

Modern Languages Trip to Paris

Monday 11th – Thursday 14th April 2022

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Photos from Drew Frazer

After two long years of the COVID-19 Pandemic and several lockdowns, of not being able to go on holiday and of missing friends terribly, 48 pupils from Years 10 and 11 accompanied by Mrs O'Shaughnessy, Mrs McCullagh, Mrs Adair, Miss McCullough and Mr McAuley were ecstatic as they set off on an experience of, what felt like, a lifetime. A school trip to Paris! Formidable!

The build-up was unforgettable, the excitement surrounding all that we were going to see and do not forget to mention the 'will we ever get there?' fear that loomed in the midst of all the COVID red tape. But, got there we absolutely did and with bells on at that!

After a crack-of-dawn-start on Monday 11th April, endless (and painful!) queuing in Dublin and Charles de Gaulle airports, we were finally *à Paris*. Our first stop was the Sacré Coeur at Montmartre, and the sun was shining. We enjoyed a walk inside the Basilica where we admired the beautiful architecture and decor. We then enjoyed some time in the nearby Place du Tertre where we were finally able to sample some authentic French cuisine, *crêpes*, *croques monsieur* even *moules frites* if we so desired! The souvenir shops were also a hit and bargaining with the artists for a portrait was certainly the ultimate test of our French! Our first day finished with taking in the views of *la belle capitale* from the top of the Montparnasse Tower. From there we could clearly see all the city's most famous and beautiful landmarks, such as the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral. After this busy day of fun and excitement, we were ready to take the weight off our feet and settle in our hotel.



The weather continued to be kind to us and on day 2, after a restful night's sleep and a delicious French breakfast we headed back into the centre of Paris to meet our walking-tour guide. Our tour began at Place de la Concorde and took in all the city's main attractions: the jardins Tuileries, the Louvre, the Champs Elysées and the Arc de Triomphe to which we would later return. We window-shopped the exclusive designer boutiques of Louis Vuitton and Chanel for example, before arriving at Trocadéro where we enjoyed an impromptu sing-along with *David le chanteur*. Apparently Dancing Queen by Abba is still a hit in France!

After all this excitement and activity, we were ready for a pit-stop in the very chic McDonald's on the Champs Elysées, it has golden, not yellow, arches, did you know? There, we sampled food not found in any

McDonald's we'd ever been to (like macaroons for example). Miam miam! Now that we had refuelled, we were ready to climb the 284 steps of the Arc de Triomphe. It is by far one of the most beautiful monuments in Paris. The views were spectacular and well worth the climb!

Our evening was spent at a crêperie followed by a cruise on the Seine on the Bateaux Mouches. It was amazing to see the sights of the city from the water and at dusk. The most special was the sight of the lights chasing up the Eiffel Tower once it became dark. A memory we'll cherish forever.

Day 3 started early as we set off for Disneyland. The weather was not as kind, the day was quite wet to begin with but that didn't dampen our spirits! We enjoyed a Disney-themed quiz on the bus journey, courtesy of Miss McCullough and Mr McAuley. Once



we were 'let loose' in the park we all rushed to the rides, the teachers included! We had a blast and they re-lived their youth!

Some of our favourite rides were Thunder Mountain, Tower of Terror and Space Mountain. We also hit the souvenir shops hard and lots of cuddly toys, keyrings and novelty hats were bought. We certainly didn't go hungry either, we had the choice of many different Disney themed restaurants throughout our day at the park, then in the evening we all met for dinner in Planet Hollywood. The teachers even managed to give us some more time back in the Disney Studios after dinner, so we really did have an amazing day!



Our fourth and final day had now arrived (*sad face*) as had the almost impossible task of packing all our souvenirs into our small suitcases! We still had lots to see and enjoy in Paris and once we checked out of our hotel, we headed straight to the Stade de France. We met our very friendly and helpful tour guides and were immediately struck by the size of the stadium. It can hold nearly 81,000 people! The tour brought us to the players' changing rooms, the medical rooms, the President's box and even to the built-in police station and cells!

Once we'd hit the stadium's gift shop we boarded the bus again and headed to the Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace, where we saw the now-grounded Concorde and many other impressive planes. Our last stop before heading to Charles de Gaulle airport was the Aéroville shopping centre for some final souvenir shopping.

lifetime and one we will never forget. *A la prochaine fois, Paris!*

And just like that we were back at the school gates after an action-packed and fun-filled four days in the City of Lights. It was an experience of a

