

## France Trip 2015 – A Diary

### Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June

The students met outside Marr College on Thursday night ready to board the coach which would serve them well over the next 4 days. There was a sense of excitement in the air, however the priority seemed to be trying to secure seats at the back of the bus, and making sure pillows and blankets were accessible for what was going to be a long drive through the night from Troon to Dover. The first service station of the night added to the excitement with the students having the opportunity to treat themselves to hot chocolate and Krispy Kreme doughnuts. After this it was full steam ahead to Dover – with some students being threatened with Mrs Mancini singing karaoke if they didn't try to get some sleep!

### Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June

After being re-energised with some breakfast on the ferry, we were ready for a very busy first day in France. The students were desperate to start spending their Euros, and the first stop of the day was, perhaps unsurprisingly, in a shopping centre. There were plenty of refreshments bought by the students, and some even started 'present shopping' for their parents. It was the teachers who embraced the French culture the most however, returning to the bus wearing very stylish French berets.

From the shopping centre, we then drove towards the château, stopping off at the town of Boulogne. The highlight of this town was the traditional Crêperie we visited. The crêpes were so good that some students decided they needed to order seconds!

Friday evening and we finally arrived at the château. There was no time for relaxation though. After a quick dinner, the students were split into three different teams and undertook a scavenger hunt organised by the château instructors. This spurred new life into the group, and the evening ended with a number of different sports in the field including football and ultimate Frisbee, or card games indoors for those who were feeling a little exhausted from the jam-packed day.

### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June

After a typical French breakfast of croissants and pain au chocolats, the group headed into the near-by town of Amiens and experienced a local French market. The students were able to view the beautiful cathedral in this town, and again more 'present shopping' was evident. A wide range of gifts were bought for the parents, ranging from cheese, to a local newspaper!

After this, the group headed to an apple orchard to learn about making traditional cider and apple juice. Back at the château the instructors had organised 'Château Olympics' which consisted of a series of relay races between the 3 teams that had been created the previous night.

### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June

The day everyone had been waiting for had finally arrived – the Parc Asterix trip! This visit certainly did not disappoint, with something in the park for everyone. Whether it be white-knuckle rollercoasters, more relaxed train rides, dolphin shows, or simply just taking in general theme of Asterix, all students had a fantastic day. The day got even better when the students found out it was burgers on the menu for dinner back at the château!

Sunday night offered a rare opportunity for some more French culture, as the group travelled back to Amiens to experience a once a year event in a nation-wide music festival. A stage had been constructed in the main square of the town, with performers situated in every street corner and every restaurant around the town.

### Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June

Knowing that we were sailing from Calais back to Britain tonight, it was essential that we squeezed in as much French culture as possible today. The day started however, with yet more activities at the château. The students were split into three groups, with each group taking part in a separate team building activity. The students could choose from canoeing, crate climbing, or raft building.

After lunch and a quick check to make sure all toothbrushes and phone chargers had been packed, the students waved au revoir to the château and boarded the coach for the start of our long, long..... long journey. All was present and correct, apart from Mr McNeil, who managed to leave his tablet in his room! First stop after the château was a local snail farm, where students learned about how the snails are looked after – and, even had a chance to sample some of the local product. Samples included snail pate, snails served in their shell with garlic butter, and rhubarb jam. The highlight of this visit was Mr Moncrieff's face, as he attempted to swallow his snail.

Next up was a local bakery. Here, students learned that in France, people buy fresh bread EVERY DAY! Students also had the chance to shape their own croissants. Given we were en route home by this point, some students seen this as a last minute chance for present shopping, buying some of the famous fresh bread to take home with them.

From here it was straight on up to Calais for the crossing back to Dover, followed by an 11 hour drive back to Troon. It's safe to say there was a lot more sleep on the bus home than there as on the way down on Thursday night. Even the famous golden arches of McDonald's at the service stations were not enough to awaken some of the students.

This was a fantastic trip thoroughly enjoyed by all students and staff, and memories have been created that will stay with the students for a very long time.