

## TRIP TO THESSALONIKI! MARCH 11-18 2017

### Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017



Six very excited people, four pupils and two teachers arrived at Craigclowan Prep school on Saturday March 11 ready for their lift to Edinburgh airport. Of all the goodbye photos one included a group shot, wearing Tunnocks ponchos which was repeated at Athens and Thessaloniki airports.

Pupils have spent their ICT lessons last term researching Scottish inventors and inventions and preparing a presentation to take to Greece. Tunnocks Teacakes featured in their presentation. The children planned to serve a Tunnocks snack to the other nations' children and offer them a taste of Iron Bru. We had brought presents featuring Scottish products and Tunnocks, who manufacture the chocolate cakes gave us six of their jolly plastic ponchos for the trip.



Our journey was punctured by food stops and transfers were trouble-free. Note to teachers: always check the trays at security after they have been 'emptied' by the children. Who can manage on two flights without a tablet to photograph the beautiful Alps from the air? There were two hours difference from Britain and as we arrived in northern Greece it was clearly very late for our hosts. There were the welcoming host families waiting to take the four children away to their homes. We were given sweet pastries and then the teachers were taken to the centre of the city and their hotel.

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Pupils spent the day getting to know their host families and the teachers spent the day getting to know the city. In the evening we all met by the White Tower, after a lovely sunny Spring day there was now a definite chill in the air, but not enough to deter Rachel from wearing her sandals! There was a ship / bar on the seafront and at 6.30pm we go aboard for a trip



around the bay. It was fresh outside but wonderful views of the city were available to us. There was also a ceremonial marching band on paraded taking down the flag from the White Tower.



We walked past statues commemorating Greek heroes until we came to the wonderful Umbrella Installation by George Zongolopoulos

Antonio, our driver, drove us back in one of the schools' twenty three minibuses.

## Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

We visited the wetlands of the Axios Delta national park on Monday. Biodiversity was the name of that game. We were amazed to see flamingo feeding and flying over the water. It was chilly there and although we were assured of the many species of birds which inhabit that area we did not see them as they had been blown to the other side of the lake which was more sheltered. We were taken to a centre where a film was shown to us showing how man and nature can co-exist if attention is made to careful planning. Wetlands farmers cultivation techniques



side of the lake which was centre where a film was shown can co-exist if attention is can be sustained by the rice which involve flooding.

In the evening the French and project partners were united: and Romanians.

Italians arrived and so all our French, Italian, Scots, Greeks

## Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017



*"The pupils and staff were so*

*friendly and welcoming."*

We visited the Greek school today. We spent the whole day there. In the morning there was a tour of the school. Aristotelio Collegio is a wonderful school. The corridors are decorated with the pupils wonderful artwork, there are small, circular story telling rooms attached to each junior classroom, there are plants and olive trees in the playground. The pupils and staff were so friendly and welcoming. We all gathered in the auditorium in order to make our presentations. Greece began with their philosophers who, as they said, were also inventors. There was a costume drama to explain how the project came by its name by enacting Archimedes in his bath! Hilarious.



The competition for the logo was decided by a vote from a short list and the winner, Ismini Lagoutari, was announced. This was the task allotted to the Greeks and the short list had excellent designs from which we had to choose one. It was a hard decision to make.

Scotland then made their presentation. The children presented their description of Craigclowan School and a PowerPoint outline of famous Scottish inventions, concluding with a snack of Irn Bru and Tunnocks Teacakes for all. Freddie played his bagpipes whilst Rachel danced to the music, Iona and Rachel sang one of the two songs that they had rehearsed. There was such a lot to fit in.



Past, Present and Future!

## Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017 continued...

When the Romanians presented their project Arthur helped out the younger Romanian children by reading out loud each set of English subtitles supplied. There were some challenging names for him to sight read!

We learnt about the Italian Moka coffee machine inventor, Alfonso Bialetti who was from the home town of our Italian partners, Verbania. The French made a presentation about Braille and the Bic! It was a busy but satisfying morning showing just how much work the schools had applied to researching and presenting their findings. The children left the staff to their business meeting in the staffroom at the school. Food was generously supplied by the lady in charge of the school tuck shop.

Everyone met later in the evening at a restaurant near the beach. The food was delicious and served in a calm and friendly way. The children were able to play outside and entertain themselves safely rather than become bored once they had finished eating. Another full day with tired children to see off to their Greek hosts.

## Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017



The coach took us to Vergina. We were being guided by Maria, the most wonderful archaeologist, who has excellent English but, more importantly, creates lively and informative education packs for children and adults on her specialisation which is the archaeology of Ancient Greece. Her contribution was invaluable as she explained in the simplest terms the life of the key figures of ancient times. We visited the tombs of the Macedonian kings and had a very knowledgeable but intelligible account of what was discovered so relatively recently at that site. How exciting and precious are the items discovered there. This is a wonderful museum which Maria guided us through most meticulously. Our children were contributing throughout. The other children had to rely upon the translations provided by their teachers.

After this most emotional first visit the coach took us to Mieza where we followed in the footsteps of Alexander the Great as he debated with his teacher Aristotle. Literally following our guide around the garden school where the conqueror followed his mentor as his education progressed. We were shown a video in the museum which was in English. Here the importance of nature was demonstrated as the Aristotelean method was explained.



The evening was spent quietly reflecting on the momentous events we had experienced in our visits. The children spent an evening with their families. They have been so busy in so many different ways.



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## Thursday March 16th 2017

It's Thursday and history day. Who better than the amazing Maria to explain the many conquests this strategically important area has experienced? Where better to start than the White Tower with its wonderful location and exhibits? The day continued with walks and bus lifts around sites illustrating the points first spoken of at the start of the day. We went from the east to the west of the city walls. What views, what photo opportunities! These, as you can imagine, were all embraced by modern electronic equipment and records for this century.

We were able to lunch in Aristotelian square enjoying seafood and a short catch up with the children who had asked if one of our Italian friends could join us. It was a most congenial conclusion to the first part of the day. Ice cream followed at a specialist bar and then the group reunited for the return to the school bus and the dance studio.

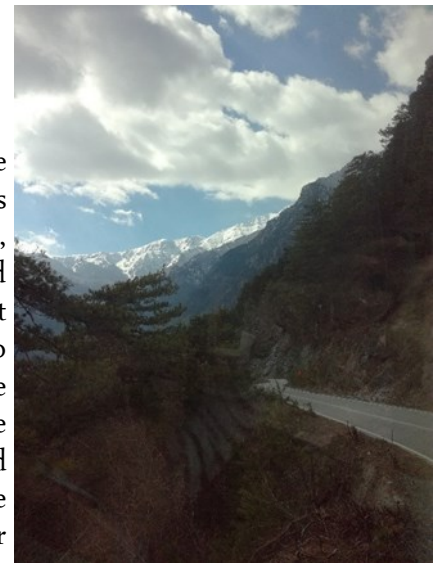
Paramythoupoli is the name of the town housing the dance studio where the children were able to learn and practise circus skills led by the Kirkland collective- Circus for All. This included Trapeze, aerial hoop, aerial silk and rope and stilt walking.



## Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017

We were a two-bus party to the archaeological site of Dion. The 24 of us were joined by Greek pupils from the 3 and 4 grade classes. We were guided, most expertly by none other than Maria, around the temples of the gods culminating in that belonging to Zeus. The children were asked to consider why the temples were outside the city! We walked the site and then the walls of the city before seeing remarkably well-preserved baths and lavatories and being advised of the civic importance of the public waterworks. There were some other public facilities nearby which challenged the Scots.

Rachel thought they were showers! A short promotional video about our Eureka project was made at the end of the visit.



*"Mount Olympus where Mrs Dibnah, the classicist, was able to realise a life's ambition."*

It was then back on the bus to Dion, the classicist, was able very challenging ascent on a with some precipitous views delighted to find snow at the led us to lunch sitting outside in were able to play safely after rest of the world in a football



Once the buses were back at school the children went with their Greek hosts until the evening when they met up with the teachers at a restaurant in the city centre. Another delicious meal!

Mount Olympus where Mrs to realise a life's ambition. It was a very steep road, in a very big bus from the window. The children were top of the road. A careful descent a park area where all the children they had eaten. Greece took on the match and narrowly triumphed.

## Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2017

This was our last day and we took an early breakfast at the hotel to say goodbye to our Romanian partners. As we were leaving in the early afternoon we thought we would explore the street markets around our hotel with the children. A last chance to shop! The children had so enjoyed eating in a restaurant by the sea that they asked for a chance to go there, perchance to swim! Carol arranged for us to be collected from our hotel by Antonio, so much more than our driver.



After a mid-morning ice-cream dangling our legs over the sea wall looking at the jelly fish and sea urchins we returned to collect our Italian partners for the bus ride to Peraia. Another memorable road trip!

Then we were there. Tables laid on the beach ready for lunch. Before eating Rachel, Arthur and Freddie could not be kept out of the sea! When the time came for it though they drove straight in. There are some delightfully captured, slow motion images of that plunge. This unscheduled addition to



our visit, aided by perfect weather concluded perfectly our trip to Thessaloniki. It will be a very hard act to follow.

It was a long but problem-free journey home. The children were so happy to be reunited with their parents after an astonishingly busy, happy, friendly, educational visit to the perfect city of Thessaloniki.

There are not words to describe what was established during those eight days but memories will be discussed in the many reunions which will surely follow.



It just remains for me to say a huge thank you to Georgia,



*"There are not words to describe what was established during those eight days..."*