

Millthorpe French trip 2010

At midnight on the 1st April, 43 Year 8 students and 6 teachers set off on a coach ride to Dover. After a long journey and a stop off at KFC at three o'clock in the morning, we reached Dover and boarded a ferry at about 7:30. We explored the ferry, nearly falling over because of the swell, and spent most of the crossing on the dance mats and in the chocolate section of the duty – free!

When we finally arrived in Calais, our first stop was Lucien – Vadéz school. On arrival, we tried to make conversation with the pupils, and were then taken for lunch in the school canteen. After lunch, we went back to the hall, and were entertained by French songs and break-dancing. We were then shown to a lesson such as English, DT, Latin and more. The lesson was difficult to understand as it was, but to add to this, some of the children were being taught Latin in French, which was particularly confusing! The floors in the school were very slippery, and we had sliding races with the French children – there are some things you don't need language to enjoy! After several laps around the maze of corridors, we got back to the hall, and then said our goodbyes to the children and teachers.

We then had a long coach ride, which was complemented by a sing-along to Hairspray, to a traditional Boulangerie. We arrived in pouring rain and sprinted inside, welcomed by the smell of freshly - baked Brioche. After showing us all the types of bread he made, the baker gave us a brief demonstration of how he made his bread to the highest standard. The baker generously gave us each a small loaf of Brioche, which we enjoyed on the ride to see our hotel for the first time.

After an early night, we set off for a small traditional sweet factory. The man showed us how he made the sweets, and even got to have a go ourselves! We were then shown to the elaborately decorated gift shop where we bought sweets ranging from chocolate mussels and the sweet-maker's traditional sweets, to dog-shaped lollies and marshmallow strawberries!

Our next stop was a small park where we ate our lunch and played a few games, and then on to the Nausicaa Aquarium. We saw some amazing creatures in the huge aquarium including sharks, penguins, and eels. There were so many different types and species! The aquarium was particularly fun when you walked over some of the tanks, you realised that the floor was made of glass, and it felt like you could fall in at any moment!

We then went to Touquet, a small seaside village, and were given the choice of going into town or the beach. A small group went to town at first, but then joined the rest of the group at the beach. We spent several hours running down the sandbanks, jumping off them and making a sand car. Everyone enjoyed the beach, and would have happily stayed on longer.

Later that evening, after tea, we enjoyed a quiz, which included a maths round from Mr Webb – Sear, a Miss Hogan's Favourites round, and a general observation round from the trip so far.

The next day, which was Sunday, we got up at what seemed like the crack of dawn to go on a canal ride around a marsh. The lady told us about life living on a canal and how the children took a boat to school everyday. She also said that when a swan flew overhead, everyone had to lie flat on the ground because they were so aggressive, and that when it gets really cold in winter, the canal freezes over and people can walk on it.

We then drove for a short while to get to La Coupole, a world war two museum, set in an unfinished German bunker. We all learnt lots about the missiles that were planned to be launched by the Germans before they were fortunately sabotaged by the Belgians.

Then we moved onto the hotly anticipated Go-Karting. Everyone was very excited and couldn't wait for their turn at the exhilarating sport. After their race, everyone came out in high spirits, wishing they could have another go!

That night after dinner, we had a talent show, which people had been practising for. We were entertained by jokes, gymnastics from Becca Hussey, singing by Alice, Beth and Evie, and break-dancing from Tom Stubbs. We also witnessed an unusual and very unexpected display of talent from Joe Mitchell-Jones and Sam Welby, involving Joe singing and keeping a straight face while Sam slapped him across the face! And finally we saw a short but perfectly choreographed dance display from Mr Webb-Sear.

The next morning, we went to a chocolate factory and were given a full demonstration of all the ingredients used and then how the chocolatier made different types of chocolate. Afterwards, we went to the gift shop where some people bought chocolate but it was very expensive!

Our next stop was a snail farm, where we were shown all the different snails, where they come from, and how the farm came about. The man who worked there showed us to the pen where the snails are kept in the winter, and we found out that rats are dangerous predators for the snails, and so to protect his snails, the man had hired a little ferret called Albert!

We moved on to Saint Joseph model village, where we had a good time looking round and going inside the traditional French shops, windmills, churches, and farmhouses.

Finally that day, we went bowling - everyone got involved and enjoyed it very much.

Everyone, including some of the teachers spent the last night dancing and singing to loud music in the lobby and our rooms! However we were only allowed to do this after we were completely packed and our rooms had been inspected.

The next morning, everyone was checking over their rooms for the last time and feeling quite sentimental. We had breakfast and got on the coach, heading for Calais. On the way, we stopped off at Cité de l'Europe for a brief shopping trip. Afterwards, we got back on the coach and didn't stop until we got to Calais. When we finally got to the ferry, we were familiar with the boat, and knew exactly where to find the games room and the dance mats! After arriving back on English soil, we stopped off for tea and then set off on the final leg of the journey. Several fairly uneventful hours passed but we managed to reach York ahead of schedule, and everyone was reunited with their parents, safe and sound. We all loved the trip and say a big thank you to Mr Stipetic, Miss Hogan, Miss Watts, Mr Webb-Sear, Mrs Wright and Miss Kirby and of course our amazing coach driver, Jason, for taking us!