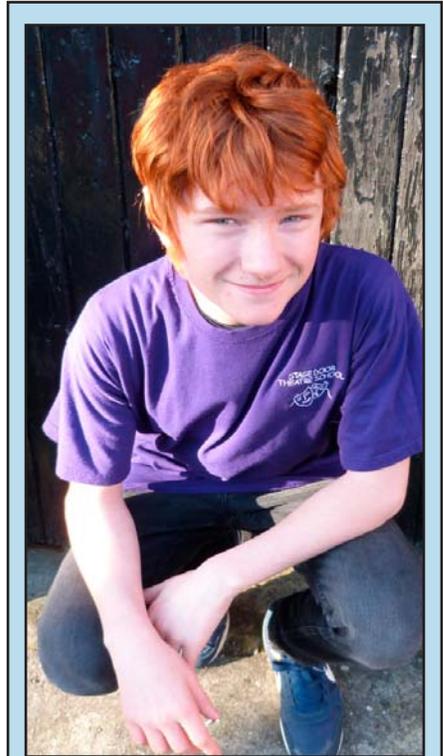


In 2011, Bethany won the dance section of Sefton's Got Talent (under 12s) and was then asked to perform at a number of charity events including Sefton's Shining Stars charity and the Lady Mayoress of Wirral's Charity Ball.

Over the last 12 months, Bethany has also taken part in a number of shows including Les Miserables at the Epstein Theatre and Annie and The Ripple Effect, both at Liverpool Empire. The tireless youngster is also busy rehearsing for footloose, showing at the Empire in April, after auditioning for the part of a dancer.

Bethany's proud mother, Tina, said: "We are thrilled that Bethany has gained a place in the live regional final showcase of Teen Star, it's a fantastic opportunity for any young person who wishes to pursue a career as a performer. "We are very proud of what Bethany continues to achieve. It's always a special moment watching Bethany's passion for performing arts come to life."

TeenStar, is run by Future Music, who also produce the Open Mic UK competition, which has unearthed acts such as Birdy and Hatty Keane



Thomas lands C4 drama role

Talented actor Thomas Priestley (9E) has landed a leading role in a forthcoming Channel 4 drama.

The Year 9 student auditioned for the role of Noah in The Mill last year and impressed the casting directors enough to land the role. Filming has now started and the 14-year-old, who also attends the Stage Door Theatre School in Crosby, is really looking forward to getting on set. He said: "I had a read-through for the first episode in London which was fantastic, then I had to be fitted for my costume."

Emma Vaudrey, Principle of Stage Door was approached in December by casting bosses and asked to select suitable pupils for the audition. She said: "I am so excited for Tom. He's going to have a great time."

Take a bow Gabriella, you're a splash hit

Congratulations to Gabriella Benbow who has swept all before her at swimming to become the North West Champion of Southport & Crosby. Gabriella (8E), who believes the 400 metre freestyle event is her strongest swimming style, took up the sport aged just 8 and soon discovered she was a major talent after picking up one award after another. The confident youngster said: "I am looking to take it as far as I can. London 2012 really inspired me and I would love to get to compete at an event like that."

